



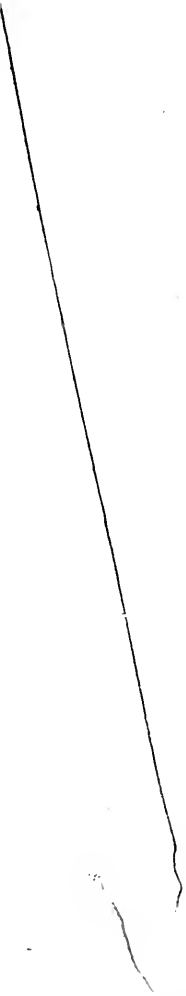
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SACRED HISTORY:

OR THE

HISTORICAL PART

OF THE

HOLY SCRIPTURES

OF THE

Old and New Testaments;

Digested into due METHOD,

WITH RESPECT TO

ORDER of TIME and PLACE.

WITH

OBSERVATIONS,

Tending to ILLUSTRATE some PASSAGES therein.

By THOMAS ELLWOOD.

The FOURTH EDITION.

V O L. III.

L O N D O N:

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T H E

P R E F A C E.

A Former treatise, O Theophilus (thou friend and lover of God, whoever thou art) have I emitted, some few years ago, containing the Historical Part of the Holy Scriptures in the Old Testament.

Which work having found (so far as I have understood) at least a favourable reception, if not a kind entertainment in the world; I have been thence encouraged to resume my pen, and proceed to the methodizing of the Historical Part of the Holy Scriptures in the New Testament also; which is what I here present thee with, in two parts.

In the first part whereof thou wilt find an account of the conception, birth, life, travels, doctrines, discourses, miracles, sufferings, death, burial, resurrection and ascension of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (the author of the true Christian religion) plainly, fairly, and succinctly given; ushered in with a brief account of the conception, birth, manner of life, ministry, and death of his fore-runner, John,

firmamed the Baptist; and attended, in the second part, with a like historical account of the acts and travels of the apostles of our Lord, in the propagation of his blessed gospel (such of them, at least, and so far, as the evangelist Luke, in his treatise on that subject, hath recorded) from the time of the ascension of our blessed Saviour, so far as the clue or thread of the holy text leads us; beyond which I was not willing to adventure, as not liking to descend from unquestionable certainty, to any, even the most approved, of questionable story.

In this undertaking I aim at the same end as in the former, viz. that all, the youth especially of either sex, under whatsoever religious denomination they go, might be farther furnished with such an entertainment, to spend, at least, their leisure hours upon, as might yield them at once both profit and delight; and might be thereby drawn off from mispending their precious time upon other, either hurtful, or, at best, unprofitable subjects.

If any shall, with a contracted brow, observe, that together with matters of fact, I deliver the discourses, speeches, sermons and doctrines, delivered by our blessed Lord either to his disciples, or promiscuous and common auditors; I intreat such, that before they proceed to censure, they will be pleased to consider that the nature of history requires it; and that without it, the discourse would have been not only less profitable, but less pleasant also to the reader; and by that means less conducive

ducive to the end I propose, which is to allure him to read the Holy Scriptures with delight, from the inviting baits of profit and pleasure. For we are taught by the poet, that

Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci.

He gains his point, who gain with pleasure joins.

Some readers, perhaps, may wonder to see (which the marginal references will lead them to observe) how often I am fain to skip to and fro, from book to book, chapter to chapter, and verse to verse, forwards and backwards, to reduce the several parts and passages of the history (in the first part) to their due and proper times and places; which I have endeavoured to do, as near as I could; and which has been the greatest difficulty I have found in the work, occasioned doubtless by its having been originally written by divers pen-men, at different times, and in distinct places, without having any intercourse among themselves, or holding correspondence one with another about it, or having indeed much regard to the order of time, wherein the things they delivered were said, or done.

This has been before observed by divers. Grotius, on Mat. xxvi. 6. says, '*Nihil est certius, quam à scriptoribus evangeliorum, multa referri non temporis ordine, sed ex rerum ductu.*' i. e. 'There is nothing more certain, than that many things are related by the evangelists, not in the order of time, but as the matters led to it.' So on Luke iv. 21. '*Omnino*

‘*certum est* (says the same Grotius) *contra quam alii sentiunt, in omni hac historia, Lucam ad rerum magis quam ad temporis ordinem attendere.*’ *i. e.* ‘It is altogether certain (contrary to what others think) that in all this history, Luke had more regard to the order of things than of times.’ And again, on Luke ix. 51. ‘*Jam sæpe vidimus* (says he) *ex occasione multa ab eo narrari, post habita temporis serie.*’ *i. e.* ‘We have often seen already, that many things are related by him (Luke) occasionally, without regard had to the series, or course of times.’

With him agrees Voffius (as cited by Cradock in his Harmony of the Evangelists, chap. v. sect. 62. page 124.) thus, ‘*Evangelistæ sæpe numero in narrando non temporis habent rationem; sed occasionem arripiunt, ex commodo argumenti nexu.*’ *i. e.* ‘The evangelists oftentimes in relating a matter have not regard to the time wherein it was done; but take hold of the occasion from a convenient joining of the argument.’

If by this means it hath happened that I have misplaced any passage, to the disadvantage of the story, I do assure thee, reader, it hath proceeded purely from mistake, occasioned by the intricacy of the contexture, without any the least design on my part.

Where the same thing (whether parable, discourse, or miracle) is related by more of the evangelists than one, and with such difference in terms, though but in circumstantials, as may render it doubtful whether it were spoken, or done, at one and the same time only, or at divers,

divers, I have chosen to deliver it twice over, that I might not deprive our Lord of the honour of any of his works or words, nor the reader of the benefit thereof, who I had rather should therein abound, than want.

In the second part, as being all written by one hand, the method is more regular, the course of the history more clear. Yet the apostolical epistles, being without date, are hardly, I conceive, to be reduced with indubitable certainty to exact order. That they were written in the same order wherein they stand, none, I think, pretending to understand them, do suppose.

‘*Epistolæ Paulinæ* (says Grotius in *Prælegom. ad Rom. i.*) *non temporis ordine locatæ sunt, ab iis qui eas primi in unum volumen compegerunt; sed pro dignitate eorum ad quos scriptæ sunt.*’
i. e. ‘The epistles of Paul are not placed in order of time, by them that first bound them up into one volume; but according to the dignity of those to whom they were written.’

That it is easier to know they stand not right, than it is how to set them right, may be easily gathered from the diversity of opinions amongst the learned about their due order; concerning which there are almost *quot homines, tot sententiæ*, as many minds as men (of them that treat about it).

I have endeavoured to place them right, according to the best of my understanding; wherein yet, if I have in any part missed, I please myself with the hopes of a favourable censure from my unprejudiced and considerate reader;

reader; the rather, for that a mistake of that kind is not of the greatest moment.

It may perhaps be expected, that I should have informed my reader what parts of the apostolical writings were by some of the ancients either wholly rejected, or doubtfully and but slowly received. But I purposely abstain from doing that. The learned know it. The unlearned, perhaps, had better not know it, than have occasion to puzzle their heads about it, without satisfaction; but not, it may be, without hurt to themselves. I truly love, and highly esteem, those writings; and as I would not (which too many do) set them above their due place and service, so neither would I in the least diminish the honour justly due unto them, by reviving any doubtful question concerning any part thereof.

The helps I have had in compiling this history, have been chiefly from the Criticks, and Cradock's Harmony of the Four Evangelists, with his Apostolical History. Out of either of which I have sometimes made bold to borrow here and there a quotation; yet not often, if ever, without owning to whom I was indebted for it.

As for the performance, whatever it is, I say no more of it, than that, if it be not done as it should (not as I would), yet it is done as I could. And therefore, in all humility, I recommend and commit it to his divine disposal, who (as the apostle, in another case, intimated, 2 Cor. viii. 12.) will accept what is done with a willing mind (as he knows
this

this to be) according to what a man hath, not according to what he hath not. May he vouchsafe a blessing to it, that it may be useful, in some degree or other, to every well-meaning reader.

I N T R O D U C T I O N .

BEFORE we enter upon the history itself, it may perhaps be acceptable to some readers, offensive I hope to none, that an account be briefly given who were the penmen by whom the Sacred History was compiled, in what language it was originally written, and in what order of time the several parts thereof were composed.

Of those parts which relate the incarnation, birth, life, acts, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were the undoubted penmen.

Of these, the common opinion is, that Matthew wrote in the Hebrew tongue, as it was then used with a mixture of the Chaldee or Syriac; and that his book was afterwards translated into the Greek tongue, though not certainly known by whom. Some think it was done by Mark: which way Hierom, Augustine, Eusebius, and most of the ancients go. Yet this is not agreed by all; others supposing that book to have been written originally in Greek by Matthew.

The other three books are by all acknowledged to have been written in the Greek tongue; save that some little question hath been made by some, whether Mark did not write his first in Latin, and turn it afterwards himself into Greek. But that notion hath not obtained.

It is generally held, that they all wrote in the same order, as to time, in which they are placed; though some have doubted that also, and would have Luke to stand foremost.

Matthew, who is also called Levi, Mark ii. 14. and Luke v. 27. being called from the custom-house, and of a publican made an apostle, was an eye and ear-witness of the greatest part of what he wrote; having been conversant with Christ, from the time he was called, until our Lord's ascension.

Mark, whom Hierom calls a Levite, was neither one of the twelve apostles, nor of the seventy disciples of Christ; but being, as is generally acknowledged, converted to the Christian faith by the ministry of the apostle Peter, wrote that which is called his gospel by the direction and information of the apostles, and more especially of Peter. To this purpose speaks Hierom, in his prologue upon the four evangelists: "Mark, says he, the interpreter of the apostle Peter, never saw our Lord and Saviour himself; but related those things which he had heard his master Peter declare, rather faithfully, than according to the order wherein they were done." To the same effect, but somewhat more largely, writes Eusebius, in the third book of his Ecclesiastical History, chapter xxxvi. from the commentaries of Papias, an early writer among the Christians. And Erasmus doubted not, on the authority of Augustine, to call that which was written by Mark, an epitome of that which was written by Matthew.

Luke, who was a physician of Antioch, being converted to the Christian faith after the ascension of Christ, wrote, as Mark had done before, not as an eye or ear-witness of what he wrote, but by the information of others of indubitable credit, who, as himself says, Luke i. 2, were from the beginning eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word. Some would have it, that Luke wrote chiefly at the instance, and by the direction, of the apostle Paul; by whose ministry he is held to have been converted. That he might have been advised and encouraged by Paul to the undertaking, being so conversant with him as he was, and a companion in his travels, is not unlikely; but that apostle being, as himself expresses it, 1 Cor. xv. 8. as one born out of due time, was not himself an eye-witness of those things, which
 Luke,

Luke, in that treatise, wrote; and was therefore the less likely to direct Luke therein.

Matthew is supposed to have written his gospel about eight years after the ascension of our Lord. Some reckon it to have been fifteen years after; but that cannot be, if he wrote before Mark, and Mark wrote, as it is generally held he did, in the fourteenth year after Christ's ascension. Luke, some say, wrote fifteen years, others say, twenty years, after our Lord was taken up.

The reason assigned by some why Luke wrote, after both Matthew and Mark had written on the same subject so lately before, is, because it was observed that neither of them, nor any other whosoever had undertaken that province, had written a complete history, or given a full account of all the memorable passages relating thereunto. For as many things were omitted by Matthew, so were there not a few also let slip by Mark; who, Grotius says, wrote a compendium of history, rather than an history. Neither one nor the other of them gives any account of the birth of John the Baptist; but they introduce him into his office, as a person supposed to be well known to the reader before. Neither is the birth of our Saviour himself so particularly and circumstantially set forth and described by Matthew, as it is by Luke; and by Mark not at all; but the first mention we have of Jesus in Mark, is of his coming to be baptized by John, in order to his entering into his ministerial office, when he was thirty years of age. These, and some other omissions, having been observed by Luke, he applied himself, no doubt by a divine impulse, direction, and guidance of the Holy Ghost, as well as at the request of the apostles, and, perhaps, more particularly of Paul, to draw forth the sacred history from the beginning, and make it more exact and full; omitting in the mean while some things which either Matthew or Mark had before delivered.

Luke himself, in the Proem to his history, takes notice that many before him had taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration, or story, as the old bible

calls it, of those things which were most surely believed among them. Whence some learned men infer, that besides Matthew and Mark, who, being but two, would scarce have been called many, some others had also undertaken that work, but fallen short in the performance. And this seems to have been the ground of his undertaking it: for thus he begins.

“Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed amongst us, &c. it seemed good to me also, as soon as I had searched out all things perfectly from the beginning,” (so the old bible) or having gained, or obtained, a perfect understanding of all things from the beginning, (which I take to be clearer than, as the last translation has it, “having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first;” for that may mislead an unwary reader, as Erasmus observes it had done some, to think that Luke had from the first been conversant with Christ and his apostles, and so wrote from his own observation and personal knowledge; which on all hands it is agreed he did not, and he himself acknowledges, when he says “even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses, &c.”) “I say, says Luke, it seemed good unto me also, to write unto thee, in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know, or acknowledge, the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.”

Who, or what, this Theophilus was, to whom Luke dedicated his book, has been, and still is, a question among the learned. The common opinion is, that he was some particular man of note, or in authority. But Epiphanius of old, and some of great name in later times, take it rather to be a common appellation for any true lover and worshipper of God; which the notation of the word imports. Cameron on the place, though he is not positive, says, “It doth not seem to be here the proper name of any one particular man, but of every Christian.” And Dr. Hammond, on the place, says, “It is not certain, that Theophilus here was the proper

proper name of a particular man; but perhaps a feigned title, to signify every Christian, every one that loved God, to whom he addressees his discourse: and then, says he, *κράτιστος*, most excellent, will be no title of honour; nor any more than *optimus* in latin, a form of civility only."

Nor is the rendering *κράτιστος* most excellent, without all exception. Johannes Pricæus, in his annotation on Acts xxiii. 26, though he takes Theophilus, in Luke i. 3, for the name of a particular person, says, "It doth not signify *præstantissimus*, but *optimus*." So Hierom turned it of old, both here, Luke i. 3. and also in Acts xxiii. 26. and chap. xxvi. 25. And so Bishop Jewel, in his apology, renders it, *κράτιστε φῆσε, optime Feste*; which, in his defence of the apology, page 26. he englishes, most dear Festus; and in page 80, O good Festus: not straining it to most excellent, or most noble, but making it only a friendly compellation of kindness, or civility.

The last of the four evangelists is John, a fisher, and a fisher's son; an apostle, and the beloved disciple of our Lord; who leaned on his master's bosom, John xiii. 23. and to whom, of all the twelve, he chose, even on the cross, to bequeath the care of his mother, John xix. 26, 27.

He, after he had been, as ecclesiastical histories report, put into a caldron of boiling oil at Rome, and taken out unhurt; then banished by Domitian into the isle of Patmos, and under Nerva recalled from banishment; wrote his gospel at Ephesus in Asia; to set forth the divinity of Christ, as coeternal with his Father, in opposition to those heretics, who, in his absence, had rushed into the Asian churches, and denied that Christ was before Mary. To refute these, he treats more copiously of the divinity of Christ, than the other three evangelists had done; less of his outward acts and miracles, and of those things which did more directly concern his manhood; unless in some passages, which fell before the imprisonment of John the Baptist, or such as had connection with them, or dependence on them. See the prologue

logue of Augustine to the gospel of John, in Hierom's Latin translation. Yet Grotius, on John, tells us, authors disagree about both the place and the time of his writing this book. As to the place, some would have it written in Patmos; others, at Ephesus. As to time, some take it to have been written thirty years, others, sixty years, or more, after Christ's ascension.

The other part of this Sacred History, which relates the acts, travels, and, therein, sufferings, of the apostles and disciples of our Lord, from the time of his ascension to the time of Paul's imprisonment at Rome, was written by the beloved physician Luke, in his book called the Acts of the Apostles. Concurrent with which are most of the apostolical epistles; out of which, what passages may be drawn to illustrate the history, shall be taken notice of.

SACRED

SACRED HISTORY;

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H O L Y S C R I P T U R E S .

O F T H E

N E W T E S T A M E N T .

P A R T I .

AS the merciful God, soon after man by disobedience fell, provided a means for his recovery and restoration; and many of the holy prophets, whose writings we have, the evangelical prophet Isaiah more especially, did foretell the coming of the Son of God, to be the Redeemer and Saviour of mankind, the time of whose coming, though somewhat covertly, and in mysterious numbers, the prophet Daniel did point out, Dan. ix. 24, &c. so, when the appointed time was come, wherein the Father had pre-determined to send his Son into the world, to be the propitiation for the sins of the world, he sent his prodrome, or fore-runner, to prepare his way before him.

This was he, whom the prophet Malachi, the last of the prophets in the Old Testament, foretold should come, under the name of the prophet Elijah. "Behold,"
said

faid he, speaking in the name and person of God, " I will fend my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple." Mal. iii. 1. And again, " Behold, I will fend you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, &c." Which Elijah here mentioned, or Elias, which is the same, our Lord explains to be John the Baptist, Matt. xi. 14, and xvii. 12, 13. and Mark ix. 13. And the angel gives the reason why he was shrouded under that name; because he should go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elias, Luke i. 17.

As this John was an extraordinary man, appointed to an extraordinary office and service, so his birth was attended with extraordinary circumstances; the account of which, not touched by any of the other three, is thus delivered by the evangelist Luke.

" There was, says he, in the days of Herod^a, the king of Judea, a certain priest, named Zacharias, of the course of Abia" (for king David had, long before, divided certain of the Levites into four and twenty courses, or ranks; of which this Abia, by the name then of Abijah, was chief of the eighth course, 1 Chron. xxiii. 6. and chap. xxiv. 10). " The wife also of this Zacharias, whose Name was Elizabeth, was of the daughters of Aaron: and they were both of them righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless: but they had no child; because Elizabeth was not only barren, but she, as well as her husband, was grown old."

Yet, it seems, the old man was desirous of a child; and had besought the Lord for one: whereupon, while, in the order of his course, he executed the priests office before God; and, according to the custom, his lot was to burn incense; when he came into the temple, there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense; at sight of whom he was both troubled and afraid.

^a Luke i.

But the angel, to cheer and encourage him, said, "Fear not, Zacharias; for thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, whose name thou shalt call John: and both thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord; and shall drink neither wine, nor strong drink; but shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb; and many of the children of men shall he turn to the Lord their God. For 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, or unbelieving, to the wisdom of the just: to make ready a people prepared for the Lord;" or, as the Vulgar Latin reads it, *parare domino plebem perfectam*, i. e. to prepare for the Lord a perfect people.

When Zacharias had heard the angel out, being surprized at the unexpected promise of a son in his old age, considering the unlikeliness of it in a natural course, he made bold to ask the angel, by what token he should know this, "Seeing, said he, I am an old man, and my wife also is well stricken in years."

To this the angel answering, said, "I am Gabriel, (which name signifies, a man of God, or the strength of God) who stand in the presence of God; and I am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. But because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season; behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak (that shall be the sign to thee) until the day that these things shall be performed."

All this while the people, whose business it was to be praying without (not abroad in the open air, but in the outer part of the temple) while the priest was offering incense within, Luke i. 10, 21, waited for Zacharias's coming forth, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

But when he came out, they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple^b; for he could not

^b Luke i.

ſpeak, but beckoned unto them, and remained ſpeechleſs.

As ſoon therefore as the days of his miniſtration were accompliſhed, he departed to his own houſe; and not long after his wife Elizabeth conceived; but hid herſelf (that is, concealed her being with child) for the ſpace of five months. Yet could ſhe not forbear in thankfulneſs to praiſe the Lord, and ſay, “ Thus hath the Lord dealt with me, in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.” For ſo was barrenneſs accounted among the Jewiſh women, who every one hoped, at leaſt deſired, to bring forth the Meſſiah.

While thus Elizabeth bare in her womb him who was to be the fore-runner of our Lord, it pleaſed God, in the ſixth month of Elizabeth’s conception, to ſend the angel Gabriel, the ſame who had before appeared to Zacharias, unto a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin there named Mary, who was eſpouſed to a man whoſe name was Joſeph, both of the houſe of David.

When the angel was come in unto her, he thus ſaluted her; “ Hail, or rejoice, thou that art highly favoured: for the Lord is with thee, and thou art bleſſed among women.”

She, when ſhe ſaw him, and had heard his ſaying, was troubled at it, and caſt in her mind what manner of ſalutation this ſhould be. Which he obſerving, ſaid unto her, “ Fear not, Mary; for thou haſt found favour with God: and behold, thou ſhalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a ſon, and ſhalt call his name Jeſus. He ſhall be great, and ſhall be called the ſon of the higheſt; and the Lord God ſhall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he ſhall reign over the houſe of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there ſhall be no end.”

Though Mary was eſpouſed to Joſeph, yet was not the marriage conſummated, but ſhe was yet a virgin. Which made her ſay to the angel, not ſo much doubt-
ingly,

ingly, as enquiringly, “How shall this be, seeing that I know not a man?”

In answer to which, the angel said unto her; “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall over-shadow thee: therefore also that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.”

And that so strange and unusual a thing might not startle her, he added, “And behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her (that is, she is six months gone with child) who was called barren: for with God, added he, nothing shall be impossible.”

This was a very proper and cogent argument, drawn from the omnipotence of God, to confirm Mary’s faith; that God, to whom nothing was impossible, could, if he pleased, enable her to conceive without the company of man, contrary to the course of nature; as he had already enabled her cousin Elizabeth to conceive, beyond the course of nature; when she had been both by nature barren, and by age past child-bearing. And it had that good effect upon her; for she immediately said, “Behold, the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to thy word.” Upon which humble and submissive answer, the angel departed from her.

No sooner was the holy angel gone, but Mary arose, and went with haste to a city of Judah in the hill-country: where entering into the house of Zacharias, she saluted his wife Elizabeth. But when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and she, being filled with the Holy Ghost, spake out with a loud voice, and said, “Blessed art thou among women; and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.”

This might seem a strange sort of an address to a virgin, to talk of the fruit of her womb. But Elizabeth was filled with the same holy spirit, whose overshadowing power had filled the womb of the virgin.

Then breaking forth into admiration, “But whence, added she, is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should

should come to me! for lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed, added she farther, is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.”

These words of Elizabeth, proceeding from the immediate opening and motion of the holy spirit, caused Mary also to break forth, in the same spirit, into that lofty song which is called *Magnificat*, because in the Latin it begins with that word.

“ My soul, said she, doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour: for he hath regarded the low estate of his hand-maiden; so that from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is his name: and his mercy is on them that fear him, from generation to generation. He hath shewed strength with his arm, he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed, for ever.”

When Mary had now staid about three months time with her cousin, she returned home: And Elizabeth's time being come, that she should be delivered, she brought forth a son. Which when her neighbours and relations heard of, taking it for a token that the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her, they rejoiced with her; thereby fulfilling that part of the angel's message, verse 14.

On the eighth day after the birth, they came to circumcise the boy; and would needs call him Zacharias, after the name of his father. But his mother refusing, said, “ Not so; but he shall be called John.” Why, said

° Luke i.

they unto her, there is none of thy kindred, that is called by this name.

To determine the matter, they made signs to his dumb father, to know how he would have him called. And he, by signs, asking for a writing-table, wrote therein, "His name is John:" at which they all marvelled.

And now, the things being performed for which he had asked a sign, his mouth was immediately opened; and his tongue being loosed, he spake, and praised God: and being filled with the Holy Ghost, he prophesied after this manner :

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel: for he hath visited and redeemed his people; and hath raised up an horn (the emblem of strength and defence) of salvation for us, in the house of his servant David. As he spake by the mouth (not mouths, but mouth, to shew that all, whom God speaks by, agree in one, as if they had all but one mouth) of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began; promising us salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us. To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, to remember his holy covenant: the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life."

Then turning his speech to his child, he said, "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways: to give knowledge of salvation to his people, by, or in, the remission (by which, says Dr. Gell, in his Remains, page 234, is to be understood a removal) of our sins, through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us^d, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death; to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Now when all these things, relating to the birth of this child, were noised abroad, throughout the hill-

^d Luke i.

country of Judea, fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all they that had heard them, laid them up in their hearts, saying, with admiration, "What manner of child shall this be?" And the hand of the Lord was with him; so that he grew, and waxed strong in spirit: and was in the deserts (not in the schools) till the day of his being shewed unto Israel.

But while Elizabeth was nursing up her little son for a great service, her cousin Mary had like to have been exposed to a great trial, and troublesome exercise. For Joseph, to whom she was espoused, having discovered that she was with child^e; and knowing that it was not by him (for they had not yet consummated the marriage) had a mind to put her away privately; being unwilling, as he was a gentle and good-natured man, to expose her to reproach, by making her a publick example.

But while he was considering of these things, the Angel of the Lord, appearing to him in a dream, said, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take Mary to be thy wife; for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins:" observe, reader, not *in* their sins, but *from* their sins: not from the guilt only, and punishment due for sin, but from the sin itself.

All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord, by the prophet Isaiah, saying, chap. vii. 14. "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son; and they shall call his name Immanuel;" which, being interpreted, is God with us.

When therefore Joseph awoke from his sleep, and had recollected his dream, he did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife; but knew her not, until she had brought forth her first-born son, and called his name Jesus.

After he had thus taken her to him, and openly owned her for his wife, before the time of her delivery

was come, he was fain to go up to Jerufalem, and take her with him, to be taxed there together.

For in thofe days there went forth a decree from Auguftus Cæfar^f, the fecond Roman emperor, that all the world (that is, all that part of the world, which was then fubject to the Roman empire) fhould be taxed.

This was the firft taxing, made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria; for there was another taxing, mentioned alfo by Luke, in the Afts of the apoftles, chap. v. 37.

Upon the decree for this firft taxing, which required all to appear, every one in his own city, Jofeph alfo went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (becaufe he was of the houfe and lineage of David, whofe birth-place it was) to be taxed with Mary, his efpoufed wife, being then great with child.

And fo it was, that while they were there, the days being accomplifhed that ſhe fhould be delivered, ſhe brought forth her firft-born fon; and wrapping him in fwadling-clothes, laid him in a manger, becaufe there was no room for them in the inn.

No doubt the inn muſt needs be thronged with gueſts, upon ſuch a concourſe of people as that capitation had drawn thither. But whether the inn was fo full before they came, that there was no room in it for any; or whether, they being but of a low rank, the room was taken up by, or referved for, higher gueſts; or whether, by reaſon of the crouds of people, there was no room in the inn fit or fuitable to her condition, which required privacy and ſtillneſs, and therefore ſhe was fain to ſeek a place of retirement in ſome ſtable or out-houſe belonging to the inn, is not eaſily to be determined. Perhaps there might be a concurrence of all theſe cauſes; but more likely, a divine diſpoſal and ordering of the matter ſo, that he who was heir of all things, and Lord of the whole world, ſhould come into the world in ſo low and mean a manner, that he might thereby check and

^f Luke ii.

condemn the pride and haughtiness of man, and give an example to his followers, and to all, of humility and self-denial.

At what time of the year the birth of our Lord fell out, the holy scripture is wholly silent. Tradition and custom have fixed it to the five-and-twentieth of December in some places; earlier, but in the same month, in other places. A man of great name tells us, that the time of Christ's birth was in the month of Tizri; which answers to part of September and part of October. See Dr. Lightfoot, cited by Craddock in his Harmony of the four evangelists, chap. 1. sect. 10. page 15. But I leave it to the observers of times, and proceed.

There were, it seems, in the same country, shepherds abiding in the fields, and watching their flocks by night^s. To these plain men, exercised in an honest and useful employment, diligent in their business, and careful and watchful over their charge, were the glad-tidings of this happy birth first published from heaven.

For the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, which made them sore afraid. But the angel bid them not fear: "For behold, said he, I bring you good tidings, which shall be cause of great joy to all people: for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger."

No sooner had the angel delivered this heavenly message, but suddenly there was with him a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, and good-will towards men."

When the angels had finished their *genethliac*, or birth-song, and were gone back into heaven, the shepherds, willing to make proof of the sign given them, said one to another, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and

see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.”

Away therefore they went with haste, and having found Joseph and Mary, and the babe lying in a manger, they spread abroad not only what they had seen, but the saying also which was told them concerning the child: and all they that heard it, wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds; but Mary kept all those things in her mind, and pondered them in her heart. But the shepherds, returning to their flocks again, glorified and praised God, for all the things they had both heard and seen, so exactly agreeing with what had been told them.

When eight days were accomplished from his birth, the child was circumcised; and then was he called Jesus, according as he had been named by the angel, before he was either born or conceived in the womb. And when the time came for the purification of his mother, according to the law of Moses, they brought him with them to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord, and to offer a sacrifice, as the law required, a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons: which being appointed by way of condescension for those that were not able to bring a lamb, Levit. xii. 8. shews yet further the low estate of our Lord's parents.

There was at this time in Jerusalem a just and devout old man, whose name was Simeon, one that waited for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was at that time upon him. Unto him it was revealed by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

This good man, coming by the spirit into the temple, at the same time when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him after the custom of the law, took him up in his arms, and, blessing God, said, “ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.”

While Joseph and the child's mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him, good old Simeon blessed them also, and then said unto Mary, "Behold, this child is set for the fall; and rising again of many of Israel (the fall of obstinate opposers, and the rising of obedient believers); and for a sign which shall be spoken against, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. Yea, added he, and a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also." That is, the sorrows which shall seize on thee, when thou shalt hear thy son blasphemed, and see him crucified, will pierce thy heart like a sword.

There was also one Anna, or Hannah; a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser or Asher, a woman of a great age; who having lived with an husband seven years from her virginity, was then a widow of about fourscore and four (which some understand to be, that she had lived a widow so many years) and departed not from the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day.

This holy matron coming in that instant, or rather, perhaps, standing by at that time, while good old Simeon praised God for the revelation of his Son, she likewise gave thanks unto the Lord, and spake also of the child unto all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

What this holy prophetess said, is not expressed; but since it appears from the text, first, that what she spake was of a divine and religious nature and tendency, concerning Christ, the Redeemer and Saviour of mankind; secondly, that she spake it to an auditory, and that not small, but of all such as looked, or waited, for the redemption; and thirdly, that she spake this in the temple, the house of God, the place of publick worship, and divine service then; it might, methinks, if well considered, abate the edge of their objection, who so sharply censure and condemn womens speaking of the things of God, in the assemblies of God's people.

While these things were transacting at Bethlehem and Jerusalem^b, it pleased God, who had thus sent his Son to be the common Saviour of mankind, Gentiles as well as Jews, to reveal the birth of this blessed Saviour to some of the most curious and observing Gentiles, by the appearance of an extraordinary star; the sight of which drew certain wise men from the East, to enquire after him.

These coming to Jerusalemⁱ, asked, “Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for, said they, we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him.”

Thus were the regardless Jews, of whom and amongst whom Christ was to be born, and was born, first informed of his birth by the Gentiles; whose enquiry after him in the quality of a king, and that too of a king of the Jews by birth, put both king Herod, and Jerusalem with him, into a fright.

When Herod the king had heard these things, the text says he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. He might well enough be troubled, at the hearing of a competitor to the crown he wore, who had a right by birth to what he held but by usurpation. And the citizens of Jerusalem may be supposed to be troubled, from the apprehensions they might reasonably have, of the miserable condition they would be likely to be in, if a civil war should break out upon them, between these two rival kings.

Herod, being himself not a Jew but a stranger, an Idumean, and so not likely to be well-versed in the predictions of the holy prophets, consulted with not the high-priest only, who was but one, but the chief or head of each of those four and twenty ranks or courses mentioned in 1 Chron. xv. and chap. xxiv. with the scribes of the people together; and demanded of them, where Christ should be born.

They answered him, in Bethlehem of Judea; urging, in confirmation of it, a testimony out of the prophet Micah, chap. v. 2. of which they gave the sense, ra-

^b Mat. ii. ⁱ Mat. ii.

ther than the words; and omitted that part of the sentence, which shews the ruler there spoken of to be the Son of God, "whose goings forth have been from of old, even from everlasting." Those are the prophet's words; which had they repeated to Herod, it might have eased him of his fears, and saved perhaps the lives of the Bethlehemitish infants; for he might easily have thereby perceived, that the governor and government therein mentioned were not of this world.

But Herod, being thus left in the dark by them who should have better informed him, began to cast with himself how he might get this young king into his hands; that by ridding him out of the world, he might rid himself of the apprehended danger.

Concealing therefore his bloody intention under a pretence of a desire he had to reverence this young Jewish prince, he privily called the magi, or wise men, unto him; and having diligently enquired of them at what time the star they had seen did first appear, he sent them to Bethlehem^k; bidding them go and search diligently for the young child: "And when, said he, ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also."

When the wise men had received this direction from Herod, they departed, but quickly found a better director: for the star which they had seen before in the East, appeared again to them, and went before them, until it came over the place where the young child was, and there it stood.

At the sight of this star, which probably they had not seen since they came from the East till now, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy: and going into the house, they saw the young child, with Mary his mother; whereupon they fell down and worshipped him, and opening their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

How long after the birth of Christ this was, is somewhat uncertain; and by that means also, where it was.

^k Matt. ii.

For though Herod, upon the information given him by the priests and scribes, that Christ should be born in Bethlehem, directed the wise men thither to seek him, verse 8. yet, as they went not by his direction, but followed the guidance of that auspicious star, which, as soon as they were departed from Herod, appearing again unto them, went before them, and conducted them to the very place where the child was; so it is very questionable, whether it was at Bethlehem that they found the child. For since Mary staid with the child at Bethlehem no longer than till the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, Luke ii. 22. which for a male child were forty days, Levit. 12. unlikely it is, that the wise men could, in so short a time, have come so far out of the East as they are supposed to have come (200 miles at least, as Scultetus computes it, in his Exercitat. Evangel. lib. 1. chap 54. in Crit. Sacr.) especially considering what delays they had after they were come to Jerusalem, before they could find the place. Nor might it have been altogether safe to have by this means published his birth so early, and thereby have exposed him to the danger of Herod's cruel search, before he had undergone those legal ceremonies, which were to be performed for him in Jerusalem at the purification of his mother,

Since therefore, at the end of forty days from his birth, he was brought to Jerusalem, and there presented as a first-born to the Lord, Luke ii. 22. and when what the law required had been performed, his parents returned with him into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth, verse 39. why might not the star lead the wise men thither, and bring them to Joseph's house there? For into an house they went, and in an house they found him, Matt. ii. 11. which was not afforded him at Bethlehem, but he was fain to take up with a stable and manger.

Much diversity in opinion there is among the learned, concerning the time when, as well as the place where, the wise men found him. But whensoever, and wheresoever, it was that they found him, when they had

paid their adorations and homage to him, being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod¹, which he had required of them, verse 8. they departed into their own country another way.

No sooner were they gone, but the angel of the Lord appearing to Joseph in a dream, said, "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and there abide until I bring thee word; for Herod will seek the young child, to destroy him."

Joseph, thus divinely warned, arose, and taking the young child with his mother, departed by night into Egypt, and was there till the death of Herod. In which time the gold that the wise men had offered as a tribute to the royal babe, might stand Joseph in good stead, to defray their charges in Egypt.

Mean while, with earnest expectation waited Herod for the return of the wise men to him, with the desired account where this young child was to be found. But when he understood that they were gone home, and thereby perceived that they had but mocked him, he was exceeding wroth; and in his fury sending forth his executioners, he slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.

Hence some conjecture that, according to the account given him by those wise men, it was then about two years since that eminent star had first appeared; and therefore, that he might not miss this late-born king of the Jews, he devoted to destruction all the infants, that were not above two years old, to the number as some report of about fourteen thousand; and, to make sure work, he slew his own son too among the rest; as Dr. Gell, in his *Remains* page 14, tells us from Macrobius. Which unnatural barbarity, as Drusus from the same Macrobius relates, occasioned the emperor Augustus, when he heard of it, to say, It is better to be Herod's

¹ Matt. ii.

swine than his son. For supposing Herod so far to judaize, as to abstain from swine's flesh, he held his swine in safer condition, than his son had been.

By this inhuman murder of those innocent babes, was fulfilled that which had been long before spoken by Jeremy, the prophet, when, in chap. i. 15, he said, "In Rama there was a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping and great mourning^m: Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not."

Where Rama, though it be the name of a place not far from Bethlehem, is taken by Hierom and by divers of the criticks for a noun, not proper, but appellative, to signify on high, or an high place, from whence the roaring out-cries of the mournful mothers for their slaughtered infants might be furthest heard. And Rachel they take, not properly for the wife of Jacob and mother of Benjamin, but figuratively for the place of her sepulchre, which was near Bethlehem, where this most execrable massacre was committed. Nor is it improbable that, as Rachel was accounted one of the two that did build the house of Israel, Ruth iv. 11. and so might pass for a kind of representative mother in Israel, the prophet whom the Evangelist in sense, thought not expressly in terms, follows, might choose her name, under which to represent the lamentable out-cries of the bereaved mothers. Not without some reference, perhaps in both, to that deplorable slaughter, which long before (see Judges xx). was made of the Benjamites, who sprang from tender Rachel.

Not long did Herod himself survive this bloody butchery of those innocent babes. And as soon as he was dead, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. And as, when the Lord sent him thither, the angel then bid him stay there until such time as he should bring him word that the danger he went thither to escape was over; so now the angel bids him arise, and take the young child and his mother,

^m Matt. xviii.

and go into the land of Israel again; "For, said he, they are dead that fought the young child's life."

Joseph thereupon taking the young childⁿ and his mother, brought them into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea, in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither; yet being again warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee, and went and dwelt again in Nazareth; and the child being bred up there until he came to man's estate, he was thence called a Nazarene; as it seems some of the prophets, though none be here named, had foretold he should.

From the time of his return out of Egypt, until he was twelve years of age^o, we read no more of him; but that he grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace or favour of God was upon him.

But as his parents were wont to go every year to Jerusalem, at the feast of the passover, so when he was twelve years old, they took him along with them; and when, having tarried there the appointed time, they returned homewards, he tarried behind them in Jerusalem, and they knew not of it; for the manner being, that the men did usually travel together in one company, the women in another, and the children at their own choice either with their fathers or their mothers; his parents by that means went a day's journey before they missed him; each of them, it is probable, supposing him to be with the other.

But when at night coming together, they found he was with neither of them, they then sought him among their kindred and acquaintance, and not finding him among them, they went to Jerusalem seeking him.

Thus were two days spent, one in going homewards, another in returning back again; and after three days, which is reckoned to be on the third day from their leaving Jerusalem, and the next day after their return

ⁿ Matt. ii. 20. • Luke iii.

thither, they found him, where probably they had lost him, in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions; such questions as made all that heard him astonished at his understanding and answers; which shews he not only asked them questions, but answered their questions also.

When his parents saw him in that place and company, and so employed, they were amazed; but after some time his mother said unto him, "Son, why hast thou dealt thus with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee forrowing." To which he only answered, "How is it that ye sought me (to wit, any where but here)? Wist ye not that I must be about my father's business (or in my father's house)?" Which saying they understood not then; yet his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

When he had done disputing with the doctors, he went down with his parents to Nazareth again; and was subject to them as before. "And he increased as well in wisdom as in stature, and in favour with God and man."

From this time we have no farther account either of him, or of his fore-runner John, until the time that John was called forth unto the publick exercise of his baptismal ministry; which Luke expressly sets in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar^p, who succeeded Augustus, at what time Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea; Herod (supposed to be the son of Herod the great) Tetrarch of Galilee; his brother Philip, Tetrarch of Iturea, and of the region of Trachonitis; and Lyfanius, Tetrarch of Abilene (that is, each of them governor of a fourth part of the kingdom); Annas and Caiaphas being at the same time high-priests: not that there used to be two high-priests at a time; but Annas being father-in-law to Caiaphas, John xviii. 13. and having been high-priest before, he continued it seems through the cor-

^p Luke iii.

ruption of the times, and by agreement betwixt him and his son-in-law, to execute the high-priest's office jointly with Caiaphas; unless we should, as some have done, take Annas to have been fagan or suffragan to Caiaphas, that is, his assistant or co-adjutor in the office, for that year.

If, as the common opinion is, both the Baptist and our Lord were born in the two and fortieth year of Augustus, who reigned six and fifty years, they must each of them be about nine and twenty years old, or entering thirty, in the fifteenth of Tiberius; the Baptist being about six months older than his Master.

At that time came the word of the Lord unto John (or according to the Greek upon John) in the wilderness, where he had hitherto as it were lain hid, to call him forth to his publick service; whereupon he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, and giving an example of self-denial in the austerity of his life, having his raiment of camel's hair³; girt about his loins with a leather girdle; and for his meat, locusts and wild honey.

What those locusts were, hath been much controverted, though perhaps not to much purpose, by interpreters both ancient and modern; some taking them for little animals, others for vegetables.

To this preaching of John, three of the four Evangelists (Matthew in chap. iii. 3. Mark in chap. i. 3. and Luke in chap. iii. verse 4, 5, 6.) refer the words of the prophet Isaiah, chap. xl. verse 3, 4, 5. not without some variation in all, though Luke comes the nearest of the three; but it is evident to any observing eye, that neither any of the pen-men of the New Testament, nor our Lord himself, in reciting passages out of the old, did recite them exactly according to the letter; but, for the most part, gave the true sense and substance of them in other words,

³ Matt. iii. 4.

The fame of this new prophet soon drew the people to him; so that Jerufalem^r (that is, the inhabitants of Jerufalem, the place, by a metonymy, being put for the people) and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan (the whole, by synecdoche, being put for a part) went out to him, and were baptized (that is, dipped) by him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when John saw such multitudes come to be baptized by him, and among them many of the Pharisees and Sadducees, he said unto them, "O generation of vipers, who hath fore-warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Since therefore I am come to call you to repentance, that is, amendment of life, if ye will come under my baptism, "bring forth fruits meet for repentance," answerable to amendment of life, that it may appear by your fruits that ye have repented. "And think not to escape by saying within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father;" as if, because he was righteous, his righteousness should be imputed to you, though ye yourselves be unrighteous: "For I say unto you (if ye render yourselves unworthy to be Abraham's children) God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also, added he, the axe is laid unto the root of the trees, and therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire."

This put the people to a stand^s, and made them ask him, "What shall we do then?" in answer to which, he advised such of them as had plenty and to spare (instancings in apparel and food) to impart to them that wanted.

Then came also publicans to be baptized^t, who were a sort of excise-men or collectors of the publick tributes, taxes, or customs; but yet Jews, either such as were employed by and under the Roman collectors, or hired the customs of them; and these asked him, "Master, What shall we do?" Exact, answered he, no more than that which is appointed you." For, as both

^r Matt iii. 5, 6. Mark i. 5. ^s Luke iii. 10.

^t verse 12.

Eraſmus and Grotius, in their ſeveral notes on the place, obſerve, thoſe publicans were wont to get, by exaction, what they could out of the people for themſelves, over and beſides what they were authorized to gather for the government.

Having answered the publicans^u, the ſoldiers came next, and they demanded likewiſe of him, what they ſhould do: to whom he answered, “Do violence to no man, neither accuſe any falſly, and be content with your wages.”

When now the people were big with expectation, and all men muſed in their hearts concerning John, whether he were the Chriſt, or not, he, to put them out of doubt, and prepare them to receive the Meſſiah when he ſhould appear, told them, “I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to bear, nay, whoſe ſhoe-latchet I am not worthy to ſtoop down and unlooſe, Luke iii. 16. He ſhall baptize you with (or in) the Holy Ghoſt and fire: whoſe fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.”

Now when John had ended his exhortation to the people^v, and had baptized moſt of them that came to him at Jordan, “Jeſus alſo came to him from Nazareth of Galilee, to be baptized by him in Jordan.”

This was ſo unexpected a thing to John^x, that, ſurprized thereat, he at firſt forbid him; yet with this modeſt expoſtulation, “I have need to be baptized by thee, and cometh thou to me?”

But when Jeſus had not only ſaid unto him, “Suffer it to be ſo now,” but had given him a reaſon for it too, viz. “For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteouſneſs,” that is, to ſubmit to, and paſs through, every divine diſpenſation, then he ſuffered him.

“And Jeſus, when he was baptized, went up ſtrait-way out of the water; and when he had prayed, lo, the

^u Verſe 14. ^v Matt. iii. 15. Mark i. 9. ^x Luke iii. 21.

heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him." Which words, being somewhat ambiguously expressed, the criticks differ not a little about; some referring the pronouns (him and he) to Jesus, so as to understand it, that the heavens were opened to Jesus, and he saw the Spirit descending and lighting upon him himself. Others applying them to John, take it that the heavens were opened to John (or John saw the heavens open, or the firmament divide or part) and that John saw the Holy Spirit descend, and light upon Jesus; which that he did, he himself expressly declares, John i. 33, 34.

Nor are interpreters better agreed about the descent of the Spirit like a dove; some taking it for a real dove, others for a likeness only of a dove, the Holy Spirit assuming the shape of a dove; nor want there some, who admit neither a real dove, nor likeness nor appearance of a dove; but take the words to express the manner only of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus. So Dr. Hammond, on Matt. iii. 16. "He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove." That the Holy Ghost both here and in other places did visibly appear, there is no doubt, says he; but that he came upon Christ in the body or shape of a dove, cannot be concluded from this place, nor from the parallel, Mark i. 10. but only that the Spirit descended and came or lighted on him, as a dove uses to do on any thing, first hovering and over-shadowing it. The Spirit descended, so as he might be (and was really) seen as it were a dove, i. e. as a dove visibly descends and lights on any thing, or in a manner somewhat resembling a dove; not defining any shape, wherein the Holy Ghost appeared. Thus he, as cited in Wilson's Christian Dictionary. Supplement. *Verbo Dove.*

This visible descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus, was accompanied also with a voice from heaven, which audibly said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" or, as Mark and Luke, changing the person from third to second, have it "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom (or in thee) I am well pleased."

As soon as Jesus had passed through John's baptismal ministrations^y, and had the Holy Spirit remaining on him, he was led or acted by that Spirit to go into the wilderness, to be there tempted of the devil.

Forty days and forty nights^z was he there, with the wild beasts, in a continual fast or abstinence from food; and without all company, save that of the heavenly angels who ministered unto him.

In which time, some think (from Mark i. 13. and Luke iv. 2. where it is said, He was forty days tempted of the devil) that Satan, not then knowing him to be the Son of God, did endeavour to inject temptations into his mind, as he used to do to other men, but in vain; because, as our Saviour afterwards said, John xiv. 30. "The prince of the world had nothing in him;" no place to enter by, no ground to cast his temptation into, that would or could receive it.

This being observed by the tempter, he thereupon came more openly and directly unto him; and finding that Jesus, after his forty days fast, was hungry, he said unto him, "If thou be the Son of God (which, it seems, by this time he began to suspect) command that these stones (or any one of them, this stone, Luke iv. 3.) be made bread."

Our Lord's answer implies, that the tempter made use of the shape or appearance of such a one, as might be capable of reading and understanding the holy scriptures; for he answered him thus, "It is written (Deut. viii. 3.) man shall not (or doth not) live by bread alone; but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

The devil getting no entrance by this, took Jesus up into the Holy City; "and setting him on a pinnacle (or turret) of the temple, said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down." And because our Lord had before repulsed him with a text, he now backs his temptation with a text (from Psalm xci. 11, 12.) "For," said he, "It is written, He shall give his

^y Matt. iv. 1. Mark i. 12. ^z Luke iv. 1.

angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone."

In repeating this text, it is observable that Satan cunningly left out a very material passage, viz. "to keep thee in all thy ways;" of which, to be sure, the casting himself headlong from the temple was none; yet I do not observe that our Lord took notice of that, but gave him an home answer, with an, It is written again (Deut. vi. 16.) "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," that is, by doing needless and unreasonable things, upon an unwarrantable dependence on protection from him.

The tempter, thus again defeated, "took him up next (as Matthew has it) into an exceeding high mountain;" from whence, having in a moment shewed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and told him (though falsely) that it was delivered to him, to give to whomsoever he would; he frankly offered it all to Jesus, if he would but fall down and worship him.

Divers conjectures have been about this mountain; some taking it to be Pisgah, from which God gave Moses a sight of all the land of Canaan; others, for a very high hill in that very wilderness wherein Jesus was then tempted, called afterwards (as they say) *Mons Diaboli*, the Devil's Mountain, from his tempting him thereon.

But both Grotius and Dr. Lightfoot think, that from what place soever the sight was shewn, it was not a real, but an aerial and phantasmal representation of kingdoms, states, and pompous appearances. Scultetus also, in his *Exercitat. Evangel.* lib. 2. chap 3. is positive, that these temptations were represented or exhibited in visions; which yet Spanhemius, in his *Dubiorum Evangelicorum*, parte tertiâ, Dub. 55. will by no means admit.

But however that was (for it is not my business to determine it) the impious proposition so provoked our Lord, that in just disdain, and with some warmth and quickness,

quickness, he bid the tempter be gone: "Get thee hence, Satan, said he; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." And upon this rebuke, the devil left him, and angels came and ministered unto him.

While thus the master had been successfully engaged in a close combat with Satan in the wilderness, his servant and fore-runner John, having baptized very many in Jordan, removed his station to Bethabara, beyond Jordan; and there continuing his baptizing ministry, had a fair occasion offered him to proclaim to the Jews his master's coming, and who he was.

For the fame of John spreading far and near, drew the Jews (suppose the chief rulers, either of their Consistory, or the Sanhedrim) to send certain priests and Levites from Jerusalem to him, to enquire more particularly of him, and bring a more full and exact account who this person was, that had set up a new administration among them, and had drawn so many disciples after him.

For though baptism in water was no new thing to the Jews, as what had of long time been in use among them, for the admission and initiating of profelytes, that came to them from the Gentile or Heathen nations, such as had a desire to live among them, but were not willing to come under the circumcising knife; yet had it not till now been used, in this manner and to this end, by Jews to Jews; who had the seal of the covenant (circumcision) upon them before.

These messengers being come to John, bluntly asked him, "Who art thou?" and he, apprehending whom they took him for, answered them at the first negatively; "I am not the Christ." What then, said they, "art thou Elias?" for the Jews had a notion, and from thence an expectation, that Elias (or Elijah the prophet, who was taken up into heaven in a fiery chariot, 2 Kings, ii. 11.) should personally come again, before the coming of the Messiah; which, through a mistake, they grounded on the words of the prophet Malachi, chap. iv. verse 5. and that made them ask that question;

question; to which he answering, in the same sense wherein they intended it, said, "I am not:" that is, not properly and personally, as they expected; though representatively, he was; to wit, in spirit, power, authority, bold and plain dealing with all, and all alike, as we read of Elias, or Elijah; thereby answering the prophecy of Malachi, which, even before he was conceived, the angel Gabriel expressly applied to him, Luke i. 17. and our Lord himself did afterwards confirm, when speaking of John to the Jews, he said, "If ye will receive it, this is Elias, who was to come," Matt. xi. 14.

When John had answered them as to Elias, they added another question, "Art thou that prophet?" By which some think they meant the same whom Moses in the law had told the Jews, the Lord their God would raise up unto them, from the midst of them, of their brethren, like unto him; which, though meant of Christ, probably was not, at least in that so far declined age of their apostacy, so understood by them. Wherefore pursuing their interrogatories, they asked John that question, "Art thou that prophet?" to which he, understanding better than they who that prophet was, answered, no.

Others suppose that, by that prophet, they meant Jeremiah, whom the Jews expected to come again, to find and bring them the ark of God, which (from the apocryphal Maccabean story, 2 Mac. ii.) they persuaded themselves he had hid in a cave. However, that there was among the Jews some sort of expectation of his coming again, may be gathered from Mat. xvi. 14.

The inquisitive messengers, not satisfied with John's negative answers, put him then more closely to it, to answer affirmatively and directly. "Who art thou then, said they to him, that we may give an answer to them that sent us?" Thou hast told us over and over who thou art not; tell us now therefore once for all, who thou art: "What sayest thou of thyself?"

"I am," said he, "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord;" as said the prophet Isaias.

For his being called, and calling himself, “The voice of one crying, &c.” I find this reason given by one, viz. Because he was thought to begin his ministry in the year of Jubilee, which was wont to be proclaimed by the voice of a cryer, &c. Hence, says he, it is most likely, that John the Baptist was called the voice of a cryer, as he that first proclaimed the coming of the Messiah; by whom an eternal jubilee, and liberty from Satan and sin, was purchased and bestowed on his people. See Wilson’s Christian Dictionary, *verbo* Voice, &c.

These messengers that were sent to examine John, as they were priests and Levites, so it seems they were also of the Pharisees, who were not tyed to any particular tribe or family, but might be indifferently of any; and being at that time the prevailing sect, they would be fishing in all waters, and put their oar into every boat.

These, not liking that any one below Christ, Elias, or that prophet whom they looked for, should set up any religious practice which had not the stamp or seal of their approbation upon it, took John to task for baptizing. “Why baptizest thou then,” said they to him, “if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet?”

John, not so much intent to justify his own practice to them, as to set forth the dignity of his master, gives them a short put-off, with respect to himself, by only saying, “I baptize in water:” (mine is but a low ministraton, and not altogether new, since it is used, in some sort, even amongst yourselves:) “But,” added he, “there standeth (or hath stood) one among, or in the midst of you, whom ye know not, he it is, who coming after me, is preferred before me; whose shoes-latchet I am not worthy to unloose.”

This, for aught appears, was all the answer their importunities got at that time from John; but had they tarried with him till the morrow, they might then have heard more; for Jesus having returned in the power of the Spirit, out of the wilderness into Galilee, came unto John, who, as he saw him coming, said of him, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin

sin of the world." Alluding therein to the legal lamb in the daily sacrifice; and calling him the Lamb of God, because he was appointed and prepared by God (Isaiah liii. 7. Acts viii. 32. Heb. x. 5.) to be offered up to God, for the redemption of the world.

And that what he had said of Jesus^a might sink the deeper into the minds of the people, he tells them, "This is he of whom I said, after me cometh a man, who is preferred before me; for he was before me; and (added he) I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel; therefore am I come baptizing in water." Whereby he plainly shews the reason and end of that outward ministration of water-baptism, to be the manifestation of Christ in that outward coming and appearance of his in the flesh to that outward Israel.

And whereas he says (and repeats it, verse 33.) "that he knew him not," (which, considering what he had said to him, when he came to be baptized of him, Mat. iii. 14. hath much puzzled interpreters, old and new) it will, I think, be best resolved, if it be taken, that though he knew him personally, as his kinsman, yet, till he came to offer himself to his baptism, he did not know (at least not so fully, so thoroughly, so certainly as then, and afterwards) that he was that spiritual baptizer, that Lamb of God, that Saviour of the world. But as soon as he came to John to be baptized, he then knew him; the same divine power and spirit, which made him leap when but a babe in the womb, at the approach and salutation of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, Luke i. 41. then inwardly revealing it to him; and the divine testimony thereupon given, in the visible descent of the Holy Spirit upon him (so exactly agreeing with what God had foretold John, when he sent him to baptize in water, namely, "Upon whom thou shalt see the spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he who baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.") together with the audible voice from heaven concerning him, incontestably

^a John i. 30.

bly confirming and sealing the truth and certainty thereof unto him.

Another day, John standing with two of his disciples, looking upon Jesus as he walked, said again "Behold the Lamb of God^b." Those two disciples hearing that, followed Jesus. He turning, and seeing them following him, asked them what they sought. They thereupon, addressing themselves to him, said, "Master, where abidest thou?" He bid them "Come and see;" which they did; and because it was somewhat late, they abode with him that day: for it was then about the tenth hour; which with us answers the fourth hour after noon.

One of these two was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother; who, finding his brother Simon, told him the good news, that they had found the Messias (which, being interpreted, is Christ, or anointed) and withal brought him to Jesus; whom when Jesus had beheld, he said, "Thou art Simon, the son of Jona (thence called Bar-Jona, Mat. xvi. 17. for *bar*, with them, signifies a son) thou shalt be called Cephas;" which, by interpretation, is Peter, or a stone.

Some diversity there is among the Evangelists, in the delivery of this matter, with respect to the time and manner of calling these early disciples, who were afterwards the apostles of our Lord.

For Matthew delivers, that Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon, called Peter, and Andrew his brother, who were fishermen, casting a net into the sea; and that, upon his saying to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men," they straitway, leaving their nets, followed him. And that, going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with their father, mending their nets; whom when he had called, they immediately, leaving the ship and their father, followed him, Mat. iv. 18. to 23.

Mark seems to have transcribed this, with some little variation, from Matthew (Mark i. 16. to 21.) And they

^b John i. 36.

both place this after John's imprisonment, and Jesus's entering upon his publick ministry of preaching.

Luke casts it back yet farther, not only till after Christ had begun to preach, but had wrought many great miracles; as casting the spirit of an unclean devil out of a man, in the synagogue at Capernaum, Luke iv. 33. Healing Simon's wife's mother of a great fever, verse 38, and curing others of divers diseases, verse 40, &c.

And for the manner, he delivers it to be, by Jesus's going into Simon's ship, then riding in the lake of Genesareth; and, after he had taught the people out of the ship, working a wonderful miracle in filling that ship and another with fishes, till they began to sink under the burthen. Whereupon not only Simon (his brother Andrew being omitted) but James also and John, the sons of Zebedee, when they had brought their ships to land, forsook all and followed him, Luke v. 1. to 12.

Yet all this, perhaps, may be accommodated, by admitting Andrew and Simon to have been called and brought to Jesus in the manner and time before delivered by John; and from thenceforth to have begun to follow him, in some measure, and at times, as the necessary occasions of their fishing trade would permit; but that they did not follow him then so constantly, cleave so closely, and stick so steadily to him at the first, as after this they did.

Otherwise, I should think it safest to follow the account which John hath given; who himself being one of Zebedee's sons, partner with Andrew and Simon in fishery, and present when the miraculous draught of fish was caught, Luke v. 10. must needs know when and how Andrew and Simon came first to Jesus, better than Matthew, who came in later; much more than Mark and Luke, who came not in till after the ascension of our Lord: and John writing after all the other three (whose writings we cannot think him unacquainted with) he had the better opportunity to reduce into order, what he might observe misplaced in any of them. But as to be over confident in a matter doubtful, is not safe, so to

be over curious, in a matter not of the greatest moment, is not needful. To proceed therefore;

John tells us ^c, that the day following (to wit, after Andrew and Peter came first to Jesus) going into Galilee, he found Philip, who was of Bethsaida the city of Andrew and Peter, and said unto him, "Follow me."

Philip, having obeyed the divine call, soon after found Nathanael, and told him, as a matter of great joy, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write (to wit) Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph."

The naming of Nazareth startled Nathanael, and made him say "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" "Come and see," said Philip; and withal led him towards the place where Jesus was; and as Jesus saw him coming to him, he said of him, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile."

Nathanael, it seems, over-heard this; and thereupon asked him, "Whence knowest thou me?" "Before Philip called thee (answered Jesus,) when thou was under the fig-tree, I saw thee."

This proof of his omniscience, drew from Nathanael an acknowledgment of his divinity. "Rabbi (said he) thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel," (him whom we looked for.)

This free confession pleased Jesus so well, that he told Nathanael, since he believed thus far on so easy a ground as his having told him he had seen him under the fig-tree, he should hereafter see greater things than these; even the opening of heavenly mysteries, and the ministry of the angels, waiting upon the Son of man.

On the third day ^d, either after Andrew's and Peter's coming to Jesus, or after his discourse with Nathanael, there was a marriage in a town called Cana (that of the two which was in Galilee) and the mother of Jesus was there; her husband, Joseph, being supposed to be by this time dead.

^c John i. 43. ^d John ii. 1.

To this marriage Jesus was invited, and his disciples also. And when the wine was spent, either by reason of the slenderness of the provision, or the accession of unexpected guests, so that they wanted wine; the mother of Jesus (who well knew his divine conception, and remembered what the angel had both predicted of him before he was born, Luke i. 32. and predicated of him when he was born, chap. ii. 11. being big with desire and expectation to see his divinity exert itself in some wonderful way) said unto him, "They have no wine." Whereupon he said unto her, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come."

Which answer, that it may not seem over rough, or less regardful than might have been expected from a son (such a son) to a mother (such a mother); let it be considered, first, that it was, as the learned say, an hebraism, a form of speech, not unusual among the Jews, to express a dislike of an unpleasing proposition; and not then taken in ill part. Secondly, that what she expected, and would have put him upon (to wit, the working of a miracle) was not in his power to do, as he was her son, or by virtue of any ability received from her; but depended wholly on the will and power of his Father. As therefore she exceeded the bounds of a mother in what she desired, so he did not answer her as his mother, but as one of the guests; as he might have done to any other woman present; and therefore he did not call her mother, but woman. And indeed, it was not the answer of a son to a mother; but, if I may be allowed so to speak, it was the divinity in him, checking the humanity in her; which would have been meddling beyond its bounds, and have put him upon acting before the time.

His mother, sensible, probably, of her own over-forwardness, and withal, from his last words, "Mine hour is not yet come," retaining still a hope, left him, and directing her speech to the servants, charged them to do whatsoever he should bid them.

There were, it seems, set there six water-pots^e of stone, containing two or three firkins a piece; these are said to be set after the manner of the purifying of the Jews; that is, either from ceremonial uncleanness according to the law, Levit. xv. or for superstitious and pharisaical washings, of not only their hands, but their cups, pots, &c. according to the traditions of their elders, Mark vii. 3, 4. or perhaps for both.

When now the right time was come for Jesus to work, not in the will of man, but in the will of God, he bid the servants fill the water-pots with water; which they, before instructed by his mother, did; and filled them up to the brim.

Then having, by the divine power which dwelt in him, turned the water into wine, "He bid them draw out now, and bear some of it unto the steward, or governor of the feast."

For it was the manner of the Jews, in their feasting, to make choice of some one person, eminent for his gravity, discretion, and sobriety, to order the placing of the guests, direct the servants in their attendance, and take a general care that the feast were well managed; from which he had the title of ruler or governor of the feast.

When therefore the servants, at our Lord's command, had carried some of this water made wine to the governor of that wedding feast; and he (not knowing whence it was, or how it was made, though the servants who drew it did know) had tasted it; he called the bridegroom, and in commendation of his wine, told him, That whereas other men generally, at the beginning of a feast, do use to set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse, that the goodness of the wine may not provoke them to drink too much, he, quite contrary, had kept the good wine until now at the last.

This is called the beginning of miracles, or the first direct and open miracle, which Jesus wrought in Cana of

^e John ii. 6.

Galilee, by which he both manifested the glory of his divinity, and confirmed his disciples in their belief on him.

When this marriage was over^f, which had been graced with so high a guest, and so great a miracle, Jesus went down to Capernaum, both he and his mother, with his brethren (or kinsmen) and his disciples; but did not tarry long there.

For the Jews passover being at hand, to which all the males among the Jews, unless they had some just ground of excuse, were, by the law, three times in a year bound to go, Exod. xxiii. 17. he went up to Jerusalem; and when he came there, he found in the temple those that sold oxen, sheep, and doves; and the changers of money sitting by their tables.

This profanation of the temple, great though it was, wanted not a plausible pretence. For God having provided in the law, that when they went up to the place which he should choose, to appear there before him, and to eat and rejoice there; if the way thither were too long for them to carry their provisions (the tythe of their corn, wine, and oil, and the firstlings of their herds and flocks) with them, they might turn it into money, and taking that with them, might lay it out there in oxen, sheep, wine, strong drink, or what else they should have a mind unto, for themselves and their families, with the Levites, to feast and rejoice before the Lord, Deut. xiv. 23 to 28.

This was made a pretence for bringing oxen, sheep, doves, &c. into the court of the temple (so interpreters generally understand it, rather than into the temple itself; where such cattle could not so well be disposed as abroad; though the money-changers perhaps might sit within) that so both they that wanted to buy such beasts, or birds, for their offerings, might be furnished near at hand, not be put to the inconvenience and trouble to seek far for them; and that such as wanted to change their money, might be there accommodated;

^f John ii. 12.

both which were lawful, as well as necessary, had they been done in a fit place near the temple; but not to be done in the temple, or in any part of it.

When therefore Jesus had observed these things, being sensible of the great abuse therein, and filled with divine zeal for the honour of his Father, he made him a scourge of small cords, such probably as he found lying here or there on the ground, with which some of the sacrifices might before have been bound, and therewith he drove them (those traders) all out of the temple, and the sheep and the oxen out of the court; and pouring out the changers monies, overthrew their tables also. And to them that sold doves, which being probably kept in cages, could not so well be driven out as the rest, he said, "Take these things hence: make not my Father's house an house of merchandize."

But let not any think it was the scourge, or whip, which gave him this dominion over them; no, it was the divine power and majesty which appeared in him, that prevailed over them, and made them give way, and depart before him; the scourge being an emblem of divine wrath; as Grotius, on the place, well observes.

Mean while his disciples, who looked on, observing the fervency of spirit wherewith he acted, remembered what was written in psalm lxi. 9. "The zeal of (or for) thy house hath eaten me up."

But the Jews, such probably as were rather spectators than parties, began to question him upon it. "What sign (said they) shewest thou unto us," to back the authority thou takest upon thee, in doing these things?

Jesus, not minding to answer their cavilling curiosity, nor yet intending to let them go on unanswered, gave them such an answer, as puzzled them yet more; for he told them, if they destroyed that temple, he would raise it up in three days.

This set their heads on work. They took him to speak of the temple they were in, and began to compute how many years had been spent in building it, and at length they told him that temple had been forty and six years in building; "And wilt thou (said they) rear it up

up in three days?" But the mistake between them lay in this, that they thought he meant the temple they stood in, whereas he spake of the temple of his body, which he foreknew they would destroy, and he should raise again. And although even his disciples understood him not then, yet after he had suffered and was risen again, they called this saying of his to mind, and were thereby confirmed in their faith.

As to the computation which those Jews had made, of six and forty years for the building of that temple, chronologers do generally allow the reckoning, whether it be taken for the sacred temple builded by Zorobabel, or for the repairing, and in a manner rebuilding, by enlarging and adorning, that temple by Herod.

What other miracles Jesus now did, while he was in Jerufalem at the passover, is not expressed; yet that he did some, might be inferred from the following words of the evangelist John^s, to wit, "Now when he was in Jerufalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did."

These believers some think to be such as were convinced in judgment, but not converted in heart and life; and the following words "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them," do somewhat favour that supposition.

It was at this time, while Jesus was yet at Jerufalem, that Nicodemus^h, one of the pharisees, and a ruler of the Jews, came unto him; who, that he might not be publickly observed, and thereby stir up greater offence in the minds of the rest of those Jewish rulers against Christ, came by night, and thus saluted him. "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles which thou dost, except God be with him."

This was true, and a fair acknowledgment, but no more than an unregenerate man might say; our Lord therefore took occasion from thence to preach unto

^s John ii. 23.

^h John iii. 1.

him the necessity of regeneration, which he brought in with a “ Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again (or, as in the margin, from above) he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

The word *ἀνωθεν*, rendered here in the text, *again*, and in the margin, *from above*, signifies both; and indeed, when it is spoken of man, who is first born here below, to be born from above (which is a second birth, or regeneration) is to be born again.

But Nicodemus being in a natural state, and taking the word in a natural sense, wondered how it could be, that a man could be born again. “ How can a man, (said he) be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?”

Jesus, seeing and pitying the ignorance of the man, to raise his contemplation higher, told him, “ Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

This shews, that however Nicodemus took Christ’s former words (to be born again) in a low sense, of a natural birth; yet Christ intended them in a higher sense, of the spiritual birth; and though he there mentions water with the spirit, yet that is not meant of material water, but of spiritual water. So the marginal note on the place, in the old bible, printed in 1600, explains it in these words, viz. “ Which is the spiritual water, where the Holy Ghost doth wash us into newness of life.” So also Wilson, in his Christian Dictionary, *verbo* Water, gives the meaning of water, in this place, John iii. 5. to be, “ The efficacy of the Holy Ghost cleansing the soul, as water doth the body.” Vossius also, mentioning this text, John iii. 5. says, *Qui locus de internâ regeneratione intelligi debet, cum aqua & spiritus ponantur pro aquâ spirituali.* Theol. Theol. 20. de Necess. Baptismi. page 388. i. e. Which place ought to be understood of inward regeneration; seeing water and spirit are put for spiritual water. All which is very agreeable to the following words in the text, where our Saviour, to raise up Nicodemus’s mind from earthly to heavenly, from carnal to spiritual thoughts,

thoughts and things, tells him, “That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit;” and therefore bids him not marvel at his having said, “They must be born again,” that is, from above. Then goes on to instruct him farther in this excellent and most important doctrine, and so leads him forward, with a gentle exprobration of his ignorance in divine matters, who professed himself to be a master in Israel, till he had given him a touch of his divinity, and of the great work which the Father had sent him into the world to do, from verse 8 to 22.

This discourse, through the cooperation of the Holy Ghost, had so good an effect on Nicodemus, that if it brought him not forth into an open discipleship (which had it done, he had probably been expelled the Sanhedrin, pursuant to a decree to that purpose made, John ix. 22.) yet it brought him into so high and firm a friendship, that when, a while after, the pharisees and chief priests, those of the Sanhedrin, sent officers to take Jesus, we find Nicodemus fairly and boldly advocating his cause among them, John vii. 50. 51. And that after the death of our Lord, he came kindly to take care of his sepulchre, bringing with him a noble present of about an hundred pound weight of myrrh and aloes mixt together, to be bestowed on the body of Jesus, John xix. 39.

After Jesus had now spent some time in Jerusalemⁱ, he went from thence, with his disciples, into the land of Judea; and while he tarried with them there, they, not he, John iv. 2. baptized. And John also being the mean while baptizing in Enon, near Salem; a question, or matter of debate, arose between some of John's disciples and the Jews, about purifying.

This some (as Scaliger) understand of the daily purification of the Jews; others (as Vatablus and Zegerus) take it to be meant of baptism; which seems the more likely, for that, upon that occasion, they came to John, and by way of complaint said to him, that he who

ⁱ John iii. 22.

had been with him beyond Jordan, and to whom he had borne witness, did now baptize also, as well as he, and that all men went to him.

This was their mistake, for that Jesus himself did not baptize, the text is positive, John iv. 2. That he had instituted or appointed any outward baptism, the text is wholly silent; not a word or syllable tending thereunto. As therefore it was his disciples, not he, that did baptize; so the baptism they administered must be that of John; which they (some of them at least, if not most or all) having been John's disciples, and by him recommended to Jesus, had learned of their old master, and probably did use on the same account, and to the same end, as John did, "That Jesus might be made manifest to Israel," John i. 31.

This these disciples of John not rightly understanding, let up a sort of emulation in their minds against the disciples of Jesus; not much unlike that which of old appeared in Joshua, when he was but young, against Eldad and Medad, for prophesying in the camp, Numb. xi. 28. But as Moses there checked that over-hasty zeal, so John here took occasion from hence to bear a farther testimony to Jesus, whom in all respects he preferred to himself, acknowledging that he, with his spiritual baptism, must increase, but himself, with his watery baptism, must decrease, verse 27, 30, to the end.

Not long was it after this, before John himself was interrupted and taken off from his baptismal ministration^k. For according to the boldness of his Elijah-like spirit, he dealt closely and freely with Herod the tetrarch, surnamed Antipas, not only for his other misdeeds, but for his taking Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, to be his wife, and that, as is supposed, while his brother was living; telling him plainly, it was not lawful for him to have her (as indeed by the Mo-saick law it was not, Levit. xviii. 16, and xx. 21). Herod thereupon laid hold on him, and shut him up

^k Matt. xiv. iii. Luke iii. 20. Mark iv. 17.

in prison; which when Jesus heard of, he departed into Galilee, Mat. iv. 12.

But in his passage from Judea to Galilee¹, either his way lay, or he found it needful to make his way lie, through Samaria. And coming, by that means, to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground which Jacob gave to his son Joseph, in which was Jacob's well; Jesus, being wearied with his journey, sat down to rest him on the well, while his disciples went into the city to buy food; for it was about the sixth hour, that is, twelve at noon with us.

Mean while, a woman of Samaria coming to draw water at the well, Jesus, who probably was athirst, as well as weary, asked her to give him some of the water to drink; but she, observing him to be a Jew, and well knowing the feud that was between the Jews and Samaritans, which was so high that it hindered all commerce and even civil society between them, instead of giving to drink, asked him how it came to pass, that he, being a Jew, would ask drink of her, who was a woman of Samaria.

He, willing to take all occasions to draw people's minds from the earthly to the heavenly, told her, if she had known the gift of God (which was himself, John iii. 16.) and who it was that said unto her, "Give me to drink," she would have asked of him, and he would have given her living water.

She, not apprehending his meaning, said, "Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who both gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, with his children, and his cattle?"

Jesus, sensible that she did not reach his meaning, and desirous to raise her thoughts to an higher consideration than that of elementary water, told her, "Who-soever drinketh of this water, shall thirst again; but who-soever drinketh of the water that I shall give him

¹ John iv. 3.

shall never thirst; but the water which I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up into eternal life."

The woman hearing that, and still catching at an outward advantage, said, "Give me this water, that I thirst not, neither have need henceforth to come hither to draw."

When Jesus perceived that she was rather to be reached by sense, than by judgment^m, he bid her go call her husband, and come again; whereupon she briskly said, "I have no husband." True, replied Jesus, thou hast well said, in saying I have no husband. "For thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast, is not thy husband."

This discovery of so great a secret, which no meer man, she knew, could have told, startled the woman, and made her presently say, "I perceive, sir, that thou art a prophet." And thereupon, considering him now in another station and capacity than she took him for before, she proposes to him the great question, then controverted between the Jews and the Samaritans, concerning the proper place of publick worship; and thus she did it:

"Our fathers, said she, worshipped in this mountain; and ye Jews say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

This mountain, which the woman spake of, was mount Gerizim, the mount of blessing, Deut. xi. 29, and xxvii. 12. upon which, about the time of Nehemiah, or soon after, Sanballat, a great enemy to the Jews, and an opposer of Nehemiah in his work of rebuilding Jerusalem, Neh. iv. 1, 7, 8, did, by permission of Alexander the Great, build a temple for his son-in-law Manasseh; who being not only a Jew, but brother to the high-priest of the Jews, Jaddus, and companion and associate with him in the priesthood, had, contrary to the law of God, taken to wife an unpromised gentile, daughter of Sanballat; for which he

^m John iv. 16.

was, by his brother and the elders of the people, put from the priesthood, and driven from the altar of God. And that temple on mount Gerizim, thus built in opposition to the temple at Jerusalem, became a refuge and shelter, both then, and in after-times, for all apostate Jews, who, to escape the lash of the law for the crimes they had committed, fled thither for protection and impunity; as Josephus the Jewish antiquary shews, in the 8th chapter of his 11th book of the Antiquity of the Jews.

When Jesus had heard the woman's plea for the mountain worship, grounded only on antiquity, a plea too often for superstition, he did not presently determine the case, and give the cause on Jerusalem's side, though there of right it then lay; but pursuing still his own work, which was to draw off from outward places, performances, and things, in the exercise of religion, to a more inward and spiritual state and frame of mind; he said unto her, "Woman, believe me, (do not rely upon what your forefathers have done; but since thou acknowledgest me to be a prophet, regard what I say) The hour cometh (the time is near at hand) when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him." And that he might not seem to dogmatize only, he gave her a reason why it should be so. "God is a spirit, said he, and they that worship him, must worship in spirit and in truth:" in spirit, not in external rites, ceremonies, and carnal ordinances, as the Jews; in truth, not in error, fiction and human invention, as the Samaritans.

Yet that she might not think he set her mountain worship upon equal ground with that at Jerusalem, he told her also, "Ye worship ye know not what; but we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews."

The woman having nothing further to urge, and therefore willing to drop the discourse, only answered,

“ I know that Meffias cometh, who is called Chrift;” and when he is come, he will refolve this, and all our other doubts.

That word drew from Chrift that open and plain difcovery of himfelf; “ I that fpeak unto thee, am he.” And upon this, his difciples coming, the difcourfe between him and the woman broke off.

Though they marvelled that he would entertain difcourfe with fuch a woman, yet none of them had the confidence to afk him, why he did fo; but having brought provifions from the city, they entreated him to eat, which he put by for the prefent, by telling them, he had meat to eat which they knew not of.

This startled them, and made them fay one to another, “ Hath any man brought him aught to eat?” Which he obferving, faid to them, “ My meat is to do the will of him that fent me, and to finifh his work;” which I have now been about in my difcourfe with this poor woman, though ye marvel fo much at it.

Then taking occafion, by an apt metaphor, drawn from the corn fields and approaching harveft, to raife their contemplations to a fpiritual harveft, for the gathering in of fouls to God; he prepared them to be ready for, and encouraged them to be diligent in, the work which he fhould fhortly fend them about.

In the mean time, while Jefus had been thus employed in inftructing his difciples^a, the Samaritan woman, confidering with herfelf what Jefus had told her, of her many husbands and no husband; and being ftruck home with his laft words concerning the Meffiah, viz. “ I am he,” neglecting the errand ſhe came upon, and leaving her water-pot behind her, went her way into the city, and calling her neighbours (the men of the city) together, faid unto them, “ Come fee a man, who hath told me all things that ever I did: Is not this the Chrift?”

They thereupon went out to him, and inviting him to come home with them, they befought him to tarry

^a John iv. 28.

a while with them; which he consenting to, spent two days among them; and harvest days they proved indeed for gathering souls to God.

For as many of the Samaritans of that city did believe on him for the saying of the woman, who told them, he had told her all that ever she did (though it doth not appear that he told her any thing but what related to her husbands; which she, it seems, reputed so great a secret, that she thence concluded, that he could as well have told her all the most private actions of her life) so many more of those Samaritans, when they had seen and spoken with him themselves, believed also, because of his own word. And these told the woman, “Now we believe; not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves now, and are satisfied that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.”

When thus our Lord had spent two days with these Samaritans^o, he then, pursuing his journey, departed thence, and went into Galilee, and was received by the Galileans; for they having been at Jerufalem at the passover-feast, had seen and observed the great things he did there.

And now being come again to Cana of Galilee^p, where he had wrought his miracle, in turning water into wine, a certain nobleman, or courtier, whose son was sick of a fever at Capernaum, having heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, came to him there, and besought him that he would come and heal his son, who lay at the point of death.

Jesus, observing that this man (though his coming thus to him bespoke that he took him for a Prophet of God, who might instrumentally help his son, yet) did not address himself to him as the Messiah, the Christ of God, who could efficiently heal his son, without coming down to see him, told him, “Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.”

^o John iv. 43.

^p Verse 46

But the man, wholly intent on the life of his son, renewing, with great earnestness, his request, said, "Sir, come down, ere my child die." Whereupon Jesus, pitying his condition, said unto him, "Go thy way, thy son liveth;" that is, he is recovered, and is well.

That word reached home; it cured both the son of his fever, and the father of his incredulity. The man believed the word which Jesus had spoken to him, and went his way homewards. But ere he could reach home, his servants meeting him, told him his son was well; he then enquiring of them the hour when the child began to mend, they told him yesterday, at the seventh hour (the first in the afternoon with us) the fever left him; by which the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus had said unto him, "Thy son liveth." And thereupon, not only he himself, but his whole household, believed.

Having, in his return out of Judea into Galilee, wrought this second miracle in Cana, which signifies *zeal*, he went from thence, and travelling about from place to place, through Galilee, instructed the people.

For from that time Jesus began to preach publicly; saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Which being, if I may so speak, John the Baptist's text, it shews that Jesus went on at the first with John's doctrine, as his disciples did with John's baptism.

And now his fame began to spread through all the region round about; and he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. And coming at length to Nazareth, the city where he had been brought up, he went, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and stood up to read.

This was a privilege he might claim there, as being a member of that synagogue in which he had been bred. Yet some think he was then called forth to read by the minister of the synagogue; because it is said, "There was delivered unto him the book of the

prophet Eſaias^s;" which, when he had read in it, he returned to the miniſter^t. And that it was the manner in the ſynagogues for the miniſter to call forth ſome of the members to read publickly in the book of the law, Dr. Lightfoot, in his *Horæ Hebraicæ* on Matthew, as cited by Samuel Cradock, in his Harmony of the Four Evangelifts, chap. 3. ſect. 10. page 67, in the margin, hath delivered.

When he had received the book, and opened it, he found the place where it was written, Iſaiah lxi. 1. "The ſpirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe he hath anointed me to preach the goſpel to the poor; he hath ſent me to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of ſight to the blind; to ſet at liberty them that are bruifed; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

There he ſtopt, before he came to the next words in the prophet, viz. "And the day of vengeance of our God;" which, though joined by a copulative to what he had read, perhaps he might not be willing to introduce his miniſtry among them with.

When he had read ſo far, which yet the evangelift delivers with ſome variation from the words of the prophet, and having cloſed the book, had given it again to the miniſter, he ſat down; "and the eyes of all them that were in the ſynagogue were ſtaſtened on him;" which beſpake in them an attention, from an expectation they had of ſomething more than ordinary from him. Whereupon he began, and ſaid unto them, "This day is this ſcripture fulfilled in your ears."

This is all the evangelift relates that he then ſaid to them on that ſcripture; but, from the following words, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe that he enlarged upon it, and opened it fully to their ſatiſfaction and admiration. For it follows, "And all bare him witneſs, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth^u;" and that the rather, when they had recollected, upon enquiry one of another, that he was

^s Ver. 17. ^t Verſe 20. ^u Verſe 22.

Joseph's son, whose education they knew had been but low. "Is not this, said they, Joseph's son? Is not this the Carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren and sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?" this wisdom, and these mighty works. Mat. xiii. 54, &c. Mark vi. 2, 3.

Thus their admiration was soon turned into an evil emulation, and they were ready to quarrel with him; for they, it seems, expected he would have wrought some miracle there amongst them, as fame had loudly told them he had lately done at Capernaum; and the rather, because Nazareth was more peculiarly his own country, where he had been bred and brought up from his childhood; but he doing none, they were offended at him.

He foresaw that, before it brake forth from them, and by anticipation told them, they would surely apply to him that noted proverb; "Physician, heal thyself," by doing here, in thy own country, what we have heard thou hast done in Capernaum.

But when, by the instances he gave them of the widow of Sarepta, called Zarephath, 1 Kings, xvii. 9. in the days of Elias, or Elijah, and of Naaman the Syrian leper, in the time of Elifeus, or Elisha, who, though not of Israel, were favoured beyond many others, both widows and lepers in Israel; he gave them a covert, but close intimation, that they of Nazareth were less worthy of such a favour, than they of Capernaum and other places were; they were filled with wrath against him, and making a kind of insurrection upon him, they thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow or edge of the hill, whereon their city was built, with intent to have cast him down headlong. But he, by his divine power, freed himself from them; and passing through the midst of them, went his way, having good cause to tell them, as he did, "A prophet is not accepted in his own country."

Thus did the obstinate unbelief of these rude Nazarenes, who despised Jesus, from the supposed meanness
of

of his birth and breeding, withhold from them the benefits and blessings which he had to dispense, and which he freely bestowed, where he found a free entrance for them.

Matthew tells us, “He did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief^w. And Mark says, “He could do no mighty work there^x,” which must be understood, not that he wanted power, but they faith. His power was absolute, and all-sufficient in itself; but he could not do it in the way, and by the medium, wherein and whereby he had resolved to work, which was faith, which they had not; and therefore he said to the two blind men that followed him for their sight, “According to your faith, be it unto you,” Mat. ix. 29.

But although, by reason of the unbelief of these people of Nazareth, which Mark says he marvelled at^y, “he did not (as Matthew has it) many mighty works there;” yet such was the goodness of his nature, such and so great his divine compassion, even to them that thus rudely rejected him, and would, if they could, have destroyed him; that he could not withhold from doing some good among them; but, as Mark relates it, laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them, Mark vi. 5.

After this rough usage at Nazareth, from whence he might reasonably have expected better treatment, and to which we do not read he ever came again (as Cradock, in his Harmony, chap. 3. sect. 11. M. N. observes; though through mistake he brings them thither again, ib. chap. 4. sect. 23). Jesus went again to Capernaum, a city of Galilee^z, situated on the sea coast, and dwelt there; and going into the synagogue on the sabbath-days, he taught them there with so great power, that they were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes used to teach.

^w Mat. xiii. 58. ^x Mark vi. 5. ^y Verse 6. ^z Mat. iv. 13. Mark i. 21. Luke iv. 31.

In this synagogue at Capernaum there was a man that was possessed with an unclean spirit, or with the devil^a; which seeing Jesus there, cried out with a loud voice, "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God."

Jesus, not admitting that a testimony should be borne to his divinity by an impure spirit, first rebuked him, and enjoined him silence, saying, "Hold thy peace," and then commanded him to come out of the man, which he, not daring to do otherwise, did.

Mark says^b, "When the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out."

Luke says^c, "When the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not."

That, it seems, whatever it was, which Mark expresses by tearing, which perhaps might be something like a convulsion fit, did not dismember the man's body, or dislocate any joint, or endanger his life, or impair his health after it was over; which might make Luke say, he hurt him not; meaning, perhaps, not mortally, or dangerously.

But the people were all amazed at the miracle, inso-much that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What thing is this? (what new doctrine is this) For with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they obey him."

This spread the fame of him more generally into every place of the country round about; and well indeed it might, this being such a miracle, as never had, by any, in any time, been wrought before. For though some have, for a while, allayed or quieted evil and turbulent spirits, as David did to Saul; yet it is observed, that no instance is given, in all the Old Testament, of any that did actually dispossess, or cast a devil out of any, whom he had taken a bodily possession of; that work being reserved to the Son of God, who was to break the head, or chief strength of the serpent.

^a Luke iv. 33. ^b Mark i. 26. ^c Luke iv. 35.

As soon as this great work was over, and they were come out of the synagogue ^d, he, with his disciples, entered into the house of Simon, who, with Andrew his brother, and James and John, another pair of loving brothers, sons of Zebedee, were partners in the fishing trade, Luke v. 10.

Simon's wife's mother lay there at that time sick of a fever; which when they had acquainted Jesus with, he came to her, "And standing over her, rebuked the fever and taking her by the hand, raised her up; whereupon the fever did immediately leave her; and she arose and ministered unto them," or gave attendance on them.

At evening, when the sun was set, that they might do it without danger of breaking the sabbath, which beginning at sun-set on the sixth day of the week, held till sun-set on the seventh, the people brought unto Jesus all that were diseased, and them also that were possessed with devils; and the whole city, in a manner, was gathered together at the door. And he, laying his hands on every one of them that were diseased, healed them, and cast out many devils; who, as they came forth, cried out, "Thou art Christ, the Son of God." But he, rebuking them, suffered them not to speak, that they might not give testimony to him.

In the morning, getting up betimes, he went out as soon as it was day, and departing into a solitary place ^e, he did there pray. But being quickly missed, Simon, and the people that were with him, followed after him, to stay him, that he might not depart from them; and when they had found him, and had told him how generally he was sought after, he told them "He must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also; for therefore, said he, am I sent. Wherefore, added he, let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also." And accordingly, he went and preached in their synagogues, throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils, and his fame went through all Syria.

^d Luke iv. 38. Mat. viii. 14. Mark i. 29-
Mark i. 35.

^e Luke iv. 42.

Then came to him a leper^f, who, kneeling down to him, besought him, saying, "If thou wilt thou canst make me clean." The leper's faith moved compassion in Jesus; who thereupon putting forth his hand, and touching him, said unto him, "I will, be thou clean;" and as soon as he had spoken the word, immediately the leprosy departed from the man, and he was cleansed.

Jesus thereupon straitly charged him that he should tell no man; that is, he should not divulge it among the people: "But go thy way, said he, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that God by Moses commanded for a testimony unto them." Which would put them under this dilemma, that they must either acknowledge the cure, and consequently the miracle, or not receive the offering.

But so overjoyed was the poor man that he had received a cure, that he went out and began to publish the matter, and to blaze it abroad; insomuch, that for a while Jesus could no more enter openly into the city; but was without in desert places, and they came unto him from every quarter.

But, after some days, he entered into Capernaum again^g; and as soon as it was noised that he was in an house there, the people gathered so thick together, that there was not room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door; and he preached the word unto them, and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

This was surely a seasonable time, and an happy day for all that were diseased, whether in soul or body. And among those who were then brought unto Jesus, there was a man sick of the palsy laid on a bed, and that borne up by four; him they endeavoured much to have brought in, that they might have laid him before Jesus; but when, by reason of the press and throng of the people, they found they could not come nigh unto him, they went upon the house-top, and uncovered the

^f Mark i. 40. Mat. viii. 2. Luke v. 12. ^g Mark ii. 1.
Luke v. 18. Mat. ix. 2.

roof; and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed, or couch, whereon the sick of the palsy lay, into the midst before Jesus.

This they might the more easily and quickly do, because their houses were made with flat roofs; having grates or lattices of open-work, both in them, and in the upper floors, for the conveniency of letting in light and air, with coverings to put over, to keep out wind and wet. And through such a lattice it was that king Ahaziah fell, 2 Kings i. 2.

When Jesus saw their faith, the faith as well of them that brought him, as of him that was brought, he said unto the sick of the palsy, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee."

There were then present pharisees and scribes, or doctors of the law, who were come out of the towns of Galilee, and out of Judea and Jerusalem; and these sitting by, and hearing what Jesus had said to the sick man, began to reason in their own hearts, and to say within themselves, "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God only?"

Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" For whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee? or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, I (said he, turning his speech unto the sick man) say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go thy way into thy house."

This did the business; for immediately the paralytick arose, and taking up the bed whereon he lay, went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, "We never saw the like." Luke adds, that they were filled with fear; which perhaps might seize on the scribes and pharisees, and might make them say, as it seems they did, "We have seen strange things to-day." And so indeed they had, if it be rightly considered. For Jesus here gave them a twofold evidence of his divinity; one, in telling them the secret thoughts and reasonings of their own hearts;

hearts; the other, in curing the paralytick in their fight, and that by his word only.

About this time probably it was, that Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee ^h (which in the New Testament is called also the sea of Tiberius, John xxi. 1. and the lake of Gennezareth, Luke v. 1, as in the Old Testament the sea of Cinneroth, Josh. xii. 3. and 1 Kings xv. 20). and being pressed hard upon by the people who flocked after him to hear the word of God, seeing two ships or fishing-boats standing by the lake (of which one belonged to Simon and his brother Andrew, the other to James and John) he entered into that which was Simon's, and praying him that he would thrust out a little from the land, he sat down and taught the people out of the ship.

And when he had done speaking, he said to Simon ⁱ, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your net for a draught. Alas! Master, replied Simon, we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing; nevertheless, at thy word, I will let down the net." And forthwith (the fishermen who had been washing their nets abroad being come in) they let down the net, and inclosed so great a multitude of fishes, that the net brake; whereupon (being out of call) they beckoned to their partners who were in the other ship, that they should come and help them; and when they were come, they filled both the ships so full, that they began to sink.

This might well pass for a triple miracle; one in gathering such a multitude of fishes into the net; another in keeping them in the net, when by its breaking they might have got away, as they are very apt to do; and the third, in keeping the ships from sinking, when, being so over-loaden, they began to sink.

But when Simon Peter saw the draught, he fell down at Jesus's knees, and in an abrupt manner, like a frightened man said (not well considering what he said) "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man;" for both he was astonished, and all that were with him,

^h Luke v. 1.

ⁱ Luke v. 4.

at the extraordinary draught of the fishes which they had taken, and so were also James and John, who were partners in the trade with Simon.

But Jesus, to encourage Simon (and to instruct him also by this draught, what draughts of another kind he should hereafter make) said to him, "Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men." So Luke hath it. But Mark relates^k, that Jesus, speaking to them both, Andrew as well as Simon, said, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." Which Matthew also confirms; and all agree, that upon this more particular call, they all four left their ships, nets, and whole trade, and forsaking all, followed him; to wit, in a constant attendance on him, at least more than before.

It was not long after this, ere our Lord walked again by the sea-side^l, and the multitude resorting to him, he there taught them again; which having done, as he passed along, he saw a man named Levi^m (called also Matthew) who being a publican or tribute-gatherer, sat at the custom-house (the place where the customs were to be received): And when Jesus said unto him, "Follow me," he, without more ado, leaving all, rose up and followed him.

Both Mark and Luke call him Levi; but he himself, not mentioning the name Levi, calls himself only Matthew; nor says he any thing of his family or extraction. But Mark calls him the son of Alphaeusⁿ, which should make him to be the brother of James, surnamed the less, if it be the same Alphaeus which James is said to be the son of, Mat. x. 3.

Levi or Matthew, being thus called and made a disciple, invited Jesus to his house^o, and made a great feast, at which were present not only his disciples, but also many publicans and others, whom both Matthew and Mark call sinners; persons probably not of the best fame.

^k Mark i. 15. Mat. iv. 19. ^l Mark ii. 13. ^m Mat. ix. 9. Luke v. 27. ⁿ Mark ii. 14. ^o Luke v. 29. Mat. ix. 10. Mark ii. 15.

There were many, says Mark, that followed him; but which [him] is not altogether clear from the text; most take it that they followed Jesus; but some (and particularly Grotius) understand it that they followed Levi or Matthew; for many of them being publicans, excise-men, or tax-gatherers, and the rest such as, in all likelihood, might have dependance upon them, as under-officers or assistants to them, being commonly not the most bashful men, might presume, on their acquaintance with Matthew a publican, to invite themselves (if not invited by him) to his table, and to sit down with Jesus and his disciples.

This the scribes and pharisees, who always watched with an evil eye over Jesus, observing, they presently picked a quarrel with his disciples upon it, demanding of them how they could justify it, that their master and they did eat and drink with publicans and sinners.

But when Jesus heard their cavil, he thence took occasion to set forth himself as the true physician of souls, who it was fit should be amongst and converse with his patients. "They, said he, that be whole (as ye think yourselves) need not a physician, but they that are sick (as these publicans and others are sensible they are); for I came not to call the righteous (such as ye pretend to be) but sinners (such as ye call these) to repentance." But go, added he, and learn what that means (which God by his prophet Hosea, chap. vi. verse 6. spake so long ago) "I will have mercy, and not (that is, rather than) sacrifice."

The pharisees, checked with this answer, gave over the pursuit of this cavil; and, having probably got some of John's disciples amongst them, start another thus:

"Why, said they, do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers also; as likewise the disciples of the pharisees do; but thy disciples fast not, but eat and drink?"

It is probable the disciples of John did both fast and pray the more frequently now, because of the danger their master was now in, being a prisoner and in bonds under

under Herod's high displeasure; but the pharisees fasting was customary and stated.

That they fasted twice in a week, our Saviour in his parable introduces that pharisee boasting, Luke xviii. 12.

Drusius and Grotius on the text tells us, that the days their weekly fasts were held on, were the second and the fifth; and Grotius adds, that the ancient Christians, that they might not come behind the Jews (after they were every-where divided from the Jews) did, in the room of those two days, substitute two other days in each week for fasting, which were the fourth and the sixth. *Quos*, says he, *Pagani vocabant Mercurii & Veneris*; that is, which the heathens called by the names of Mercury and Venus, the same which in an heathenish-christian stile are now generally called Wednesday and Friday. But to the pharisees captious question our Lord answered, by an allusion to a custom then in use among themselves in their marriages, where the peculiar friends of the bridegroom (probably called the children of the bride-chamber) were allowed to indulge themselves in pleasure and joy while the marriage-feast lasted.

“Can ye, said he, make the children of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? But the time shall come, added he, that the bridegroom shall be taken away from them; and then shall they fast, even in those days.”

Then by a twofold parable, setting forth the unsuitableness as well as danger (first, of setting a piece of new and unwrought cloth upon an old garment; and secondly, of putting new wine into old bottles) he aptly shewed them, that a new dispensation, as his was, should not be clogged with old observations, new with new agreeing best.

The story of Jairus follows next in Matthew ^p, though postponed by Mark and Luke, and so also by others that have written upon it. But I think indeed it belongs to this place, because Matthew doth connect it to

the former parable of the new wine and old bottles, by saying, "While he spake these things unto them, behold there came a certain ruler (both Mark and Luke name him Jairus, and say he was a ruler of the synagogue).

This man (having but one only daughter of about twelve years of age, who lay then sick, and at the point of death) came to Jesus, and falling down at his feet, besought him earnestly that he would come and lay his hands on her; and heal her, for he made no question of the cure, if he could but prevail with Jesus to come to her.

His faith prevailed, and without any hesitation Jesus went with him; but before he could get thither he met with a stop⁹; for in the way as he went, much people following and thronging him, a certain woman among the rest, who had had an issue of blood for twelve years together (and had suffered much by many physicians, and spent all she had upon them, and yet was never the better, but rather grew worse) when she understood that Jesus was in the company, came privately behind him, and touched the hem or border of his garment; for she said within herself, "If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole."

This was an healing touch indeed, for immediately her issue of blood was stanch¹, or (as Mark gives it) the fountain of her blood was straitway dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed. And yet this was a way of touching, quite contrary to the ordinary way; for in the ordinary way the physician used to touch the patient, but here the patient touched the physician; and not him himself neither, but his outside garment only.

The woman having reaped the benefit, which none (she thought) but herself knew of, was silently slipping away. But Jesus immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turning himself about in the throng, said, "Who touched me?" (that is, my clothes.)

⁹ Mat. ix, 20. Luke viii. 43. ¹ Mark v. 29.

Nobody would own it ; and when all denied, Peter, and they that were with him said, “ Master, the multitude throng and prefs, and dost thou ask, Who touched me?”

Aye, but (said Jesus) some body hath touched me (more than ordinarily) for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me. And thereupon he looked round about to find her out that had done that thing.

Which when the woman saw, and found that she could not be hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, declared unto him before all the people, not only that it was she that had touched him, but for what cause she had done it, and how she was immediately healed. Whereupon he graciously said unto her, “ Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole ; go in peace.”

This occasional delay had so long stopped Jesus’s journey with Jairus’s, that before they could set forward again, one came from Jairus’s house, and brought him the sorrowful news that his daughter was dead, so that he need not trouble the master (so in respect they called Jesus) to go any further.

This we may conceive was a doleful message to the affectionate father. But when Jesus heard it, he, to comfort poor Jairus, bid him not be afraid, but believe only, and his daughter should be recovered to both life and health.

Jairus, who had good confidence in him before, had much more reason now to have his faith confirmed and strengthened, from the miraculous cure he had just now seen wrought on the way, and so on they went together.

Being come to the house, he found a great tumult there, minstrels playing, and the people making a doleful noise, with weeping and loud wailing, for sorrow that the maid was dead.

This use of minstrels (fidlers or pipers) at funerals, Dr. Hammond says came to the latter Jews from the rites and manner of the Gentiles; for in the Old Testa-

^s Mark v. 35. Luke viii. 49.

ment he observes, there is no mention of any such custom. Songs of lamentation he admits they had, Jer. ix. 17, and xxii. 18, and xxxiv. 5, and Amos vi. 15. But these, he says, were performed only by the voice, not by instruments.

Grotius holds otherwise, but not that it had any divine institution; and so it seems; for when Jesus came up to them, he bid them give place, or be gone; and to the rest that made the noise, he said, "Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." Whereupon they in scorn laughed at him, concluding that she was dead.

But he, taking only (of his disciples) Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the maiden with him, went into the room where the body lay, and having put out the rest of the people (for they that deride him are not worthy to see his wonders) he took the damsel by the hand and said unto her, *Talitha cumi*; which being interpreted is, damsel arise; whereupon her spirit coming again, she straightway arose and walked, which filled her parents with both astonishment and joy.

Then he bid them give her something to eat, probably that they might be satisfied that she was really restored, not only to life, but to sound health, so that she could eat her food again.

Then gave he to her parents a strict charge that they should not spread this matter abroad (for he aimed not at popular applause) yet notwithstanding his care therein, the fame thereof went abroad into all that country.

As Jesus departed from thence^t, two blind men followed him, crying after him, "Thou Son of David have mercy on us." This (their calling him the Son of David) shews that they took him not barely for an holy man and a prophet, but for the prophet, the promised Messiah.

When therefore Jesus was come into the house (whether he was then going) and these blind men were come

^t Mat. ix. 27.

in also to him, he asked them, if they did believe that he was able to do this for them, which they had desired of him; and they answering, yea, Lord, he thereupon touched their eyes, and said, "According to your faith, be it unto you."

Their faith was great, his power was greater, and accordingly their eyes were opened (that is, their sight was restored). And although he charged them also, as he had done the others before, that they should not let any man know it, yet they, overjoyed for the benefit they had received, could not conceal it; but when they were gone from him, they spread abroad his fame throughout the country.

As these went out others came in, and brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil^u. Jesus cast the devil out, and then the dumb spake; at which the multitude marvelled, and said, "The like was never seen in Israel."

Yet the envious pharisees, to detract from his fame, said, "He casteth out the devils through the prince of the devils."

But he, at that time not regarding their slander, went on into the cities and villages round about, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom; so that his fame, which they invidiously sought to stop, spread throughout all Syria.

Hereupon they brought unto him all their sick people, such as were taken with divers diseases and torments; and those that were possessed with devils; those also that were lunatick, and those that had the palsy, and he healed every sickness and every disease among the people; and this drew such a great concourse of people after him, that multitudes followed him, not only from Galilee and Decapolis, but from Jerusalem also and Judea, and from beyond Jordan.

The sight of so many distressed people, who seemed ready to faint^w, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd, moved compassion in him towards

^u Mat. ix. 32.

^w Mat. ix. 36.

them, and made him say to his disciples, “ The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few : pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”

This seems to have been a prologue to his first sending forth of his apostles to preach, and, as it were, to begin the harvest-work among the Jews. To which, that he might the better prepare and fit them, by instructing them more particularly and fully in the divine doctrines of the heavenly kingdom than hitherto he had done, he went up into a mountain, perhaps to avoid the press of the multitudes, or at least that he might have the more convenient place to be heard more distinctly, and with advantage, by all.

When he was set, his disciples came unto him, and the evangelist says, he opened his mouth and taught them *. Which phrase (of opening his mouth) is not idle or empty, but (in this place at least) emphatical; not used commonly, but on the most solemn and weighty occasions, and imports a deliberate and very considerate way of speaking, such as was that of the Psalmist, Psalm lxxviii. 2. of Wisdom, Prov. viii. 6. and of Peter, Acts x. 34.

Some have conceived that Jesus did therefore go up into the mountain, that from a mountain he might deliver his new law, as from a mountain God by Moses had delivered the old law. So Clarius in the criticks on the place.

But whether there was any intention of agreement in that case between the old law and the new, there was certainly great disagreement and disparity in the manner of promulgating each; for that was introduced with thunderings, lightnings, and great noises, terrible to the spectators: whereas this dropped down in divine blessings, as a sweet refreshing dew from heaven upon the hearers. For as soon as he had opened his mouth, he taught them thus. First, “ Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

* Mat. v. 1.

These blessed poor ones, others (who by a voluntary humility, and spontaneous poverty, hope, though in vain, to merit heaven) willingly take to be those that are destitute of all outward substance or worldly riches, though by their own resignation of them; but the words need no commentary to explain them; the following words (in spirit) plainly enough shew to what sort of poor this blessing, and the spiritual effect thereof (the kingdom of heaven) doth belong.

But in favour of the former notion, they urge that Luke^y, in the report he makes of this sermon, gives the word indefinitely (Blessed be ye poor) without the restrictive addition (in spirit). To which objection Dr. Hammond, in his paraphrase on the place, hath already given this answer:

‘ That there is, says he, some variety in the words, as also in some other words some light differences, between this and the other gospels, seems to be caused by Luke’s writing his gospel by short notes, which he had received from those that were present, not being an eye and ear-witness himself, chap. i. 3. From whence it follows that these words in Luke are to be interpreted according to the importance of those in Matthew, who sets them down more fully. And accordingly, by the poor here must be understood the poor in spirit; and by the hungry here, those that hunger and thirst after righteousness; as the words of an epitome are to be interpreted according to the sense of the entire copy before it was contracted.’

The second blessing is bestowed on them that mourn^z, with promise that they shall be comforted. Where both the mourning and the comfort are principally to be understood in a spiritual sense. A mourning for sin; a being comforted by deliverance from sin.

Third, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth^a.”

“Fourth, Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled^b.”

^y Luke vi. 20. ^z Mat. v. 4. ^a Ver. 5. ^b Ver. 6.

Fifth, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy^c.”

Sixth, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God^d.”

Seventh, “Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God^e.”

Eighth, “Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven^f.”

This (of bearing persecution for Christ’s sake and the gospel) was set last; because it was then, as it yet is, the lot of those who labour to attain those excellent conditions to which the foregoing blessings are pronounced; which to prepare his disciples to undergo, he repeats this last, by application thereof to them there present, saying, “Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you; and shall say all manner of evil against you; but falsely, and for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you^g.”

These blessings which are eight in number (taking that in the 11th verse to be but a repetition, for particular application, of that which in the 10th verse was delivered more generally) are called the eight beatitudes, because they begin severally with blessings, and jointly contain the chief heads wherein the happiness of man consists.

Luke, though he sets not down these blessings either in the same order or number, yet, to so many of them as he gives, he opposes their contraries under so many woes, viz. 1. “Woe unto you that are rich. 2. Woe unto you that are full. 3. Woe unto you that laugh now. 4. Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you^h.”

Our Lord, having thus far gently opened the understandings and hearts of his disciples to receive farther

^c Mat. v. 7. ^d Ver. 8. ^e Ver. 9. ^f Ver. 10. ^g Ver. 11.

^h Luke vi. 20. Ver. 24. ⁱ Mark v. 13.

instruction from him, goes on, and gives them some little intimation of the work or service he intended shortly to send them about and employ them in.

“Ye are, said he, the salt of the earthⁱ.” A metaphor taken from the creature, salt, whose acrimonious quality purging out putredinous humours, as it preserves flesh from corruption; so they, by the powerful preaching of the piercing word, and sound doctrine committed to them, were to season mankind in all parts of the earth whither they should be sent.

But then he lets them know how watchful and careful they had need be, to retain the true saline favour and virtue in themselves, both for the preserving themselves clean and sweet, and enabling them to season others.

“For if, said he, the salt should lose its favour, wherewith shall it be salted or seasoned?” It will be so far then from being able to season others, that it will not be able to preserve itself; nay, it will thenceforth be good for nothing but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

To this metaphor he adds another, telling them they were the light of the world^k; a city which being set on a hill could not be hid. But then he lets them know withal, that they must not expect to lead this private and easy course of life always, to lie covertly sheltered under him; but must go abroad into the world, that their light being seen may lead others to him. For, says he^l, “Men do not use, when they light a candle, to put it under a cover, but they set it on a candlestick, and then it gives light to all that are in the house.”

Thus having compared his disciples to salt, with respect to the savoury and seasoning doctrine they should preach; and to light, and an high-built city, with respect both to doctrine, and to the holy lives and exemplary conversations they should lead, he added, as an exhortation thereunto, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and thence

ⁱ Mark v. 13.^k Mat. v. 14.^l Luke xi. 33.

take occasion to glorify your Father who is in heaven^m.”

Then that he might obviate an objection which they or any others might misconceive in their minds concerning himⁿ, as that he went about to set up a new dispensation, in opposition to, and destructive of, the old dispensation, which God had set up by Moses, and which was yet in force, he bids them not think that he was come to destroy the law or the prophets; for he came not to destroy, but to fulfil.

That if he had not told them so, they might plainly enough have seen, not only by his being subject to the ordinance of circumcision and other legal rites, but even by his submitting to the ministrations of John the Baptist, though but an appendant to the law.

He assures them therefore^o, that the law shall have its full term and complete time of standing, and that not one jot or tittle (so much as the least part) of it shall pass away till all be fulfilled. And that therefore, while that law should stand in force, if any one should wilfully break one, even of the least, of the commandments contained therein, and by his doctrine or example give encouragement or allowance to others so to do, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; which, in the general sense of expositors, is to be wholly excluded from thence.

This was a side-blow at the pharisees^p, whom he elsewhere taxed, not only with omitting the weightier matters of the law, whilst they made a pompous shew of being very exact in lesser things; but also with transgressing the commandment of God by their traditions.

But an home stroke followed, when he told his disciples, “That except their righteousness should exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, they should in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven^q; which plainly implied that those topping pharisees,

^m Mat. v. 16. ⁿ Ver. 17. ^o Ver. 18. ^p Mat. xxiii. 23.

Luke xi. 42. ^q Mat. xv. 3. Mat. 5. 20.

by all their gilded shews of righteousness, would not be able to gain an entrance there.

To shew therefore his disciples more particularly wherein their righteousness ought to exceed that of the scribes and pharisees, who yet pretended to an exact observance of the law according to the letter, he gave them apt instances in some particulars, wherein he expected their righteousness should out-do and go beyond not only the highest pitch of pharisaical righteousness, but even the literal construction of the law also.

And in the first place he puts them in mind^r, that they had heard that it was said to them of old time (so I read it as in the margin, rather than [by them] as in the text; and so both Grotius on the place, and Spanhemius, *de Dubiis Evangeliorum, parte tertiâ*, Dub. 119. and Dr. Gell on the place all read it; and so the text is rendered in the former translation) “Thou shalt not kill,” or rather (as in that translation) “Thou shalt do no murder;” for though all murder is killing, yet all killing is not murder. “And whosoever shall kill (or murder) shall be in danger of the judgment:” Which last part of the sentence, though not in the text, either in Exodus or Deuteronomy, is yet in the law, and is drawn from Levit. xxiv. 17, 21. and Numb. xxxv. 16, 17, 18. 30.

The judgment here mentioned, which such should be in danger of, was that of the lesser court or judicatory of the Jews, consisting of three and twenty judges, whose power (though then suspended at least, by their subjection to the Romans) did originally extend to criminal cases.

But though the law against murder (at least in the literal sense of it) took hold only of such as in fact were actually guilty of murder, and they who were free from the fact, were free also from the danger of that court or judgment, and so were, in that respect, righteous according to the letter of that law; yet Christ tells his disciples that their righteousness must exceed this.

^r Mat. v. 21.

They must not only not have a murtherous hand, but not so much as a murtherous heart or mind. They must shun and keep clear of not only the act of murder, but the passions also which would lead or incite thereunto; as anger, contemptuous carriage, and reproachful language; which three degrees of provocation, tending to murder, he subjects to the three degrees of punishments most noted and most feared among the Jews.

Wherefore having reminded them that they had heard it had been said to them of old time, "Thou shalt not kill;" he now superadds thereunto, "But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment," (shall come under the cognizance of the lesser court, the judicature of the three and twenty judges.) And whosoever shall suffer his anger to break forth into any contemptuous behaviour, or slighting expression, such as *Racha* (which signifies *vain, empty, witlefs*) shall be in danger of the council (the greater court, the Sanhedrin, or highest court among the Jews, consisting of seventy and one judges).

But whosoever shall in anger and reproach call his brother fool, shall be in danger of the highest punishment of that court, the fire of Gehenna (that is, to be burnt in the valley of Hinnom); where, besides the fires that were occasionally made for the offering of children to Moloch, a continual fire was kept for the consuming the dead carcases, with the garbage and filth of the city; from whence, by a metaphor, it is called hell-fire.

By these references to the Jewish judicatures and punishments, he informs his disciples, that his law being more copious and extensive than that by Moses, would as really subject them to the judgment of God, if they should be guilty of groundless or unreasonable anger, and the effects thereof, despiteful and contumelious carriage or words towards others; as Moses's law did them who were actually guilty of murder, to the judgment of

men in their Jewish judicatures, and to punishments proportionable to the nature and degree of the offence.

But besides this he lets them also know †, that such unruly passions of the mind would hinder the acceptance of their religious oblations to God; for prevention of which, he gives them this necessary caution, and seasonable counsel following :

“ If when thou bringest thy gift to the altar, thou there rememberest that thy brother (any man) hath aught against thee (that is, that thou either by word or carriage hast given him any just cause of offence) leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first (offer fair terms for reconciliation, use thy best endeavours to) be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift †.”

And because in all cases delays are dangerous †; but in none more than in that which hinders our access to God, whether it be want of reconciliation to him, or to our brother, he (alluding to the way of judicial proceedings between creditor and debtor) advises his disciples to agree with their adversary quickly, while they are in the way with him; lest at any time he deliver them to the judge, and he to the officer, who puts them into prison, out of which they cannot get without paying the full debt

Another instance by which he shews the extent and spirituality of his law beyond that of Moses, is in the case of adultery †; concerning which he tells them, “ Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery,” which, in the decalogue, is the seventh commandment, Exod. xx. 14.

“ But I, said he, say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman, to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” Wherefore by the moving metaphors of plucking out the right eye, and cutting off the right hand (whereof the former more particularly relates to the case of adultery, as the latter

† Mat. v. 23. † Ver. 23. † Ver. 25. † Ver. 27.

to that of murder) he advises his disciples to mortify and suppress those unruly passions of lust and anger.

From the instance of adultery he passes to that of divorce⁷, which, though not contained in the decalogue, was yet a part of the Mosaic law, Deut. xxiv. 1. as an indulgence granted by permission to the Jews, for prevention of greater evils, by reason of the hardness of their hearts; so that whereas by the law (Levit. xx. 10. and Deut. xxii. 22.) the wife that lay with another man than her husband (as well as the man that lay with her) was to be put to death; it might be in the power and choice of the abused husband, to spare (if he thought fit) his wife's life, and to dismiss or put her from him with a bill of divorce. Of which bill (or book) of divorce, Grotius on the place gives the form in use among the Jews, in these words :

Meâ sponte, nullius coactû, te, uxorem hæcenus meam, dimittere à me, deserere ac repudiare decrevi; jamque adeò te dimitto desero ac repudio, atque à me ejicio, ut tuæ sis potestatis, tuoque arbitrato ac lubitu, quò libet discedas; neque id quispiam ullo tempore prohibisset; atque ita dimissa esto, ut cuivis viro nubere tibi liceat; that is, Of my own accord, without constraint of any, I have determined to discharge, forsake and cast off thee, who hast hitherto been my wife; and I do now in such manner discharge, forsake, reject, and cast thee off from me, that thou mayest be at thy own disposal, and mayest depart whither thou hast a mind at thy own will and pleasure. Nor shall any one at any time hinder it; and be thou so discharged, that thou mayst be married to any man.

Other forms for this end (varying rather in circumstances than in substance) are given by Godwyn, in his Moses and Aaron, lib. vi. chap. iv. and by a nameless author, in a treatise called a View of the Jewish Religion (printed at London in the year 1656). chap. xxix. page 394.

This permitted favour, intended for a merciful expedient, and that in the case of adultery only, the Jews

⁷ Mat. v. 31.

perversely extended to almost every trifling occasion of difference that happened between men and their wives; so that if a man were weary of his wife, and would be rid of her, he needed but give her such a writing of divorcement, and the work was done.

But whosoever told them this (for it is observable that he doth not say in this case as in the former, Ye have heard that it hath been said to them of old time; but barely, It hath been said) our Lord, reforming this abuse, informs his disciples better, telling them (with a “ But I say unto you) whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication (which word, though most properly and usually spoken of unmarried persons, is here, by a *synecdoche generis*, used for adultery) causeth her (if she marry another) to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her (that is so divorced) committeth adultery also.”

From divorcing he proceeds to the case of oaths and swearing, thus. Again (said he to his disciples) “ Ye have heard that it hath been said to them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths ^z.”

This is by many referred to Exod. xx. 7. as supposed to be the third command in the decalogue. But the words there do not answer it. There indeed it is said, “ Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” And if his name could not be taken in vain without forswearing, then these words would answer patly. But though all forswearing by his name, is a taking his name in vain; yet all taking his name in vain, is not done by forswearing by his name. His name may be, and often is, taken in vain, without either forswearing, or swearing by it, and too often by both.

The words in Moses which Christ here seems most directly to refer to, are in Levit. xix. 12. “ Ye shall not swear by my name falsely.” But the latter part of that verse answers not directly to the latter part of those words in Mat. v. 33. which Christ refers to (“ But

^z Mat. v. 33.

thalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths"); which seems to be but an *exegefsis*, or explanation, of the former words, fhewing how, while fwearing was allowed, they fhould avoid forfwearing themfelves, namely, by performing what they had fworn. And fo taken, this latter claufe ("But thalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths") might perhaps be borrowed from the law concerning vows, Deut. xxiii. 23. where we read, "That which is gone out of thy lips thou thalt keep and perform."

But whencefoever that prohibition or negative command ("Thou thalt not forfwear thyfelf) was taken; Chrift furmounds it, when, in his command to his difciples, he fays, "But I fay unto you, fwear not at all^a."

From this general prohibition, he defcends to particulars, not much unlike to what God, in delivering the decalogue, or ten commandments, Exod. xx. had done.

For as he there, having faid in general terms, "Thou thalt have no other gods before me," verfe 2. added the particulars wherein the great danger of their idolatrizing lay, faying, in verfe 4 and 5. "Thou thalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likenefs of any thing in heaven, earth, or water; thou thalt not bow down thyfelf to them, nor ferve them," &c. fo our Lord here, having in general forbidden all fwearing, enumerates fome particular forms (or objects rather) of fwearing, which, as being the oaths fuppofed to be then moft in vogue and ufe among the Jews, he apprehended they would be moft liable to be intangled in, and drawn to a breach of his general prohibition by.

Having therefore faid, "Swear not at all," he adds, "Neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footftool; neither by Jerufalem, for it is the city of the great King; neither thalt thou fwear by thy head" (thy life, health, or fafety) all which are in God's hand, and fo little in thy power, that thou canft not make one hair white or black.

^a Mat. v. 34.

Which enumeration of particulars doth no more destroy, weaken, or let loose the general prohibition [Swear not at all] than the particulars mentioned before, in Exod. xx. do let loose or destroy the general prohibition there, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

Swearing then in general, and all sorts of oaths in particular, being set aside (for the apostle James, who may well be supposed to have well understood his master's mind, and to have written by his direction and guidance, when he had said, “But above all things, my brethren, swear not; neither by heaven, neither by the earth;” adds, “neither by any other oath,” James v. 12.) our Lord in the next place tells his disciples how they should answer the end of swearing, and what they should say instead of an oath.

“But, said he, let your word (so $\lambda\gamma\theta$ properly signifies, especially here, where it ought to have its fullest and most extensive sense; whereas the word [communication] was put into the text merely to restrain the general prohibition of all swearing, to swearing in common discourse or talk only; I say, let your word) Yea be Yea, and Nay be Nay.” Let not your word Yea prove Nay, but speak the plain truth, and make good what ye say; that ye may no more forswear yourselves, than others (who swear) forswear themselves. “For whatsoever (adds he) is more than this, cometh of evil,” or of the evil one. As if he had said, if ye go beyond this; if ye speak more than is true; if ye promise more than ye perform, your so doing is of the evil one; or it is the evil one that leads you so to do.

To this purpose Johannes Pricæus, in his annotations on the place. ‘*Si quis Christi hæc ad Jacobi (quæ sub formâ tantillum discrepante, 5. 12. concipiuntur) verba expendat, putabit (cum celeberrimæ doctrinæ viro) Christum hoc dicere, concordent dictis facta vestra; pæctis promissisque vestris, ac si firmata juramentis essent, idem robur esto: coram Deo enim (qui mentem loquentis, non verborum formulas intuetur) negatio vel affirmatio simplex loco juramenti habetur; nec qui irritam alteru-*

tram

‘*tram illarum reddiderit, minore apud illum crimine obli-*
‘*gatur, quam si juramentis, omnique imprecationum genere*
‘*obstrinxisset se;*’ that is, If any one would weigh these
‘ words of Christ with those of James (which in chap.
‘ v. 12. are delivered with very little difference) he will
‘ think (as a very learned man doth) that Christ spake
‘ after this manner; “ Let your deeds agree with your
‘ words; let your covenants and promises be as firm
‘ and strong as if they had been confirmed with oaths;
‘ for in the sight of God (who looks at the mind of him
‘ that speaks, more than at the form of words in which
‘ he speaks) a plain and simple denial or affirmation
‘ is taken instead of an oath; nor is he less guilty before
‘ him who hath made either of them void, than if he
‘ had bound himself by oaths, and all manner of im-
‘ precations.’

And a little after, ‘ *Qui autem ad ὅλας illud precedens,*
‘ *benè animum adverterit, similique hujusmodi admissio sensu,*
‘ *ad ἀνακολεθΐαν illorum, τὸ δὲ περισσὸν τέτων, &c. con-*
‘ *cedit (ni fallor) mecum in earum sententiam, qui non de*
‘ *affirmandi vel negandi veritate, sed simpliciter de non*
‘ *jurando hic agi existimarunt;* that is, But he that shall
‘ well consider the words, [at all] going before, and
‘ withal (admitting such a sense as this) the inconfe-
‘ quence of those words [For whatsoever is more than
‘ this, &c.] will (if I am not deceived) yield with me
‘ to their opinion, who have thought the matter, here
‘ treated of, to be not concerning the truth of affirming
‘ or denying, but simply concerning not swearing.’

Much might be added to the same purpose, from those learned annotators on the place, Erasmus, Dru-
 sius, Capellus, and Grotius; men all of great name;
 but I would not unnecessarily load the work with
 quotations.

But if I may use the liberty to express my own sense
 in the case; I take a great part at least (if not the
 greatest part) of the disputes which have arisen about
 the true sense of this text to have sprang from the mis-
 rendering of the words in the English translation (to
 wit, “ Let your communication be yea, yea; nay,
 nay;

nay, &c. against which I conceive two just objections lie.

First, The turning the word $\lambda\epsilon\gamma\theta$ by the word communication, which it is evident was done on purpose to draw Christ's word from a general prohibition of all swearing, to a more particular prohibition of prophane, vain and idle swearing, in common discourse only. Whereas the most proper signification of the word $\lambda\epsilon\gamma\theta$ is a word or speech, and in this place a solemn and religious word or speech, such as under the law was the uttering of a vow to God.

Secondly, The rendering of the text so, as makes an ingemination, or redoubling of the particles, yea and nay; thereby making the text run thus: "Let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay," and that without reason or good sense; as if, to answer this command, a single affirmation or denial would not serve, but it must be repeated. So that if I am asked whether I do consent to such a contract, and will perform such an agreement, or will speak the truth of my knowledge in such a matter, it is not enough that I say yea, but I must say yea, yea. In like manner, if I am examined whether I am guilty of such a thing, it is not enough for me to say nay, but I must say nay, nay. Which (if the rule hold that two negatives make an affirmative) would be an unthought-of conviction of myself; a granting in terms what I deny in intention.

These absurdities may be prevented, and that both easily and rightly, by placing the verb between the adverbs, both affirmative and negative; reading the text thus: "Let your word yea be yea, and your nay be nay. That is, Let what ye say be true, and stand to what ye say or promise. And that this is the right reading of the words, may be confirmed from the parallel place in the apostle James, who, not having the word $\lambda\epsilon\gamma\theta$ in his text, delivers the words thus: "Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay," James v. 12. This makes the sense and force of the text to be, that although they might by no means swear in any case; yet they should be no less careful to speak the truth,

and to perform their engagements without swearing, than if they had been sworn.

As to the particular things mentioned (as heaven, earth, &c.) which they were forbidden to swear by; the reason given why they might not swear by any of those things deserves our observation. For as while swearing under the law was allowed, they were to swear by God only; so now that under the gospel all swearing was forbidden, they were not to swear by heaven; Why? "Because it is God's throne." Not by the earth; Why? "Because it is his footstool." Not by Jerusalem; Why? "Because it was his city." Nay, not by their own heads; Why? "Because their heads, ay, and the very hairs also, were his;" not in their power so much as to change the colour of them. So that they were not to swear by God, nor by any thing belonging to him, and because every thing belonged to him, therefore by nothing, "not at all."

The next thing our Lord touches is the talique law ^b, the law of retaliation, given by Moses in Exod. xxi. 24. "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." So it was in the old law, which in repeating our Lord contracts to eye and tooth only, and then teaches his disciples his new law of bearing injuries patiently. But I say unto you, "That ye resist not evil (evil men, when for my sake they do evil to you); but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also."

By which metaphor (as Zegerus calls it) and the two following (of giving the coat also to him that would take away the cloak; and of going two miles with him that should press one to go one mile; three instances answering the three great privileges of every free-man, viz. person, property and liberty) our Lord instructs his disciples, that it were better for them, and they ought rather, to bear injuries, to suffer wrong twice over, than once to revenge themselves on the injurer, by

^b Mat. v. 38.

taking the advantage of the talique law, or otherwise.

Nay, by bidding them give to him that asketh^c, and not refuse to lend to him that would borrow, he intimateth, that it is scarce enough for his disciples to bear injuries patiently without retorting, but that Christianity teaches to do good for evil; to shew kindness in giving or lending (as just occasion may call, and ability answer) even to them that have done the wrong.

And therefore, having reminded them that they had heard it had been said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy^d;" where we may observe, that he doth not here as before say, it hath been said to them of old time; but barely, it hath been said; because, though the former part of these words [Thou shalt love thy neighbour] was said to Moses, and by him to Israel, Levit. xix. 18. yet the latter part [and hate thine enemy] was not said there, nor any-where else expressly in the Holy Scriptures; but was added (probably by the pharisees) as an inference or consequence drawn from some mis-understood and perverted places of scripture:

Which to correct, he adds, "But I say unto you, love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you^e; that ye may not only be, but may be known to be, the children of your Father who is in heaven, by bearing his image, following his example, and doing as he doth. For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil as well as on the good, and sendeth rain, not only on the just, but on the unjust also."

For, adds he, if ye love them only that love you^f; if ye salute your brethren only, who ye may expect will salute you again; if ye do good to them only that do good to you; what do ye therein more than the publicans, the sinners, the worst of men do? For even sin-

^c Mat. v. 42. ^d Ver. 43. ^e Ver. 44. ^f Ver. 46.

ners also love those that love them, Luke vi. 32. But do ye imitate your heavenly Father in shewing mercy; and be ye perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.

Now because he had exhorted his disciples to acts of humanity, of common charity, and beneficence to all, that their righteousness, in the performance of these, might exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees; he in the next place cautions them against a dangerous evil, which the pharisees were very subject to, and delighted much in, viz. ostentation and pride.

“Take heed, said he, that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them^g;” for if ye do, ye have no reward of your Father who is in heaven.

Therefore, “When thou givest thine alms, do not cause a trumpet to be sounded before thee,” as the hypocritical pharisees do, in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. “Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.” They have the praise of men, which they sought for, and that is all they are like to have.

But when thou givest alms, do it with that simplicity and secrecy that thy most intimate friend or acquaintance (who is as conversant with thee, as one hand with the other) may not be privy to it; and then thy Father, who seeth in secret what thou doest in secret, will himself reward thee openly.

And as the pharisees were alike vaunting, and as greedy of popular praise in their prayers, as in their alms; our Lord warns his disciples to beware of that vanity also.

When thou prayest, says he, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites^h, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and at the corners of the streets, where many, ways meeting, they may be seen as far, and by as many as may be. “Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward in that also.” They do it to be admired of men; to be accounted by men devout and pious; they

^g Mat. vi. 1.

^h Ver. 5.

are so accounted (though they be not so) and that is their reward.

“ But thou (said he, who art my disciple) when thou prayest (not in an open assembly, but by thyself) enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father who is in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret will reward thee openly ^l.”

But then, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do ^k; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be ye not therefore like unto them, for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.

Luke tells us ^l, that Jesus being in prayer, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, “ Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples;” whereupon he taught them that prayer, in effect, which is delivered here by Matthew. But from the context in Luke, it seems that that was at some other time, not now; for that was after he had been praying, this while he was yet preaching; that at the request of one of his disciples, this of his own motion, without asking.

For being upon the subject of prayer, and having forewarned them what to shun in the performance of that duty, he now teaches them what to pray for, and how, giving them a form or pattern, but not tying them precisely or strictly to it. A form he thought fit to give them, and at that time it was the more needful, because the Holy Spirit (by whose assistance alone true prayer can be rightly conceived, and acceptably offered up to God) was not then as yet poured out upon them. After this manner therefore, said he, pray ye :

Our Father ^m,] not mine, or thine only, but ours, the common Father of the whole family and household of faith, for which every member ought to pray, as for himself.

Which art in heaven,] Not one of the Rabbinical sect-masters, who loved superiority, sought pre-emi-

^l Mat. vi. 6.

^k Ver. 7.

^l Luke xi. 1.

^m Mat. vi. 9.

nence, and affected publick salutations, and to be called Rabbi, Rabbi. For which cause, Christ afterwards forbade his disciples to call any man their father upon earth, because they had, in a religious sense, but one Father, and him in heaven.

Hallowed be thy name.] Sanctified, celebrated, praised, and glorified be thy name. Let holiness be attributed or ascribed to thy name.

Thy kingdom come.] Set up thy kingdom in us, and over us. Do thou rule and reign in us, and over us, and over all.

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.] That is, as Erasmus paraphraseth the words [in earth, as in heaven.] Let thy will be done in thy heavenly people, who are yet conversant bodily on earth, even as it is done in heaven; where none resisteth thy will.

Give us this day (or day by day) our daily bread.] Give us neither poverty nor riches; but feed us with food convenient for us, Prov. xxx. 8. both spiritual and temporal.

And forgive us our debts (or sins, Luke xi. 4.) for we also forgive our debtors, such as have trespassed against us.

And lead us not (or suffer us not to be led) into temptation; but deliver us from evil, or the evil one, the tempter. God is faithful, said the apostle, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able: but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it, 1 Cor. x. 13.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

This is called the doxology, or hymn of glory, often repeated in liturgies, but controverted among the learned, whether it be a part of the foregoing prayer or no.

In the English Liturgy, or Common-Prayer, it is sometimes taken in with the Lord's Prayer; sometimes left out; the reason whereof, given by some of that communion, is, because the doxology is no part of the Lord's prayer. So says Dr. Sparrow, Bishop of Exon,
in

in his Rationale upon the Book of Common-Prayer, page 23, where he farther opens the matter thus :

‘ Though in St. Matthew vi. it be added in our usual copies; yet in the most antient copies, says he, it is not to be found, no, nor in St. Luke’s copy, Luke xi. and therefore is thought to be added, by the Greek church, who indeed use it in their liturgies (as the Jews before them did) but divided from the prayer, as if it were no part of it. The Latin church generally say the prayer, as this church does, without the doxology, following St. Luke’s copy; who setting down our Lord’s prayer exactly, with this introduction, When you pray, say, not after this manner, as St Matthew has it, but say, Our Father, &c. leaves out the doxology.’

To the same purpose speak others, as Erasmus, Zegerus and Grotius, in the Criticks. But I chose rather to give the sense of the Church of England from a Bishop of her own,

In the prayer, our Lord taught his disciples to ask forgiveness of their heavenly Father, as they forgave (or because they forgave) those that had offended them. But this lesson of forgiving injuries being somewhat hard to be thoroughly learned; he, after the prayer, as a strong motive and inducement thereunto, assured themⁿ, that if they did forgive men their trespasses, their heavenly father (to whom they prayed, and of whom they asked forgiveness) would also forgive them. But that if they did not forgive men their trespasses, neither would their father forgive them theirs.

To prayer he joins fasting, which he doth not directly injoin, but directs them how, when they did fast, they should behave themselves in it, without ostentation, or seeking the praise of men.

Moreover, said he^o, When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. But thou, when thou prayest, anoint thy head, and wash

ⁿ Mat. vi. 14.

^o Mat. vi. 16.

thy face (which was usual with the Jews to do at other times, when they fasted not) that thou appear not unto men to fast; but to thy Father, who, seeing in secret, will reward thee openly.

And because the pharisees did much value and set great store by the fame and estimation they got among the people, by their fasting and hypocritical looks; they being covetous and greedy of gain, seeking by such false appearances of devotion and piety to scrape together and heap up to themselves great store of wealth^p; for they are taxed by Christ, in three of the Evangelists, with devouring widows houses, under colour or pretence of making long prayers; our Lord takes occasion, first, to dehort his disciples from laying up for themselves treasures upon earth, from the hazard there is of keeping them safe there; where moth and rust (any thing that frets and eats metals, or other things) corrupt; and where thieves may, and often do, break through and steal^q.

Then he exhorts them to lay up for themselves treasures in heaven, where they shall be out of all that danger. And in the next words he adds the reason why it is necessary for them thus to do: for where your treasure is, there, says he, will your heart be also.

So that if your treasure consists of earthly things (outward riches, popular fame, feigned humility, counterfeit shews of devotion and piety, or the like) and be repositied in the earth, or earthly part, they will draw your hearts down into the earth, and ye will be earthly-minded; not regarding any thing but what is attainable here below.

But if your treasure consists of heavenly things (solid virtue, true piety, hearty devotion, inward humility, cordial charity; exerting itself in beneficence towards all; the poor, and Christ's poor more especially) this, and such-like treasure as this is, being laid up in heaven (from whence it came, and was received) will draw the mind upward from the earth and earthly things, and

^p Mat. xxiii. 14. Mark xii. 40. Luke xx. 47. ^q Mat. vi. 19.
will

will engage the heart to seek a conversation in heaven, Phil. iii. 20.

And because the judgment or understanding is to the mind, what the eye is to the body, he takes occasion here also, by a metaphor taken from the eye, to set before them the danger and mischief of having the judgment corrupted and darkened, so as either to prefer the earthly things to the heavenly, or mistake those for these.

“The light of the body, says he, is the eye^r. If therefore thine eye be single (clear and free from spots and defects) thy whole body shall be full of light (thou wilt see clearly thy way, and how to manage what thou undertakest). But if thine eye be evil (covered with spots, films, or any thing that obstructs the sight) thy whole body will be full of darkness. And then if the light (put by a metonymy for the eye, or organ of sight, which should convey the light) in thee be darkness (or darkened, the abstract being put for the concrete) how great is that darkness!” So if thy judgment, the eye of thy mind, be darkened by self-interest, private affections, or unruly passions, how great will the darkness of thy mind then be!

And lest through such darkness of mind, and for want of clear sight, any one should so far misapprehend, as to think there is no such incompatibility between the heavenly and earthly things (the two sorts of treasure here treated of) but that they may enjoy both, and lay up store of each; he informs them farther, by another metaphor^s, taken from the relation between masters and servants, that no man can serve two masters (whose services and requirings are contrary one to the other). For either he will hate the one and love the other; or at least hold to the one, and despise the other.

Ye cannot, says he, serve God and mammon (that is, riches, Luke xvi. 11. in the margin). He therefore that having riches would serve God, must not serve his

^r Mat. vi. 22. Luke xi. 34. ^s Mat. vi. 24.

riches, but make his riches serve him; be himself subject to God's command, but keep his riches in subjection to his command. So shall he have but one master, to wit, God, to serve; the other, who would be master, but should not, being made and kept a servant.

Here an objection might arise thus; "But if I do not lay up treasures upon earth, as well as in heaven, What shall I have to live upon? How shall I be maintained? With what shall I provide for myself food and raiment?"

This objection our Lord foresaw, and obviated it, by bidding them take no thought for their life, what they should eat, or what they should drink; nor yet for their body, what they should put on^t. Where, we may observe, he doth not say, take no pains, use no endeavour to get a livelihood; but be not thoughtful about it; be not over careful, too solicitous; make it not thy main business; not thy master. Do thy just endeavour, and leave the rest to God.

This he enforces by an argument *à majori*; reasoning from the greater to the less, thus^u: "Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment?" Well then, since God is the author of both thy life and thy body, and thou owest both to his bounty and goodness, canst thou doubt, that, while thou continuest in his service, and dost honestly perform thy part, he will afford thee raiment to cover the body, and food to sustain the life he hath given thee?

But if reason will not rule thee, take example^w: "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns." They only seek about, and pick up what they find (according to the instinct and law of their nature) yet your heavenly Father feedeth them (that is, provideth that there should be food for them to find and live upon) and are not ye much better than they? Here he argues *à minore*, from the less to the greater. If he takes such

^t Mat. vi. 5.

^u Ver. 25.

^w Ver. 26.

care of the fowls of the air, how much more will he of you; you are so much better than they?"

Besides, he shews them how vain and foolish a thing it was for them so eagerly to pursue that which was out of their reach, beyond their power. "Which of you, said he, by taking thought (by all his carking care) can add one cubit unto his stature*?"

Then for raiment, he asks them, "Why take ye thought (why are ye so anxiously concerned about it)? consider the lillies of the field how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon (whose peaceful reign did so abound with wealth^γ, that silver and gold were at Jerusalem as plenteous as stones, 2 Chron. i. 15. and silver was not of any account, chap. ix. 20. he) in all his glorious robes of royalty, was not arrayed like one of these." Wherefore (by an argument again from the less to the greater) "If God, said he, so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is (fresh, green and beautiful) and yet so fading, frail and perishing, that to-morrow it is (withered, cut up, and) cast into the oven (to heat it with) shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" So the Jews were wont to call them by way of reproof, who having enough for the present, did vex and torment themselves for fear of wanting hereafter.

Besides, added he^z, "These are the things which the Gentiles (or heathen, whom the Jews, in contempt, called finners) seek after. And will ye be like them? Be not therefore so thoughtful concerning these low things (what ye shall eat, drink, and be clothed with): for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God^α (which implies, that these necessary things may lawfully be sought also, in right time, and with due bounds; though not in the first place, nor too eagerly) and when the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, is sought first and

* Mat. vi. 27.

^γ Ver. 28.

^z Ver. 32.

^α Ver. 33.

chiefly;

chiefly; then all these things (that are fit for you) shall be added to you."

Wherefore, to conclude this subject, he wills them not to be over thoughtful for the morrow^b (the time to come); but leave that care until the time comes; for every day brings vexation and trouble enough with with it (which is here called the evil of the day) so that we need not increase them by perplexing thoughts concerning the future, or how we shall get through hereafter.

Having thus thoroughly cautioned them against worldly-mindedness; he, in the next, place warns them to beware that they be not rash and hasty in passing judgment upon others.

That the pharisees were very censorious of others, as well as highly opinionated of themselves, is evident from the representation Christ gives of them, in the parable of the pharisee and the publican, Luke xviii. 11. That therefore he might at once both secure his disciples against this evil, and expose the pharisees for it, he, going on in his sermon, says, "Judge not, that ye be not judged: for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again^c."

This plainly shews that he did not forbid simply and indefinitely all judging; but hasty, unadvised, rash, unrighteous and false judging; such judgment, as will bring them under judgment for it, that give it. Judge not so, as to bring judgment upon yourselves for giving it. Judge nothing before the time, 1 Cor. iv. 5. Judge no man without first hearing him, John vii. 51. Judge not according to the outward appearance only, but judge righteous judgment, John vii. 24. Judge not according to the flesh, John viii. 15. by human conjectures, or carnal affections. Judge not others for that, whereof ye yourselves are guilty, Rom. ii. 21, &c.

Then, by an apostrophe, directing his speech to the pharisees (of whom, we may suppose, there might be

^b Mat. vi. 34.

^c Mat. vii. 1.

not a few, among so great a multitude of auditors as he then had) “ And why^d, said he, beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye; but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast the mote out of thy brother’s eye.”

But observing, perhaps, how hardly this went down with some among the people, he turned his discourse to his disciples again, and said, “ Give not that which is holy unto the dogs (such as will fly out, and at least snarl, and bark at, if not bite, him that delivers those holy things to them); neither cast your pearls before swine (such as will give you the hearing, it may be, but wallow on still in their own mire and unclean ways). Lest the one fort trample them under their feet, and the other turn again and rent you.”

He had taught them before how to pray; and now, to encourage them to the practice, he says^e, “ Ask (in such manner as I have taught you) and it shall be given you. Seek (aright) and ye shall find. Knock (in due season) and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that (so) asketh, receiveth; and he that (so) seeketh, findeth; and to him that (so) knocketh, it shall be opened.”

This he confirms, by a comparison drawn between a son and a father. “ What man, says he, is there of you, who, if his son ask of him bread, or a fish, will give him a stone, or a serpent? Now then (to reason from the less to the greater) If ye, though ye be evil, know how to give good gifts to your children; how much more shall your father, who is in heaven (who is good, and the fountain of goodness) give good things to them that ask (aright) of him?”

Then adding his golden rule, he said^f, “ All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.” The scope and drift, the sum and sub-

^d Mat. 7. 3.^e Ver. 7.^f Ver. 12.

stance of what the law and the prophets require of you, with respect to your duty, both one to another, and to all men, is virtually contained in this one most excellent precept.

But because they could not do this, if they walked in the common road, in which the common rout of wicked men walked, he describes to them the two gates^g, leading to the two ways, at one of which all men enter, and in one of which all men walk: the strait gate and the wide; and the narrow way and the broad.

The wide gate and the broad way (though many enter in thereat, and there is always great store, though not good store, of company walking therein) leads directly to destruction.

But the strait gate (which, alas! but few find) and the narrow way (which is comparatively but little trod) leadeth assuredly unto life. Therefore he exhorts his to strive to enter in at the strait gate^h; that so, walking in the narrow way, they might obtain life eternal.

And lest the pharisees, by their specious shews of austerity, and outside appearances of piety and devotion, should mislead them to think that was the narrow way which they walked in, he bids them beware of false prophetsⁱ.

The word prophet is not restrained to such only as did foretel things to come, but extended to all such as took upon them to teach others; of which sort the scribes, by profession, the pharisees, by usurpation, made a considerable number.

And this caution he gave them the rather, because these (of whom he now warns them) though they came to them in sheeps cloathing (in an appearance or shew of meekness, humility, and harmless innocency, most likely to deceive) were yet inwardly, and in their hearts, ravening wolves; such as, if once they got them within their reach, would persecute, tear and devour them.

These, he tells his disciples, they may know by their fruits^k. That four fruit for one, ravening, rending,

^g Mat. vii. 13. ^h Luke xiii. 24. ⁱ Mat. vii. 15. ^k Ver. 16.
tearing,

tearing, devouring all that would not conform to them, and come under their teaching. Their hypocritical shew of devotion for another; whereby they devoured widows houses, Mat. xxiii. 14. For of outward conversation, with respect to an immoral and vicious course of life, we cannot suppose these words to be meant, either only or chiefly, since the pharisees in general, for ostentation and interest sake, avoided that. And indeed, the comparative instances which follow, do intimate the fruits here mentioned to be rather of that persecuting kind. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? The false prophets here are compared to thorns and thistles (or bramble bushes, Luke vi. 44.) very sharp and prickly shrubs; whose fruits shew their natures. For as a good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and cannot bring forth evil; so a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit, and cannot bring forth good; but is fit to be hewn down, and cast into the fire.

By their fruits therefore ye shall know them; much better than by their pretences¹. “For not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven. For though many will say to me in that day (wherein entrance shall be given into the kingdom of heaven) Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? Yet will I then profess unto them, I never knew you (where, by knew you is meant, I never approved or owned you). Depart therefore from me (how many and great things soever ye have done; or how fine things soever ye can speak) ye that work iniquity.”

This shews, that it is not talking well, but walking well; not saying, nor hearing only, but doing the will of God, that will avail. “Therefore (added he^m, to close up this his excellent sermon) whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them; I will liken him unto a wise man, that built his house upon a rock; and

¹ Mat. vii. 21.^m Ver. 24.

though the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; yet it fell not, because it was founded upon a rock. But every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and when the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, down it fell; and great was the fall thereof."

With this did our Lord close his sermon; which is commonly, for distinction sake, called his sermon on the mount. And when he had done, the people were astonished at his doctrineⁿ, and at the power with which he delivered it: for he taught them as one having authority; and not as the scribes.

For the scribes, being but interpreters of the law, did only give their sense thereof, as men. But Christ went farther.

For, as Zegerus, on the place, observes: *‘ Ille videlicet, non ut minister, aut simplex legis interpres, ea doceret; sed ut dominus et autor legis, suo jure atque auctoritate addebat complebatque quæ deerant legi; unde & dicebat, audistis quod dictum sit antiquis: ego autem dico vobis, i. e. He did not teach those things as a bare minister, or interpreter only of the law; but, as Lord and author of the law, he, by his own right and authority, did add to, and fill up, what was wanting to the law. Upon which account it was that he said, Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time: but I say unto you.’*

Some parts of this sermon are related by Luke, in chap. vi. from ver. 20, to the end; and but some parts: and those too with some variation; as the reader, if he please, by comparing the places, may observe.

But since Luke reports it so, as if it had been delivered in the plain (not on the mountain, as Matthew gives it; but after Jesus was come down from the mountain, and stood with his disciples in the plain) it hath occasioned some doubt, whether it be one and the

ⁿ Mat. vii. 29.

same sermon, delivered at one and the same time with that in Matthew, or not.

Dr. Hammond, on the same place, says, ‘ That the
‘ beatitudes here repeated are the same which are men-
‘ tioned, Mat. v. there is little cause of doubting:
‘ though whether they were but once delivered, only
‘ in the sermon on the mount; or whether again re-
‘ peated in some other sermon to other auditors, it is un-
‘ certain. That there is some variety in the words, as
‘ also in some other places, some little differences be-
‘ tween this and the other gospels, seems to be caused
‘ by Luke’s writing his gospel by short notes, which
‘ he had received from those that were present, being
‘ not an eye and ear-witness himself.’

After our Lord was come down from the mountain, where he had preached the most excellent of sermons, and had also cleansed a leper of his leprosy (of which an account is given before, from Mark i.) he went to Capernaum again. Whither he was no sooner got, but a centurion (a Roman captain over an hundred men) came to him, and beseeching him, said, “ Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and grievously tormented*.” So we read it in Matthew.

But Luke tells us^p, that the centurion (whose servant, that was dear unto him, was sick and ready to die) when he heard of Jesus, sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

These, when they were come to Jesus, besought him instantly to go; and to move him thereunto, told him, “ The centurion was worthy to have this done for him: for, said they, he loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue.”

Upon this Jesus went with them. But when he was come near the house, the centurion sent some of his friends unto him, to say unto him in his name, “ Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; wherefore neither

* Mat. viii. 5.

^p Luke vii. 3.

thought I myself worthy to come unto thee; but say thou the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say unto one, go, and he goeth; to another come, and he cometh; and to my servant, do this, and he doth it."

When Jesus heard these words, he marvelled; and turning him about, said unto the people that followed him, "I have not found so great faith (as is in this Roman soldier) no not in Israel (among God's own peculiar people the Israelites).

Hence he took occasion to give a short hint of that, which of all things was the most displeasing to the Jews⁹ (to wit, the calling of the Gentiles, and casting off of the Jews): when hereupon he told them, "Many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and with Isaac, and with Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Then turning to the centurion^r (if he was present, as Matthew delivers it) he said, "Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." And his servant was healed in the same hour: for so (as Luke relates it) they that were sent found upon their return to the house.

The difference, though but in circumstances, between the relations of this matter, as given by Matthew and Luke, is so obvious, that it hath occasioned some question, whether it was one and the same, or two distinct cures wrought at divers times, and on different persons. But there is so much agreement, not in the substance only, but in several of the circumstances which make up the story, as is sufficient to persuade that it is but one, though differently delivered.

They who would excuse (rather than reconcile) the different relations, suppose Matthew (in reporting the centurion to be present, and to have spoken *Ore tenus*,

⁹ Mat. viii. 11.

^r Ver. 13.

face to face) to have had regard to that common saying, "That what we do by others, we do by ourselves:" and thereupon to have delivered what Luke says was said by his friends and messengers, as if spoken personally by himself.

But let it be remembered, that Matthew, being in all probability present at this action (which was performed after he was become a follower of Jesus) both saw and heard what he wrote; and therefore could not be so likely to mistake as Luke, who wrote by report from others. And although those others, from whom he received his account, were such ministers of the word, as (in his proem he says) had been eye-witnesses from the beginning; yet in the transferring the account from them to him, it is not very difficult to apprehend how such a mistake might be committed.

But however it was in that particular circumstance, certain it is in the main, and in the substance, that a very great miracle was wrought on the centurion's servant, who being ready to die of a palsy, was in a moment restored to health by a word spoken; and that too at a distance.

The next day he went to Nain, or Naim^s, having many of his disciples, and much people with him. And when, being come nigh to the gate, he was about to enter into the city, behold there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, who was a widow; and much people was with her, attending the corpse to the burial.

Our Lord, having compassion on the afflicted mother, bid her not weep. At which word, they that bare the corpse standing still, he came and touched the bier (or bed) on which the body lay; and said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." Whereupon he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. This motion of his, in sitting up, shews that the body was not laid into a coffin; or at least, that if it were, the coffin was not closed or shut down.

^s Luke vii. 11.

When Jesus had delivered this dead man, thus miraculously raised to life, unto his mother again; not admiration only (as in other cases) but fear came on all; and they glorified God, acknowledging, that a great prophet was risen among them, and that God had visited his people. And this rumour of him going forth throughout all Judea^t, and the region round about, the disciples of John related to him in prison the things they had heard concerning Jesus.

This shews, that though John was committed to prison by the king himself, or at least by his express command; and for that, which, no doubt, was then accounted an high misdemeanour or crime; yet he was not kept so close a prisoner, but that his disciples had free access to him.

They, though they could not but have heard of (at least, if they had not seen) the great works which Jesus daily wrought; yet, being still, notwithstanding, somewhat doubtful in their minds concerning him; John chusing out two of them, sent them to Jesus^u, to ask him this plain and direct question; “Art thou he that should come? Or, do we look for another^w?”

Some have thought that John himself had let in a doubt concerning him; because he had not, in all this time, delivered him out of prison; which, if he were the Son of God, indued with all fulness of power, it might have been expected he could, and would have done.

But doubtless John understood better the end of his coming; and therefore sent his disciples to Jesus upon this inquiry; and that they might be acquainted with him; and turn to him.

These men, when they were come to him^x, told him John Baptist had sent them to him, to ask him, whether he was the Messiah that was to come; or they were yet to look for another?

They came in such a seasonable hour, that they found him then curing many of their infirmities and plagues,

^t Luke vii. 18. ^u Ver. 19. ^w Mat. xi. 2. ^x Luke vii. 20.

and of evil spirits; and giving sight unto many that were blind.

Wherefore Jesus, not telling them whether he was or was not the Messiah, bid them, for answer, go their way, and tell John what things they had seen and heard¹: “How that the blind see (they that had been blind were made to see); the lame walk; the lepers were cleansed; the deaf hear; the dead are raised; and the gospel is preached to the poor.” And, added he, “Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me;” that is, at the little low and mean appearance wherein I am come; so much below what they expected.

Now, when the messengers of John were departed², he began to speak unto the people concerning John, asking them, “What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?” If so, ye were mistaken in John; for he was steady and constant.

“But what, said he again, went ye out to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? (then were ye no less mistaken in him: for he was grave and austere, and clothed in coarse raiment, camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle). Behold, added he, they who are gorgeously appalled, and live delicately, are in kings courts (whereas John was in the desert or wilderness).”

But, to put the question once more, “What went ye out to see? A prophet? (then indeed ye went right: but your expectation was too low; for I tell you he was a prophet); yea, and much more than a prophet³.” This is he of whom it is written (though with some variation) “Behold I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee,” Mal. iii. 1.

“For I say unto you, amongst those that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist;” not only as his dispensation came nearer to that of the gospel, than did the legal dispensation, under which all the former prophets lived and prophe-

¹ Mat. xi. 5. ² Luke vii. 24, Mat. xi. 7. ³ Mat. xi. 11.
 Luke vii. 28,

fied: but as they foretold the coming of the Messiah at a distance, long before he came; whereas John, pointing him out as it were with the finger, said, This is he.

Yet as great as John was, he that is least in the kingdom of God (he that is under the dispensation of the Messiah himself, the gospel, which as far (and farther) excels that of John, as his did that of the law; and who, by being in the kingdom, knows the mysteries of the kingdom, and hath them committed to him to preach to others; such an one) is greater than he: the degrees of comparison here lying not between persons, but dispensations and doctrines, as Beza on Mat. xi. 11. noteth.

For all the prophets, and the law, prophesied until John: but from the days of John the Baptist, until now^b, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

The meaning whereof is taken to be, that though few of the grandees, or rulers among the Jews (not many mighty, not many noble, 1 Cor. i. 26.) came to receive the gospel ("Have any of the rulers, or of the pharisees believed on him?" John vii. 48.) yet great numbers of the meaner sort of Jews, with some publicans, and some Gentiles (by the Jews called sinners) flocked in; and with such ardent affection and zeal pressed into the dispensation of the Messiah (called here the kingdom of heaven, because it led thereunto) as soldiers use to do, who would by force take a town; to which sort of military action there seems here to be an allusion.

When Jesus had, to this purpose, delivered himself concerning John^c, all the people that heard him (take it chiefly for the common people) who had been baptized with the baptism of John, and the publicans, justified God; that is, acknowledged the justice, goodness, and mercy of God, in thus opening a way and means of salvation unto all mankind.

^b Mat. xi. 12.

^c Luke vii. 29.

But the pharisees, and the lawyers^d (or scribes) who had not come to John's baptism, made void to themselves the counsel of God, who by that ministration, if they would have received it, would have led them to repentance, and so have brought them to Christ, the universal Saviour, as he did others.

This obstinacy of theirs led our Lord to say, "Whereunto shall I liken the men of this generation?" and to what are they like? Why, they are even like, said he, unto the children sitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept."

Under this parabolical speech, it may be supposed, that Jesus comprehended not only the untractable men of that generation, but even himself also, and John the Baptist; whom he compared to those children, who by mirth and mourning invited others to chearfulness and sadness, but could not prevail on their stubborn tempers to comply with them in either.

"For John the Baptist, said he^e, came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine;" that is, not in a sociable familiar way of conversation, but in an abstemious and severe course of life; "and ye say, he hath a Devil."

On the other hand, "The Son of man (Jesus himself) is come eating and drinking; that is, in a free, familiar, sociable way of conversing; and ye cry out, Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber; a friend of publicans and sinners."

But yet, for all this, "Wisdom is justified of all her children." Not only I myself (who am the Divine Wisdom, and have been of old set forth by that name, Prov. i. 20. and chap. viii.) am justified by those whom I have begotten to God. But the wisdom of God, in sending John, as my fore-runner, with his penitential baptism, to prepare a people to receive my purifying baptism and saving doctrine, is justified of all those, who by that means have been drawn to own and follow me.

^d Luke vii. 30. ^e Mat. xi. 16. Luke vii. 31. ^f Mat. xi. 18.
Luke vii. 33.

Upon this (as it follows in Luke ^s) one of the pharisees inviting him to eat with him, he went into the pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. This pharisee's name was Simon. Whether the same that in Mark xiv. 3. is called the leper, is somewhat uncertain: it being not clear, whether the following story of the woman bringing a box of ointment, and anointing Jesus therewith ^h (which all the four evangelists mention, though not all alike) be but one and the same act, done at one and the same time; or different acts done at divers times:

Many, I know, hold it to be but one act; and Grotius, on Mat. xxvi. 6. hath taken some pains to prove it. But, with due regard to so great a man, I rather incline to their opinion, who make this story, related by Luke, distinct from that which is delivered by the other evangelists. And who shall duly consider all the circumstances of matter, time and place attending each, will perhaps find cause to be of the same mind.

That which is delivered by Matthew, Mark and John, was done at Bethany, a small village, but about fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem; whereas this, which Luke relates, seems to have been done in the city Nain, Luke vii. 11. and by a woman of that city, ver. 37. which Cradock, in his Harmony, chap. iv. sect. 9. page 164, tells us, is a city of Galilee, at the foot of mount Hermon, far enough from Bethany. But whether the stories relate to one and the same fact or no, the case was thus.

While Jesus was sitting at meat in this pharisee's house ⁱ, a woman in the city (who, having led a licentious life, is therefore here called a sinner; but had been converted by Christ, as appears Mark xvi. 9, and Luke viii. 2. though it doth not appear how or when) understanding that he was there, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and standing at his feet behind him weeping, began to wash his feet with tears, and then did

^f Luke vii. 36. ^h Mat. xxvi. 6. Mark xiv. 3. Luke vii. 37.
John xii. 3. ⁱ Luke vii. 37.

wipe them with the hairs of her head. Which done, she both kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

Now when the pharisee, who had invited him to eat with him^k, saw this, he said within himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what manner of woman this is that thus toucheth him."

Jesus knowing his hard thoughts both of the woman and himself, said, "Simon, I have something to say to thee. Say on then master, said Simon."

"There was, said Jesus^l, a certain creditor that had two debtors; whereof the one owed him five hundred pence, and the other fifty; and when they had nothing to pay, he freely forgave them both. Tell me now therefore, which of them will love him most? I suppose, answered Simon, that he will love him most, to whom he forgave most. Thou hast rightly judged, replied Jesus."

Then turning to the woman^m, but continuing his speech to Simon, "Seest thou, said he, this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet (which was the general custom of not only Jews, but all those eastern nations, towards strangers, travellers more especially) but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss (which was also the custom, as a symbol of friendship at least, and of kind reception) but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. Mine head with oil thou didst not anoint (which also was a custom among the Jews, used at their feasts or banquets to their guests; to which the psalmist may be thought to have alluded, when, setting forth the kindness of God unto him, he said, Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over, Psalm xxiii. 5). But though, (said Jesus to the pharisee) thou hast not anointed so

^k Luke vii. 39.

^l Ver. 41.

^m Ver. 44.

much as my head, this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

Then said he to her, "Thy sins are forgiven";^a which, indeed, they were before: the sense whereof drew forth her love so strongly to him. But he was willing, by thus declaring it, to renew the remembrance thereof to her, for her greater consolation and confirmation in the faith.

But when they that sat at meat with him^o, heard what he had said to the woman, they began to say within themselves, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" Which Jesus taking no notice of, said to the woman, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

That this woman, not here named, was Mary Magdalen (mentioned Mark xvi. 9, and Luke viii. 2.) is pretty generally agreed. But whether Mary Magdalen was Mary the sister of Lazarus, mentioned John xi. 1, 2. and chap. xii. 3. is not agreed amongst the learned. Grotius holds the negative, Dr. Lightfoot maintains the affirmative.

By this time there was a feast at Jerusalem^p, which most, I think, take to be the passover. But Zegerus tells us, Chryostom took it for the feast of Pentecost.

Whichsoever it was, it occasioned Jesus to go up to Jerusalem. Whither being come, he went, it seems, to a pool that was there, by the sheep-market; which, in the Hebrew tongue, was called Bethesda, that is, the house of mercy: so named from the many and great cures which the people received there.

It had five porches built about it^q for the accommodation of impotent folk; such as were blind, lame, or withered, who lay there waiting for the moving of the water. For at a certain season, an angel went down into the pool, and troubled the water; and whosoever

^a Luke vii. 48. ^o Ver. 49. ^p John v. 1. ^q Ver. 2.

then stepped in first, after the troubling of the water, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

Amongst the many that then lay there[†], waiting the good season for a cure, there was one poor man, who, it seems, had laboured under an infirmity for eight and thirty years together.

When therefore Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he asked him, “Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool. But while I (with much ado) am coming, another (that is more able, and can make more haste) steppeth down before me. Jesus thereupon said unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. Whereupon the man was immediately made whole, and took up his bed, and walked.”

This great cure was wrought on the sabbath-day[‡]; on which it was not lawful to bear any burthen, God having expressly forbidden it, Jer. xvii. 21. Yet here Christ bids this man take up his bed, and walk with it.

This gave great offence to the Jews. They said to him that was cured, “It is the sabbath-day; and therefore it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. But he answering, told them, he that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.” As much as to say, if it were an evil thing, surely he who is so good and so great, as, with a word speaking, to make me whole, would not have bidden me do it.

Upon this they asked him[†], “What man is that (not who made thee whole, for that they willingly passed over in silence, but) who said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?” And here the poor man was at a loss: for he that was healed, wist not who it was that had healed him. He could name no man; he could not describe him; for Jesus (having done the good, and not seeking the praise of men) had conveyed himself

† John v. 5.

‡ Ver. 9.

§ Ver. 12.

away; which he might the more easily do, because there was a multitude of people in that place.

But Jesus helped him out of this strait. For though the man did not know him, yet he knew the man; and finding him afterwards in the temple (which implies he rather sought him, than met him by accident) he discovered himself to him, by saying, "Behold thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." For (not to insist here, that bodily diseases are sometimes the punishments for sin) certain it is, that many infirmities proceed from intemperance, and an evil course of life.

The man, now reckoning he had good authority for what he had done ^w, went and told the Jews, that it was Jesus who had made him whole.

This gave the Jews a fresh handle, and (as they thought) a just occasion to prosecute Jesus: so that they sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath-day.

Here a question might arise, why Jesus would order the man to carry his bed on the sabbath-day, so directly contrary to the law? Might it not have sufficed to have healed the man on that day, and let his bed have lain where it was until the next day; where it might have lain without offence to any; and when it might also have been carried away without offence to any.

Dr. Lightfoot (in the third part of his Harmony, page 255, as cited by Samuel Cradock, in his Harmony of the Four Evangelists, page 86). puts the question thus:

‘ Why would our Saviour injoin him to carry his bed on the sabbath-day? It was contrary to the letter of the law: bear no burthen on the sabbath-day, &c. Jer. xvii. 21. To which himself thus answers: First, as to his bidding him carry his bed, it seems Christ would have him, hereby to shew that he was perfectly cured; seeing he that could not stir before, is now able to carry his bed; and so, by this action,

^w John v. 14.

^w Ver. 15.

at once he should give a publick testimony of the
 benefit received, and an evident demonstration of the
 perfectness of the cure. Now as to the day, adds he,
 Christ seems to intend hereby to shew his power over
 the sabbath. And as in healing the paralytick, Mark
 ii. 9. he would not only shew his power over the
 disease, but also over the sin, the cause of it, and so
 forgave it; so it pleased him, in this passage, to shew
 his power over the sabbath, to dispense with it, and to
 dispose of it, as he thought good; as he shewed his
 command over the malady that he cured. And here
 is the first apparent sign towards the shaking and
 alteration of the sabbath, as to the day, that we meet
 withal; and a greater we hardly meet with, till the
 alteration of the day came. For to injoin this man
 to carry his bed on that day, and to bear it home, when
 it might very well have lain there till the sabbath was
 over, certainly intimates that he intended to shew
 his authority over the sabbath, and to try the man's
 faith and obedience in a singular manner, and to assert
 his own divine Power and Godhead, even the same
 power that could warrant Abraham to sacrifice his
 own son, and Joshua to march about Jericho on the
 sabbath-day.' Thus he.

Evident it is from this, and other like cases, that
 Jesus did not study to please or humour these hypo-
 critical pharisees among the Jews; but rather, by both
 his actions and answers, did puzzle and confound them;
 as they, on the other hand, by wiles, stratagems, en-
 snaring questions, and sometimes open violence, sought
 to destroy him.

The text here says*, they did now, on this occasion,
 persecute him, and sought to slay him. How or after
 what manner they attempted this is not set forth.
 Some think they had him before the Sanhedrin, or
 great council of the Jews, and there accused him. But
 that doth not appear, nor yet what they said to him.
 But whatever they said to him, his answer to them

* John v. 16.

did but enrage them the more. For he answered them thus, " My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. "

By which words, closely asserting his divinity, and therein equality with God, he inferred that he had as much power or right to dispense with the sabbath now, as his Father always had, who, though he is said to have rested on the seventh day, after he had finished his six days work of creation, had continued working ever since, by his watchful providence, upholding, governing, renewing, providing for, and taking care of all his creatures, without ever being called to account, or questioned for it, by any of them.

They were not so dull, but they perceived the drift of his speech, and therefore sought the more to kill him, because he had not only broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his father, making himself equal with God.

Probable it is, that upon this they contradicted him also in discourse (though in what words is not expressed); because it follows in the text, then answered Jesus, and said unto them: " Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself² (as man) but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he (the Father) doth, these also doth the Son likewise." The Father and the Son being so one in the Godhead, that neither of them, in that respect, can act separately.

The reason of this is, the Father's loving the Son, and shewing him all things that himself doth. And (added he) " He will shew him greater works than these, that ye may at least have cause enough to marvel. For, as the Father raiseth up the dead³, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment to the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. For he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who hath sent him.

¹ John v. 17. ² Ver. 19. ³ Ver. 21.

By all which course of fair reasoning, grounded on his first assertion, that God is his Father, he covertly warned the Jews to beware how they charged him with having broken the sabbath; lest, since he had done nothing of himself, but all in conjunction with his Father, in accusing him, they should unwittingly and unwarily accuse God himself.

He had just before told them, "That the Father had committed all judgment to the Son." Wherefore now he shows them how they might escape the danger^b (the condemning part) of that judgment; namely, by hearing and believing. "Verily, verily, said he, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

And though they, in their captious and obstinate minds, would stop the ear, and refuse to hear; yet he tells them (with a Verily, verily, I say unto you) "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear (and hearing, believe and obey) shall live. For as, added he, the Father hath life in himself^c (whereby he raiseth up and quickeneth the dead); so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, whereby he also quickeneth whom he will, ver. 21). And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man."

This seems to have struck them a little, and to have put them to a stand; which might make Jesus, going on with his discourse, say, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming (he doth not say here, as he did before [and now is] because he seems now to refer to the time farther off), in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."

^b John v. 24.

^c Ver. 26.

And now again, having spoken such and so many great things to them, that they might not think he arrogated this power to himself as a man, he tells them, "I can of mine ownself do nothing (it is as I am one with my Father, that I do these things); neither do I judge merely as man^d; but as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father who hath sent me."

The hearing here referred to, was not that of the outward ear, as if he had used to judge by common hear-say or report; but it was the inward hearing, the hearing of the voice of his Father, who was in him, John xiv. 10. and xvii. 21. and 2 Cor. v. 19.

Hitherto he had defended himself against the cavils of his envious adversaries by reason and argument. Now coming to produce witnesses to prove his divinity, he first acknowledges, that according to the common course of judicial proceedings among men, a man's own evidence, in his own cause, is not valued; which is the meaning of his saying, "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true^e," that is, is not regarded as true. Not intending therefore to insist at this time on his own evidence, as man (though yet, to maintain his right and privilege as God, he elsewhere doth assert, that though he bear record of himself, his record is true, John viii. 14). he now tells them he had a fourfold evidence on his side."

First, John the Baptist "Whom, said he, ye sent unto^f, John i. 19. and he bare witness unto the truth," verse 27. But, added he, I receive not testimony from man (I value not myself upon any human testimony), yet inasmuch as he was a burning and shining light, and ye were willing, for a season, to rejoice in his light; his testimony is, and ought to be, of weight and force with you: and I therefore mention it, that ye may believe and be saved. But I have greater witness than that of John: for,

^d John v. 30.^e Ver. 31.^f Ver. 33.

Secondly, “The works which the Father hath given me to finish^g, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.”

Thirdly, “The Father himself^h, who hath sent me, hath borne witness of me (particularly and expressly by that voice, which was heard from heaven, saying of me, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” Mat. iii. 17.) “But this perhaps will be of least force with you; because ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape; and (which is worse) ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.”

Fourthly, “The scriptures bear witness to meⁱ. Them ye search, for in them ye think to have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me: but ye will not come unto me (as they direct you) that ye might have life.”

The ambiguity of the words [*Ἔρευνᾶτε*] in the Greek, and [*Scrutamini*] in the Latin, being each of them alike in the indicative and the imperative moods, hath occasioned a different reading of the texts: some reading it imperatively, Search ye; others indicatively, Ye search. Which latter way, Leigh in his *Crit. Sac. Verbo Ἔρευνᾶτε*, tells us, Cyril, Beza, Camerarius, Brentius, Toffanus, Cameron and Piscator follow: to whom may be added the learned Dr. Gell, who (both in his Essay, page 326. and page 491, and in his remains, page 13) reads it, “Ye search the scriptures;” and adds, for so the original *Ἔρευνᾶτε* is rather indicatively, than imperatively to be understood, as the text will appear to any judicious man that well considers it; whose authorities, I hope, will justify my reading the text that way.

When thus our Lord had proved his divinity to them by reason, argument, and plenty of witnesses, that they might not think he had done this to be cried up, and applauded by them, he lets them know he did not seek after popular applause; nor regarded honour from such

^g John v. 36.

^h Ver. 37.

ⁱ Ver. 37.

men as they were, who he knew had not the love of God in them: for if they had, they would have received him, whom God, in his abundant love, had sent unto them.

“But, said he, though ye receive not me^k, who am come unto you in my Father’s name; yet if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.” As indeed they did Barchochebas, Theudas, Judas of Galilee, &c. But this, he intimates, was no more than was to be expected from them, considering their ambitious temper, so greedy of human honour, and the lowness of his appearance amongst them. “How can ye believe, said he to them, who receive honour one of another; and seek not the honour which cometh from God only?”

And that they might not apprehend he spake this in a vindictive spirit^l, from a high resentment of their contempt of him, he bids them not think that he would accuse them to the Father (which he needed not do; for, said he) “There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings (whom ye so much cry up, and whose disciples ye boast yourselves to be) how shall ye believe my words, whom ye so much despise and vilify?”

Thus ended this discourse at that time. But long it was not before another occasion offered, to renew the debate about the sabbath^m. For it so fell out, that as Jesus walked through the corn-fields, his disciples, being hungry, did pluck the ears of corn; and, rubbing them in their hands, did eat thereof.

This is said to have been done on the second sabbath after the first; which being an obscure phrase, and sounding somewhat uncouthly, may to some need some explanation.

It hath much puzzled expositors, both ancient and modern. And the great Erasmus, though he plays somewhat pleasantly on the ignorance of others that

^k John v. 43. ^l Ver. 45. ^m Mat. xii. 1. Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. wrote

wrote before him, doth not himself attempt to open it. Of the criticks, Grotius seems to come the nearest. But our countrymen Godwyn and Lightfoot, give, I think, the best account of it.

Godwyn, in his *Moses and Aaron*, l. 3. c. 5. having first observed, that the fourteenth of the month Nisan (which with us takes part of the first month, and part of the second) was the passover; the fifteenth, the feast of the passover; the sixteenth, the second of the passover, or the morrow after the feast of the passover, called in Greek, *δευτέρα τῆ πάχα*, adds, that upon the *δευτέρα*, or morrow after the feast of the passover, they offered a sheaf, of the first fruits of their harvest, Levit. xxiii. 10. as upon the Pentecost they offered two wave-loves, Levit. xxiii. 17. The sheaf being an oblation offered in the name of the whole congregation, whereby all the after-fruits throughout the land were sanctified; it being from thence afterward lawful to reap the corn, &c. That from the *δευτέρα*, or the morrow after the feast of the passover, they did count fifty days to Pentecost, by numbering the weeks between; whence it was called a feast of weeks. The manner how they counted the weeks, was according to the number of the sabbaths following the *δευτέρα*, or morrow after the feast of the passover. Thus the first sabbath following they called the second-first sabbath; the second they called the second-second; the third, the second-third; and so on. So that all the weeks and sabbaths, during the time of the Pentecost, as the first, second, third, fourth, &c. took their denomination from the *δευτέρα*, or morrow after the feast of the passover. Which observation, says he, gives light to that of St. Luke vi. 1. where there is mention of a sabbath termed *Deuteroprōton*, that is, the second-first sabbath (or the second sabbath after the first): and by it is meant the sabbath next after the sixteenth of Nisan, which was the *δευτέρα*, or morrow after the feast of the passover.

This is the substance of what Godwyn there says. From which Dr. Lightfoot (as cited by Cradock in his

Harmony, page 93) doth not much vary. Take his words.

‘The law, says he, enjoined, that the next morrow after the eating of the passover, should be kept holy like a sabbath, Exod. xii. 16. accordingly it is called a sabbath, Levit. xxiii. 7. and v. 11. The law enjoins, that on the next day after that sabbatical day, they should offer the sheaf of the first-fruits to the Lord. And from that day they were to count seven sabbaths to Pentecost, which was their solemn festival, and thanksgiving for that half harvest, viz. barley-harvest, which they had then inned, Levit. xxiii. 15, 16, 17. That day therefore that they offered their first barley-sheaf, and from which they were to count the seven sabbaths, or weeks forward, being the second day in the passover week, the sabbaths that followed did carry a memorial of that day in their name, till the seven were run out. So the first was called the first-second sabbath; the next the second-second sabbath; and so the rest, all the seven through.’

Thus far he, for explaining that dark phrase [the second sabbath after the first]. Which having done, he next offers to consideration three things relating to the timing of the story.

First, That no corn, nor ears of corn might be eaten, till the first-fruits sheaf was offered, and waved before the Lord, Levit. xxiii. 14.

Second, That it was waved on the second day of the passover week.

Third, That it was the first sabbath after that second day, when the disciples plucked the ears of corn. And this, says he, will plainly evince, that we must look for a passover before this story: and so it will shew the warrant and justness of taking in the fifth of John next before it. Thus he.

If any one, not well acquainted with the husbandry of that country, should wonder that barley should be ripe so early, as to afford a sheaf of corn, fit to be offered as a first-fruit by the time of the passover (which fell about the latter end of the first month with us, commonly

monly called March, or the beginning of the second; whereas in these countries it is seldom sown till then, or after) the same Dr. Lightfoot may inform him, that barley seed-time with them was about the beginning of our November. So that the barley being sown at the beginning of winter, and, through the mildness of the air, growing all the winter, it was come to that ripeness by the time of the passover, that from that time, after the sheaf was offered, the barley-harvest began.

Having somewhat cleared these doubtful parts, let us now go on with the story itself; from which we have made this (I hope not unnecessary) digression.

We observed before, that the disciples following their master through the corn-fieldsⁿ, did pluck the ears, rub them in their hands, and eat them, to satisfy their hunger.

This the pharisees (who always watched with an evil eye, and for mischief) observing, presently picked a quarrel with them. "For why do ye (said they to them) that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath-day?"

So Luke gives it. But Matthew delivers it not as a question put by the pharisees to the disciples; but as a charge laid before Jesus himself against his disciples. And so Mark also has it, save that he puts it by way of question, though to Jesus himself.

However, Jesus so took it to himself, as to undertake the defence of his disciples therein. And the charge being only for doing this on the sabbath-day (for the law allowed them to pluck the ears of corn to eat, in whose field soever they came; so they did not cut down, Deut. xxiii. 25). he urges first the example of David.

"Have ye not heard (says he to the pharisees) what David did^o, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him? How he entered into the house of God (to wit, the tabernacle before the temple was built) in the days of Abiathar the high-priest and did eat the

ⁿ Mat. xii. 1, Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1. ^o Mat. xii. 5.

shew-bread; which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them that were with him, but only for the priests."

This, so apt an instance, was enough of itself to stop the mouths of his cavilling adversaries; yet to weigh them down, he gave them more, thus :

"Or have ye not read^p, said he, in the law, Numb. viii. 9, 10. how that on the sabbath-days the priests in the temple prophane (that is, do that which ye would account a prophaning of) the sabbath, and yet are blameless?"

And if ye think the holiness of the temple would excuse and bear them out in what they did, I tell you plainly, "That in this place is one greater than the temple."

"But if, added he^q, ye had known what this meaneth (which God, by his prophet Hosea, chap. vi. verse 6, spake to your fathers, viz). I will have mercy (with sacrifice); and not sacrifice (without mercy) ye would not have condemned the guiltless; but would have understood both that the sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath, and that the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath." Which words [Son of man] in this place, Grotius will not admit should be restrained to Christ only (accounting that an error) but will have it extend to every man; inasmuch as the sabbath was made for every man, or for man indefinitely.

Thus, for aught appears, ended this discourse also for this time between the pharisees and our Saviour. But before we proceed to another, two things, which have dropped in by the way, as it were, in this, deserve to be taken notice of.

The one is, that our Lord, in urging the example of David's going into the house of God, and eating of the shew-bread, mentions them that were with him (which all the three evangelists, that relate the story, have): whereas, in 1 Sam. xxi. 1. (where the story is originally given, and from whence we may suppose our Lord to

^p Mat. xii. 5.

^q Ver. 7.

have it) the priest, as surprized, and wondering at the manner of David's coming, asked him, "Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?" And David (implicitly acknowledging that he was alone, and had no one there present with him) pretended that he had appointed his servants to attend him at some other place.

Which, notwithstanding the unanimous agreement of the three evangelists mentioning them that were with him; and both Luke and Mark expressing that he gave (of the shew-bread) to them that were with him, hath drawn Grotius to conclude that David had some company with him in that flight of his; but that they went not throughout with him to the priest at Nod, but made an halt somewhere by the way.

But he that shall duly consider the condition David was then in, and the manner of his escape, at that time, from the stone Ezel (where we may reasonably conclude he was alone, and which none was privy to, but his friend Jonathan only, 1 Sam. xx.) may find reason enough, perhaps, to suspend his belief of David's having then any company with him; and conjecture rather, that from David's telling the priest he had appointed his servants to attend him at such a place, and taking with him of the bread, as if it were for them, as well as for himself, a traditional report might go along with the story, that David had some with him who did eat of the bread as well as he. And this serving to make the instance more forcible against the pharisees, that not David only (who had been anointed, as well as the priest, and that by God's express command, 1 Sam. xvi. 13. though not to the same office) did eat of the consecrated bread, but his common servants also, at his hand, and that without blame, might make our Lord urge both the text and the tradition together, and the evangelists record it accordingly.

The other is, that this act of David's is said to have been done in the days of Abiathar the high-priest; so Mark only has it. Whereas it is plain¹, by the text,

¹ Mark ii. 26.

1 Sam. xxi. 1. that it was in the days of Ahimelech (who was the father of Abiathar, 1 Sam. xxii. 20); and it was Ahimelech, not Abiathar, that suffered for it.

To reconcile this, great endeavours have been used, and divers inventions sought. Some would have it that both Ahimelech and Abiathar (father and son) were binominous, or had each of them these two names. And that way runs, besides others, the marginal note on the place in the Old Bible. But of that Grotius says, *Nondum video probatum*, I do not yet see it proved.

Hierom, as quoted by Erasmus on the place, thinks the name Abiathar is put for Ahimelech: but whether because both those names belonged to one and the same man, or whether it happened through the fault of the writers, he seems not to know.

Erasmus blames him for knitting the knot, and not opening it: yet doth not attempt to untie it himself.

Others are of opinion, that Abiathar the son did officiate the priests office for and under Ahimelech his father. And this way Erasmus tells us Lyranus goes, with whom agrees Zegerus on the place.

Drusius, reciting the opinions of others, among the rest, tells us, Theophylact thought these things were done by Ahimelech, the father, under the pontificate (or high-priesthood) of Abiathar, who is therefore called high-priest: whereas the other (his father Ahimelech) is called only priest. Which groundless notion Drusius himself rejects, yet gives not his own judgment on the place; acknowledging it to be a question which deserved to be discussed at more leisure than he, it seems, then had.

Grotius finds nothing, he says, more probable, as a reason why Abiathar is here named, than that his name was more noted than his father Achimelech's, as well for his carrying the ephod to David, 1 Sam. xxiii. 6. as for that he, for a long time, bore the high-priest's office under David, &c.

With him, in the main, agrees Dr. Hammond; save that he has a particular contrivance beyond the rest
(if

(if it will hold) which is, to render the preposition ἐπι by *circa*, or *ante*; and so read the text (instead of *in* the days of Abiathar the high-priest) *about*, or *before*, Abiathar's being high-priest.

Having thus briefly given the different opinions of divers on this place (all well intended, no doubt, as tending, which one observes, in *patrocinium puritatis textus*, to defend the purity of the text; which no man can more heartily desire than I) I shall leave it to the considerate reader's judgment, whether, seeing of the three evangelists that relate the story, Mark only (who all agree was not an ear-witness, but wrote as he received from others) mentions Abiathar, it may be supposed, without any derogation from the honour due to the text, that the name Abiathar has here slipped in (as in some other places the like hath happened) if not by a misinformation at the first to the evangelist; yet at least (as Hierom intimates) *vitio scriptorum*, by the fault of writers. But to proceed.

When Jesus had left the place where he had held this discourse with the pharisees about the sabbath^s, he went into their synagogue. Luke says, on another sabbath: but, as Matthew delivers it, it seems to be the same day. However, on a sabbath it was, as many of his miraculous cures proved to be.

In this synagogue there was a man whose right hand was withered (the sinews being shrunk and dried up): the scribes and pharisees watched him, to see whether he would heal this man on the sabbath-day, that they might have whereof to accuse him; and, according to Matthew, they not only watched him, but put the question directly to him, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-day?"

Jesus knew their thoughts, and what they intended by this question. Wherefore, having bid the man arise, and stand forth in the midst (that all might see his lameness, and be the more moved with compassion towards him) he said to them, "I will ask you one thing

* Mat. xii. 10. Mark iii. 3. Luke vi. 7.

also; Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath-day, or to do evil? To save life, or to destroy it?"

But they (seeing the tendency of his question, and foreseeing whither it would lead them) warily held their peace; which he observing, pressed them farther with another question, more particular and close.

"What man, said he, shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, which, if it fall into the pit on the sabbath-day, will not lay hold on it, and lift it out?" Then arguing from the less to the greater; if one of you would do so much to save a sheep, what should not I do to recover a man? He thence infers, "Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath-days." Thus answered he their objection in substance, though not in direct terms; putting only the words [do well] instead of [heal] as concluding, that to heal is to do well.

When thus he had put to silence his captious adversaries, he looked round about on them with anger (not pettish, nor revengeful, like theirs towards him, but arising from grief for the hardness of their hearts); and said unto the man, "Stretch forth thine hand. Whereupon he stretched it forth, and it was restored whole as the other."

At sight of this (which, one would think, might have broken their hard hearts) they were filled with madness; and not only communed one with another what they might do to Jesus, but the pharisees went out, and (though it was the sabbath-day) straitway held a council with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

Hence we may conclude, that although they would not answer his question [Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath-day, or to do evil? To save life, or to destroy it?] they would not have stuck at destroying him on the sabbath-day, if they could.

But that which perplexed them was, they could not convict him of any overt act, whereby they might charge him with having broken the sabbath. For though (as Drusus, on Mark iii. 6. observes) every medicinal act, though it were but to lay a plaister on a
fore,

fore, or to put spittle on the eyes, was, according to their constitutions, a breach of the sabbath; yet, in this case, they could not charge Jesus with having done so much as that; for he had done no overt act at all, but with a word only had healed the man.

This difficulty, perhaps, put the pharisees upon taking the Herodians into consultation with them, to see if they could find any way to insnare him: for as in the multitude of (good) counsellors there is safety, Prov. xi. 14. so the more evil counsellors, the more danger. And these Herodians being (whatever they were else) strict observers of the sabbath, were the fitter to be consulted with in this case by the pharisees, who otherwise, for some opinions they held opposite to pharisaism, were sufficiently averse from them.

Who, or what in particular, these Herodians were, who now clubbed with the pharisees against Jesus, is not well agreed among interpreters. Some think them to have been Greeks by nation, brought by Herod from the desert to Jerusalem; and there settled in a kind of religious order, or course of life, of his institution. A part whereof was to celebrate his birth-day with lighted candles, or torches, crowned with violets, and placed in the windows. Of which Drusius, on Mat. xxii. 16. gives some account; and Persius, the fatyrist, more, in Sat. 5. *sub finem*.

Others take them to have been a sect among the Jews, in our Saviour's time, who embracing Sadducism, drew king Herod into that error with them: and that he and they together formed a sort of new religion, partly out of Paganism, and partly out of Judaism; as Beza notes, on Mat. xxii. 16. Which our Saviour is supposed by some to have struck at, in that caution of his to his disciples, "to beware of the leaven, not only of the pharisees, but of Herod (or the Herodians) also." Mark viii. 15.

That these Herodians did take Herod for the Messiah, many authors of great note have delivered; and for that they were long since branded for hereticks by Epiphanius,

Epiphanius, and others. And yet that is disbelieved and rejected by as many, and as great.

The more common (as well as more likely) opinion is, that they were by nation Jews; by profession, Sadducees; courtiers withal, and flatterers of king Herod; from whom they took the name Herodians (for other names also they went under). That they always took part and sided with Herod, both father and son; and with all their might laboured to support and establish the kingdom in that family. For which see Dr. Lightfoot on Mark iii. 6. That they stood stiffly for tribute to be paid to Cæsar, and that on Herod's interest, whom it concerned, having at first received his crown from Cæsar, to further Cæsar's tribute, not only in way of thankfulness, but also in way of policy, to prevent a possible deposing, or disceptering; it being in the power of Cæsar to take away the crown again when he pleased. See Godwyn's Moses and Aaron, lib. 3. chap. 13.

But whatever these Herodians were, while the pharisees and they were laying their mischievous heads together for evil^t, Jesus withdrew himself, with his disciples, to the sea. But a great multitude following him thither from Galilee, and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumæa, and from beyond Jordan, with them that dwell about Tyre and Sidon, he gave order to his disciples that a small ship should attend him, because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.

For having healed many^u, they that heard the fame thereof came flocking to him in so great numbers, that they pressed upon him to touch him, as many of them as were afflicted with diseases. They also that had unclean spirits in them, when they saw him, fell down before him; and the unclean spirits cried, saying, "Thou art the Son of God."

But he straitly charged them that they should not make him known^w; which was done, that it might be

^t Mat. xii. 15. Mark iii. 7.

^u Ver. 10.

^w Ver. 17.

fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet Ifaias, faying, (in chap. xlii. 1, &c.) “ Behold my fervant, whom I have chofen; my beloved, in whom my foul is well pleafed. I will put my fpirit upon him, and he fhall fhew judgment (which moft expositors take in this place for the gofpel, which teaches what is juft and right, and fixes judgment on that which is wrong) to the Gentiles.”

And this he fhall do, not with noife and clamour, either for oftentation or violence (not only with a found of words, as Mofes) but by writing it, the evangelical law, by his fpirit in their hearts; fo Jansen in Cradock’s Harmony, page 97. marg.

“ He fhall not ftrive, nor cry^x, neither fhall any man hear his voice in the ftreets.” But with fuch gentlenefs and tendernefs fhall he deal with even the weakeft and moft feeble, that a bruifed reed (the emblem here of a poor foul, dejected and almoft broken down, under the fenfe of its fin and mifery) he fhall not break (but rather bind up, confirm and ftrengthen): and fmoaking flax (by which is here reprefented a very difconfolate one, ready almoft to fink into defpair; fuch an one, as in whom the flame and heat of faith and hope are fo near extinguifhed, that, like the wick of a dying lamp or taper, there is only fo much warmth left, as by fending forth a little fmoke, fhews it is not wholly dead, even fuch flax as this) he will not quench (but rather quicken, revive, and re-enlighten it) until he fend forth judgment unto victory (that is, caufe his gofpel to prevail, and through judgment give victory to thofe that receive it, over that which would hinder their growth and perfeverance therein). And by this great clemency of his, he fhall engage the Gentiles to trust in his name.

Of what ufe the fhip was to him at this time^y (which he befpoke, Mark iii. 9.) we do not read. But perhaps it might carry him off from the preffing multitude, to fome not far diftant mountain; whither he went up

^z Mat. xii. 19. ^y Mark iii. 13. Luke vi. 12.

to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God, or (as Dr. Gell contends it should be read) in the prayer-house of God.

Here he seems to have spent the night alone by himself: for Luke, ver. 13, adds, "that when it was day, he called unto him his disciples (whom he would, says Mark, not whom they themselves would); and out of them he chose twelve (in allusion, some think, to the twelve patriarchs, and the twelve tribes of Israel) whom also he named apostles. The reason of which title Mark gives, ver. 14. when he says, "He ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach." For the word apostle (or apostel, from ἀποστέλλω, *emitto, vel ablego*, signifies one sent forth.

The names of these twelve were ², Simon, and Andrew his brother; James, the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew (who had been the publican); James, the son of Alphaeus and Lebbeus (whose surname was Thaddeus) Simon, the Canaanite; and Judas Iscariot, who afterwards betrayed him.

In naming these, there is some little variation among the evangelists, with respect both to the order of place wherein they are named, and to some of the names themselves.

As to the order, both Matthew and Luke place Andrew next to Simon Peter; but Mark, putting James and John before him, makes Andrew the fourth in order. Mark and Luke place Matthew before Thomas; but Matthew himself, modestly giving place, sets Thomas before himself.

From which diversity in placing them may be inferred, that no preference, in point of dignity or power, did accrue to any of them, from the rank or order of place in which they are named.

As to the diversity of names, the next that follows James, the son of Alphaeus, is by Mark called Thad-

² Luke vi. 14. Mat. x. 2. Mark iii. 16.

deus; but by Luke he is called Judas, the brother of James; whose general epistle we have under the name of Jude, who therein writes himself the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James. Though Grotius will not admit that epistle to be his.

Again, he who is by Matthew and Mark called Simon the Canaanite, is by Luke called Simon Zelotes; and clapped in also there between the two brothers, James, the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbeus, or Thaddeus, or Jude. This Simon is supposed to be called the Canaanite, from the town or city called Cana in Galilee, of which he was; which signifying zealous, he is thence also called Zelotes, or the Zelot.

As the other Judas also is thought by some to be called Iscariot, from the country of which he was, supposed to be Kerioth, mentioned Josh. xv. 25. To which *Ish*, which signifies a man, being prefixed, thence is formed the word Ishcarioth, and by contraction, Iscariot, that is, a man of Kariot.

Other derivations of the word are given; whereof that which seems the most likely, is taken (as Dr. Hammond observes) from the Syriack, which calls a wallet, or purse, Secariat. And then, says he, Secariota, or Iscariota (which with him are synonymous) may signify him that hath the wallet; which was the office of this Judas. To the same purpose Franciscus Junius, in his commentary on the epistle of Jude, as quoted by Pasor, in his Greek Lexicon, *verbo Iudas*.

Of these twelve apostles, our Lord had given the surname Peter to that Simon, who was brother to Andrew; as he now surnamed the two sons of Zebedee, James and John, Boanerges (which word Drusius, and some others of the criticks, quarrel with, and in the room of it would substitute Bencreem) sons of thunder. Which bespake that those two brothers, James and John, should prove thundering preachers of the gospel. Of which two, Grotius observes, that of all the apostles, this James was the first that sealed the doctrine of Christ with his blood (being slain with the sword by Herod, Acts xii. 2). And that John, surviving all the rest of
the

the apostles, did bear testimony to the truth the longest of any.

So Simon had the surname Peter given, signifying a stone, or rock; perhaps to put him in mind how firm, steady and immoveable he ought to be in the work of the gospel, to which he was called.

Having thus chosen his apostles in readiness against the time that he should see meet to send them forth, he came down with them from the mountain he had been in^a, and stood in the plain, the company of his disciples attending him, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon, surrounding him.

These people came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases; as did they also that were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all; which made the whole multitude press upon him, and seek to touch him.

Here Luke introduces an epitome of that sermon which our Lord delivered in the mount, and is already related from the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of Matthew, though not without considerable variations, as the reader may observe by comparing them together.

Whether that which is here delivered by Luke be the self-same sermon related by Matthew, with respect to both the matter itself (though abbreviated) and the time and place of delivering it, interpreters are not agreed; some going one way, some the other.

There is difference enough, both with respect to place and matter, to persuade, that they were delivered at least at several times. Yet I see no sufficient ground to induce a belief, that this, which Luke gives, was delivered at this time, when Jesus came down from the mountain, and stood in the plain, surrounded and crowded with a throng of people.

^a Luke vi. 17.

For having been up all the night before in prayer and fasting, after he came down into the plain, and had healed the people, he went into an house with his disciples^b, as Mark intimates, not to preach, but to refresh himself with food; which yet he could not do, by reason of the multitudes thronging upon him.

Unless any would suppose, that seeing the great concourse of people, he, neglecting his food, went out among them. Which might give occasion to his friends, when they heard of it, to go out also to lay hold on him. But then it may be considered, that what Luke here reports him to have delivered, being directed to his disciples, who were in the house with him, he needed not have gone out among the multitude to preach to his disciples who were within.

However it was, as Mark relates the matter, when his friends (or kinsmen, says the margin) heard, that by reason of the multitude, he, with his disciples, could not so much as eat bread, they went out to lay hold on him; for they said, he is beside himself.

This implies he was gone out, though no mention be made of his going out. But surely they may not be admitted to be his friends, who could say, or think, he was beside himself, in the common acceptation of that word.

A late learned critick, studious to defend the reputation of our Saviour, hath found a way (if it will hold) so to turn the text, as to throw off this imputation from him upon the people.

First, he tells us, that where we read, "They went out to lay hold on him;" it should, instead of *him*, be *it*, the multitude.

Next, That the verb κρατήσαι, which is rendered to lay hold on, doth oftener signify to restrain, or stop. Then he observes, that Jesus himself was within, in the house; so that it could not well be affirmed, that they who heard went out of the house to hold him who was in the house. Whereupon he concludes, that it was

^b Mark iii. 19.

the multitude that was beside itself, either through high admiration, or out of a strong desire to press on, that they might come at Jesus.

This well meaning critick is Knatchbull, in his animadversions on the books of the New Testament; cited by Cradock in his Harmony of the Four Evangelists, page 100. where also he gives the opinions of others.

Of which that of Grotius seems also very favourable, who renders the word, which we read beside himself, so as to signify a fainting, or swooning (the effect of long fasting, emptiness, and close heat): so that his friends hearing of it, went out of the room in which they were, to the room where he was, that they might lay hold on him, and lead him away out of that house, or room, where he was so indisposed, into some other, where he might have less company, and more air.

But Dr. Lightfoot goes more downright to work on it. For he makes those, who are here called the friends of Christ, to say, "He is forgetful of himself and his own health." He is so vehement and fervent in the discharge of his duty, and in preaching, that he is transported beyond himself, and his understanding is disturbed, so that he regards neither his necessary food nor sleep.

This the Doctor takes to be the sense of those words of his friends concerning him: for which yet he thinks they need an apology, in that they did not conceive more soundly and holily concerning him. But that they should think him to have fallen into plain and absolute madness, and mere distraction, he thinks is scarce credible.

But, with the Doctor's leave, if we may be allowed to suppose that these, who are here called his friends or kinsmen, were the same, or such as John informs us did not believe in him, but tauntingly upbraided him with ambition, John vii. 3, 4, 5. and whom he intimates to be so much one with the world, that the world could not hate them, ver. 7. we need not, perhaps, be much concerned what they thought or said of him.

Having

Having now chosen his twelve apostles to be his more immediate and near attendants, and witnesses of what he did, he took them with him and went forth^c throughout every city and village, preaching the kingdom of God, and shewing the glad tidings thereof.

But in this perambulation he had more attendants than only his twelve apostles; for there accompanied him certain women, who had been healed by him of evil spirits and infirmities. Namely, Mary, called Magdalen, supposed to have taken that *agnomen* from a fort or castle in Galilee, called Magdalum; wherein, while she had an husband, she had lived before she came to follow Jesus. And she having been before a woman of a notorious evil life, and now converted and cleansed by Christ, it is thence here said, that seven Devils went out of her.

Besides her, there were also with him Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who, having reaped a large crop of heavenly things from him, did gladly impart of their earthly things for the support of him and his disciples; ministering unto him of their substance.

While thus our Lord went about preaching the gospel^d, there was brought unto him one possessed with a Devil, which had deprived him of both sight and speech, so that he was both blind and dumb. Him Jesus so perfectly healed, that whereas he was before blind, he now saw; and being before dumb, he now spake.

At this so great a cure all the people were amazed, and in admiration said, "Is not this the son of David?" meaning the promised Messiah, whom they expected.

But the pharisees, with whom joined the scribes, that came down from Jerusalem, said, "This fellow doth not cast out Devils but by Beelzebub^e, the prince of the Devils.

They had served him so once before, upon his dispossessing a dumb man of a Devil, Mat. ix. 34. and then he let it pass: but now he resolved to attack

^c Luke viii. 1. ^d Mat. xii. 22. ^e Mat. xiii. 22. Luke xi. 14.

them upon it. Wherefore knowing their thoughts (which implies that they spake not this to his face, but either among themselves, or privately to the people) he calling them to him, began with them in a rational way of conviction; first laying down, as a known and acknowledged maxim, or axiom, this proposition, viz. "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city, or house (that is, family) divided against itself shall not stand."

Upon this proposition he thus reasons with them^f, and exposes them. "If I (as ye say) cast out Devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the Devils, then Satan casts out Satan. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself: and how then shall his kingdom stand?"

This of itself was enough to silence them: for it was indeed, upon the premised principle, unanswerable. But that he might give them an home-stroke, from their own practice, he added, "If I, by Beelzebub, cast out Devils (as ye surmise), since your own children (or disciples) pretend to cast out Devils also (and are thence called exorcists, Acts xix. 13). by whom do they cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges: their practice or pretences shall judge you."

This was *argumentum ad hominem*, a close pinch; which put them under this dilemma, that they must either confess their own disciples did cast out Devils by the power of the Devil (which would for ever shame them, and spoil their trade); or they must acknowledge that there is a divine power or spirit, by which Devils may be cast out, and by which their disciples pretended to cast them out; and that would justify him, as well as them. Thus he drove them to that strait, that if they would condemn him, they must condemn their own disciples also; and if they would acquit their own disciples, they must acquit him also.

Having therefore gained the point so far upon them, he adds, "But if I cast out Devils by the Spirit of God,

^f Mat. xii. 25. Mark iii. 23.

then the kingdom of God is come unto you^s." By the kingdom of God is understood the state of the gospel, the dispensation of the Messiah. And hereby he inforces upon them, that if they cannot but grant that he casts out Devils by the Spirit of God, they cannot then reasonably deny that he is the Messiah.

Besides, he proves himself to be of God, by the dominion he hath over the Devils. "For how, saith he^h, can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? And then he will spoil his house." But then, he that binds the strong man must be acknowledged to be stronger than he.

Since then, infers he, I cast out Devils, as ye see, and that not by Beelzebubⁱ (for that were to set Satan against Satan, to the dividing and destroying of his kingdom), it must be done by a power superior to his; which none can have but from God. And so you must confess, that what I do is done by the finger of God^k.

And since, according to another maxim, "He (among enemies) that is not with me is against me^l; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad;" ye may be sure, that since Beelzebub was not (could not upon his own interest be) with me; he (the prince of darkness) would rally all his forces, lead forth his legions, Luke viii. 30. against me, to withstand and oppose me, and to scatter, if he could, what I had gathered.

Having thus fairly and fully convicted them by the pure force of truth and reason, he now shews them the danger they had run themselves into by this their wicked censure upon him, and the work which God had wrought by him.

"Wherefore, said he, I say unto you^m, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men (that is, is forgiveable, or may be forgiven, and upon true re-

^s Mat. xii. 28. ^h Ver. 29. Mark iii. 27. ⁱ Luke xi. 22.
^k Ver. 20. ^l Mat. xii. 30. ^m Mat. xii. 31. Mark iii. 28.

pentance shall be forgiven). Nay, "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man (as he is man, or with respect to his manhood, through a dislike of, or an offence taken at, the meanness and lowliness of his appearance therein) it shall be forgiven him."

"But whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit" (against Jesus, as he is God, blaspheming that divine power which was in him, and by which he wrought) hath never forgiveness. It shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come; but he is in danger of eternal damnation. And this our Lord denounced to them, because they said of him, he hath an unclean spirit."

To call him, in contempt, this fellow, as here, Mat. xii. 24. The carpenter, Mark vi. 3. The carpenter's son, Mat. xiii. 55. Illiterate, John vii. 15. A sinner, John ix. 24. A glutton and a wine-bibber; a friend of publicans and sinners, Luke vii. 34, and chap. xv. 2. with other such opprobrious speeches, though (being spoken in contempt of him, and in an evil mind towards him) they were sinful and blasphemous words; yet being levelled only at his manhood, they came within the reach of forgiveness.

But to strike, with an impious mind, at his Godhead; knowingly to revile his divinity; wilfully to blaspheme the Holy Spirit, by which he had wrought those wonderful works, which nothing could effect but a Divine Power; and to call the Holy Spirit an unclean spirit; this seems to be that sin unto death, which the apostle gives no encouragement to pray for remission of, 1 John v. 16. as knowing, no doubt, that his Lord had declared it to be an unpardonable sin.

The reason hereof may be this; that the way and means to obtain forgiveness being repentance, and repentance being wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, all other sins may be repented of, and consequently may be forgiven. But this horrid sin of blaspheming the Holy Ghost, by calling the Spirit of God an un-

^a Mat. xii. 32. Mark iii. 29. Ver. 30.

clean spirit, is so high an offence, that thereupon withdrawing his assistance from such, he leaves them shut up in hardness of heart, incapable of repenting, and consequently of being forgiven.

This consideration were enough, one would think, to make all men, of but common sense, to fear; and beware how they revile, blaspheme, or speak contemptuously of, or against, the light, the grace, or the Spirit of God, in any of its operations or appearances.

If any here should enquire who or what this Beelzebub was, who is called the prince (or chief) of the Devils, such may take this short account of him.

He is supposed the same that in the Old Testament was called Beelzebub, the God of Ekron, to whom Ahaziah king of Israel sent to enquire whether he should recover of his disease or no, 2 Kings i. 2.

In the Greek he is called Beel-zebul, Which small variation of but a letter, makes a great alteration in the signification of the name. For Zebul signifying dung, Beel-zebul imports the lord of dung; which also is supposed to be imposed on him in contempt by the Israelites: and so idols in general are by Tremellius and Junius called *Deos stercoreos*, dungy gods, Deut. xxix. 17, in the margin. Such as are curious to know more of this subject, may read Drusius and Grotius in the criticks; Selden de diis Syris, page 211. Godwyn's Moses and Aaron, l. iv. c. 3. Wilson's Christian Dictionary, *verbo* Baal-zebul. But to proceed.

Our Lord, in his discourse, begirts the pharisees as with a close siege, leaving them no way to escape the force of his arguments. He had before refuted their envious charge (that he cast out Devils by the prince of the Devils). 1. From the absurdity of supposing that Satan would work against himself, and his own interest, to the destruction of his own kingdom. 2. From the practice of their own disciples, who pretended to cast out Devils as well as he; and yet would not be thought to do it by an infernal power. 3. From the superiority and dominion, which it was evident he had over the Devils, in casting them out: since it must be

acknowledged, that he that doth bind, is stronger than he that is bound; and he that doth cast out, is greater and more powerful than he that is cast out. And now, that he may close them round on every side, he adds yet another argument, drawn from the agreement that is in nature between a tree and its fruit.

“Either make the tree good, said he^o, and its fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by its fruit.”

The fruit was the miracle wrought; the tree was the spirit or power by which it was wrought. They could not deny the miracle; it was openly wrought in the sight of the people. They durst not deny that it was a good deed to cast a Devil out of a man, and thereby restore to sight and speech him whom the Devil had made both blind and dumb. The people would not have borne that, for they were affected with it.

The pharisees therefore^p, to humour the people, would own the work; yet, to traduce Jesus, would disown the spirit by which it was wrought. But he, by a metaphor, taken from a fruit-tree, shews them the necessity they were under, either to disown the miracle, as well as the spirit; or own the spirit, as well as the miracle.

Then calling them a generation of vipers, who would destroy him that came in love to save them (as the vipers brood, according to the received opinion of elder ages, did use, at their exclusion, to destroy their mothers, by eating out, or tearing their way through, her bowels), he shews how contrary it was to reason, to expect better fruits from such bad trees as they were. “For since out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh; and a good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things, as an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth evil things^q; how can ye, said he, O generation of vipers, being yourselves evil, speak good things?”

^o Mat. xii. 33. ^p Ver. 23. ^q Mat. xii. 34.

Yet, that they might not think their tongue was so their own, that they might, with impunity, speak what they would with it, he let them know, "That by their words they should be justified, and by their words they should be condemned"; and therefore it behoved them to be more wary what they said. For if of every idle (vain, false) word that men shall speak, they shall give account in the day of judgment (which he assures them they shall) how much greater and heavier account must they expect to give, who had uttered such high and horrible blasphemy as they had done, against that Holy Spirit, which had wrought so many mighty miracles through him?

Then, by a kind of parabolical speech, he shews what had been the state of that people, the Jews; and what was like to be the condition of such of them then living, as thus hardened themselves against the grace, which by him was now freely offered to them.

"When, said he, the unclean spirit is gone out of a man^s, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest: and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out; and when he cometh, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first."

This ænigmatical speech (though properly and reasonably applicable to any particular person, who having been washed, purged, cleansed from sin and iniquity, returns (as the apostle has it, 2 Pet. ii. 22. "like the dog to his own vomit; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire," is by some interpreters applied to the Jews. And indeed they had reason to apply this speech to the Jews, from the following words of our Lord in the text^s, viz. "Even so shall it be unto this wicked generation."

And as soon as Jesus had finished his discourse to the pharisees, a certain woman that was in the company,

^s Mat. xii. 36. ^s Ver. 43. Luke xi. 24. ^s Mat. xii. 45.
admiring;

admiring the Divine Wisdom with which he spake, lift up her voice and said unto him; "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked."

But he, granting that (which both the angel, Luke i. 28. and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Ghost, ver. 41. had before declared, ver. 42. yet willing to improve all occasions to raise the minds of the people from outward to inward, from carnal to spiritual things, replied, "Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." Intimating (says Cradock, in his Harmony, chap. 5. sect. 29. That it is more blessed to bear him in the heart, by believing in him, and obeying his commandments, than to bear him in the womb only. To which purpose also, he there gives this sentence out of Augustine, *Materna propinquitas nihil Mariæ profuisset, nisi felicius Christum corde, quàm carne gestasset: beatior enim Maria percipiendo fidem Christi, quàm concipiendo carnem Christi*, i. e. The relation of mother would have done Mary no good, if she had not borne Christ more happily in her heart, than in her flesh: for more blessed was Mary in receiving the faith of Christ, than in conceiving the flesh of Christ.

The people being by this time gathered thick together^w, certain of the scribes and pharisees, instead of answering what he had before said unto them (and willing, perhaps, to divert him from prosecuting that subject any farther) said unto him, "Master, we would see a sign from thee."

But he, so answering as not to answer their design, told them, "An evil and adulterous (or bastardly) generation (a generation springing from adultery, as well as adulterated) seeketh a sign: but there shall no sign be given to it (in its will, or at its seeking) but the sign of the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be (synecdochally, or by a figure of a part for the whole) three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

^w Luke xi. 27.

^w Mat. xii. 38.

So we read it in Matthew. From which interpreters generally understand Christ's lying in the grave to have been typified by Jonas's lying in the belly of the whale.

But Luke reads it, "As Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites^{*}; so shall also the Son of Man be to this generation." Whence others infer, that Jonas did prefigure Christ, in his being purposely sent by God to warn the Ninevites of the impending danger, and thereby save them from the destruction threatened; as Christ was sent by his Father to preach repentance to the world, and thereby save from eternal death all that did truly believe in him.

Hence, however, he took occasion to upbraid them again for their hardness of heart, unbelief, and impenitence; telling them, "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it[†]; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas (though he was but an ordinary man, and a mere stranger to them); whereas they had not repented at his preaching, but had hardened themselves against him; although he was much greater than Jonas, as they might well perceive, by the many and great miracles he had wrought, which Jonas did not so much as pretend to.

Nay, the queen of the south (or of Sheba, 1 Kings, x. 1. called by Josephus, l. 8. Antiquit. c. 2. *Nicaule*, by other *Nicolaa*) he tells them shall rise up in judgment with the men of this generation[‡], and shall condemn them; for she came from towards the uttermost parts of the earth (near the south sea) to hear the wisdom of Solomon; "and behold, a greater than Solomon is here."

While he yet talked to the people[§], his mother, and his brethren (or kinsmen) standing without, sent to him, desiring to speak with him. Of which the multitude that sat about him giving him notice, he there-

* Luke xi. 30. † Mat. xii. 41. ‡ Ver. 42. § Mark iii. 31. Luke viii. 20.

upon (not in disrespect to his mother, to whom, and to his reputed father, he from a child had paid a due observance and subjection, Luke ii, 51. but to lead the people's minds to an higher and heavenly relation) first asking, "Who is my mother? And who are my brethren? Stretched forth his hands towards his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren: for whosoever shall do the will of my Father, which is in heaven (or hear the word of God, and do it, Luke viii. 21). the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Thereby teaching all his, that when they are engaged in God's work (as he then was) natural affections and relations should be so far set aside, as not to be suffered to draw or divert them from the service of God they are concerned in.

Having thus finished his discourse at that time, Jesus, going out of the house, went the same day, and sat him down by the sea-side ^b. And when great multitudes were gathered together to him, he went into a ship; where sitting, and the whole multitude standing on the shore, he spake many things unto them in parables; which is a sort of mystical way of speaking by similitudes, relating matters sometimes real, sometimes feigned; whereby not only the mind of the hearer is excited to a more close attention, but the understanding also raised to a more sublime consideration of the matter couched thereunder.

And first, he delivered a parable unto them, which reached in some sort the condition of every man.

"Behold, said he, a sower went forth to sow ^c; and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way-side; and it was both trodden down, and the fowls came and devoured it."

"Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprang up, because they had not deepness of earth: and when the sun was

^b Mat. xiii. 1. Mark iv. 1. ^c Mat. xiii. 3. Mark iv. 3. Luke viii. 5.

up, they were scorched; and because they had not root, they withered away."

"Some also fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up, and choaked them; so that they yielded no fruit."

"But others fell into good ground, and sprang up, increased, and brought forth fruit; some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, and some thirty-fold."

When he had delivered this parable, that he might stir up the attention of the hearers to a due consideration of the mystical meaning thereof, he added that saying (which, on weighty occasions, was pretty usual with him, viz). "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Not ears indefinitely; but ears to hear. The ears which God openeth, when he sealeth to men their instruction, Job xxxiii. 16. The ear that trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat, chap. xxxiv. 3.

Every one in this auditory, it is probable, had ears; but few, if any, it may be doubted, had these ears. For they, with whom it were most reasonable to expect it, viz. his own disciples, with the twelve, came to him (as soon as they could get him alone) and having first asked him, "Why he spake unto the people in parables?" desired to know of him the meaning of this parable. Which shews they did not understand it.

Before he answered their request, in opening the parable, he answered their question why he spake it.

"Because, said he^d, it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven: but to them (the people that are without) it is not given. For whosoever hath (that is, hath by improvement, by increasing what was given him) to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance. But whosoever hath not (hath made no improvement) from him shall be taken away even that he hath," or (as Luke words it) that which he seemeth to have, or thinks (and perhaps boasts) that he hath.

^d Mat. xiii. 11. Mark iv. 11. Luke viii. 10.

Then, that he might apply to these people the words of Isaiah, chap. vi. 9, 10. he adds, "Therefore speak I to them in parables^e; because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

In reciting which passage from the prophet (which all the four evangelists touch, rather in sense than direct terms; but Matthew the most largely) it is observable, that what the prophet had delivered so obscurely, that interpreters were puzzled and divided about (some taking the words to contain an imprecation, or curse upon that people; others, a commination, or threatening of them) our Saviour has so clearly opened, that it plainly appears, that the reason why, though they heard and saw, they did not understand nor perceive, was, because they themselves had closed their own eyes, and (by analogy) had shut their ears, and incrassated (or made gross and heavy) their own hearts, so that they could neither see, hear, nor understand; and that hindered their conversion, and being healed. Most truly therefore was it said by the prophet, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself," Hosea xiii. 9.

Having shewn, from the words of the prophet Isaiah, the unhappy state of those who could neither see, hear, nor understand (aright) he, for the comfort of his disciples, adds^f; "But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear (that is, ye are blessed, in that ye have not, like them, closed your eyes and ears; but they stand open, and are capable to see, receive, and understand the mysteries of the kingdom of

^e Mat. xiii. 13. Mark iv. 12. Luke viii. 10. John xii. 40.
^f Mat. xiii. 16.

God). For I assure you, many prophets and righteous men have desired to see and hear those things which ye see and hear, and have not seen nor heard them.

When he had thus prepared their understandings to receive it, he now opens to them this parable of the sower, thus :

“ When any one heareth the word of the kingdom ⁸, and understandeth it not (or, as Clarius comments on it, doth not endeavour to understand it) then cometh the wicked one (Satan, or the Devil) and catcheth away that (the word or seed of the kingdom) which was sown in his heart; lest he should believe, and be saved. And this is he that received the seed by the way-side.”

“ But he that receiveth the word into stony or rocky ground, the same is he who heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet not having root in himself, he abideth but for a time. For when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended; and in the time of trial falleth away.”

“ He also that receiveth seed among the thorns, is he that heareth the word; and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things, as the pleasures of this life, entering in, choke the word; and he becometh unfruitful, at least doth not bring forth fruit to perfection.”

“ But he that receiveth seed into the good ground, is he, that hearing the word, and understanding it, keepeth it in an honest and good heart, and bringeth forth fruit with patience; some thirty, some sixty, some an hundred-fold.”

In this instructive parable, as we may take notice of the impartiality of the sower, who sowed every sort of ground, and that with one and the same good seed; so may we, with sadness, observe, that of all the several sorts of ground that were sowed, but one brought forth fruit to the sower.

⁸ Mat. xiii. 19. Mark iv. 15. Luke viii. 12.

Although, in all the three evangelists, the exposition of this parable immediately follows the parable of itself; yet, if we observe what Mark says, that his disciples asked him about it when he was alone^h, we may suppose he went on to utter his other parables unto his publick auditory, before he explained this of the sower to his disciples; and afterwards gave them the meaning of this, together with the rest, when, having dismissed the multitude, he went into the house, Mat. xiii. 36. and Mark iv. 34.

His next parable (as Matthew gives it, who hath both the most, and them in the most regular order) is commonly called the parable of the tares.

The former parable set forth one sower, of one sort of seed, but in several sorts of ground. This sets forth two sowers, of two sorts of seed, in one and the same ground, or field. And thus the evangelist introduceth it.

Another parable he put forth unto them, sayingⁱ, "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while men slept, the enemy came, and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. The servants of the householder, coming thereupon to him, said, Sir (or master) didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares? He telling them an enemy had done it; they thereupon asked him, if he would have them go, and gather them up? Nay, replied he; left, while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both therefore, said he, grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, gather ye the tares first together, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn."

The explanation of this parable does not (as the former) immediately follow; but is suspended until Jesus and his disciples were by themselves in the

^h Mark iv. 10.

ⁱ Mat. xiii. 24.

house, where by and by we shall have it; and in the mean time may observe, that Jesus put forth another parable in these words :

“ The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed ^k, which a man took, and sowed in his field or garden; which, indeed, is accounted the least of all seeds (usually sown by the Jews in gardens) but when it is grown up, it is the greatest among herbs, and becomes a tree; so that the birds of the air come, and lodge in the branches thereof;” or, at least, may lodge under the shadow of it, as Mark words it.

To this he subjoins yet another parable; “ whereby he likens the kingdom of heaven to leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.”

By both which parables he sets forth the energy and efficacious virtue and power of the gospel; which, from so low beginnings, should rise so high, spread so far, and attain to so great a growth.

But as, in the parable of the leaven, interpreters wander wide in their conjectures about the three measures of meal; and they are by some thought to come nearest, who refer them to the three essential parts of man, body, soul, and spirit; while others content themselves to refer them to thoughts, words, and deeds (of which, see Zegerus, on the place, in the Criticks, tom. 6.) so in the parable of the mustard-feed, some objection has been made against that being called the least of all seeds; whereas not only the cypress-tree (as herbalists say) hath a smaller seed (as being, for its littleness, not, without straining the sight, discernable) but poppy and rue yield (they say) a smaller seed than mustard.

To which Erasmus and others return this answer; that the comparison lies not between the mustard-feed and all other feeds in general, but between that and the seeds of garden pot-herbs. Which as not the cypresses, so neither the poppy nor the rue, come

^k Mat. xiii. 31. Mark iv. 31. Luke xiii. 19.

under, as being rather physical than culinary, fitter for medicine than fallets or broths. But truly, I think the most plain and simple answer will be, that our Saviour spake according to the common notion of the time and country, without making an exact and strict enquiry into nature about it.

All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables, as they were able to bear it; and without a parable spake he not (at that time) unto them, that it might be fulfilled¹, says the evangelist, which was spoken by the prophet. But no prophet being named, it is left uncertain what prophet it was.

The marginal reference is to psalm lxxviii. of which the title is, Maschil of Asaph; which the marginal note there explains, a psalm for Asaph, to give instruction; and Tremellius and Junius render it, *Ode didascalica, Asapho*, i. e. a doctrinal song, or psalm, to or for Asaph.

This Asaph was one of the chief singers, whom David set over the service of song (or singing-service) in the house of the Lord, 1 Chron. vi. 31, 39, and unto him divers of the psalms are inscribed or directed; as particularly, psal. l. and all the psalms as they stand, between psal. lxxii. and lxxxiv. In all which, though in the last translation we read "a psalm of Asaph;" yet there, in the margin, it is "for Asaph." And in the Old Bible it is, "a psalm committed to Asaph." Yet even there, the 50th psalm (which is the first that bears his name) is intitled "A psalm of Asaph." And the marginal note upon it is, "Who was either the author, or a chief singer, to whom it was committed." Which shews the translators or annotators doubted who was the author of that psalm, and consequently of the rest, inscribed "of Asaph."

Tremellius and Junius are of opinion, that this 78th psalm was written either by king Hezekiah, or the prophet Isaiah, or some other person, about those times wherein the kingdom of Israel fell, and was cut off,

¹ Mat. xiii. 35.

2 Kings xvii. Trem. Annot. on psal. lxxviii. Which if it were, it might have been directed to or for the sons of Afaph, rather than Afaph himself, who probably had then been dead about three hundred years.

We read indeed, in 2 Chron. xxix. 30. that Hezekiah the king, and the princes, commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David, and of Afaph the Seer, contained in psal. cv. and mentioned in 1 Chron. xvi. from ver. 8 to 37.

Which word *feer*, applied to Afaph, being the more ancient appellation of a prophet (1 Sam. ix. 9.) might induce Matthew, if he took Afaph to be the author of this psalm, to call him here the prophet.

Not but that there has been an ecclesiastical tradition, that in some old copies it was written "Isaiah the prophet." This both Erasmus and Drusus mention, in their several commentaries on this place, and deliver it on the credit of Hierom, who, they say, gives notice, that in some Greek books, it was written [by Isaiah the prophet.] But when this passage was nowhere found in Isaiah, the name of the prophet was taken out by the wise men. And Hierom conjectured that it was written by the evangelist at the first, not Isaiah, but Afaph; and that afterwards the scribe, not understanding the name Afaph (as a prophet) but taking it for a mistake of the writer, changed Afaph into Isaiah, as a more noted name, and often cited by Matthew.

But whosoever this prophet was, that place we are referred to, in psal. lxxviii. 2. doth not fully answer what Matthew here reports this prophet to have spoken. For he repeats the saying of the prophet thus; "I will open my mouth in parables^m: I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." Whereas the words of the psalmist there are; "I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old (not, which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world, but) which we have heard

^m Mat. xiii. 35.

and known, and our fathers have told us." And in the recounting them, he reaches no higher than the deliverance out of Egypt, ver. 12. But lest this be thought too long a digression, I proceed.

When Jesus had thus far entertained the multitude with parables, he dismissed them, and went into the house; whither, when his disciples were come unto himⁿ, they desired him to declare to them the meaning of the parable he had before delivered concerning the tares of the field; whereupon he thus explained it to them.

"He that soweth the good seed, said he, is the Son of Man (that is, I myself); the field, in which this good seed is sown, is the world^o; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one^p."

What these tares are, in the mystical meaning of the parable, is here, in the general, plainly enough declared; "They are the children of the wicked one;" but what they are in the literal sense, is not agreed, nor perhaps well understood. They are called, I suppose, in all our English translations, tares. But we are told (by Leigh, in his *Crit. Sac. Verbo Ζιζάνια*) that it should not be translated tares, nor vetches, but evil feed; yet such as bears the nearest resemblance to the good feed; and that so near, that until they are grown towards harvest, they are hardly distinguishable the one from the other. It is that (saith Weems) which we call blasted corn, or deaf ears; which grow up with the good corn, and cannot be discerned from it until the harvest. Leigh, *ubi supra*. Hence it is made by some the emblem of Hypocrites, who desire and endeavour (not to be, but) to be like the good, as much as may be. Who can, and will, may read enough of this evil feed in *Sculteti Exercitationes Evangelicæ*, l. 2. c. 65. in *Crit. Sac.* tom. 6. But let us go on with our Lord's exposition.

ⁿ Mat. xiii. 36.

^o Ver. 37.

^p Ver. 38.

Whatever fort of evil feed these, which are here called tares, were, they are, he says, "The children of the wicked one⁹, and the enemy that sowed them is the Devil; the harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels."

"As therefore, added he, the tares are gathered, and burnt in the fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. And then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father."

From this parable, they who do not wilfully wink, and that too very hard, may see that these tares, or evil feed (of whatsoever religious kind it be, or may pretend to be) may be, should be, must be, ought to be let alone, not be plucked up; but suffered to grow in the world (though not in the garden, the church) until the general harvest. And this, without infringing the church's power, on the one hand (in the exercise of due ecclesiastical discipline on those who are the acknowledged members of it; and declaring, as occasion may require, who are of it, who not) or retrenching the civil power, on the other hand (in the equal administration of justice, and due execution of laws, in all cases rightly subject to the cognizance of the civil magistrate) will secure all persons whatsoever from violence, or sufferings of any kind, in person or property, on account of conscience, or religious persuasion only; which is as much as any one can reasonably desire, and yet no more than every one may occasionally need. For if it were admitted that the tares might be rooted out of the world, what assurance can the good feed, the wheat have, that if the tares grow strong, and prove predominant (as for the most part they have hitherto done) the wheat shall not, by the tares, be called tares, and as tares be rooted up and destroyed? For,

⁹ Mat. xiii. 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43.

not to seek examples of such proceedings higher than Wickliff's time and downwards, did not the tares of those times call the best wheat then growing, in this and other neighbour-nations, Lollards (from *lolium*, signifying darnel, cockle, or tares) and as such, binding them up in bundles for the fire, burn them in Smithfield and other places; thereby, as fast and as far as they could, rooting them out of the world? But of this, I hope, enough.

Besides those parables already related, as delivered unto the multitude; some others follow, which it may be supposed are spoken to his disciples in the house. Of which Mark gives this.

“So is the kingdom of God^t, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise (night and day follow his usual course of life, as if he took no regard of it) and the seed should spring and grow up, he knows not how (without man's contriving, willing or cunning, provided he do not any thing to check or hinder its growth); for the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear (so that all the increase is of God, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7). But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.”

“Again, said he, The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field^s; which, when a man hath found, he hideth; and for joy thereof, goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.”

And again, adds he, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man^t, seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”

By which two parables he shews both the inestimable value of the truth of the gospel, of the heavenly kingdom in itself, and in the minds also of them that truly know it; and also the various ways of obtaining it. One travels far, and takes great pains and care in

^s Mark iv. 26.

^t Mat. xiii. 44.

^t Ver. 45.

seeking after it; while another finds it, in a manner, unexpectedly, and without looking after it. Much like to what God by his prophet declared, Isa. lxx. 1. which is cited by the apostle, Rom. x. 20. and in the recital somewhat more plainly accommodated to the purpose, thus: "I was found of them that sought me not: I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me."

But this is more especially observable in it; that however, whether easily or hardly, a man finds this divine treasure, he must part with all his former treasures; the knowledge, the wisdom, the righteousness and religious experiments he had treasured up before he found this (and which were not of the nature of this) if he means to obtain and retain this hidden treasure, this choice pearl.

"Again, said he, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea", and gathered (fish) of every kind; which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and sitting down, gathered the good into vessels, and cast the bad away. So, added he, shall it be at the end of the world. The angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, &c."

Having thus, by many ways, instructed them in the things relating to the heavenly kingdom, he now asked them, if they had understood them all; and they answering, yea, Lord; he thereupon, by another parable, of a scribe that is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven (whom he likens unto an householder*, who out of his treasury bringeth forth things new and old) gives them to understand, that they are not to store up this heavenly knowledge, this divine light which he had given them for their own private use only; but to impart and communicate it, as occasion shall offer, to others.

"For is a candle*, said he (which is a metaphor he had used once before, Mat. v. 15.) brought to be

* Mat. xiii. 47.

° Ver. 52.

* Mark iv. 21.

covered or hid, and not to be set on a candlestick? For, added he, there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; nor hath any thing been kept secret, but that it should (in its proper season) come abroad."

Now when he had finished these parables^y, in the evening of the same day, he said to his disciples, "Let us pass over unto the other side" (to wit, of the lake Gennasereth, where the ship, in which he was, then rode). For Mark delivers the story so as if he were yet in the ship, out of which he had taught the people (for he says, they took him even as he was in the ship); which if he was, he must either have gone into it again, after he went, as Matthew says, into the house, Mat. xiii. 36. (which that he did, none of the evangelists mention) or else, what Matthew calls going into the house, must be taken for a going into the cabin, or some more private part of the ship, where he and his disciples were together by themselves. However it was, in the ship they had him; and forth they launched, having other little ships also in company with them.

"But as they sailed, he, lying on a pillow in the stern of the ship, fell asleep^z. And while he slept, there arose a great storm of wind, which falling down upon the lake, so raised the waves, that they beat into the ship to that degree, that they were filled with water; that is, the ship (the contained being, by a metonymy, put for the containing) was filled with water, and they were in jeopardy."

This made his disciples bestir themselves; and knowing that there was no help but in him, they hasten to him, and awake him with a redoubled cry, "Master, Master, save us, we perish."

"He thereupon arising, rebuked the wind, and the raging of the water: whereupon they ceased, and there ensued a great calm."

^y Mat. viii. 18. Mark iv. 35. Luke viii. 22. ^z Mark iv. 37. Luke viii. 23.

Then gently blaming his disciples, he said, "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?"

But the men (they who were in the other ships, who are here called the men, in distinction from his disciples) seeing the miracle, and having partaken of the mercy, marvelled, and said, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

Having with this danger (yet without damage) crossed the lake^a, they arrived in the country of the Gergesenes; so Matthew calls them: Mark and Luke call it the country of the Gadarens, over against Galilee.

Some take these to be but one and the same country and people, though called by different names. But others (as Tremellius, in *Notis ad Syriac. Testam.* and Isaac Casaubon, in *Not. in Marc. 5. 1.*) hold them to be two distinct places and people; yet lying so conterminant and intermixed, that they who came upon the one, might well enough be said to have come upon the other.

Our Lord was no sooner landed, but immediately there met him two possessed with Devils (for Matthew mentions two, though Mark and Luke have each of them but one).

These came out of the tombs, and were exceeding fierce; one of them more especially (which might make those evangelists overlook the other, and take notice of this only), who though he formerly came out of the city, yet having of a long time had Devils in him, he now wore no clothes, neither abode in any house, but had his dwelling in the tombs.

And so strong was he in the unclean spirit (or so strong was the unclean spirit in him) that no man could bind him (so as to hold him) no, not with chains. For he had often been bound with fetters and chains; but the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken to pieces. Neither could any man tame him; but he was driven of the Devil into the wil-

^a Mat. viii. 28. Mark v. 1. Luke viii. 26.

dernefs, and was always night and day in the mountains and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with ftones; fo that no man might (with fafety) pafs by that way.

This raving man, when he faw Jefus afar off, ran towards him, and falling down before him, cried out with a loud voice, and faid, "What have I to do with thee, Jefus, thou Son of the moft high God? Art thou come to torment us before the time? I befeech thee torment me not." So he fpeaks in Luke, fomewhat modestly ^b. But in Mark he is more peremptory, and prefumes to bind him to it by an oath. "I adjure thee by God, faid he, that thou torment me not."

That which, it feems, had fo ftirred the Devil, and raifed him to this exorbitant height, was, "That Jefus had faid unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean fpirit."

Jefus then asking him, "What is thy name? He answered, My name is Legion (a term borrowed from the Roman soldiery, among whom it was ufed to fignify a brigade of men, confifting, for the moft part, of fix thousand, or thereabouts): for, faid he, we are many." Then finking in his terms, he fell from adjuring to befeeching again; he befought him much, that he would not fend him away out of the country, fays Mark: but Luke, that he would not command them to go into the deep; that is, into their old prifon and proper place, hell, or the bottomlefs pit. See Dr. Hammond on the place.

There was, it feems, at fome diftance, a great herd of fwine feeding on the mountain. This the Devils obferving, and fearing worfe quarters, they all, with one confent, befought him, that, if he would caft them out of this man, he would fuffer them to go into the herd of fwine.

What thefe Gargefenes and Gadarens were, is not well agreed amongst expositors. Some will not admit

^b Luke viii. 28. Mark v. 7.

them to be Jews, because of the swine, whose flesh was to them forbidden food.

Others allow them to be Jews, who, abstaining from eating, did notwithstanding breed, keep, and feed swine, to trade and barter with other nations for other commodities therewith.

But probably they may be nearest the truth, who take them to be a mixed people, Greeks and Jews, living promiscuously together; those Jews also being such as were less regardful of, or obsequious to, the law; and yet that the swine belonged rather to the Greeks, than to the Jews.

But whosoever these swine were, Jesus having commanded this legion of Devils out of this possessed man, suffered them to enter into the swine; not to gratify those unclean spirits, but (as some conjecture) to punish the owners, who were wont to deride the Jews for their observance of the law of God, in their abstaining from swine's flesh; or, perhaps, to make trial of the temper of those people, whether they would prefer him to their swine, or their swine to him.

But whatever was the motive to this permission, no sooner had the Devils obtained the grant, but they immediately took possession of the swine^c; which, being disturbed at the entrance of these unexpected and unwelcome guests, ran violently, the whole herd of them, down a steep place into the lake (or sea, for so also it was called) and being there choked (whether by the water, or the Devils) they all perished in the waters.

Upon this the swine-herds fled, and going into the city, told both there and in the country, as they went, what had happened

This drew some out to see what it was that was done, and perhaps to demand satisfaction for the damage received, or revenge the loss they sustained in their swine; which could not but be pretty considerable, since the herd consisted of about two thousand.

^c Mat. viii. 32. Mark v. 13. Luke viii. 33.

But when they came to Jesus ^d, and saw the man that was possessed with the Devil, and had had the legion in him, now sitting (who used to be hurried hither and thither) and clothed (who was wont to be naked) and in his right mind (who used to be raving mad) they were afraid.

And when they who had seen it told the rest, by what means he that was possessed with the Devil was healed ^e, and also concerning the swine, the whole city came out to meet Jesus, and the whole multitude of the Gadarens round about the country gathered about him also; and not having grace, or goodness enough, to prefer him before their swine; nor courage enough to contest the point with him for the loss of their swine, they besought him to depart out of their coasts, which he did.

And for aught else appears, the chief end of his going thither at that time was, that he might shew his power over the elements in the passage, and thereby confirm the faith of his disciples; and manifest his dominion over the unclean spirits, in freeing those poor souls from their usurped tyranny.

But oh! how inexpressible is the comfort which accrues to mankind from the consideration arising from this story; that the Devil, that prince of darkness, in his highest strength, even at the head of his legionary forces, has not power to enter so much as a sorry swine, until it be given him by a divine permission.

At the request of the Gadarens Jesus went on board the ship again; and then he of the two that had been possessed, and thus grievously tormented by the Devils, besought Jesus that he might go with him, and be with him; fearing perhaps lest, when Jesus was gone, and he left again to himself, his old masters might return, and take possession of him again.

But Jesus ^f (who, as well absent as present, knew how to preserve the poor man) would not suffer him to go with him; but advised him to go home to his own

^d Mark v. 15. ^e Ver. 17. ^f Ver. 19.

house, and to his friends, and tell them what great things the Lord had done for him, and how he had had compassion on him.

The man thereupon departing, did publish throughout Decapolis^s (which took its name from ten cities, of which this was one, and the chief) how great things Jesus had done for him; and all men did marvel at it.

Now when Jesus was come back again^h to the other side of the lake, he went unto his own city (Capernaum, where his residence mostly was) and there the people received him gladly; for they were all waiting for his return.

To this time is by some referred the working of those miraculous cures on the daughter of Jairus, and the woman with the bloody issue, Mark v. and Luke viii. on the two blind men, and the dumb man possessed with a Devil, Mat. ix. 27, 32. All which have been related before, from Mat. ix. how seasonable, is left to the reader's judgment.

From hence it is supposed by some, our Saviour made a second visit to his own country Nazareth; which is gathered from Mark vi. 1. and Mat. xiii. 54. But it is more probable, that what these two evangelists do here deliver, is the same with that which Luke gives in chap. iv. from which place I have related it before.

Samuel Cradock, indeed, in his Harmony of the Four Evangelists, chap. iv. sect. 23. relates this from Matthew and Mark, as a distinct story from that in Luke, making it another visit to Nazareth. But it had, I suppose, slipped his memory at that time, that in sect. 11. of his 3d chapter (having just before given the account at large, from Luke iv. of our Lord's having been at Nazareth, and the rude entertainment he met with there) he had, in a marginal note, told us, we read not that Christ ever came to this town again.

^s Mark v. 20. ^h Mat. ix. 1. Luke viii. 40.

Our Lord (as we have given account before) had some time ago chosen out of the whole body of his disciples twelve by name, to be always with him, in readiness to be sent forth by him, when he should see occasion. And that time being now comeⁱ, he called them to him, and gave them power and authority over all Devils, and unclean spirits, to cast them out; and to heal all manner of sickness, and cure all diseases; yea, and to raise the dead also.

Then sending them forth in pairs, by two and two together, he gave them both their commission to preach the kingdom of God; and instructions how and where to do it; and how to behave themselves in the doing of it.

First, He forbid them to go in the way of the Gentiles in general^k. For though he was the common Saviour, who not only would that all men should be saved, but to that end gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, 1 Tim. ii. 6. yet the offer and tender of his salvation was to be first made to the Jews, the ancient and peculiar people of God; which the apostle Paul afterwards acknowledged to be, in a sort, their due, Acts xiii. 46.

In particular, he forbid them to enter into any city of the Samaritans; for the Samaritans (as Grotius observes on Mat. x. 5) were partly of foreign extraction, not imbodyed with the Jews in a religious fellowship; partly also Jews, who, rejecting the rites of their own religion, had fallen off to them.

“But go rather, said he, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel^l. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

This was the sum of their message, the same which both John the Baptist, Mat. iii. 2. and Jesus himself, Mat. iv. 17, began their preaching with; adding repentance to it. “Repent, said they, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” The dispensation of the gospel, the administration of the spirit under the Son, is ready to

ⁱ Mat. x. 1. Mark vi. 7. Luke ix. 1. ^k Mat. x. 5. ^l Ver. 6. enter,

enter, and take place of that of the law and of the letter under Moses.

And to confirm this doctrine; “Heal the sick (said he to them^m) cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out Devils. Work such miracles as may not only, from the strangeness of them, enforce an acknowledgment that ye are endowed with a supernatural power; but also, from the beneficialness thereof to mankind, may engage them to love you, and receive your testimony. Which that ye may the more effectually do, see that ye do all freely. As ye have freely received from me; so do ye freely give to them.”

Some there are, who, unwilling themselves to preach freely, would willingly restrain this precept [freely give] to the healing part of their work; so that they should demand nothing for the cures they wrought; not willing to extend it to their preaching. But they received the gift for preaching, as freely as that for healing; and therefore were under equal obligation to perform both alike freely.

This is acknowledged by some, not of the least note among the learned.

Capellus, in his observations on those words [freely ye have received, freely give] delivers himself thus: *Refertur illud non modò ad ægrotorum curationem, cujus donum miraculosum à Christo acceperint apostoli; sed ad evangelii prædicationem: quod hinc sanè liquet, quòd ab eo tempore in ecclesiâ christianâ simoniaci sunt dicti illi, qui prætio sacerdotia munusq; docendi & sacra administrandi redimere voluerunt. Vult ergo Christus discipulos suos gratis non modò ægros sanare, sed & evangelium docere, quia & ipse gratis eos illud docuisset, i. e.* ‘That saying [freely ye have received, freely give] is referred not only to the curing of the sick, for which the apostles had received from Christ a miraculous gift; but to the preaching of the gospel also; which indeed is evident from hence, that from that time they are called simonists in the christian church, who with

^m Mat. x. 8.

‘ a price would purchase benefices, and the office of
 ‘ preaching and administering holy things. Christ there-
 ‘ fore would have his disciples not only heal the sick
 ‘ freely, but preach the kingdom also freely; because
 ‘ he also had taught it them freely.’

With him agrees Grotius, who in his annotations on this place, says: ‘ *Christus, cum videret multum decessu-
 ‘ rum auctoritati doctrinae evangelice, quin neq; extra ca-
 ‘ lumniam futuros discipulos suos, si pro actibus qui ad
 ‘ testandam duntaxat veritatem pertinere debebant, aliquid
 ‘ acciperent præmii, non fædas tantum pactiones, sed omnem
 ‘ omninò ex rebus ejusmodi, aut etiam ex ipsa docendi operâ,
 ‘ quæstum prohibuit. Quod à veris apostolis, eorumq;
 ‘ successoribus sanctissimè est observatum; apud quos, ut Ter-
 ‘ tullianus loquitur, nulla res Dei prætio constabat,*’ i. e.
 ‘ Christ, seeing that the authority of the doctrine of the
 ‘ gospel would be much lessened, and moreover, that
 ‘ his disciples would not be free from calumny, if they
 ‘ should receive any reward for acts which ought to be-
 ‘ long only to the testifying of the truth, forbade not
 ‘ only filthy bargains, but all manner of gain whatso-
 ‘ ever, out of such things, or even out of the work it-
 ‘ self of preaching. Which thing was most religiously
 ‘ observed by the true apostles, and their successors;
 ‘ amongst whom, as Tertullian speaks, none of the
 ‘ things of God did cost any thing.’

Then having hinted that both Christ and his apostles, as well in word as by example, taught, that it was but equal that they who, neglecting their own business, employed their time and pains in procuring the salvation of others, should in course be honestly maintained by them; and that the apostles notwithstanding (Paul more especially) did very often quit this right of theirs, rather choosing to get their living by their hands, than be a burthen to the poor, or lie open to the calumnies of such as bare ill-will to them: he adds, by these arts the truth of the gospel was propagated, or spread throughout the whole world. From which, how greatly the manners of after-times have receded,

is as needfuls to be spoken, as sad to be thought of. Thus he.

To whom may be added, Sebastian Munster, who, on the words, "Provide neither gold," &c. Mat. x. 9. has this remark. *'Hoc dicitur, quòd illi qui Dei agunt negotium, & regnum ejus hominibus annunciant, omnem curam vitæ presentis rejicere debent in eum; non dubitantes Deum illis suppeditaturum commeatum, victum & amictum, atq; defensionem in itinere, juxta illud proverbium vulgò jactatum, Dignus est operarius cibo suo,' i. e. 'This is spoken, because they that do God's business, and preach his kingdom unto men, ought to cast all their care of this life upon him; not doubting but that God will supply them with provision of both food and raiment for their journey, and defence in it, according to that common proverb, The workman is worthy of his meat.'*

From this strict charge given to the apostles to perform the service they were sent on freely, some think the apostles began to cast in their minds what provisions they should take with them for their use in the journey they were now to go upon; and that therefore our Lord added, "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purse"ⁿ (the Greek word, ζώνας, signifies girdles; and is rendered purses, because in old times they did wear their purses within their girdles or belts).

Take nothing for your journey^o; no money, no bread, no scrip (or wallet to carry change of garments in) and therefore not two coats (one to travel in, and another to be trim in) no, nor any shoes, but the sandals only which ye have on: nor yet staves, say Matthew and Luke. Yet inasmuch as Mark, out of the general prohibition, hath that one exception of a staff only, interpreters, to keep the texts from clashing, are willing to suppose that by staves, forbidden in Matthew and Luke, are meant weapons for defence; and by a staff allowed, in Mark, is meant an usual walking-

ⁿ Mat. x. 9. ^o Mark vi. 8. Luke ix. iii.

stick only, to ease and support them when wearied with travel.

The sum and scope of all these prohibitions of their making any provision for themselves, seems to be to imbue and season them, now at their initiation into the apostolical service, with a full and firm fiduciary dependence upon God for all things necessary to a comfortable life; and a willing self-denial and abnegation of whatsoever was more than needful. And that they might not fear wanting what was needful, he tells them, in a proverbial speech, "The workman is worthy of his meat."

Having secured them of that, he in the next place instructs them how they should behave themselves where they came.

And first, he bids them, when they should come into any city or town, not run at a venture into any body's house, but inquire who in that place is worthy (for sobriety, gravity, and religious inclinations).

And when, upon inquiry, they should find such a family; then, when they came into the house, they should salute the family with the common comprecation used in salutations in those times and countries, viz. "Peace be to this house."

So the seventy were directed, a while after, to salute the families where they came, Luke x. 5. And that that was the common salutation, not only among the Jews, but other eastern nations, may be seen in 1 Sam. xxv. 6. 1 Chron. xii. 18. Gen. xliii. 33. by which they wished all health and happiness, or prosperity; as appears from psalm cxxii. 7. And with this salutation did our Lord himself, after his resurrection, greet his disciples, John xx. 19.

If, says he, the house (that is, the people of the house, the containing being, by a metonymy, put for the contained) be worthy, let your peace (what in your salutation ye wish them) rest upon them: but if it be not worthy, your peace (or good wish) will return to yourselves.

Next he bids them, in whatsoever place they enter into an house^o (where the people do receive them) there they should abide, till they depart from that place; and not shift their lodging to and fro from house to house; thereby giving people occasion to think them unstable, and of unsettled minds; or that they hunt after the best quarters.

Then he tells them how they should carry themselves towards such as should despise or reject them, or their testimony.

“Whosoever, says he, will not receive you, nor hear your words^p; when ye go out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet as a testimony against them.” Upon which passage Grotius, on Mat. x. 14. in *Crit. Sacr.* thus delivers himself.

‘*Non videtur mihi ritus iste directè quidem denunciatio-
nem divini judicij continere, sed tantundem valuisse, quasi
dicerent apostoli, Veneramus hic, non nostri commodi,
sed salutis vestræ causâ. Nunc quando monitis nostris
auscultare non vultis, res vestras vobis habete. Nihil
nobis vobiscum ultrâ commercii est, quin aded nè tantillum
quidem vestri expetimus,*’ *i. e.* ‘That ceremony (of
shaking off the dust of the feet) doth not indeed seem
to me to contain directly a denouncing of divine
judgment, but to have the same force as if the apostle
had said, We came hither, not for the sake of our
own advantage, but of your salvation. Now, seeing
ye will not hearken to our admonition, keep your
matters to yourselves; we have no more to do with
you; nay, truly, we do not desire so much of you as
this small dust comes to.’ To like purpose speak also
Castallio and Zegerus.

But surely one might think from the following words, that the shaking off the dust, on that occasion, might import a denunciation of divine judgment; for thus it follows in Matthew. “Verily, I say unto you,

^o Mark vi. 10. ^p Luke ix. 4. ^p Mat. x. 14. Mark vi. 11.
Luke ix. v.

it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for that city."

Having instructed them how to demean themselves in their present expedition, our Lord now foretels them what hardship they may be likely to meet with, if not in this journey, yet in their future travels in his service. And this he did, that he might prepare them to expect and bear persecution for his name sake, when he should in person be absent from them. For, as Grotius observes, '*Quæ sequuntur non tam ad hanc legationem pertinent, quam ad eas quas Christus postea apostolis erat mandaturus,*' i.e. 'The things which follow belong not so much to this their present embassy, as to those which Christ should hereafter employ them in.'

He tells them therefore, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves⁹. Against whom (we know) the sheep are not able to defend themselves by strength and force." Therefore he advises them to be wise, wary, watchful and circumspect, as the serpent is; who (as naturalists say) doth shun the company of men, as knowing them to be his enemies; and is watchful of the feet of men, if they come where he is, and very careful of his head, that they may not tread upon it.

Yet lest this serpentine policy should carry them too far towards a self-security, he compounds it with the innocency and harmless simplicity of the dove. "Be ye therefore, said he, wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." By which similitude, as Erasmus observes, Christ hath admirably painted out the simple prudence, and prudent simplicity, of men truly christian.

"But beware of men, added he^r (as if he had said, beware what men ye converse with; beware how ye converse with them; beware of opening yourselves too freely to them; beware of contending too fiercely with them; beware of casting your pearls before swine, or giving your holy things unto dogs; beware of such men) for they will deliver you up to the councils (as they did

⁹ Mat. x. 16. ^r Ver. 17.

afterwards Peter and John, Acts iv.) and they will scourge you in their synagogues (or rather consistories, or judicatories) as they did the apostles, Acts v. 40. and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them (the Jews) and the Gentiles (as Paul was brought before Felix and Festus, two Roman governors, Acts xxiv. and chap. xxv. 6. and before king Agrippa, ver. 23. and before Nero, the Roman Emperor, 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17.) whereby not the Jews only, but the Gentile rulers also, had occasionally a means of hearing the gospel preached."

Yet, that they might not perplex their thoughts^s, how they should answer those great persons, when they should be brought judicially before them, he bids them not be anxiously careful how or what they should speak; assuring them, that if they were faithful, in the needful hour it should be given them. Which that they might the more confidently rely upon, he wished them to consider, that it was not they that were to speak (of themselves, or as men) but it was the Spirit of God (their Father) which should speak in and through them; which was verified not long after in Peter, Acts iv. 8. and v. 29, and in Stephen, Acts vii.

Having eased them in that respect, he goes on to set forth the dangers they might probably meet with from the cruelty and treachery that would be likely to arise in the unbelievers, or false brethren, against the true believers; and that even in private families, and amongst the nearest relations,

"For brother shall deliver brother to death^t; and the father, the child; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. The result of all which should be, that they (his disciples) should be hated of all men for his name's sake; that is, for confessing themselves to be his disciples. Yet this comfort should also attend it, that he that should not be staggered and turned aside

^s Mat. x. 19. ^t Ver. 21.

by it, but should persevere in the christian profession and life, and therein hold out unto the end, should be saved."

Therefore he encourages them to go on boldly and faithfully on the message he now sent them about, and not be stopped or hindered by any storm they might meet with in this, that, or the other place. But, said he^u, "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye (or hasten ye, not into the desert, or some place of quiet and safety, but) into another city, there to preach the same gospel: for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man come."

Concerning which coming interpreters do not well agree, some referring it to one time, others to another; but they seem nearest to hit the mark, who refer it to his spiritual coming and appearing to his disciples after his resurrection, and the general effusion of his Spirit upon them after his ascension.

But in this interpreters do well agree, that that direction of Christ to his disciples, when persecuted in one city, to flee unto another, imported the urgency of the service, and straitness of time for the performance of it, and was intended by him as an incitement to them to boldness and diligence in the discharge thereof.

'*Apparet igitur* (says Grotius on the place) *non rectè ex hoc loco peti argumentum ad questionem de fugâ voluntariâ, solo vitandî periculi respectu,*' i. e. 'It appears therefore, that an argument to the question concerning voluntary flight, merely on the account of avoiding danger, cannot rightly be fetched from this place.'

But that they should not think much of this sort of treatment when they should meet with it, since they professed to be his disciples, he recommended to their consideration that proverbial axiom, "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord".

^u Mat. x. 23.

^w Ver. 24.

But it is enough for the disciple, if he speed as well as his master, and the servant as his Lord.

“If therefore, said he, they have called me, the master of the house, Beel-zebub (as ye know they have) how much more will they call them of his household (that is, you) so? and how much the more patiently may ye bear it?”

“Fear not therefore, because of them, to declare your message boldly^x; but what I have spoken to you privately, and (as it were) in your ear, that speak ye openly, and preach it as publickly as from the house-top; for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; or hid, that shall not be made known.”

“Neither fear them, who can kill the body only; but are not able to kill the soul^y: but rather fear him (God) who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

And as he is able to destroy, he is no less able to save; and therefore ye may safely rely both on his power and providence, which is so extensive, that although a sparrow is so mean a thing, that two of them are sold for a farthing^z; yet not one of them shall fall to the ground without your father's permission, or knowledge at least.

“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men^a (for, as one observes, Christ requires not only faith in the heart, but confession with the mouth, Rom. x. 10. Grotius) him will I confess also before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven.”

Then to obviate an objection which might possibly arise in their minds, that he, the promised Messiah, the prince of peace, of the increase of whose government and peace it was long before prophesied there should be no end, Isaiah ix, 6, 7. and chap. xi. 6, 7, 8, 9. might have been expected to have been attended with peace at his coming^b, rather than with such op-

^x Mat. x. 26. ^y Ver. 28. ^z Ver. 29. ^a Ver. 32. ^b Ver. 34.

positions and disturbances as he spake of: "Think not, said he, that I am come to send peace on earth (think not that my coming will produce that peace which ye expect); I came not to send peace, but a sword. My coming will not at present work peace, but differences and divisions. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, &c. (or, upon my coming, variance will arise between a man and his father) even the nearest relations in families disagreeing, and falling out among themselves; while one receiveth my doctrine, another rejecteth it; one confesseth to it, another blasphemeth it, and persecuteth him for it; whereby it will come to pass, that a man shall have foes amongst them of his own household."

Yet even in this case, how near and strait soever the tie and bond of natural relation be, all must give place to me, to my doctrine and service^c: "For he that loveth father or mother, son or daughter, more than me (which he doth, who, for their sakes, at their importunity, either for fear or love of them, forsakes me, my service, the profession and confession of my gospel) is not worthy of me," deserves not to be entertained in my service.

"Nay, he that taketh not his cross^d; he that adventures not himself, life and all, to the extremest and most ignominious sufferings, and even death (when called thereunto) rather than not follow me, is not worthy of me."

And if worldly policy should prevail on any one to desert me, in hopes thereby to save his life, he will thereby lose, if not that life, a better; whereas he that shall readily give up his life for my sake, shall be sure, if he do not save that, to find a better.

And lastly, for their comfort, and the encouragement of such as should entertain their message and them, he addeth^e: "He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent

^c Mat. x. 37.^d Ver. 38.^e Ver. 40.

me; which is sufficient to intitle all such to a good reward."

For he tells them, "that he who receiveth a prophet in the name of (or as) a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward." Such an one doth so interest and engage himself in the prophet's service, that he will thereby intitle himself to a like reward with the prophet. Nay, he goes a step farther, and adds, "He that receiveth a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man^f, shall receive a righteous man's reward."

That the reader may the better understand what is meant here by a righteous man, distinguished from a prophet, I will give him a brief account of the matter, as I find it more largely delivered in Godwyn's Moses and Aaron, l. 1. c. 9.

Before the captivity in Babylon, says he, we find the word Chasidim to signify the same as Tfadikim, just, or good men, in opposition to Reschagnim, ungodly, or wicked men; the whole body of the Jews being then distinguished into two sorts, good and bad.

After their captivity, the Chasidim began to be distinguished from the Tfadikim. The Tfadikim gave themselves to the study of the scripture. The Chasidim studied how to add to the scripture. The Tfadikim would conform to whatsoever the law required. The Chasidim would be holy above the law. So that to the repairing of the temple, the maintenance of the sacrifices, the relief of the poor, &c. they would voluntarily add over and above to that which the law required of them.

This subdivision of the Tfadikim and Chasidim brought the body of the Jewish people to be distinguished, with respect to holiness, into three sorts.

First, The Reschagnim, or ἀσεβεις, wicked and ungodly men.

Secondly, Tfadikim, δίκαιοι, just and righteous men.

^f Mat. x. 41.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Chafidim; who are sometimes translated *ἁγιοὶ*, holy men, and that for the most part; and sometimes also *ἀγαθοὶ*, good men.

These over-righteous persons, who were called good men, were of all others best reputed, and beloved of the people.

But it is probable that the others, the Tfadikim, who, not aiming at works of supererogation, endeavoured to observe the law, and to be indeed just and righteous, were preferred by Christ; which made him pitch upon them for his instance. But to proceed.

Our Lord carries it yet a degree farther ^g, with which he here closes his discourse, saying, “And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones (the very least of my disciples) a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, Verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.”

When now our Lord had furnished his apostles with sufficient instructions for their journey, they departed; and going through the towns, preached the gospel, and cast out many Devils; and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them every-where ^h.

This anointing of the sick with oil, when they prayed for them, Grotius informs us was an ancient custom among the Hebrews, which they used, in hope to obtain from God, to the sick, refreshment and joy; which was signified by oil.

After that Jesus had sent forth his apostles, he departed from thence; and went to teach and preach in their cities; from which may be inferred, that he followed after them, to confirm the doctrine they had delivered.

And now, alas! comes on the tragical story of the death of John the Baptist ⁱ. He had been shut up in prison long before by Herod the tetrarch, surnamed Antipas (the son of that Herod surnamed the Great) who slew the infants, in hope that among them he should have slain Jesus.

^g Mat. x. 42. ^h Mark vi. 7. Luke ix. 6. ⁱ Mark vi. 21, Mark xiv. 3.

For this Herod Antipas having taken from his brother Philip, tetrarch of Iturea, his wife Herodias (by whom Philip had had issue) and married her himself, John reprov'd him for it, telling him plainly, "It was not lawful for him to have her."

This we may suppose did not please Herod himself. But in Herodias, a wicked and violent woman, it rais'd an inward grudge, and deep desire of revenge; in-somuch that she would have killed him then, if she could: but that she could not do.

For Herod himself (without whose authority she durst not attempt it) not only feared John, as knowing him to be a just and an holy man; but heard him gladly, and with observance; and when he heard him, did many things at his instance before he had meddled with his Herodias. Nay, after he had taken this offence against him, and, to gratify his Herodias, would have put him to death at first, he forbore, fearing the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

But now, when (as Mark has it) a convenient day was come^k (a day, as it proved, convenient indeed for the wicked purpose of Herodias) that Herod's birthday was to be kept; he, for the honour of that day, made a feast or supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee.

At this revelling feast, the daughter of Herodias (whose name was Salome, and whom she had by her lawful husband Philip) came in and danced (the Greek word, says Vatablus, signifies to dance with a lascivious carriage). And her dancing so pleas'd Herod, and them that sat with him^l, that he bid her ask of him whatsoever she would, and he would give it her. Nay, he confirm'd it to her with an oath, that whatsoever she should ask of him, he would give it her, even to the one half of his kingdom. A proverbial way of speaking, us'd by kings, when they would give to any one the freest liberty of asking, as Grotius on the place observes; who there also hath this note on Herod's

^k Mark vi. 21.

^l Ver. 22.

cath, ‘*Vide quò tandem jurandi facilitas evaserit; non jam apud prophanas dico gentes, sed apud eos ipsos qui Mosis legibus teneri se profitebantur,*’ i. e. ‘See to what a pass the facility of swearing was come; I do not now say among prophane nations, but even among those very persons, who did profess themselves to be bound by the laws of Moses.’

Salome, having got this liberal grant^m, went forth, and asked her mother what she should ask; who bidding her ask the head of John the Baptist, she, hastening in again, said to Herod, “I will that thou give me by-and-by in a charger (or platter) the head of John the Baptist.”

The fixing on a charger, dish, or platter, as the vessel in which they would have the head brought, Erasmus thinks was done for sport-sake; as if this dish should be served up for one mess, at that genial or birth-day feast.

At this probably unexpected requestⁿ, the king (for so Herod, though but a tetrarch, was called) is said to have been, as well he might, exceeding sorry; yet for his oath’s sake, and for their sakes who sat with him (that he might not seem to them to be, either through fear or inconstancy, worse than his word) he would not reject her, but commanded that it should be given her.

Upon which Munster makes this note, ‘*Rex impius religiosus esse voluit in ea re, quæ citrà summam impietatem perfici non potuit: nam innocentem occidit, contra jus Dei et nature. Nec excusare illum potuit juramentum, quod erat factum contra Dei mandatum,*’ i. e. ‘The wicked king would be religious in that thing, which could not be performed without the greatest impiety: for he slew the innocent, against the law of God and nature. Nor could the oath excuse him, which was made against the law of God.’

But when once the king had said the word, which he did evil in saying; rather than he would unsay it, he

^m Mark vi. 24.

ⁿ Ver. 26.

would do worfe in performing it. Wherefore he immediately fent an executioner, and commanded that the head of John the Baptift fhould be brought; which was not, properly fpeaking, within his oath, as being no part of his kingdom, though more worth than all his kingdom.

The headfman thereupon going to the prifon^o, ftruck off the holy man's head; and bringing it in a charger, delivered it to the dancing damfel; and ſhe, glad of the prize, forthwith prefented it to her mother.

The revengeful mother, having by this means got into her power the head of him, whom ſhe (though unjuſtly) accounted her greateſt enemy, did (if we may truſt the marginal note given, as from Hierom, in Cradock's Harmony, chap. iv. ſect. 27). draw forth the tongue, by which ſhe miſapprehended herſelf to have been injured, and bored it through with a bodkin; as Fulvia, the wife of Mark Anthony, did to the tongue of the Roman orator Cicero.

This was the end of that great good man, the fore-runner of our Lord, the prophet of the moſt High; who, though he baptized others but in water, was himſelf baptized in blood, his own blood. And this (as Clarius, on the place, well obſerves) was the fruit of dancing and wanton tripping about, even the ſlaughter and beheading of that man, than whom a greater hath not ariſen among them that are born of a woman. And this made the annotators, in their marginal note on the place in the Old Bible, cry out, "What inconvenience comes by dancing^p!"

When his diſciples heard what had befallen their maſter^q, they went and took up his body (which, it ſeems, was not denied them) and laid it in a tomb. Which having done, they went and acquainted Jeſus with it; and thence-forward (as with good probability it is ſuppoſed) they continued with him as his diſciples.

• Mark vi. 28. p Ver. 22. Ver. 29. q Mat. xiv. 12.

By this time the twelve apostles, whom Jesus had not long before sent forth in pairs, to proclaim his coming, and awaken the people to an expectation of him^r, and dispose them to a readiness to receive him, having expeditely passed through many of the towns, and alarmed (as it were) the country thereabouts, returned to Jesus, and gave him an account in particulars, both how they had taught, and what they had done (what miracles they had wrought among the people) in healing the sick, and casting out Devils, in confirmation of their doctrine.

Wherefore considering the toil they had had in their late travels, and being willing to give them a little ease, he bid them come themselves apart with him, into a desert place, that they might rest a while; for there were many coming and going^s, so that they had not leisure so much as to eat.

Neither was that all. Two things more concurred, which might probably incline them to retire a while.

One was, the sudden cutting off of John the Baptist, and that in an arbitrary manner, without any sort of legal trial, or judicial proceeding; and not openly neither, but covertly in the prison, directly contrary to the law of God, which commanded that the guilty should be punished in the sight of the people.

The other was, that Herod, having heard of the fame of Jesus^t, began to make inquiry after him, and desired to see him; perhaps with no better intention than his father had before desired to see him, when he was in his swaddling clothes.

For his name being spread abroad, and the report of what great things he had done being brought to Herod's court, occasioned various discourses and conjectures about him; some saying John was risen from the dead; and that perplexed Herod.

He therefore, to stop that report, said, "John have I beheaded; but who is this, of whom I hear such things?"

^r Mark vi. 30. Luke ix. 10. ^s Mark vi. 31. ^t Mat. xiv. 1. Luke ix. 7. Mark vi. 14.

Others said, "It is Elias; and others, It is a prophet, at least one equivalent to a prophet."

Though Herod was not willing the notion should be received, that John the Baptist was risen from the dead; lest the people, who highly revered him living, should too highly resent his having been illegally and arbitrarily put to death; yet to his own servants he stuck not to say, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him."

But though Herod desired to see Jesus, yet had not Jesus any desire to see him; and therefore took this opportunity, upon the return of his apostles from their travels, to withdraw with them into a place of privacy.

In order whereunto^u, that they might not be clogged with company if they should go by land, they went on board a ship, and sailing away as privately as they could, landed again at some distance on the same side of the lake; and then went aside into a desert place, belonging to the city called Beth-saida.

Yet they got not away so secretly, but that some of the people saw them depart; and they telling others, it was soon spread abroad whither he was gone; and the people, when they heard it, followed him by land, out of all the adjacent cities; and getting to the place before him, came together there unto him.

When therefore Jesus was come out of the ship, and saw so great a multitude of people^w, he was moved with compassion towards them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things relating to the kingdom of God; and withal he healed them that had need of healing. Which done, he went up into a mountain, and sat there with his disciples, until the day was far spent, and the evening came on.

His disciples then coming to him, put him in mind that the people had nothing to eat^x, and were besides

^u Mat. xiv. 13. ^w Ver. 14. Mark vi. 34. Luke ix. 11.

^x Mat. xiv. 15. Mark vi. 35. Luke ix. 12.

in a defart place, where nothing was to be got; and therefore they desired him to difmiss the company, that they might go into the towns and country villages round about, and provide themselves of both food and lodging.

Instead of doing fo, Jesus told his disciples^y, there was no need that the people should depart on that account; and bid them give them to eat.

This fo startled the disciples, that some of them asked him, if they should go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread for them^z? Whereupon he, turning to Philip, asked him, “ Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” Which he said to try him; for he had before concluded what he would do.

“ Alas! replied Philip, two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.”

Andrew thereupon acquainted him, that there was a lad there^a, who had five barley loaves, and two small fishes; adding withal, “ But what are they among fo many?”

Upon this information, Jesus bid his disciples make the multitude sit down in companies^b, by fifty in a company, upon the green grafs; of which, at that time, there might be good store^c. For it was a little before the feast of the passover (which beginning on the fourteenth of their first month, called Nisan and Abib, which took in half the first and half the second with us, must begin about the latter end of our first month) by which time, especially in those warmer climates, plenty of green grafs might be expected.

When now the whole company (being about five thousand men, besides women and children) were sat down in ranks^d, by hundreds, and by fifties, our Lord took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven (from whence all blessings, and even himself, the greatest of blessings, came) he blessed them, and

^y Mat. xiv. 16. Mark vi. 37. ^z Luke ix. 13. John vi. 5.
^a John vi. 8. ^b Ver. 10. ^c Ver. 4. ^d Luke ix. 14. Mat. xiv. 19.
 Mark vi. 41. Luke ix. 16.

brake and divided the loaves and the fishes, and gave his disciples to set before the multitude; which done, they did all eat, and were filled.

Then said Jesus to his disciples, "Gather up the fragments which remain, that nothing be lost^e. And the disciples thereupon, gathering them together, did fill twelve baskets with the fragments which remained of the five barley loaves and two small fishes, after so great a multitude had eaten thereof, and were filled."

This so evident and eminent a miracle drew from the people an acknowledgment, that this of a truth was that prophet, who was expected to come into the world, that is, the promised Messiah.

And because he was looked for to come as a king, who should break the yoke of bondage from off their necks, and deliver them from all their enemies, they thought, that under his government (who, they saw, could multiply the species of things, and with so very small provisions feed and satisfy so great a multitude) they might lead easy and idle lives; and thereupon began to think of setting him up for their king.

But when Jesus perceived this intention of theirs^f to come and take him by force to make him a king, he straitway constrained his disciples to go on board the ship again; and to go before him unto the other side of the lake, while he sent the multitudes away. Which being done, and the people dismissed, he went up again into a mountain apart to pray.

And now a new exercise befell the disciples to try their faith, which, one would think, might have been well confirmed and strengthened by the wonderful miracle they had so newly seen.

For they, at their master's command, launching out into the sea or lake, were got into the middle of it by that time it was grown dark^g. And then a contrary wind blowing strong upon them, the sea swelled, and

^e John vi. 12. Ver. 13. Mat. xiv. 20. Mark vi. 43. Luke ix. 17. John vi. 14. ^f Ver. 15. Mat. xiv. 22. Mark vi. 45. ^g Mat. xiv. 24. Mark vi. 47. John vi. 18.

toffed the ship, which put them into no small fear, and made them row hard to make the land.

When they had thus rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, and were much spent with the toil, our Lord (who though he was not then with them, had a watchful care over them) seeing the distress they were in, about the fourth watch of the night (which reached from three to six in the morning) went towards them, walking upon the sea; and to try them thoroughly, made as if he would have passed by them.

So little did they expect him, in that place and manner especially, that when they saw him walking upon the sea^b, supposing it had been a spirit (that is, a spectrum, phantasm, ghost, or apparition) they were troubled, and cried out for fear. But their compassionate Lord, presently discovering himself to them, said, "Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid."

That word cheered them indeed, and drove away fear, especially from Peter; who thereupon said unto him, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the waterⁱ."

Jesus, willing to make him sensible of his own weakness, bid him come. And thereupon Peter, going down out of the ship, attempted to walk on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, fear gat up in him again; and his fear being stronger than his faith, he soon began to sink; and as soon as he found it, cried out, "Lord, save me^k."

Jesus, thereupon stretching forth his hand, caught him; and with this gentle rebuke, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" took him with him into the ship; into which the rest that were on board willingly received him, though not without great amazement and wonder.

For they had not sufficiently considered the miracle of the loaves; which, if they had duly done, they needed not have wondered that he, who could so miraculously multiply the bread, could by the same power

^b Mark vi. 49. Mat. xiv. 26.

ⁱ Ver. 28.

^k Ver. 30.

walk upon the water without sinking, and still the winds, as he did; for immediately the winds ceased.

But the reason given in the text why they were so amazed at this¹, and why they had not considered, as they ought, the miracle of the loaves before, is, “their heart was hardened.”

That is (as one observes upon the place) ‘*Nondum erat intellectus eorum divino lumine illustratus, quò possent visa miracula dignè expendere, & ex iis intelligere majestatem & gloriam Christi,*’ i. e. ‘Their understanding was not yet so cleared by the divine light, that they could worthily weigh the miracles they saw, and by them understand the majesty and glory of Christ.’ Then adds, ‘*Admonemur hic de humane mentis vitio, quò fit, ut non sufficiat spectare oculis corporis magnalia Dei, ad hoc ut intelligas, & credas, nisi mens supernè fuerit illuminata,*’ i. e. ‘We are here warned of the imperfection of man’s mind; by which it comes to pass, that it is not enough to behold with our bodily eyes the great things of God, so as to understand and believe them, unless the mind be enlightened from above.’ See Cradock’s Harmony, p. 214. Margin.

Clarius also, in the Criticks, on Mark vi. 52. ‘*Non agnoverant in multiplicatione panum potestatem Christi; propterea videtur Dominus turbasse mare, ut vel sic agnoscerent eum.*’ i. e. ‘They (the apostles) had not acknowledged the power of Christ in the multiplying of the loaves; for which reason the Lord seems to have troubled the sea, that even by that means they may come to acknowledge him.’ Then adds, ‘*Usu quoque nunc evenit, ut multi in summa felicitate non observent Dei erga se beneficentiam; attriti malis, tum demum agnoscant,*’ i. e. ‘It often happens now also, that many, in the height of happiness, do not observe the bountiful dealing of God towards them; but when they are worn with afflictions, they then at length acknowledge it.’

¹ Mark vi. 52.

Thus the apostles, after they had been thoroughly frightened with the danger of a troubled sea, and the sight of a supposed ghost, and had somewhat recollected themselves^m, came to Jesus, and worshipping him, said, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

No sooner was Jesus got on board the vessel, but the winds ceasing, immediately the ship was at the land of Genesareth, to which they were bound. And when they were come on shore, the men of that place knowing Jesus, ran and sent out into all that country round about, to give notice that he (the great benefactor to mankind) was come.

Whereupon they began to carry about in beds those that were sick, wherever they could hear he was. Nay, whithersoever he entered, into villages or cities, or in the country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border or hem of his garment; and as many as touched him, were made perfectly wholeⁿ.

Next morning the people, who had been miraculously feasted over night^o, remembering that there was no other boat then on that side of the sea, save that in which the disciples went off, and that Jesus did not go with them, came again to the same place to seek him, in hopes, perhaps, to have got such another meal.

But not finding him there, and seeing some other boats (or ships, which in the mean time were come from Tiberius) riding hard by^p, they took shipping, and went over to Capernaum in quest of him.

Whither being come, and finding him there, they, wondering when or how he could in that time get thither^q, confidently asked him, "Rabbi (or Master) when camest thou hither?"

He, not regarding their impertinent question^r, but knowing, by his heart-searching power, what the prime motive was of their thus hunting after him, plainly

^m Mat. xiv. 33. Ver. 34. Mark vi. 53. John vi. 21. ⁿ Mat. xiv. 36. ^o John vi. 22. ^p Ver. 24. ^q Ver. 25. ^r Ver. 26.

told them (and that with a Verily, verily, as a matter he was well assured of) that they sought him not because they had seen the miracles he had wrought, but because they had eaten of the loaves, and were filled.

Then taking occasion, as his manner was, to draw up their minds from earthly to heavenly things, he exhorts them not to make it their whole or chief concern to acquire the fading things of this world, which perish in the using^s; (labour not for the meat which perisheth) but for that which endureth unto everlasting life (that heavenly food, on which your souls feeding may live for ever) which, said he, the Son of Man (meaning himself) shall give you (that is, hath to give, and will give, if ye rightly seek it, and are duly qualified to receive it). For him hath God the Father sealed, by the visible descending of the Holy Spirit upon him, and remaining on him, John i. 32.

The Jews, by this discourse, put beside their expectation^t, asked him what they should do, that they might work the works of God (such works as he requires and accepts of)?

He readily replies, this is the work of God^u (this is a most pleasing and acceptable thing to God, and that also which he hath required of you) that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

Though he spake in the third person, yet they understood him to mean himself; and being (as it seems) somewhat nettled at his free dealing with them, in telling them they followed him not for the sake of the miracle, but of the loaves, they began to make light of that miracle^w; and ask him, “What sign shewest thou then, that we may see and believe thee? What great work dost thou do, more than has been done by others before thee?”

“For our fathers did eat manna in the desert^x; as it is written, he gave them bread from heaven to eat.”

^t John vi. 27. ^s Ver. 28. ^u Ver. 29. ^w Ver. 30. ^x Ver. 31.

As if they had said, Thou hast indeed fed five thousand men (besides a few women and children); but Moses, whose disciples we profess to be, fed six hundred thousand men (beside the tribe of Levi) and all the women and children belonging to all the twelve tribes, which probably might amount to ten times as many as the men. Thou fedst the five thousand at one meal only; but our master, Moses, fed those vast multitudes forty years together. Thou fedst us with barley-bread; but our master fed them with delicious manna, sweet as honey, angels food, bread from heaven.

This was high indeed. But to take them down, and abate their boasting, Jesus tells them they were mistaken; and that in two principal parts of their story. For,

First, "It was not Moses that gave them that bread, the manna^x; but God himself; Moses had no hand in it." And,

Secondly, That bread, or manna (though rhetorically said by the psalmist to have come down from heaven, psal. lxxviii. 24.) did not come from heaven, in a strict and proper sense (as it is the cœlestial kingdom) but from the airy region, sometimes, but improperly, called heaven.

But, said he, "My Father giveth (or offereth to give) you the true bread, and that from heaven indeed; from the highest heaven, the seat of his glory and majesty. For, added he, "The bread of God is he who cometh down from heaven, and giveth (maketh an offer of) life unto the world" (not to six hundred thousand only, or six hundred thousand times six hundred thousand, but) to all mankind.

When they heard that, not having spiritual sense enough to raise their minds above carnal conceptions, but (like the Samaritan woman about the water, which Christ spake to her of, John iv. 15.) thinking it would be a great conveniency and advantage to them, if they

^x John vi. 32.

might be furnished *gratis* with such lasting provisions^y, they said, “Lord, evermore give us this bread.”

Jesus pitying their ignorance, and still aiming to lead them higher, and beget in them a greater desire and appetite after the true spiritual food, tells them^z, “I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me (rightly, through the drawings of the Father, by a living faith, and suitable obedience) shall never hunger; and he that (so) believeth on me, shall never thirst (shall be so filled and satisfied, as not to desire any thing more than it). But, said he, I told you before, that although ye also (amongst others) have seen me (in the working of that miracle, of multiplying the loaves, which was sufficient to have convinced you of my divinity) yet ye do not believe.”

“All, added he, that the Father hath given me, shall come to me^a: and him that (so) cometh (as of the gift of the Father) I will in no-wise cast out. For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the will of the Father, who hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I shall not suffer any thing to be lost; but that every one that seeth the Son (so as to believe on him) may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

The Jews now began to murmur at him^b, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And considering him no farther than as he was man; they, in their reasonings among themselves, said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith, I am come down from heaven?”

It is probable this was not spoken openly, or in his hearing, but privately among themselves; but he, who knew their hearts, their thoughts, yea, and their words also, without hearing them, to let them know he did so, bid them not murmur among themselves. Then tells them, “No man can come to him, except

^y John vi. 34. ^z Ver. 35. ^a Ver. 37. ^b Ver. 41.

the Father, who hath sent him, draw him^c; and that such as, being so drawn, come to him, he will raise up at the last day."

Then appealing to the prophets (whom the Jews professed great regard for) he put them in mind, that it was written in the prophet, "And they shall be all taught of God." He names no prophets. But we find the saying in the prophet Isaiah, chap. liv. 13. and the same, in effect, in the prophet Jeremiah, chap. xxxi. 34. And from those words he thus infers, "Every man therefore that hath heard^d, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."

Upon which words, Samuel Cradock, in chap. iv. sect. 31. page 218. of his Harmony, gives a marginal note from Luc. Brugeus, thus; '*Omnis qui audivit à Patre intus loquente, & revelante, quod humanâ ratione est investigabile,*' i. e. 'Every one who hath heard of the Father, speaking within, and revealing that, which cannot be searched out by human reason.'

To which is there also added, as from Cyril. '*Cognitionem Filii sui, non sono aut voce Pater nobis immittit, sed illuminatione mentis,*' i. e. 'The Father sends into us the knowledge of his Son, not by sound, or voice; but by the enlightening of our mind.'

Our Saviour having thus, from the testimony of their own prophets, convinced them, that the way for them to come unto him (and to believe in him) was to hear the Father, and learn of him; now, to prevent their running into gross and carnal apprehensions concerning God^e, addeth (as it were in a parenthesis) not that any (mere) man hath seen the Father (or that he is perceptible to carnal eyes) but yet, "He that is of God (the Son, who is God, as well as man) he hath seen the Father."

Then resuming his former subject, he tells them^f, in great assurance, with a "Verily, verily, he that believeth on me (who am that bread of life, which I have been speaking of) hath everlasting life."

^c John vi. 44. ^d Ver. 45. ^e Ver. 46. ^f Ver. 47. Ver. 48.

And to shew them how much, in another respect, the bread or food he offered to them did exceed the manna they gloried in, he tells them ^g, “Your fathers indeed did eat manna in the wilderness (as ye alledge); but what of that? They are dead notwithstanding. That was but temporary food, serving to keep their bodies alive, and that no longer than they continued eating of it ^h. But this bread, which cometh down from heaven, is such, that a man may eat thereof, and not die ⁱ: and I am, added he, the living (life-giving) bread, which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever. And the bread which I give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” Not for some particular persons only of, or in, the world; but as Grotius on the place notes, ‘*Ut vitam æternam impetrem humano generi.*’ i. e. ‘That I may obtain eternal life for mankind.’ ‘*Pro omnibus enim,*’ adds he, *mortuus est,*’ i. e. ‘For he died for all,’ Heb. ii. 9.

The Jews were so startled at his having at length brought the bread, he had spoken so much and so highly of, to be his flesh; that from murmuring only before, they now came to striving and contending amongst themselves about it, saying ^k, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

Which Jesus observing, said unto them, with a “Verily, verily, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood ^l, ye have no (spiritual) life in you. But whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh (in a true spiritual sense) is meat indeed; and my blood (in the like sense) is drink indeed: and he that (so) eateth my flesh, and (so) drinketh my blood, dwelleth (so) in me, and I in him.”

Then adding, “As the living Father (so called, because he hath in himself the fountain of all life) hath sent me ^m, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me,

^g John vi. 49. ^h Ver. 50. ⁱ Ver. 51. ^k Ver. 52. ^l Ver. 53. 54, 55, 56. ^m Ver. 57, 58, 59.

even he shall live by me, he closes his discourse with them thus: "This is that bread which came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that eateth of this bread, shall live for everⁿ." And these things he spake in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

This high and mysterious discourse concerning the eating of his flesh, and drinking of his blood, not only startled the Jews in common, but so far puzzled even many of them also who bore the name of his disciples, that they also among themselves said^o, "This is an hard saying, who can (endure to) hear it?"

Which murmuring of theirs Jesus in himself knowing, said to them, "Doth this offend you? What if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before (before he descended from the bosom of his Father, to take upon him this body of flesh in the womb of the virgin) if ye are so startled at hearing this, how amazed would ye be at seeing that? But this happens to you from your gross and low apprehensions, taking that in a carnal sense, which I have delivered to you in a spiritual sense. For it is the spirit that quickeneth^p, the flesh (of itself, without and abstract from the spirit) profiteth nothing. "The words, added he, which I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life; they are to be spiritually understood and received; and being so, they quicken, and raise a spiritual life in the hearers."

But to let them know that he was not mistaken in them, he tells them, "There are some of you that believe not^q. And therefore, added he, it was that I said unto you before, no man can come unto me (can believe in me, and receive me) except it were given unto him of my Father." (which was expressed before by the Father's drawing him, ver. 44). For Jesus knew from the beginning both who they were that believed not, and who also should betray him.

ⁿ John vi. 59. ^o Ver. 60. ^p Ver. 63. ^q Ver. 64.

From that time many of these his unsettled disciples turned their backs upon him^r, and walked no more with him. Whereupon he asking the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life (and which lead to eternal life) and we believe, and are sure, that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Peter speaking thus in the name of all the twelve; and Jesus knowing that Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, would betray him, replied, "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a Devil?" By which words he gave Peter a necessary caution to beware how he too forwardly undertook for others; and to all the rest a seasonable warning to examine seriously their own hearts.

We observed before, from John vi. 4. that when Jesus fed the multitude with five barley-loaves, &c. the Jews passover was then at hand. By this time we may suppose it to be come, and that Jesus was gone up to it, though I find no mention of his going, or of any thing he did or said there at that time. Yet inasmuch as the law was positive, that all the males should appear there at that time, Deut. xvi. 16. we may well conclude that he, who was so careful to fulfil all righteousness, Mat. iii. 15. would not transgress this known law by absenting. It is supposed therefore (and with great probability) that at this feast Jesus went up to Jerusalem, but staid not long there, because the Jews sought to kill him, John vii. 1. And his time for suffering being not yet come, he would not walk in Jewry; but returning into Galilee, had, for a while, his conversation there.

But long he had not been there, ere he was again attacked by the pharisees^t, and certain of the scribes who came from Jerusalem, for they commonly banded together against him.

^r John vi. 66, 67, 68, 69. ^s Ver. 70. ^t Mat. xv. 1. Mark vii. 1.

These observing some of his disciples to eat bread with defiled (for so they accounted unwashen) hands ^u, began to find fault. For the whole sect of the pharisees, and indeed all the Jews, except they washed their hands (often, say some; carefully, say others; up to the elbows, say a third sort of interpreters) eat not, holding therein the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups and pots, brazen vessels and tables.

Now when the pharisees and scribes had got (as they thought) a sufficient ground to quarrel upon, they asked Jesus ^w, “Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders, for they wash not their hands when they eat bread?”

Our Lord, offended at these hypocritical pretenders to religion, who regarded more an outside shew of sanctity, than substantial and real devotion, instead of answering their cavilling question, asked them another.

“Why do ye also, said he to them, transgress (not a bare tradition, but) the express commandment (not of the elders only, who were but men, but even) of God himself ^x, by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and thy mother, Exod. xx. 12. And he that curseth father or mother, let him die the death,” chap. xxi. 17. and Levit. xx. 9.

“But ye say ^y, If a man shall say to his father or mother, it is *Corban*, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me (that is, whatsoever I have that may be helpful to thee, is already given, or devoted to some religious or charitable use; as to the temple, the priest, or the poor) he shall be free (from all obligation or duty to help or relieve his parents, how great soever their necessities may be) and ye suffer him no more to do aught (or ye excuse and exempt him thenceforward from doing aught) for his father or his mother. And thus have ye made the

^u Mark vii. 2, 3, 4. ^w Mat. xv. 2. ^x Ver. 3, 4. ^y Ver. 5, 6.
command-

commandment of God of none effect through your tradition."

From which words [ye suffer him no more to do aught for his father or his mother] is well and fairly inferred, that the honour due from children to their parents consists not barely in a respectful carriage towards them, and a ready observance of their lawful commands (though that is due) but in doing for them, in relieving and helping them, according to ability, in their wants.

So interpreters generally understand it; and doubtless rightly. Erasmus on the word *Τίμα*, *honora*, honour, says, '*Secundem consuetudinem sermonis scripturarum, magis pertinet ad subsidium, quàm ad honorem,*' i. e. 'According to scripture phrase, it belongs rather to affording help, than to (personal) honour.' And he adds, '*Præcipit enim Deus (id quod gentilium quoque legibus cautum est) ut liberi parentibus, vel ætate defectis, vel inopiâ laborantibus, vel alioquin afflictis, opitulentur,*' i. e. 'For God commands (which also is provided for by the laws of the heathens) that children should help their parents, when they either fail by reason of age, or fall into poverty, or are afflicted any other way.' And he complains that '*Id hodiè quidam non intelligentes, parentes suos tantùm non adorant, eùmque honorem parentes à liberis exigunt; atque ità totum pietatis officium persolutum arbitrantur,*' i. e. 'Some at this day, not understanding that, do almost adore their parents, and the parents require that sort of honour from their children; and so (on both sides) they think that the whole duty of filial piety is performed.'

Zegerus, another of the criticks, on Mat. xv. 4. tells us, '*Honor iste parentibus exhibendus, non tantùm in salutatione, capitis aperature, genuflectione, & id genus aliis officiis, quantum in subsidio, consilio, & necessariarum rerum subministracione, situs est,*' i. e. 'That honour, which is to be given to parents, stands not so much in salutation, putting off the hat, bowing the knee (or scraping with the leg) and other services of that kind; as in help, council, and supply of necessaries.'

When

When now our Lord had, by this instance, convicted these scribes and pharisees of impiety, in eluding the command of God by their tradition, he applies to them that saying of God by his prophet *Isaiah*, xxix. 13. “Well, said he, hath *Isaiah* prophesied of you hypocrites², when he said, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouths, and honour me with their lips (mere outside shews of religion and worship) but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they pretend to worship me, while they teach for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold (said he to them) the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups,” &c.

Then to be even with them, for charging his disciples with doing ill, in not observing their lavatory traditions, he, by a sharp irony, returns upon them, “Full well do ye reject the commandment of God³, that ye may keep your own tradition.”

Having now sufficiently foiled these carping pharisees and scribes, he vouchsafed not to discourse any farther with them on this subject. But taking occasion from their cavil against his disciples for eating with unwashed hands, as if that were a thing which would defile their consciences, and render them unclean in the sight of God, he, yet farther to expose them to the people, called the multitude unto him; and bespeaking their attention, by bidding them all hearken unto him, that they might rightly understand this so necessary and important a point, he tells them, “It is not that which goeth into the mouth that (of itself, and in its own nature) defiles a man^b; but that which cometh out of the mouth, is that which defiles the man.”

For although the eating of those sorts of foods which God had by express law forbidden, would defile them who were under that law, if they did eat of them; yet that was not from the nature of the things prohibited, but from the transgression and breach of the divine

² Mat. xv. 7, 9.³ Mark vii. 9.^b Mat. xv. 11.

prohibition, or law by which the eating of them was forbidden.

The opening of this matter to the people, did not a little gall the pharisees, as striking at the root of pharisaism, which consisted chiefly in such like superstitious observations; nor had they, it seems, so much command of their temper, as not to discover the offence they had taken at it. Which the disciples of Jesus observing, came to him, and said ^c, “Knowest thou that the pharisees were offended, after they had heard this saying?”

But he, not regarding their offence ^d (since it was groundless, and withal evil) answered his disciples, by telling them, “Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.” And therefore all the pharisaical observations, grounded merely on human tradition, not divine institution, must be plucked up, and broken into pieces

But as to the men themselves (the scribes, pharisees, and other superstitious bigots) he advises his disciples to let them alone, and not concern themselves about them ^e, for they were both blind themselves, and leaders of the blind; and if the blind lead the blind, they will be in danger to fall both into the ditch.

Having now got rid of these troublesome folks, he went into an house from the people ^f. And then his disciples, making Peter their spokesman, desired him to declare unto them this parable; for so they call what he had delivered concerning that which defiles a man.

He, blaming their dulness, asked them, “Are ye also yet without understanding? Do ye not perceive that the heart is the seat, and source, or spring in man, from whence virtue and vice, good and evil proceed, and flow forth?” And therefore nothing that from without entereth into man by the mouth can defile him ^g, because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and so goeth out into the draught, purg-

^c Mat. xv. 12. ^d Ver. 13. ^e Ver. 14. ^f Ver. 15. ^g Ver. 17, to 20. Mark xvii. 18 to 23.

ing all meats (discharging the gross and feculent parts of the food, which are not fit for aliment).

But that which defiles a man comes out of the man^h, proceeds from the heart, and thence issues out of the mouth. For from within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, false witness-bearing, blasphemies, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil (or envious) eye, pride, foolishness (that sort of it chiefly, as Dr. Hammond thinks, which discovers itself in unseemly boasting, and vain-glorious behaviour). All these evils come from within, and defile the man.

After our Lord had thus ended his instructive discourse to his disciples, he departed from thence; and going into (or towards) the coasts or borders of Tyre and Sidon, entered into an house there, intending to have been private for a while, but that he could not be.

For a certain woman of Canaan, says Matthewⁱ; a Greek, says Mark, and a Syrophœnician by nation (all which may well be, for she is called a Greek, to shew that she was not of the Jewish religion, either by birth, or by profelytism; and she was by nation of Syrophœnicia, a province or country in Canaan); this woman, having a young daughter, who was possessed with an unclean spirit, when she heard of Jesus, came and cried unto him, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David, for my daughter is grievously vexed with a Devil."

He answered her not a word, nor seemed to take any notice of her; which made her renew her petition, and cry the more earnestly to him for help.

This disturbed his disciples, who thereupon coming to him, desired him to help her, and send her away^k, if it were but to be rid of her: for, said they, "She crieth after us."

^h Mark vii. 25. ⁱ Mat. xv. 22. Mark vii. 27. ^k Mat. xv. 23.

He thereupon answered his disciples, telling them ¹, “That he was not sent (primarily, nor personally) but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” those that were a gathered people, had entered covenant with the Lord, had been in the fold, and belonged to it still; though, through the negligence and naughtiness of their pastors, they were now in a scattered and lost condition.

This answer, discouraging enough, one would think, to the woman, did not at all baulk her, but coming up to him, and falling at his feet, she worshipped him, and said, “Lord, help me.”

“Nay, stay, said he, let the children (the Jews, who, by profession at least, are of the household of faith ^m, let them) be first filled: for it is not meet to take the childrens bread, and to cast it unto the dogs.” So, willing to try her faith to the uttermost, he treated her as the Jews used to do the Gentiles; all whom they accounted as dogs, in comparison of themselves.

The importunate woman, having gained so far upon him as to prevail with him to speak to her (though it were but in a seeming denial) clings now closer to him and humbly answers to this effect; Truth, Lord, I acknowledge it is even so as thou sayest ⁿ; yet since the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master’s table, permit, I beseech thee, a poor distressed Gentile to pick up one crumb at least, to taste but one of those mercies, which the full and over-fed Jews make light of, and carelessly let fall.

Now had she done her work. That word (with faith) prevailed, and drew from Jesus this gracious answer, “O woman, great is thy faith ^o! And for this saying, be it unto thee even as thou wilt. Go thy way therefore; for the Devil is gone out of thy daughter.”

The woman thereupon going home, found it to be even as Jesus said unto her; for the Devil was gone out of her daughter, and her mother found her laid upon the bed, which was a token of a composed and quiet mind, and she was well from that very hour.

¹ Mat. xv. 24. ^m Ver. 25. ⁿ Ver. 27. ^o Ver. 28.

It is observed by one of the antients, that Christ never admired the faith of any but Gentiles; to wit, that of the centurion (or Roman captain) mentioned in Mat. viii. 10. and of this woman. And that both their sick were cured by Christ, without his being present with them; because he came not in person to the Gentiles.

This miracle being wrought, our Lord departed from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon^p, and came unto the sea of Galilee, passing through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis, a country so called from the ten cities that were in it.

Here they bring unto him one that was deaf^q, and had also an impediment in his speech (which rendered him almost as unfit for conversation as if he had been absolutely dumb) and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

He thereupon taking this patient aside from the multitude (out of the throng) put his fingers into his ears; and having spit, touched his tongue therewith. And then looking up to heaven, he sighed^r, and said unto the man “*Ephphatha*, that is, Be opened.” And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, so that he spake plain.

Then he charged them that they should tell no man. But the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal did they publish it; for they were beyond measure astonished, and said, “He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.”

When passing still onwards^s, Jesus was come nigh unto the sea of Galilee, he went up into a mountain, and sat down there. Thither came to him great multitudes, bringing with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others; whom they laid down at his feet, and he healed them. Infomuch that the multitude wondered, when they heard the dumb to speak, and saw the maimed to be whole, the

^p Mark vii. 31. ^q Ver. 32. ^r Mark vii. 34 to 37. ^s Mat. xv. 31.

lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.

The people, it seems, continued now with Jesus for three days together¹; in which time it is probable their numbers did much increase. And either not having brought any provisions with them, or if they did bring any, having spent them, our Saviour, not willing to send them away empty, or fasting (which implies they had not brought food with them) lest they should faint in the way (for divers of them came from far); calling his disciples to him, said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have continued with me now three days, and have nothing to eat."

His disciples not remembering, or not duly considering the miracle he had wrought not long before, in feeding five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, Mat. xiv. Mark vi. were startled now again, at his proposing to feed so great a body of people as were now present; and asked him, "Whence they should have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?"

But he, not discouraged at their incredulity, nor upbraiding them with it, asked them how many loaves they had? And when they had told him they had but seven loaves, and a few little fishes, he commanded that the people should sit down on the ground.

Then taking the seven loaves and the fishes, he first gave thanks, then brake them, and gave them to his disciples, for them to set before the people. Which when the disciples had done, the people (who were in number four thousand men, besides women and children) did all eat, and were filled: and they took up, of the broken meat that was left, seven baskets full. Which done, he sent the multitude away, and taking ship with his disciples, came into the coasts of Magdala, or Magada, called also Dalmanutha; a place, some think, in the tribe of Zebulon; others, of Issachar, near the sea of Tiberius,

¹ Mat. xv. 32. Mark viii. 1.

Here again the Pharisees accosted him ^u, who, having gotten the Sadducees (in other things dissenting from them) at this time, and on this occasion, to join with them, came forth to question him about his commission and doctrine; and tempting him, desired him to shew them a sign from heaven.

They were not satisfied, it seems, with his healing the diseased by a touch, or a word only; or with his making a little food go a great way, to the filling a multitude of people; so that what, perhaps, was scarce enough to satisfy five men, was made to be more than enough to satisfy five thousand, and more; nor yet with his telling them their most inward and secret thoughts. No, this was not enough for them; but they would have some strange apparition in the skies; perhaps either to bring down fire from heaven, as Elijah had done, 2 Kings i. (but not on themselves) or to stop the sun and moon in their course, as Joshua did, Josh. x. 12, 13.

This their horrible hypocrisy, and contempt of the many greater miracles they had seen, displeased him greatly, so that sighing deeply in his spirit, he said, "O ye hypocrites! Ye can discern the face of the sky, and can tell over night what the weather will be next day. For when it is evening, ye say it will be fair weather, because the sky is red: and in the morning ye will predict foul weather that day, if the sky be red and lowring. So that ye pretend to understand the constellations, and know the influences of the planets; and can ye not discern the signs of the times?"

"A wicked and adulterous generation, added he, seeketh a sign; and there shall be no sign given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas." And having said this, he left them, and entering into the ship again, crossed over to the other side,

When they were come thither, the disciples found ^v, that having forgotten to recruit their store of bread,

^u Mat. xvi. 1. Mark viii. 11. ^v Mat. xvi. 5: Mark viii. 14.

they had but one loaf with them. And Jesus at the same time warning them to take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and of Herod, or the Herodians, his flatterers (whom yet some take to be but Sadducees, though great admirers of Herod) the disciples thereupon misapprehending him, fell to reasoning among themselves, saying "It is because we have taken no bread, that he gives us this caution." For they, it seems, having their minds exercised in things too low, thought he had given them that warning, that they should not furnish themselves with bread, or other provisions, from any of those sects he had mentioned, who were avowed enemies to his doctrine, and to him.

But Jesus perceiving their mistake, and being troubled that they were still so insensible, and so inconsiderate, after they had had such experience of his divinity, reproving them with an "O ye of little faith! asked them, Why reason ye among yourselves because ye have brought no bread? Perceive ye not, neither understand? Have ye your hearts yet hardened? Having eyes, do ye not see, and having ears, do ye not hear, nor yet remember? Let me then refresh your memories. When I brake the five loaves among the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? Twelve, said they. And when, added he, I brake the seven loaves among the four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They answered, Seven. How is it then, said he, that ye do not understand, that when I bid you beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees, I did not speak it concerning bread?" Then at length they understood, that by the leaven he meant the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees, &c. which he would have them beware of.

From hence passing on, he came again to Bethsaida, a city whose name signifies the house of fruits*; but little fruit had the many miracles he had already

* Mark viii. 22.

wrought therein, as yet produced; which drew him to denounce woe unto it, Mat. xi. 21.

No sooner was he now come thither, but they brought a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him; which implied faith (in them at least that brought him) that a bare touch from him would heal him.

Jesus was willing to help the poor man; but not willing, as it seems, that the people of that place (whom, for their incredulity, he had before condemned) should be spectators, and witnesses of the cure.

Wherefore taking the blind man by the hand^y, he led him out of the town; and when he had him there, having spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him, "If he saw aught? Whereupon the man, looking up, answered, I see men walking, but as trees. Then Jesus having put his hands again upon the man's eyes, made him look up again; and his sight being then fully restored, he then saw every man clearly.

This cure differing from all others in this respect, that others were wrought at once (whether by word or touch) whereas this had a gradual operation; restoring to the blind man first some sight, but thick, or misty and imperfect; then upon a second touch, a full and clear sight; some have supposed the cause to be a weakness or defect of faith in the patient at first, which increasing upon his receiving a little sight, made way for a perfect cure.

But whatever was the cause, it is certain that this gradual operation exhibits a true representation or emblem of the opening of the inward eye, the divine illumination of the mind; which gradually arises to higher and clearer discoveries of spiritual objects.

Having cured the man, he sent him away to his house (which probably was without the city) and gave him a charge, that he should neither go into the town (to tell it) nor tell it to any of the town, if he should chance to meet with them; that is, before Jesus was

^y Mark viii. 24.

gone from the city; for so it is necessary to restrain the prohibition; not that he enjoined him a perpetual silence, in a case which, in course, would lead people to inquire how he came to recover his sight.

Departing then from thence, he went with his disciples² into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, a town (or city rather) built in honour of Tiberius Cæsar, by Philip the tetrarch, in the northern parts of Palestine, bordering upon Syria, at the foot of Mount Libanus, formerly called Laish, and after Dan, says Cradock in his Harmony, chap. v. sect. 10. p. 11. But Munster, on Mat. xvi. 13, says it was called Paneas before, and was only enlarged by Philip, and then called first Cæsarea, afterward Neronia.

In his way thither he went aside to pray, having none with him but his disciples. And after he had prayed (that he might thence take occasion to instruct his disciples farther concerning himself) he asked them, "Whom do the people say that I the Son of Man am?"

Where that phrase, The Son of Man, by which very frequently Christ doth signalize himself, doth not (says Dr. Lightfoot on the place) denote his manhood only, nor yet his humility; but sets forth the seed promised to Adam, the second Adam; which the apostle calls a quickening spirit; yea, the Lord from heaven, 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47.

In answer to his question, his disciples tell him, "That there were various opinions among the people concerning him. For some (said they) say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; others, Jeremias; and others yet, that one of the old prophets (though which, by name, they cannot tell) is risen again."

"But whom (said Jesus) do ye say that I am?"

The question was put in general to them all; but we read not that any answered it, but Peter. Whence it is fairly gathered, that he spake the sense of them all,

² Mat. xvi. 13. Mark viii. 27. Luke ix. 18. ² Mat. xvi. 15. Mark viii. 29. Luke ix. 20.

and in their name, as well as his own; and the answer was, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

"This, said Jesus to him, flesh and blood hath not revealed unto thee; but my Father, who is in heaven; and thereupon calling him Simon Bar-jona, he added, Blessed art thou."

Bar-jona signifies the son of Jona, or of John. And Grotius thinks Simon was commonly called so before he came to Christ. After his conversion, our Lord gave him another name, John i. 42. where he said, "Thou art Simon, the son of Jona (there was Bar-jona) thou shalt be called Cephas;" which is, by interpretation, a stone; or, as in the margin, Peter. For from Drufius, and others of the criticks, we learn that Cephas, in the Syriac tongue; and Petros, and Petra, in the Greek, signify alike, a stone or rock.

Peter, in answer to his master's question, had just then confessed Jesus to be the Christ. Which name the apostle Paul doth allegorically apply to that spiritual rock, which is said to have followed Israel of old; who (says he) drank of the spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ, 1 Cor. x. 4.

Now we know our Lord would sometimes, in his discourses, take occasion, from the sense or sound of a word, to make a transition from one subject to another.

So when his disciples were concerned that on their journey they had forgotten to take bread with them, he, from the word bread, took occasion to warn them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees; yet by leaven not meaning (as they thought) bread, but doctrine, Mat. xvi. 6.

So again, when being in the temple at Jerusalem, contending with the Jews about it, he said, "Destroy this temple;" he meant not that outward fabrick of stone (as they supposed he did) but the temple of his body, John ii. 19.

So here, when Peter had said, "Thou art Christ;" he replied, "And I say unto thee, thou art Peter (or Cephas, a rock). And upon this rock (not that which thou

thou art, but that which thou hast now acknowledged me to be, in calling me the Christ) will I build my church ^b, (in the hearts of men, says Dr. Hammond on the place) and the gates of hell (the utmost force, power, strength, counsel, contrivance, stratagem, policy, worldly empire and authority, death and the grave) shall not (universally and finally) prevail against it."

And, adds he, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven."

That this promise of giving the keys (an emblem of rule and government, Isaiah xxii. 22. as well as of knowledge and instruction, Luke xi. 52). with the power of binding and loosing, which depended thereupon (though here made to Peter only, who only, in express words, though for them all, answered the question put by Jesus to them all) extended to all the rest of the apostles (the traitor excepted) who all were of the same mind therein with Peter, and whose sense he delivered in delivering his own, is evident by this; that when a while after instructing his disciples how to exercise discipline in the church, in dealing with obstinate offenders, Mat. xviii. 15, 16, 17. he said to them all generally and jointly, "Verily I say unto you (not to thee only, Peter, but to you) whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven," ver. 18. And when, after his passion and resurrection, he appeared to his disciples, John xx. 19. to perform this promise of his, in delivering the keys, he did not single out Peter from the rest; but to them all, and all alike (that were present, for Thomas was then absent; and Judas the traitor, having taken vengeance on himself, Mat. xxvii. 5. was gone to his place, Acts i. 25). he said, "Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost (did he not then

^b Mat. xvi. 17.

deliver them the keys)? adding, Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained, John xx. 22, 23. Nor did the cloven tongues, like as of fire, rest upon Peter only; but upon each of them," Acts ii. 3.

This discovery of his divine nature and Godhead^c (that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God) though he was pleased that his disciples knew it, he was not willing the world should yet have it; and therefore he gave his disciples a strict charge that they should not as yet open that to any man.

The reason of which prohibition here (as often elsewhere, of divulging the miraculous cures he wrought) is thought by some (as Piscator, Musculus and Zegerus) to be, that the glory of his divinity might not break forth too brightly, and be received and believed by the Jewish rulers before his crucifixion; and so hinder his being put to death, and consequently the redemption of mankind, which was to be purchased thereby; upon a supposition which the apostle Paul, in favour of his countrymen, advances, "That had they known it (that divine wisdom which he preached in a mystery) they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory," 1 Cor. ii. 8.

But now that his disciples had plainly owned that they knew him in his heavenly capacity, were sensible of his divinity, understood him to be the anointed of God, the promised Messiah, the Son of the living God, he from that time began to prepare them to expect, and patiently (without distraction or disturbance of mind) to bear the sight of those sufferings which he was to undergo.

Wherefore he acquainted them, that in the appointed time he must go to Jerusalem, and there suffer many things of the elders^d, and chief priests and scribes, and at length be killed; but that that might not startle them, and stagger their faith in his Godhead, he added,

^c Mat. xvi. 20. Mark viii. 30. Luke ix. 21. ^d Mat. xvi. 21. Mark viii. 31. Luke ix. 22.

and be raised again the third day. So both Matthew and Luke have it; and so indeed it was. And whereas Mark has it, after three days, instead of the third day; the seeming difference, which from thence arises between him and the other two evangelists, may be easily reconciled, by admitting that Mark computed the time from the beginning of our Lord's suffering, the very instant wherein he was apprehended, in order to be brought to trial, which enlarges the time; whereas Matthew and Luke take their computation but from the morning of that day whereon he suffered death.

This discourse about his sufferings and death Peter could not well bear. Wherefore in the warmth of his affection to his Lord, and for want of a right understanding, or at least of a due consideration of the end for which he came into the world, the work he was sent to do, he took Jesus (so the last English translation barely hath it; the former translation says, he took him aside; but Grotius and some others think he rather took him in his arms, in way of a kind embrace) and began to rebuke (chide, or blame) him^e, for predicting such hardships to himself, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not (I hope) befall thee."

Peter's good-will and kindness to his Lord would not so far atone for his ignorance, but that he came off with a sharp reproof; for Jesus turning himself about (with severity) in his countenance, as Grotius says the Greek word imports, and looking on his disciples (which shews Peter had not taken him aside from them) he rebuked Peter, saying, "Get thee behind me, Satan (be gone out of my sight, thou adversary) thou art an offence^f (or hindrance) to me; for (in this particular case) thou favourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." Thou art not sensible of the work which God hath appointed me unto; but art carried away with an human affection to me.

Then directing his speech to his disciples in general (Mark says he called the people also^g, which neither

^e Mat. xvi. 22. Mark viii. 32. ^f Mat. xvi. 23. Mark viii. 33. ^g Ver. 34.

Matthew nor Luke have) he, for their further information and instruction in this concern of so great importance (and in opposition to Peter's self-saving proposition) said unto them^b, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

For whosoever (by shifting and flinching, and baulking his testimony) will (endeavour to) save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose (give up, and hazard the loss of) his life for my sake, shall find (or save) it."

And to make them the more sensible of the vanity of shunning the cross, in order to save or get the things of this world, he addedⁱ: "For what is a man profited, or advantaged, if he shall gain the whole world, and (by doing it) lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

"For the Son of Man, said he, shall come in the glory of his Father, and in his own glory, with the holy angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his works."

And, added he, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he so cometh. And verily, continued he^k, I say unto you, there be some standing here, who shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom, or the kingdom of God come with power."

The coming here mentioned, some interpreters refer to his transfiguration, which soon followed; so Clarius and Vatablus; but that is set aside by most. Others, by his coming in his kingdom, understand his resurrection, ascension, pouring forth of his spirit, working signs and miracles thereby; with the destruction of Jerusalem, abrogation of the ceremonial legal worship, and setting up the purely spiritual gospel-worship in the

Mat. xvi. 24. ⁱ Mat. xvi. 26. Mark viii. 36. Luke ix. 25.

^k Mat. xvi. 28. Mark ix. 1. Luke ix. 27.

room thereof. Which way Grotius, Jacobus Capellus, and the marginal note in the Old Bible, on Mat. xvi. 28, go.

Some little time after our Lord had had the foregoing discourse with his disciples¹ (that is, after six days, as Matthew and Mark relate it; or about eight days after, as Luke, taking in the day before, on which he had that discourse, and reckoning six days clear between, computes the time) Jesus went up into an high mountain (supposed to be mount Tabor) to pray; and foreknowing, no doubt, what he should there meet with, he took three of his apostles (Peter, James, and John his brother) up with him thither, apart from the rest; both that they might be confirmed in their belief of his divinity, from what they should there see, and might be witnesses to others thereof.

As he prayed, he was transfigured before them, so that his face did shine as the sun, and the fashion of his countenance was altered. His raiment also was white as the light, or as snow, shining and glistering, beyond what any fuller on earth could whiten them. And behold, there talked with him two men, who were Moses and Elias (very eminent both; that for bringing Israel out of Egypt, and giving them the law; this for the extraordinary miracles he wrought, and his wonderful reception alive into heaven. Both for being the only two, that, before our Lord himself, had fasted forty days). And these, appearing in glory, talked with Jesus, and spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

Peter, it seems, and the other two that were with him^m (such is the weakness and dulness of man's nature) were heavy with sleep; but when they awaked, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. But how they knew them to be Moses and Elias, whom they had never seen (and the Jews used not pictures) is not easy to be resolved, without supposing

¹ Mat. xvii. 1. Mark ix. 2. Luke-ix. 28. ^m Luke ix. 32.

them to ask their master, or having recourse to a divine revelation.

However Peter, seeing them ready to depart, addressing himself unto Jesus, said, "Master, it is good for us to be here". Wherefore, if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles (or tents to dwell in) one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." Where we may observe, he made no provision for himself, or his brethren; the reason of which probably might be, that he hoped they should find room and admittance with their master in his. But this proposal he hastily made, not knowing what he said, nor indeed what to say, being greatly surpris'd with fear.

Before he had done speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and as they entered into the cloud, their fear increased. But when they heard the voice, which, coming out of the cloud, said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him; they fell on their faces, and were fore afraid."

Jesus thereupon coming to them, and touching them, said, "Arise, and be not afraid." Whereupon they lifted up their eyes, but saw no man, save Jesus only; for Moses and Elias had disappeared.

Coming down then from the mountain^p, Jesus charged them that they should not tell the vision to any man; until the Son of Man (meaning himself) should be risen again from the dead. They did accordingly keep it to themselves; not imparting it to any one in those days. Yet being still puzzled about the rising from the dead, they could not forbear questioning one with another what the meaning of that should be.

It is not improbable that the sight of Elias, at this interview, might bring to their remembrance, if not the words of the prophet Malachi, chap. iv. verse 5. yet at least the notion, which the scribes, through mistake thereof, did ground theirs on; namely, that Elias

ⁿ Mat. xvii. 4. Mark ix. 5. Luke ix. 33. ^o Mat. xvii. 5.
^p Mark ix. 9.

should come again, in his own proper person, before the coming of the Messiah. Which notion, inculcated by the scribes into the people, is thought to have been no small means of with-holding the Jews from receiving Jesus for the Messiah, when they did not see Elias come before him, according to their expectation.

The disciples therefore asking their master “Why the scribes said that Elias must first come?” he, answering by concession, as granting that the scribes had some ground for what they said, if they had rightly understood the prophet’s meaning, told them, “It is true that the Elias, whom the prophet spake of, was to come before him, and to restore all things (that is, to prepare his way before him, by pointing him out, and directing the people to him); but I assure you, added he, that that Elias, who the prophet foretold should come, is indeed already come; and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed; first put him into prison, and afterwards put him to death. And so also shall the Son of Man suffer by them.”

Next day, after he was come down from the mountain, whereon he had been transfigured, going to his other nine apostles, whom he had left below, he found a multitude of the people about them, and the scribes questioning with them. But as soon as they beheld him, the people being greatly amazed, came straight-way running to him, and saluted him.

He then asked the scribes, “What they had been questioning his disciples about?” But before either one side or the other could make him an answer, one of the multitude kneeling down to him, said, “Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son^a; for he is mine only child; and he is both lunatick, and sorely vexed, or possessed with a dumb spirit; which, wheresoever it seizeth on him, teareth and bruisseth him, so that he foameth again; and crying out on a sudden, gnasheth his teeth, and pineth away. And I brought him in

^a Mat. xvii. 14. Mark ix. 17. Luke ix. 38.

thy absence to thy disciples, and besought them to cast it out, but they could not."

At hearing this so piteous complaint, "O faithless and perverse generation, answered Jesus! How long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him hither to me, said he to the child's father."

They thereupon that had the care of him, brought him. But as he was yet coming, the Devil threw him down and tore him, so that he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming.

Then did Jesus ask the child's father, "How long it was ago since this came unto him? And he answered, of a child. Adding, and oft-times it hath cast him into the fire, and into the water, to destroy him. But if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us."

"Nay, replied Jesus, If thou canst but as well believe, as I can do, thy child may be healed; for all things are possible to him that believeth."

The father of the child hearing that, and being earnest to further the work, straitway cried out, and with tears said, "Lord, I believe, yet modestly added, help thou mine unbelief."

When therefore Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee to come out of him, and enter no more into him."

The spirit thereupon cried, and having rent him fore, came out of him, but left him as one dead; inso-much that many said, "He is dead." But Jesus taking him by the hand, lifted him up, and he arose, and was healed from that very hour; and then he delivered him again to his father.

Now when Jesus was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could not we cast him out? Because, replied he, of your unbelief. For verily I say unto you, If ye have faith but as a grain of mustard-seed (though but small, if true and living)

if ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place, it shall remove."

Which being (as Grotius observes) a proverbial saying among the Hebrews, and spoken here by the figure hyperbole (as Zegerus notes) is explained by the following words, viz. "And nothing shall be impossible unto you. Not but that, added he, this kind of evil spirit goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

The people now were all amazed at the mighty power of God^s, the effect whereof they had newly seen in this miraculous cure. And while they were wondering every one at what Jesus had done^t, he with his disciples departing thence, passed as privately as he could through Galilee, not willing that any one might know whither he went; but that he might have an opportunity with them by themselves, to instruct them more fully concerning that great and most important business of his death and resurrection, which in his discourses with them on that subject he always joined together. Telling them of his death, to prepare them to expect it, and not be startled and dismayed at it, when it should come; and at the same time assuring them of his resurrection to life again, that they might not wholly despond, but might bear his death the better.

When therefore he had gotten them apart from the company, he first bespake their attention, by saying^u, "Let these things (which I am about to speak to you) sink down into your ears."

Then he told them, "The Son of Man (meaning himself, which they now understood) shall be betrayed (so Matthew has it^w) shall be delivered (so Luke) but Mark says, is delivered into the hands of men (that is, it is a certain fixed determination and appointment that he shall be delivered, as sure as if he were in their hands already) and they shall kill him; and

^s Luke ix. 43. ^t Mark ix. 30. ^u Luke ix. 44. ^w Mat. xvii. 22.
Luke ix. 44. Mark ix. 37.

after that he is killed, on the third day he shall be raised again.

At the mention of his death, they were exceeding sorry, both from an affectionate unwillingness to part with him, and the great disappointment it gave to their hopes, and high expectation of a temporal kingdom for him and with him; wherein he, as the Messiah, should reign, and they rule with and under him.

It puzzled them too not a little, to apprehend how it could be, that he, who came to save others, could not save himself; that he, who came to give life to others, must himself be put to death.

As for the other part of his speech relating to his so speedy resurrection (which should have been their stay and comfort) they understood it not. It was so wholly hid from them, that they did not at all perceive it, and they were afraid to ask him any thing farther about it, lest they should thereby farther discover their ignorance, and draw from him a reproof upon themselves.

Going on therefore to Capernaum^x; when they were come thither, they who received tribute-money coming to Peter, and asking him, "Doth your Master pay tribute? He replied, yes." And going into the house to his master, to acquaint him with it, he was prevented by his Master, who, before he could open the matter to him, asked him^y, "What thinkest thou Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? Of their own children, or of strangers? Of strangers, no doubt, said Peter. Then are the children free, replied Jesus. Notwithstanding, added he, lest we should offend, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened its mouth, thou shalt find in it a piece of money; that take, and give it to them for me and thee."

What sort of tribute this was, interpreters do not well agree; some taking it to be a civil tax, laid on

^x Mat. xvii. 24. ^y Ver. 25, 26, 27.

them by the Romans (who had then dominion over them) viz. that, or the like, poll-tax, capitation, or head-silver, which Augustus Cæsar imposed, Luke ii. 1. Others suppose it to be that capitation which God commanded the Israelites to pay, whensoever they should be numbered, Exod. xxx. 12, 13, and which was at this time paid to the Romans, if we may rely on the marginal note on this place in the Old Bible; which yet may well be questioned. Others of great authority affirming, that this tribute continued to be paid to the temple while it stood, and was not transferred from the Jewish temple to the Roman capitol, till Jerusalem, with the temple, was destroyed in Vespasian's time.

This tribute was called in Greek *didrachma*, and was in value of our money fifteen pence, which was half a shekel of the sanctuary.

The piece of money found in the fish's mouth, is in the Greek called *stater*; which containing precisely two *didrachma's* (as Godwyn, in his *Moses and Aaron*, l. 6. c. 10. observes) was in value two shillings and six-pence; a double tribute paid for Jesus and Peter also. The reason of which, Wilson, in his *Christian Dictionary*, *verbo* Son, assigns to be, because Peter (though originally of Bethsaida, John i. 44. before he followed Christ) had at that time an house and family in that city (Capernaum) where Christ then abode; which the rest of the apostles, he says, had not.

In their coming to this place, they had, it seems, reasoned on the way, and disputed among themselves who of them should be greatest. Wherefore after they were come hither, and were in the house, Jesus, who knew their thoughts, asked them, "What it was that they disputed about among themselves in the way?"

They sensible, it may be, of their ambition, and vain affectation of superiority, were unwilling at the first to open the matter to him, and therefore held their peace. But after a while they did it, by propounding to him the same question which they had canvassed on the way; but in general terms, without

restriction or application to themselves, thus: "Who shall be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

So they call that kingdom which they looked for on earth, because it was to be the kingdom of the Messiah; in which, notwithstanding, they expected to find different degrees of honorary employments, and offices of trust and credit (and Judas, perhaps, of profit too) as they understood there were in earthly kingdoms. And their having so lately seen their Lord single out three of his apostles, Peter, James, and John, to be witnesses of his glory in the mount, might, not unlikely, raise some emulation in the rest.

To correct which, and cure them of that ambitious and aspiring humour, our Lord sitting down, and calling the twelve about him, first laid down this as a maxim, or general rule for them, "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last^a, and not only so, but servant of all; but he that is willing to be least among you all, the same shall be greatest."

Then calling a little child to him (not so mere an infant it seems, but that he could go) he set him in the midst of them^b (that they might well observe and consider him) and then taking him in his arms, he said unto them, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children (for innocency, subjection, and humility of mind) ye shall not so much as enter into the kingdom of heaven (much less be eminently advanced therein). Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is (or shall be) greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whosoever shall, in my name, receive one, that (in those qualifications) is like such a little child, he receiveth me; and he that (so) receiveth me, receiveth not me (only) but him that sent me."

The apostle John hearing this, put in, and said^c, "Master, we saw one casting out Devils in thy name;

^a Mat. xviii. 1. ^b Mark ix. 35, 36. ^c Mat. xviii. 2. Luke ix. 17. ^d Luke ix. 49. Mark ix. 38.

but because he followed not thee, as we do, we forbid him."

"Forbid him not, said Jesus; for there is no man who will do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For (of those that are not professed enemies) he that is not against us, is on our part."

It is supposed, and not improbably, that this man, who cast out Devils in Christ's name, was one that had been a disciple of John, and so had at least heard of Christ as the Messiah, then ready to be manifested; but that, not knowing that this Jesus of Nazareth was that Messiah, he had hitherto forbore to follow him as his disciple; and that not out of contempt, or any disrespect to him, but in mere ignorance, or for want of full assurance, that he was indeed that Messiah, of whom his master John had declared.

Neither is it unlikely that God might vouchsafe to bestow on some such, not ill-meaning ones, the gift of working such beneficiary miracles in the name of the Messiah; that by that means the way might be made the more plain and easy for the receiving of the Messiah, when he should declare himself to be the Messiah, under the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

To this purpose Dr. Lightfoot delivers his sense on the place, as recited by Cradock in his Harmony, chap. 5. sect. 15.

As John's interposing gave some interruption to the discourse which Jesus was upon, so when he had answered that, he went on with his former subject.

And as he had before commended to his disciples humility and self-denial in themselves, and gentleness and tenderness in their carriage towards their brethren, how little or low soever they might be, or be thought by them to be; so now he sets forth the danger they would incur, if they should give a just offence to any of but the lowest rank of believers.

This he expresses by saying, "But whosoever shall offend one of these little ones, who believes in me (those that are little in their own eyes, not highly conceited of themselves, and of their own parts,

attainments or worth; but are poor in spirit ^d, humble in heart, low in their own thoughts, such as I represent unto you by this little child) 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."

The offence here pointed at seems to be of such a kind or nature, as tends to cause the young, or weak in faith, to turn aside from the way of truth.

The sense whereof so affected our Lord, that he cried out ^e, "Woe unto the world because of offences; for though offences must come, yet woe to that man by whom the offence cometh."

"Therefore if thy hand, said he ^f, or thy foot, or thine eye (any thing whatsoever, inward or outward, that is as dear and useful to thee as either of these) offend thee (either by causing thee thyself, or, through thy means, thy weak brother, to stumble, fall and depart from the faith, to the loss of eternal life) cut them off, pluck it out, and cast them from thee; for it is better for thee to part with thy most dear enjoyments, that thou mayest enter into life, than to retain them, and by and with them to be cast into hell-fire," the torment of which will be extreme and endless.

And lest they should think the parting with these hurtful things, which they so much regarded and valued, would be too great an hardship and affliction to them, he puts them in mind ^g, that whosoever desires to be an acceptable oblation to God, must expect to be salted with fire (the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which, like fire, purges, consumes, and takes away the offending matter) as the sacrifices under the law, then still in force, were salted with salt, by express command, Levit. ii. 13. Which was an emblem of purity and sincerity; the nature and property of salt being to draw forth putrefactive humours, and to cleanse and preserve from corruption.

^d Mat. xviii. 6. Mark ix. 42. Luke xvii. 2. ^e Mat. xviii. 7. ^f Ver. 8, 9. ^g Mark ix. 49.

Hereupon he takes occasion again to commend the virtue of salt, as he had done before, Mat. v. 13.

“Salt is good, said he^b, but if the salt have lost its saltness, wherewith will ye season it?” Whereby he renewed his caution to them, that they should be careful and watchful over themselves, that they did not, by contempt or neglect of the divine gift, which they had received (emblem’d by salt) through their ambitious contests among themselves, render it unserviceable and useles unto them, though in itself unchangeable.

Therefore he exhorted them to have (that is, to retain) salt in themselves (which would eat down, and keep down, the proud flesh) and then they would have peace one with another, not striving for pre-eminence, or seeking superiority one over another.

And that he might the more imprint in them a sense of the evil and danger of slighting any brother, whom they thought to be, or who really was, below them in spiritual gifts, growths, or attainments, he warned them to take heed that they despised not any of those little ones, represented to them by the child then in his alms; “For, said heⁱ, I say unto you, that in heaven their angels (the guardian angels which God hath appointed them) do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven.”

As if he had said, have a care, lest by despising these (in your eyes) little ones (but in God’s eye precious ones) ye give occasion to their guardian angels, who are always attending on God, to complain to him of the injury ye do to them; and thereby draw down the displeasure of God upon yourselves.

And to shew them, by a familiar example, how much God regards such little, low, humble-minded persons, he asked them^k, “What 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 going into the mountains, seeketh that which was gone astray?”

^b Mark ix. 50.

ⁱ Mat. xviii. 10.

^k Ver. 12.

And if he finds it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety-and-nine that went not astray. Even so, added he, it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish; and therefore the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost."

Having sufficiently cautioned them against giving offence to the weaker ones in his flock, lest such should presume, under such a protection, to injure others of the society, and the injured, for fear of giving offence, should let them go on therein, to their own hurt, without giving them due reproof for the same, he now instructs and directs them how, in such case, the injured party should deal with the injurer, to bring him to a sense of the evil he hath done, that he may be recovered, and may make satisfaction, saying (and this he brings in with a moreover),

"Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee¹, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." Both that thou mayest, as much as in thee lies, preserve thy brother's reputation, and that he, being sensible of thy regard to him therein, may more willingly hearken unto thee, and be persuaded by thee.

This was agreeable to the divine law given by Moses, which said, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; and yet, thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin to lie (unreproved) upon him," Levit. xix. 17.

"If upon this friendly dealing with him, he shall hear thee (that is, shall kindly receive thy admonition, observe thy counsel, and, as Luke has it, chap. xvii. 3. if he repent) thou hast gained thy brother." Which ought to be more to thee, and more aimed at by thee, than thy gaining reparation from him for the injury or damage done thee.

"But if he will not (so) hear thee^m, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth (by the evi-

¹ Mat. xviii. 15.

^m Ver. 16.

dence) of two or three witnesses, every word may be established according to the law," Deut. xix. 15.

Wherein great regard is had to an offending brother, while there is any ground to hope for an amendment; that a few be taken in to deal with him, in order to his recovery, if it may be, or, if otherwise, to his conviction; and yet but a few (as few as may be) that if he submit, his failing may be covered, that he be not publickly defamed.

"But if he shall neglect to hear themⁿ, then (as the last remedy) tell it to the church. Lay the whole matter fairly open before that religious society or congregation, which he professes himself to be a member of."

"And if he neglect to hear the church (he by that means disjoins, or dismembers himself from the church, and therefore) let him then be to thee as an heathen man, and a publican." These were by the Jews accounted the vilest of men, such as with whom they held it not lawful to entertain any converse.

And that it might be known of what force the judgment of the church should be, that no contempt might be put thereon, he adds, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven^o; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven."

By which terms, of binding and loosing on earth, is signified, that what judgment the church of Christ, by the direction and guidance of the Holy Spirit, should give, should be ratified and confirmed by God, and the party stand accordingly acquitted or condemned in the sight of God.

And that neither the church might be discouraged from giving judgment, nor offenders be emboldened to contemn the judgment given, in case the church, or congregation of believers, before whom the matter should be brought, should be but small, the members thereof but few, he adds farther^p, "That if (but) two

ⁿ Mat. xviii. 17. ^o Ver. 18. ^p Ver. 19.

of you (speaking to his disciples) shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven."

The reason of which he subjoins, saying, "For where two or three are gathered together (*εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα*) into my name (that is, into my power) there am I in the midst of them. So that they need not (how few soever, if rightly gathered) be afraid to give judgment; nor may the offenders (how many or great soever) presume to reject or slight the judgment so given.

Peter hereupon coming to him, started a question, thus⁹; "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? (that is, how often am I bound to forgive my brother, sinning against me)? till seven times?"

"Nay, replied Jesus, I do not say until seven times (only) but until seventy times seven. That is, very often; or (as it is well explained in Luke xvii. 3, 4), as often, how oft soever that shall be, as he shall repent and confess his fault unto thee."

From this question of Peter's, our Lord took occasion by an apt and very instructive parable to open to his disciples the equitableness and reasonableness of forgiving an offending brother, repenting and confessing his fault, which he introduced with a therefore: "Therefore, said he^r, is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, who would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, who owed him ten thousand talents; and forasmuch as he had not wherewith to pay, his Lord commanded that he, with his wife and children, and all that he had, should be sold, and payment to be made."

"The servant thereupon falling down, most humbly besought him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all."

This submission of the servant, and offer of making satisfaction, so wrought upon his lord, that moved

⁹ Mat. xviii. 21.

^r Ver. 23.

with compassion towards him; he released him, and forgave him the whole debt.

“ This very servant going out, found one of his fellow-servants^s, who owed him an hundred pence (a small matter, a very trifle, in comparison of what he had owed his lord); and ungratefully forgetting the clemency of his lord to him, he forthwith laid hands on his fellow-servant, and violently taking him by the throat, said, Pay me that thou owest me.”

“ His poor fellow-servant falling thereupon down at his feet (as he just before was glad to do to his lord) besought him, in his own terms, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. But he, void of all compassion towards his submitting brother, would have no patience with him, but went and cast him into prison, there to lie till he should pay the debt.”

“ When his other fellow-servants saw what was done^t, they being very sorry for it, came and told their lord of it; who thereupon calling him to him again, said unto him, O thou wicked servant! since I forgave thee all that (great) debt, because thou desiredst me, shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? Then being wroth with him, his lord delivered him to the tormentors (or jailers) till he should pay all that was due unto him.”

“ So likewise (added Jesus, by way of application) shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one the trespasses of his brother;” submissively acknowledging his offence, and thereby evidencing his hearty sorrow for it, and repentance of it.

When Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee^u, and came into the coasts of Judea, beyond Jordan; and great multitudes following him, he, after his wonted manner, both taught them, and also healed them there.

^s Mat. xviii. 28. ^t Ver. 31. ^u Mat. xix. 1. Mark x. 1.

Amongst others, the Pharisees came thither to him; but they came to tempt him with this question, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" He, seeing their design, warily put by their question with a question; asking them, "What did Moses command you? Moses, said they, suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away."

"But, said Jesus, have ye not read, that when God made them in the beginning, he made them male and female? Which made Moses, when he wrote the history of the creation (for to him interpreters more generally ascribe that saying, though some to Adam) say, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh; whence our Lord thus infers; wherefore they are no more two, but one flesh; and therefore, what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

"Why then, replied the Pharisees, did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement, and put her away?"

"It was, answered Jesus, because of the hardness of your hearts, that Moses suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and he who marrieth her, who is so put away, doth commit adultery". And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery."

How strange soever this sounds, of women putting away their husbands; yet some, it seems, in those times, did take upon them so to do. For Godwyn, in his Moses and Aaron, l. 6. c. 4. tells us, not only that it was a custom among the Romans, about the time of our Saviour's birth, even for the women to divorce their husbands, and to marry again at their pleasure; but that the same practice was in use among the Hebrews also; and that from thence is that saying of our Saviour, "If a woman shall put away her husband," &c.

Mark x. 12. Which Josephus tells us (*Antiq. Judæor.* l. 15. c. 9). Salome, the sister of king Herod, did to her husband Costabarus, to whom she sent a libel of divorce. And Grotius says, Herodias (she who procured the death of John the Baptist) followed therein the example of Salome.

This discourse of our Lord's, concerning divorces, seems to have somewhat startled his disciples; who thereupon, when they were come into the house, told him, "If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry."

But he told them again, "All men are not capable of receiving this saying, nor any, save they to whom it is given. And he adds the reason, in a threefold distinction of eunuchism. For, said he, there are some eunuchs, who were so born from their mother's womb (such as, by reason of natural deficiency and inability, are incapable of performing the procreative office of marriage). And there are some eunuchs, who were made eunuchs by men (which in those eastern countries was frequently practised, and yet is, upon those who were bred up to serve in princes courts; such especially as were appointed to attend upon the royal women). Such we may suppose them to be, who waited upon queen Jezabel, and threw her out at the window, 2 Kings ix. 32, 33. Such Ebed-Melech the black-moor, who took the prophet Jeremiah out of the filthy dungeon, Jer. xxxviii. 7. Such those mentioned in the Book of Esther, under the title of Chamberlains; as Hege, chap. ii. 8. Shaashgaz, ver. 14. and Hatach, chap. iv. 5. And such also was that noble Jewish proselyte, treasurer to the Ethiopian queen Candace, who, in his return from worshipping at Jerusalem, upon his declaring his belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, was baptized by Philip, Acts viii.

"But besides these sorts, there are eunuchs (adds our Lord) who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven."

This is not by interpreters taken literally, of a voluntary castration (such as Origen is reported to have used upon himself, as Eusebius delivers in his *Hist. Eccles.* l. 6. c. 7). but of such an improvement of the gift of continency (through temperance, abstinence, frequent fasting and fervent prayer) as hath given them power over their own natures, and made it easy to them to lead a single and chaste life; that being thereby the more free from domestick cares, they may be the more assiduously exercised in divine contemplations, and works of piety.

When this discourse of divorce was ended, some brought unto Jesus little children^{*} (infants Luke calls them) desiring that he would put his hands on them and pray. Which his disciples observing, and thinking they made too bold with their Master, rebuked them that brought them. But Jesus was much displeas'd with them for it, and bad them "Suffer the little children to come unto him, and forbid them not; for of such, said he, is the kingdom of God." And thereupon repeating the doctrine he had preached to them a little before, *Mat.* xviii. 3. he told them, "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child (in harmless innocency, humility and subjection, free from malice, and other vicious affections and inclinations) he shall in no wise enter therein. Then taking the children up in his arms, he put his hands upon them (a ceremony used among the Jews) and blessed them."

Passing then from the house whercin he had done this[†], when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running (Luke calls him a ruler) and kneeling to him, asked him, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?"

Some have thought this man put this question temptingly, but that is no way likely. For Mark says, "Jesus beholding him, loved him," *ver.* 21. which he,

^{*} *Mat.* xix. 13. *Mark* x. 13. *Luke* xviii. 15. [†] *Mat.* xix. 16. *Mark* x. 17. *Luke* xviii. 18.

who saw the inside, as well as the outside, would not have done, if the man had come to him in deceit. Nor would the man have gone away sorrowful, or grieved (as he did) but angry, or scoffing, if he had been an hypocrite.

Reasonable therefore it is to think, that he was a well-meaning man, who, having hitherto lived an orderly life, came with a good intention to be farther informed by Jesus, whom he took to be a very good man, how he might make sure of an eternal life.

From the first words of his address, which were [Good Master] Jesus took occasion to raise his mind to an higher consideration of him, than that of a merc man, how good soever. Which to do, he asked him, "Why callest thou me good? There is none (simply and abstractedly) good but one, that is God." As if he had said, Since there is none good (properly speaking) but God only, why dost thou call me good, and yet dost not take me to be God? Thou must therefore either acknowledge me to be God, or not call me good.

Having thus, from the terms of the man's address to him, inferred his own divinity, he, in the next place, answered his question; bidding him, if he would enter into life, keep the commandments.

The man then asking him which? Jesus thereupon enumerating some (not in the order wherein they stand in the decalogue, but either as they came to remembrance, or as he thought fit to put them, or the evangelist to recite them; for even they do not recite them all alike) said, "Thou shalt do no murder; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; honour thy father and thy mother; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

To this the man readily answered and said, "Master, all these things have I observed or kept from my youth up. What lack I yet?"

Matthew calls him a young man², which makes his saying, he had kept those commands from his youth

² Mat. xix. 20.

up, found somewhat improperly; for he that speaks of what he has done from his youth up, may well be understood to be then past his youth, and to be grown up to an higher and riper age.

But whatsoever his age then was, his declaring that he had hitherto kept those commandments (which, it is observable, were not ritual or ceremonial, but moral commands) and his desire of progression, to go on yet farther in the way to eternal life, procured him the love of the Lord.

“Then Jesus beholding him, loved him;” and in answer to his last question [What lack I yet?] told him, “One thing thou yet lackedst. Thou art mistaken in thinking thou hast kept all the commandments; for of them which I recounted to thee, one was, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. How canst thou say thou hast done that, when thou aboudest in wealth, and many of thy neighbours (yea, thy brethren) are in want?”

“If therefore thou wilt be perfect (if thou wilt perfectly keep that commandment, in the right sense and due extent of it), go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast (superfluous, or over and above a sufficient competency for thyself and thy family) and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure (more and better treasure) in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me.”

It is not to be doubted but our Lord foresaw, that this of itself would prove a cross to him, and so it did. For as soon as he heard that saying, he was fore grieved, and went away very sorrowful; for he had great possessions, and was very rich.

When Jesus saw that he went away sorrowful, looking round about, he said unto his disciples^a, “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!”

At that saying the disciples were astonished; which Jesus observing, that he might soften the expression,

^a Mat. xix. 23. Mark x. 23.

and shew them that the evil lay not simply in the riches, but in the inordinate desire after them, and over-confident reliance on them, repeating the words, with some little variation, he said again unto them, "Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God^b!"

Then using a proverbial speech, in use among the Hebrews to express a matter of the greatest difficulty by; "It is easier, said he, for a camel to go through the eye of a needle^c, than for (such) a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

This puzzled them more than they were before, and made them say among themselves, "Who then can be saved?" But Jesus looking on them again, said, "With men indeed it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible."

Some working heads, to avoid the supposed impossibility, will needs read it a cable (a rope of a ship) instead of a camel; of which notion, Theophylact (who lived in the eleventh century, about the year 1070) is held to have been the first broacher. So that although it be not very ancient, yet it is old enough, unless it were better. For besides that the Greek word, used for a camel, is observed to differ somewhat in the writing from that which is used for a cable rope (that for a camel being written *καμηλα*, with an *eta* in the middle syllable; the other, for a cable, being written *καμιλα*, with an *iota* in the middle syllable); they who, to avoid the impossibility, take hold on the cable^c rope, forget that the design of the comparison was to render it impossible, humanly speaking, and in the ordinary way and course of working. And therefore when our Lord himself (who best knew his intention in speaking it) declares that with men it is impossible^d; it seems, methinks, too officious in men to bend their wits to contrive a way to make that possible, which he has expressly told them is impossible.

^b Mark x. 24. ^c Luke xviii. 25. ^d Mat. xix. 26. Mark 27.

Nor see I cause for any to infer from thence that rich men cannot be saved: since all things being possible with God, and the impediment lying in rich mens trusting in their riches, he can take off those rich men from their confiding in and relying on their riches; and make them, who are rich in worldly possessions, poor in spirit, and rich in faith, as well as others, and then as capable of inheriting his kingdom as others. But to proceed.

Peter, having observed that his master, when he advised this rich man to sell what he had, and give to the poor, promised him that if he did so he should have treasure in heaven^e, puts in now a plea for himself and his brethren, telling his master, "Behold, we have left all and followed thee, what therefore shall we have?"

This Grotius, and (as he says) others think was spoken, though truly, a little too boastingly. And Cradock (in a marginal note on chap. 5. sect. 53. of his Harmony, p. 103.) says, they had left their goods as to the use, not as to the possession, Mat. iv. 20. Luke v. 28. and that after Christ's resurrection they returned to the use of them again, John xxi. 3. which yet must be understood of such of them as had suitable employments. For Matthew is supposed to have so altogether left his publican employment, as never to have returned to it again. But the apostle Paul (who came in afterwards, and who had an useful and inoffensive trade) did continue to work at his trade, when he had leisure from the exercise of his ministry, Acts xviii. 3. 1 Cor. iv. 12. that he might not be chargeable to any, 2 Thes. iii. 8.

But Jesus, as well to shew his acceptance of what they had done, as to encourage them to persevere therein, told them, in answer to Peter's question, first, "That they who had followed him in the regeneration (the way to the new birth) when the Son of Man should sit in the throne of his glory, should sit

^e Mat. xix. 27. Mark x. 28. Luke xviii. 28.

also upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

From which words if any one should inquire why our Lord pitched upon twelve thrones for his juridical apostles to sit upon, when he knew before-hand that one of them (Judas Iscariot) was a traitor, and should betray him, and so not be fit to judge, but to be judged; let such consider, that as our Lord foreknew this, so he foreknew also, that upon the fall of Judas another should, by divine election, be substituted in his room, and succeed into his place, whereby the number should be filled up again, as it was, Acts i. 26.

Secondly, he assures them that (not they only, but) “ Every one that had forsaken father, mother, wife, children, brethren or sisters, houses or lands, for his sake and the gospel’s^f, shall receive an hundred-fold (that is, as Luke explains it, manifold) in this present life (and even while they are under persecution); and in the world to come eternal life.”

This, with respect to the recompence proposed in this life, is, by some expositors, referred to the sufficient supplies of necessaries, which such should receive from the pious bounty of their Christian brethren, whose hearts God would open and enlarge, to communicate of their outward substance to them; and to perform the offices of love and duty which they might have expected from the relations they had been so deprived of; whereby the absence of those relations, and loss of their own estates, would be abundantly made up.

Yet, after all this, lest they should over-value themselves upon what they had done or suffered for him, and so should grow over-confident and secure; to excite them to watchful diligence and care, that they might go on, and persevere in the course they had so well begun, he gives them this as a watch-word, or caution^g, “ That many who are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.”

^f Luke xviii. 30. ^g Mat. xix. 30. Mark x. 31.

In which words he is thought to have had respect to the calling of the Gentiles, by whose coming in, and receiving the gospel, the Jews, who then were first, would come to be last; and the poor Gentiles, who then were last, out-stripping the tardy Jews in faith and obedience, would come to be first. But the caution is proper to all.

To explain to them this saying of his [that many who are first shall be last, and the last first] and that it might sink the deeper into their minds, he relates the following parable to them.

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an housholder, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard^b; and when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.”

“And going out about the third hour (which answers to our nine in the forenoon) he saw others standing idle in the market-place, and said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right I will give you; whereupon they went their way.”

“Again, he went about the sixth and ninth hours (twelve at noon and three in the afternoon) and did likewise.”

“And about the eleventh hour (five in the afternoon) he went out again; and finding some others standing idle, he asked them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They answering, Because no man hath hired us; he thereupon bad them also go into the vineyard, and whatsoever was right that they should receive.”

“When the evening was come (the time for labourers to leave work) the lord of the vineyard ordered his steward to call the labourers, and give them their hire; bidding him begin with them that came last in, and so go on to them that came in first.”

When therefore they, who came in about the eleventh hour, came to take their wages, they received every man a penny; which was as much as the first had bar-

^b Mat. xx. ver. 1. to 9.

gained for who came in betimes in the morning; which when these observed, though they had agreed for that price, yet seeing the others, who had done so little, so well paid, they conceived hopes that their wages would be advanced, and they should receive moreⁱ. But when it came to, it proved otherwise, for they likewise received every man but a penny."

This disappointment of their ill-grounded expectation made them fly out; so that when they had received their pay, they murmured against the good man of the house, saying, "These have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, who have borne the burthen and heat of the day."

This would have been apt to have provoked some masters to high displeasure; but he mildly answering one of them, said, "Friend, I do thee no wrong. Didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take that that is thine, and go thy way; I will give unto this last as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So (said our Lord in the close of his parable) the last shall be first, and the first last; and he adds the reason, For many are called, but few chosen."

The feast of tabernacles was now at hand^k, which was one of the three great anniversary feasts, appointed by God to the Jews, Exod. xxiii. 14, 15, 16. at which all the males were to appear before the Lord, ver. 17. and Deut. xvi. 16.

This feast beginning on the fifteenth day of the seventh month (answering pretty near to the beginning of our eighth month) lasted seven days, of which the first and the last were the most solemn; during all which time the Jews were to dwell abroad in the open air, in booths made of thick boughs, in remembrance that God had made the children of Israel to dwell in booths (or tents) in the wilderness, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt, Levit. xxiii. 43. And

ⁱ Mat. xx. 10, 11, 13. ^k John vii. 2.

from thence it was called the feast of tabernacles, or tents.

To this feast some kinsmen of Jesus, (who, according to the manner of speech among the Jews, are called his brethren, supposed to be some relations of his mother's, but such as did not believe in him) preparing themselves to go, urged him to go also; but they did it in such a manner, as shews they designed rather to upbraid or reproach him, than seriously to desire his company.

“Depart hence, said they to him¹, and go into Judea, that thy disciples (there) also may see the works that thou doest; for there is no man that doth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If therefore thou doest these things, shew thyself to the world.”

By which words some think they expressed their desire that he, who they thought could work miracles when he would, should now go and do some extraordinary thing at their request, in this general concourse of the Jews at the feast, whereby he might get himself great fame, which they would put in for a share of with him, as being related to him.

But as their unbelief in him, and his answer to them, bespeaks them to be such as had no hearty kindness, nor real regard to him; so it is not difficult to discern, in the manner of their speaking to him, a design in them of silyly suggesting that he was ambitious of praise, and sought to be popular; which yet he made it his great care to avoid.

He knowing in what spirit they spake to him, answered them accordingly: “My time (said he) is not yet come, but your time is always ready.” As if he had said, “Ye are your own masters, and at your own command; but I am subject to my Father, and wait for his command.”

Besides, “The world cannot hate you, said he (because ye are of the world, John viii. 23. and the

¹ John vii. 3, 6, 7.

world loves its own, chap. xv. 19). but me it hateth, because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil. As for you, added he^m, ye may go up unto this feast when ye will; but I go not up yet; for my time is not yet fully come." And accordingly, when he had given them this answer, he went not up with them, but abode still in Galilee.

Yet he did not stay long behind them neither; but when they were gone up, he set forward to go up also unto the feast; yet not openly, but as it were in secret.

And being to pass through a village of the Samaritans, he sent messengers before him to make some provision for him, against he, with his disciples, came thitherⁿ.

But the Samaritans, like themselves, apprehending that he was going to worship at Jerusalem, would not receive him, or afford him any entertainment among them.

This affront, put upon their master, did so highly displease two of his disciples (James and John) that they importuned him to give them leave and power to command fire to come down from heaven, and consume these rude and inhospitable Samaritans, as Elias had done to some others formerly, 2 Kings, i. 10.

But not more offended perhaps were they with these Samaritans for rejecting their Lord, than he was with them for desiring this. For turning upon them, and rebuking them, he said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, For the Son of Man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save them."

These two disciples, whose zeal was so inflamed on their master's behalf, were before, when he chose them into the apostleship, by him named Boanerges, or Sons of Thunder, Mark iii. 17. But they would now, if they might, have been sons of lightning too, as well as of thunder, to have scorched up and utterly con-

^m John vii. 8, 10.

ⁿ Luke ix. 52.

fumed those churlish and envious people, who would not receive their master.

But our mild Saviour would not suffer it. He would give no countenance to revenge at all in any case, much less permit that any should be persecuted for not receiving him. Therefore he would not that any farther or other punishment should be inflicted on these, than what they themselves had procured to themselves; a being deprived of his excellent company, and the blessings that attended it. Wherefore passing by those four Samaritans, whose religious zeal had made them irreligious, he went on for entertainment to another village.

On the way as he went, a certain man^o (whom Matthew calls a scribe, if he were the same here mentioned by Luke) said unto him, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest."

Jesus, seeing what he aimed at, gave him quickly to understand what he must expect to meet with, if he would be one of his followers. "The foxes (said he to him) have holes, and the birds of the air have nests (or shelters) but the Son of Man (meaning himself) hath not where to lay his head." When this forward man had heard this, we hear no more of him.

But to another we read our Lord said^p, "Follow me." And he, not refusing the service, did only ask leave that he might go first and bury his father.

That was, no doubt, a necessary office and duty. But seeing it might be done by others, who were not called to that service which he was called to, neither ought he to have urged it in delay of his obedience, nor would Jesus admit it, but said to him, "Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou, and preach the kingdom of God." Which it is supposed he thereupon forthwith did.

Another also, we read in the same place (but whether at the same time is uncertain) said, "Lord, I will follow thee^q." The former was called by Jesus; this, un-

^o Luke ix. 57. Mat. viii. 19. ^p Luke ix. 59. ^q Ver. 61:

called,

called, offers himself. Each had his but, his obstacle, his delay. "But let me first go, said this man, and bid them farewell that are at home at my house; take leave of my relations, acquaintance, neighbours." That one would think he might have done, before he had offered himself to the Lord's service. Our Lord therefore answers him in a known proverb; which is, "He that in ploughing looks behind him, is no good ploughman. No man (said Jesus to him) having put his hand to the plough (which he seemed to have done, by saying, I will follow thee) and looking back (which he did, by saying, Let me first go bid them farewell at home) is fit for the kingdom of God."

About this time it is probable it was, that the Lord sent forth his seventy disciples, as before he had sent his twelve apostles, by two and two, to go before him into every city and place, whither he himself would afterwards come. Unto whom, in the main, he gave much the like instructions and directions how they should behave themselves in the exercise of their ministry in this perambulation, as he had formerly done to his apostles, when he sent them forth in the like service. Of which having given the account before, from Mat. x. that I may avoid repetition, I refer the reader thither.

Having sent forth the seventy, he pursued his journey to Jerusalem^r. Whither being come, but not making himself publick at the first, the Jews sought him at the feast, asking one another, "Where is he? And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him."

"For some said he is a good man; others said nay, but he deceiveth the people. Howbeit, no man spake openly of him, for fear of the Jews."

For they who thought well of him durst not speak freely for him; lest the rulers of the Jews should take notice of it, and be offended.

^r John vii. 11.

And on the other hand it may be supposed, that they who thought ill of him durst not openly discover the rancour of their minds against him, lest the common people (many of whom had received great benefits by him, and for that reason had him in high esteem) should, in taking his part, fall upon them. For it is evident (both from hence, and from Acts v. 26.) that they stood in some awe of the people.

About the middle of the feast, when the heat of their expectations was a little cooled, Jesus went up into the temple and taught^s.

What he taught, or what subject he spake upon, is not particularly expressed; but in general we may gather it was doctrinal. And whatever the subject was, it was excellent, and excellently delivered, for it raised admiration in the auditors, so that the Jews marvelling, said, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"

He seeing they took him but for a mere man (as well as a mean man) and willing to raise their consideration of him higher, to apprehend his divinity, answered them^t, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. Then added, If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

Whereby he intimates, that the way for a man to attain to farther knowledge, and higher discoveries of the mind of God, and of the mysteries of the heavenly kingdom, is to do his will so far as it is revealed and manifested to him. "For he that is obedient to the will of God, in what he knows (though it be but a little) will grow and increase in the divine knowledge, whereby he will be enabled to judge of a doctrine (when he hears it) whether it be of God, or of man." *Habenti dabitur*, "Unto him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance, Mat. xxv. 29. And he that is faithful in a little, will be made ruler over much," ver. 21, 23.

^s John vii. 14.

^t Ver. 17.

Then giving them a rule, whereby they might judge whether a man speaks of himself or not, he tells them, "He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory". But he that seeketh (not his own, but) his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him."

But to convince them of their unrighteousness towards him, he asks them, "Did not Moses give you the law? And yet none of you keepeth the law? Why then go ye about to kill me (upon a false pretence that I have broke the law, in healing a man formerly here on the sabbath-day)?" John v.

Here some of the people (who knew not the designs of the rulers against him) said to him, "Thou hast a Devil: who goeth about to kill thee?"

He, over-looking their abusive language, and going on with his discourse, tells them, "I have done one work (here amongst you at the pool of Bethesda) and ye all marvel (or are offended) at it. Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is of Moses, but of the fathers, who received it from God long before Moses, though ye had it from Moses) and ye on the sabbath-day circumcise a man-child (if the sabbath happen on the eighth day from his birth) though circumcision be a manual operation, and hath servile work attending it."

"If therefore a man be circumcised on the sabbath-day (that the law of Moses, requiring circumcision, may not be broken) and ye account that no breach of the sabbath; are ye angry at me because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath-day; when-as I used not any manual operation about it, but did it only with a word-speaking? Judge not according to the appearance (judge not partially, or with respect of persons, Deut. i. 17. and xvi. 19.) condemning me for doing a less thing on the sabbath-day, than ye yourselves ordinarily do; but judge righteous judgment."

" John vii. 18, 20, 22, 24.

Hereupon some of them that were of Jerufalem (who probably were privy to the defigns of the rulers againft Jefus) faid, "Is not this he whom they feek to kill? But lo, he fpeaketh boldly^w, and they fay nothing to him." And confidering with themfelves what might be the reason why they let him thus go on, "Do the rulers, faid they, know indeed that this is the very Chrift?" But theyfoon refolved that point themfelves, concluding the rulers could not be fo miftaken in him; for, faid they, "We know this man, whence he is; but when the Chrift cometh, no man knoweth whence he is."

Jefus hearing them thus fpeak, as he was thus teaching in the temple, and willing to take all occafions to draw them from his Manhood to his Godhead, faid aloud (that all might hear) "Ye know me indeed (as a man) and whence I am (as to the place of my birth and education) but I am not come of myfelf, but am fent by him that is true; and him ye know not; but I know him, for I am from him (that is, I came from him) and he hath fent me."

Then they (who were in the plot againft him) fought to take him; but (being reftained) becaufe his hour (the time appointed by God for his fuffering) was not yet come, no man laid hands on him.

Yet many of the (unprejudiced) people believed on him (that is, believed him to be a good man, fent of God) and faid, "When the Chrift cometh, will he do more miracles than thefe which this man hath done?"

The pharifees, who had their fpies abroad watching him, heard that the people murmured fuch things concerning him; and they, with the chief priefts (by which together, it is probable, is meant the Sanhedrin, or chief court of judicature among the Jews) fent officers to take him, that is, ordered their officers to watch a feafonable time to apprehend him in."

^w John vii. 25, 27, 28, 30, 32.

He in the mean time (being sensible of their machinations against him, and that the time of his suffering drew on) going on with his discourse unto the people, said unto them*, " Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me; and though ye should seek me, ye shall not then find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come."

This made the Jews fall to reasoning among themselves. " Whither, said some of them, will he go, that we shall not find him? Will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles (the Jews that live scattered among the heathens) and teach the Gentiles? What manner of saying, said they, is this that he saith, viz. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me (or, though ye seek me, ye shall not find me); and whither I go, thither ye cannot come?" Thus they puzzled their heads about it; but, being carnally-minded, they could not understand his meaning in it. And thus, for that time, for aught appears, the matter ended, and they parted.

But on the last day, that great day of the feast (which was about three days after the former discourse had passed, and was appointed to be kept as a solemn assembly, Levit. xxiii. 36, 39.) Jesus, being in the temple again, stood and cried (that is, he stood up, and spake aloud, that he might be heard of all) and said, " If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

This may seem a pretty strange speech to begin with, and in such a place; but there was a reason for it; for we are told, that on this last and great day of the feast, the people did use, with great solemnity and joy, to draw great store of water out of the fountain or river Shiloh, and bring it to the temple; where being delivered to the priest, it was poured upon the altar, together with wine; the people mean-while singing that canticle out of the prophet, " With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation," Isa. xii. 3. See

* John vii. 33, 35, 37.

Godwyn's Moses and Aaron, l. 3. c. 6. and Grotius on John vii. 37.

The fight of this, at that time, might give occasion to Jesus (who usually took hold of all opportunities to draw the people from the outward to the inward, from the natural to the spiritual, from the earthly to the heavenly things) to direct and invite them to come unto him, the true, heavenly, saving fountain, from whence the waters of life might (by the living faith) be livingly drawn.

Wherefore he not only gave them that general invitation, by saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink; but for their greater encouragement to come, he added^y, He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Where the belly (says Drufius) is put for the heart, as in Job xv. 35. Psal. xl. 8. and elsewhere.

But, says the evangelist, "This (the flowing of rivers of living waters) Jesus spake of the spirit, which they that believe on him should receive. For, adds he, the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

But these words, which our Lord had then spoken, had so much influence upon the people, that many of them did thereupon say, "Of a truth this is the prophet (namely, that prophet, though they knew not in particular which, who they expected should come before the coming of Christ). Others said, This is the Christ. But some (ill-meaning ones) said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people concerning him."

And it rose so high, that some of them would have taken him (or would have had the officers, who were ordered by the Sanhedrin to apprehend him, to have then taken him): but the division of the people (some

^y John vii. 38, 39, 40, 41, 43.

standing up for him, as others against him) prevented that, so that no man laid hands on him; but the officers (who it seems were there in readiness to have done it, if they had found opportunity) returned to their masters, the chief priests and pharisees, without him.

They, thereat displeas'd, asked the officers, "Why they had not brought him? The officers, being themselves filled with admiration at his doctrine, in excuse for their not having brought him, answer^z, Never man spake like this man;" implying they took him to be above the condition of a mere man.

The reason which the officers alledged for their excuse, did more provoke their masters, the priests and pharisees, than the neglect of their office, in not bringing him, had done. Wherefore they upbraidingly asked them, "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers, or of the pharisees, believed on him? But this people, added they, who know not the law, are cursed."

Thus they shewed their arrogance and self-conceit, despising the common people, as if none but themselves, and such as, like them, were letter-learned, could understand any thing of the law, though it was that by which they were all to walk; and thus also they shewed their injustice, in condemning Jesus before they had heard him.

This so troubled Nicodemus (him who came to Jesus by night, John iii. 2. and retained ever since a secret favour for Jesus, though he did not yet openly profess himself his disciple) that being himself one of them, he could not forbear asking them, "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doth?"

But they, not taking any notice of this close pinch of his upon them, tauntingly ask him again, "Art thou also of Galilee? (that is, Art thou a follower, or a favourer, of this Galilean?)" For so they took Jesus to

^z John vii. 46, 48, 51, 52.

be, because he conversed mostly in Galilee, though born in Bethlehem). Search, said they, and look (thou who art a scholar, well read in books, and skilled in records of antiquity): "For out of Galilee ariseth no prophet," said they, more roundly than truly; if we may believe Nicholas Lyra, who (as cited by bishop Jewel, in his Defence of the Apology of the Church of England, part 1. p. 73.) plainly saith, "This word of the pharisees is plainly false;" for if it be taken generally for all prophets, there were some born in Galilee, as Elizeus, Tobias, Deborah the prophetess, and perchance others more. And some others think that both the prophets Jonah and Nahum were of Galilee.

However, this debate among themselves broke their measures for that time; so that, without concluding any thing about it, they brake up, and went home.

But Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives^a (a place he often resorted to for private retirement and prayer, Luke xxi. 37. and chap. xxii. 39, 40). And early in the morning he came again into the temple; whither he was no sooner come, but the people came unto him; whereupon he sat down and taught them.

The scribes and pharisees, who never liked to see him teaching the people, partly, perhaps, to divert him from that good exercise, and partly, if not principally, to get, if they could, some advantage thereby against him, brought unto him a woman taken in adultery.

The history of this adulterous woman was left out, it seems, of some of the most antient Greek and Latin copies of the New Testament, and of the Syriac version also, as is generally agreed by the criticks, viz. Erasmus, Drusius, Gualtperius, Jacobus Capellus, and Grotius on the place; the reason for which is by divers given diversly. Yet none, that I observe, question the truth of the story; it being found in other copies, as well Greek as Latin, of sufficient credit.

When therefore they had set the woman in the midst (that all might both see her, and hear what Jesus would say unto her, or to them concerning her) they said unto

^a John viii. 1.

him, "Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act (so that there is no doubt to be made of her being guilty). Now Moses in the law^b, Levit. xx. 10. and Deut. xxii. 22. 24. commanded us, that such should be stoned (from whence may be gathered that this woman was, at least, a betrothed wife) but what, said they to him, sayest thou?"

This they said tempting him, that they might have whereof to accuse him; for they reckoned this was such a dilemma, as would be sure to catch him upon one point or the other.

For if he should acquit her, they would charge him with contradicting the law, and countenancing lewdness. On the other hand, if he condemned her to die, according to the law, they would represent him to the people as an unmerciful and cruel man; and withal, accuse him of usurping to himself a civil judicature, and taking upon him the magistrate's office.

But he, not ignorant of their evil designs against him, so ordered the matter, that they could not take hold of him with either hand; for while they spake thus to him, he, stooping down, wrote with his finger on the ground, as if he heard them not.

What he wrote is altogether uncertain; divers conjecture diversely. Some think he wrote what he afterwards said to them, viz. "He that is without sin, let him," &c. ver. 7. Others, that he there described the particular sins which those scribes and pharisees were respectively guilty of, which made them so willing to be gone. Others yet, that he transcribed the words of the prophet, Jer. xvii. 13. "O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be confounded; they that depart from thee (so the Old Bible, so the vulgar Latin, and so divers interpreters read it, though the last English translation, instead of *thee*, hath *me*) shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters."

^b John viii. 5, 6.

Whatever it was that he wrote, when they continued still to ask his judgment upon the woman, he, lifting up himself, said unto them, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her^c." And having said so, he stooped down again, and wrote on the ground as before.

When they heard this, being convicted by their own conscience, they slunk away, one after another, beginning at the eldest (who, having lived longest, had probably contracted most guilt) and so went out one by one, till they were all gone, and Jesus was left alone (with respect to them; not but that it is reasonable to conclude that his disciples were still with him, and the people too, or part of them, whom he had preached to before this happened, ver. 2. and whom, as soon as this was over, he preached to again, ver. 12.) and the woman was yet standing in the midst, to wit, of the place where her accusers had set her.

When therefore Jesus had lift up himself again, and saw none now but the woman (that is, none of them that brought her, and accused her) he said unto her, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? To which she answering, No man, Lord: he replied, Neither do I condemn thee: Go, and sin no more;" acting therein the part, not of a magistrate, but of a preacher, in exhorting her to reformation and amendment of life.

Some of the ancients have taken this woman to have been a type of the Gentile church (the church then shortly to be raised out of the loose and prostituted Gentiles) whose spiritual adulteries, in their open idolatries, were so obvious, that she might thence be said to have been taken in the fact, and for that impeached by the Jews. But that the Jewish church, conscious to herself of her own guilt, in committing spiritual adultery also, through their too frequent worshipping strange Gods, was not able to stand the trial, and make good

^c John viii. 7, 9, 10.

her charge against that Gentile church, but was glad to let fall the prosecution, and sink away.

So soon as the woman was gone (whose coming had given some interruption to the discourse our Saviour was then upon) he went on again to instruct the people how they might attain eternal life. "I am, said he^d, the light of the world; he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Here again the pharisees (not those, it may be, who had so lately brought the woman before him, and then for shame were fain to slip away themselves, but others of that sect) interrupting him, said, "Thou bearest record of thyself, thy record is not true."

He had before, on another occasion, John v. 31. acknowledged, "That if he bare witness of himself, his witness was not true. That he spake after the manner of men, and of himself, as he was man."

But now, speaking of himself as he was God (the light of the world, the light of life, John viii. 12. he will not admit their rule to hold in that respect, but rejects it, saying, "Though I bear record of myself, my record is true. For which he gives this reason; for I know whence I came, and whither I go (I know who sent me, and for what). But ye cannot tell whence I am, and whither I go. The cause of which your ignorance concerning me is, that ye judge after the flesh, according to your own carnal conceptions and human apprehensions of me, whereby ye suppose me to be a mere man, like yourselves; whereas I, as man, do not take upon me to judge any man."

"And yet, said he, If I judge, my judgment is true. For I am not alone, but I, and the Father that sent me. And ye know it is written, even in your law, that the testimony of two is true (that is, accepted for true, and binding); now I am one that bear witness of myself, and my Father that sent me beareth witness of me."

^d John viii. 12, 13, 14, 16.

Since he named his Father for a witness, they thought it but reasonable that he should appear. Therefore they asked him, "Where is thy Father? He answered^e, Ye know neither me, nor my Father; for if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also."

They thought they had known both his Father and him. For they took Joseph to have been his father, and him to have been Joseph's own son. Whereas Joseph was but his mother's husband, and his reputed father; and he himself was indeed, properly speaking, the son of no man, though born of a woman.

This discourse between him and them passed in the treasury, as he taught in the temple. Now the treasury was a place of great resort and concourse of people, because there were the vessels and consecrated things, which were given for the service of the temple, laid up and kept; and yet no man laid hands on him, not because they had not malice enough against him, but because the time appointed for his suffering was not yet come.

Yet he, knowing that it was not far off, and that the enmity of the Jewish priests and rulers increased against him, and the desire of his death grew stronger on them, to shew them how little they would get by killing him, tells them, "I go my way, and ye (in your streights and necessities) shall seek me (and wish ye had me again) but then (having rejected and crucified me, who came to have saved you from your sins) ye shall die in your sins; and (assure yourselves, if ye die in your sins) whither I go, ye cannot come."

This so puzzled these stupid Jews, that they said, "Will he kill himself? Because he saith, whither I go ye cannot come." Not considering that his killing himself could not have kept them from going whither he went, since they might have killed themselves too, and so have gone after him that way, whether he would or no.

^e John viii. 19, 20, 21, 22.

But he, grieved at their ignorance, told them, "Ye are from beneath, and of this world (and so cannot raise your thoughts above the low things of this world); whereas I, said he, am not of this world, but from above. And therefore I said unto you, that ye shall die in your sins. For if (after such plain and undeniable evidences that I am the Messiah) ye believe not that I am he, there is no remedy, but ye must die in your sins." His thus pressing them to believe in him, made them ask him, "Who art thou? To which he, not thinking fit at this time to open himself more directly, than he had already done, only answered, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. But then added, I have many things to say and to judge of you; but he that sent me is true, and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him."

So dull were the Jews for all this, that they understood not that he spake to them of the Father. Wherefore (to awaken them, if possible) Jesus said further to them, "When ye shall have lift up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself, but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those things that please him."

As he spake these words, many believed on him. Whereupon he said to those Jews who believed on him, "If ye continue in my word (my doctrine) then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth then (by an experimental and certain knowledge) and the truth (so known and obeyed) will make you free."

They thereupon (that is, some of the Jews then present, not they who believed on him) resenting those last words of his, as a reflection on them, briskly answered, "We are Abraham's seed (free-born men); and forgetting themselves, and the Roman yoke they then, though unwillingly, wore, added, We were never in

^f John viii. 23, 25, 28, 30, 33.

bondage to any man; What then makes thee say, ye shall be made free?"

He might have put them in mind of their fathers bondage, first in Egypt, then in Babylon; and their own present subjection to the Romans; but his aim was to win upon them, and do them good. Therefore, without upbraiding them with their outward condition, he leads them to a consideration of their inward condition, telling them, that although they thought themselves free, they were indeed but servants, servants to sin.

"For whosoever, said he, committeth sin^s, is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house (or family) for ever; but the Son abideth for ever. If therefore, added he, the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

And because they had boasted that they were Abraham's seed, he grants they were so, in the natural line, and according to the flesh. "I know, said he, that ye are Abraham's seed (that is, outwardly; but ye are not Abraham's seed inwardly; ye want Abraham's spirit, and therefore) ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you, ye have not room in you to receive it."

But to abate their glorying in their being Abraham's seed, and to shew them what race they were spiritually of, he added, "I speak that which I have seen with my Father, and ye do that which ye have seen with your father."

"Our father, cried they! Why, Abraham is our father."

"If ye were the children of Abraham, replied Jesus (if ye were Abraham's children spiritually, as well as outwardly) ye would do the works of Abraham (who was the father of the faithful); but now ye seek to kill me, a man who hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God; this did not Abraham, so that ye do not take after him. But it is evident, by the deeds ye

do, who is your father, and whom ye take after; for ye do the deeds of your father."

"Why, said they^h (still vindicating themselves) we are not born of fornication (in a spiritual sense neither, for we are not descended of any of the idolatrous nations, neither are we Polytheists, or worshippers of many gods, but) we have one Father, even God."

"Nay, replied he, If God were your Father, ye would love me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Whence is it then, added he, that ye do not understand my speech? but even because ye cannot (and that because ye will not) hear (that is, receive) my word."

Then the contest between him and them rising still higher and higher, he, to break their false confidence in having God to their Father, told them plainly, "Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye do (your will and desire is strongly bent to do them). He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, which is the cause there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of lying. Yet so addicted ye are to believe him, that because I tell you the truth, ye will not believe me. And yet, which of you convinceth me of sin (that is, to be a wicked man, not fit to be believed). But if I say the truth (if ye can neither object against my veracity, nor deny the truth of my doctrine) why do ye not believe me?"

"Ye pretend to be of God; but he that is of God, heareth God's words; since therefore the words which I speak unto you are God's words, the reason why ye hear them not is, because ye are not of God."

This plain dealing nettled those gainfaying Jews to that degree, that they fell to downright railing. "Say we not well, said they to Jesus, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a Devil?"

^h John viii. 41, 43, 44, 47, 48.

Scarce could any thing have been said to have rendered him more obnoxious to the contempt and utmost hatred of the Jews in common, than to call him a Samaritan, from the professed enmity that was between the two peoples; nor could any thing have been reflected more foully on his divinity, than to say he had a Devil. Yet the first of these (which related to him as a man) he wholly passed over; and to the latter, mildly answered, "I have not a Devil. But I honour my Father, and ye (through the instigation of your father) do dishonour me¹. Which yet I speak not as seeking mine own glory, for there is one that seeketh it for me, and that also judgeth you for endeavouring to take it from me."

Returning now to his former subject (which he had been upon before the cavilling Jews had so frequently interrupted him) ver. 31, 32, where he had told those Jews, who then believed on him, that if they continued in his word, they should be his disciples indeed, and then they should so know the truth, as to be made free by it; he now tells them, with a "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death."

At this the carping Jews brake in upon him again, saying, "Now we know that thou hast a Devil. For Abraham is dead, and so are the prophets, and yet thou sayest, If a man keep my sayings, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? and than the prophets, who are dead? Whom makest thou thyself?"

Jesus answered, "If I honour myself, my honour is nothing (or would be of no value); it is my Father that honoureth me, of whom ye say that he is your God (which if he were, he would, even for his sake, honour me also, were it but in imitation of him). Yet, for all your boasting of him, ye have not (sensibly and experimentally) known him, but I know him. And if I should say I know him not, I should be a liar like

¹ John viii. 50, 51, 52, 54.

unto you. But that I can never say, for I do both know him, and keep his saying."

Then because they gloried so much in that Abraham was their father, he, to take them off from too secure a reliance on that, and let them see that even on that account they ought to have a greater regard to him, tells them, "Your father Abraham rejoiced^k (that is, with joy desired) to see my day (the day of this my appearance in flesh); and he, by faith, saw it, and was glad."

"How! said the Jews, Thou art not yet fifty years old (pitching on that number as the jubilee year) and hast thou seen Abraham?"

"Yes, verily, replied Jesus; for I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am."

This he spake with respect to his divine nature, which they (gross as they were) not understanding, but applying it to his manhood, it put them so out of all patience, that breaking off the discourse, they took up stones in a tumultuary manner to cast at him. But he, by his divine power, covering himself from them, went out of the temple, and going through the midst of them, passed away from them.

As he passed by, he saw a poor beggar man who was blind from his birth^l, and taking notice of him, his disciples, supposing this blindness to be a divine judgment, as a punishment for sin, asked their Master an unlearned question, "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

This question, with respect to the man himself, is supposed to be grounded upon the Pythagorean notion of the metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls from one body to another; which notion being received by the heathen philosophers, had by this time found entertainment among some of the Jews. For otherwise, they could not sure imagine that this man had sinned before he was born, or had been punished with blindness for sin before he had committed it.

^k John viii. 56, 58, 59. ^l John ix. 1.

With respect to his parents, the question is thought by some to be grounded on a supposition, that they might have transgressed the prohibitive command, Levit. xx. 18. and that from such their unseasonable coition, this great defect had befallen their son, the fruit of that congress.

But whatever odd apprehensions they had concerning the man or his parents, our Lord's answer at once removed those, and cleared these. For he told them^m, "That neither this man had sinned, nor his parents (that is, neither this man's own sin, nor yet any sin of his parents, was the cause of his blindness). But that this was thus ordered or permitted, that the works of God, the wonderful power by which God works (the effect being, by a metonymy, put for the cause) should be made manifest in him."

And having mentioned the works of God, he added, "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day (while the day or time lasteth, which he hath appointed for me to be here, in this bodily appearance on earth) for the night cometh, wherein no man can work (for God); but so long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." I give light and sight to them that are in darkness, as this poor blind man is.

Then spitting on the ground, he made clay with the spittle, and having therewith anointed the eyes of the blind man, he bid him go wash in the pool of Siloam (which is, by interpretation, *sent*). And the blind man thereupon went thither, and washed, and came back seeing.

Our Lord, in this case, was pleased to make use of outward means; but those such as, according to the ordinary course of nature, were more likely to have made a seeing man blind, than a blind man see. But the unsuitableness of the means did the more magnify the power, which by those means did work the cure.

Of this pool, to which this blind man was sent, and of the reason of its name Siloam, or *sent*, divers are the

^m John ix. 3, 6,

opinions. That seems to me to be the plainest account of it, which Cradock in his Harmony, chap. 5. sect. 22. page 48 in the margin, gives, where he says, ‘ This pool, spoken of Neh. iii. 15. was fed by a fountain or spring at the foot of mount Zion, from whence flowed out the brook of Siloah, which watered a part of the city, of which, Isa. viii. 6. The name seemeth to be given of old, only in testimony that they accounted it a special gift, sent of God, to have a fountain among those hills, so commodious for their city. Or else, because (as they report) the waters thereof did not constantly flow, but now and then, as God was pleased to send them. And so the name of the pool might put them in mind of the Messias, who is Shiloh, Gen. xlix. 10. and the *sent* of God.’

When this poor man, who had never seen before, came back from the pool seeing, his neighbours and former acquaintance, who had often seen him before, and knew that he had been always blind, wondering now to see him see, said one to another, “ Is not this he that was wont to sit and beg?”

Some of them said ⁿ, “ This is he; others said, He is like him. But when, for the greater certainty, they had recourse to him himself, he positively said, I am he.”

They thereupon asked him how his eyes were opened? And he readily told them, “ A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes therewith^o, and bid me go to the pool of Siloam, and wash, which I did, and received sight.”

It was on the sabbath-day that this cure was wrought. And the tempering of the clay, and anointing the eyes, being a sort of medicinal operation, the Jews looked upon this to be a plain breach of the law, and therefore they asked the man what was become of him that had done it (probably that he might be brought to punish-

ⁿ John ix. 3.

^o Yer. 7, 14.

ment for it). "Where is he, said they? I know not, replied he."

Since therefore he could not produce the person, who, for his sake had (as they reckoned) thus broken the law, they took the man himself, who had so long been blind outwardly, and brought him to be examined by the pharisees, who, alas! themselves were still blind inwardly.

By the pharisees here is supposed to be meant the Sanhedrim, or the highest court of judicature amongst the Jews, of which many of the pharisees were members.

These asked the man again, "How he had received his sight? And he told them (as he had the others before, but more briefly) he put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see."

Some of these pharisees, more hardened than the rest of that court^r, to render the miracle less regardable, said, "This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath." But others of them, who were not yet arrived to that height of obduracy, wished them to consider how it could be, that a man that is a sinner should do such miracles?

Upon this they were divided among themselves, and therefore had recourse again to the man that had been blind, asking him, "What sayest thou of him (what thinkest thou, or what is thy opinion of him) seeing he hath opened thine eyes on the sabbath-day?" (for therein lay the pretended offence).

He bluntly answered, "He is a prophet." Therein, perhaps, referring to that opinion, which Grotius says was received among them, that at the command of a prophet, the sabbath might be broken.

This answer of his not answering their purpose, they made as if they did not believe that he had been blind, and had received his sight; and therefore they called his parents, and asked them, "Is this your son (not

who was born blind, but) who ye say was born blind? How then doth he now see¹?"

The parents being in fear of the Sanhedrim (as knowing that they had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue) answered warily, telling them, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind, but by what means he now seeth, or who hath opened his eyes, we know not. He is of age, ask him, he shall speak for himself."

Hereupon they again called for the man that had been blind; not now to interrogate him, as before, but to work off the good opinion which either he or the people had conceived of Jesus, for this so miraculous and beneficial a cure.

In order whereunto, they said unto the man, "Give God the praise, for we know that this man is a sinner."

"Whether he be a sinner or no, replied he, somewhat discontentedly, I know not; but this I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

They, in confusion, yet desirous to try if, by frequent examinations, they could draw any word from him, by which they might lessen or any way discredit the miracle, asked him again, "What did he to thee? How did he open thine eyes?"

This their idle way of questioning him brought them into contempt with him; so that in a deriding way he answered, "I have told you already, and ye did not hear (that is, ye would not believe the account I gave you); why therefore would ye hear it again? Will ye also be his disciples?"

This put them out of their pharisaical patience, so that in a reviling manner they said to him, "Thou art his disciple, but we are the disciples of Moses. For we know that God spake unto Moses; but as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is." That is, from

¹ John ix. 18, 20, 24, 26, 27, 28.

whom he pretends to derive his authority and commission.

“Why herein, replied the man^r, is a marvellous thing, that ye (who pretend to out-know every body else) know not whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know (added he) that God heareth not sinners (such impostors as ye suggest this man to be; at least not so as to grant them power to confirm their impostures by working miracles); but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began (continueth he) it hath not been heard that ever any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. And therefore, since this man hath done that, it is an evident sign that he is of God; for if he were not of God, he could do nothing (of this kind).”

Being now thoroughly warmed, they said unto him, “Thou wast altogether born in sin, and dost thou teach us?” And thereupon they cast him out, by a judicial sentence of excommunication, pursuant to the agreement they had made before, ver. 22.

But when Jesus heard that they had cast him out, he sought him out that he might take him in. And when he had found him, he said unto him, “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?”

“Who is he, Lord, said the poor man, that I might believe on him?”

“Thou hast both seen him, answered Jesus (namely, when he opened thine eyes, and gave thee sight); and it is he that now talketh with thee.”

“I believe, Lord, replied the poor man (feeling faith to spring in his heart); and thereupon he worshipped him.”

Then said Jesus, “For judgment am I come into this world, that they who see not (and, being sensible of their want of sight, desire to be enlightened) might see. And that they who see (that is, arrogantly boast of their spiritual sight above and beyond others) might

^r John ix. 30, 34, 35, 39, 41.

be made blind" (might be manifest that they are blind).

There being some of the pharisees present when these words were spoken, they, being guilty, could not but wince, and scornfully asked him, "Are we blind also?"

To whom he replied to this effect: "If ye were indeed so blind spiritually, as this poor man of late was bodily^s, and had not any means afforded you whereby ye might see, then should ye have no sin. But now that ye say, we see (now ye not only acknowledge that ye have sight, but boast also that ye see more clearly than others; and yet ye reject, oppose, and vilify the true light, which would give you a true sight) therefore your sin remaineth."

Now because, upon his having healed the blind man on the sabbath-day, the pharisees had both blasphemed him, representing him as a seducer, and had also cast out the poor man from the fold of their communion, and he had received him into his fold; he thence takes occasion, under the parabolical terms of a sheepfold, and a door into it, to set forth the true sheepfold, and the true entrance thereinto, with the nature and properties of the true and false shepherd. And this he did in a continued discourse to the pharisees, and other Jews that were standing about him.

"Verily, verily (said he) I say unto you^t, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door, is the shepherd of the sheep."

"To him the porter (the Spirit of God) openeth; and the sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name (which speaks his thorough knowledge of them, and familiar acquaintance with them) and he leadeth them forth."

"And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them (this was the manner of shepherds in

^s John ix. 41. ^t John x. 1, 3.

those times and countries. Whereby is set forth the property and duty of a good shepherd, who should go before his flock, in an exemplary life of holiness and self-denial, and should lead them on in Christian boldness and constancy, in tribulations and persecutions; for the sake of the gospel). And the sheep follow him, for they know his voice" (not his words only, but his voice).

"A stranger these true sheep will not follow", but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers, though they may use the words of the true shepherd."

This parable Jesus spake unto them, but they understood not the meaning of it. Wherefore, to explain it to them, he added :

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep (the way by which the sheep must enter into the fold of eternal rest). All that ever came before me (pretending to be the great shepherd, or the Messiah, and personating me, such as Theudas, and after him Judas of Galilee, Acts v. 36) are thieves and robbers."

"But the sheep did not hear them (would not hearken to them; they that did were not sheep). Now I being the door, if any man enter in by me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out (a pastoral phrase, setting forth the safety the sheep shall be in, and the good assurance and satisfaction they shall have there) and shall find pasture."

"And whereas the thief cometh not (that is, for no other end) but to steal, to kill, and to destroy; I am come that my sheep might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

"I am the good shepherd. And as it is the property of a good shepherd to adventure his life for the sheep; so will I lay down my life for my sheep; whereby it shall be known that I am the true shepherd."

" John x. 5, 7, 10.

But

“ But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd (he that takes upon him the place of a shepherd, only or chiefly for a livelihood and maintenance) he whose own the sheep are not, when he seeth the wolf coming (a storm of persecution and violence arisen, aptly emblemed by the wolf, a ravenous and devouring beast); he leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf catcheth, and scattereth them. And the reason why he thus fleeth, and leaveth his flock in danger, is because he is an hireling (one that makes it his trade to live by) and careth not for the sheep, but for himself.”

“ But I, who am the good shepherd, know (that is, regard) my sheep, and am known of them, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I will not stick to lay down my life for the sheep.”

But besides this Jewish flock (or converts from the Jews) “ I have other sheep also (a Gentile flock, or converts from the Gentiles) which are not (yet) of this fold *.”

Nor indeed as yet of any fold, nor, in a strict way of speaking, sheep; but (as Cradock in his Harmony, chap. v. sect. 23, page 52. in a marginal note observes) ‘ *Denominatio fit à termino ad quem; unde vocantur oves, per anticipationem, quia oves erunt, i. e.* “ The denomination is taken from the term to which; whence they are called sheep by anticipation, because they will be sheep.”

These also, said Jesus, I must bring, and they shall hear my voice (which must be understood of his inward voice, the voice of his spirit within, in their hearts; since these being to be gathered by his apostles, and other ministers of his, after his ascension into heaven, it could not be said they should hear his voice outwardly, through that prepared body, in which he was then conversant on earth). And, added he, one fold (comprehending both the flocks of believing Jews and Gentiles together) and one shepherd.

* John x. 16.

Then having an eye to his approaching passion (the time for which drew nearer and nearer) he added ^w, “Therefore doth my father love me, because I lay down my life (which I intend to do, yet so as) that I may take it again. For no man taketh it from me (against my will) but (it is a voluntary offering) I lay it down of myself. For I have power to lay it down, and I have power also to take it again. This commandment (or commanding power) have I received of my Father.”

Upon these sayings of his, a new division arose among the Jews, many of whom, filled with rage and envy, and instigated, no doubt, by the Devil, to hinder the people from receiving him, said of him, “He hath a Devil, and is mad: Why hear ye him?”

But others of the better sort, considering the excellency of his discourses, and the wonderful miracle he had newly wrought, said, in opposition to those that so reviled him, “These are not the words of one that hath a Devil. And beside, Can a Devil open the eyes of the blind?”

By this time, it is probable, the seventy disciples, whom our Lord had sent forth some time before, ver. 3. were returned ^x; and coming to give him an account of the success of their ministry, they (amongst other things) told him, “Lord, even the Devils are subject unto us through (or in) thy name.”

Whereupon he told them, he beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven (from the principality he had usurped in the airy region, Ephes. ii. 2. Which is sometimes in scripture called heaven, as in Mat. xiii. 32. old translation, John vi. 31. and in many other places).

Then to encourage them to persevere, and go on cheerfully in whatsoever service he should employ them in, he says to them, “Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions (the most venomous and hurtful creatures) and over all the

^w John x. 17, 19. ^x Luke x. 17, 18, 19.

power of the enemy; so that (while ye keep in my power) nothing shall by any means hurt you."

Yet lest, from the sense of being endued with so much power, and possessed of such immunities and high privileges, the enemy should take advantage to puff them up in their minds, and so cause them to fall, as himself had done, our Lord was pleased to add this necessary caution: "Notwithstanding, rejoice not (only or chiefly) in this, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

This phrase (of having your names written in heaven, as here; or in the book of life, as Rev. iii. 5, or in the book of the living, as Psal. lxxix. 28. or in the lamb's book of life, as Rev. xxi. 27). is metaphorically borrowed from the custom among men, of inrolling or registering in the publick calendar, or book of records, the names of all such as are enfranchised or made free of the city or place where they live, which both intitles them to, and assures them of, all the privileges and immunities of the place, so long as they are subject to the laws thereof, and do not, by any grand offence, justly forfeit that freedom.

Having thus both confirmed and cautioned his disciples, he brake forth into an holy exultation in spirit, from a contemplation of the divine wisdom, in opening the deep mysteries of the heavenly kingdom to the low, the humble, and the poor despised people, who with gladness would receive and embrace them; while the lofty learned ones, the self-conceited wise men, who both rejected and despised them, were left mean while in the dark concerning them. And thus he thereupon expressed himself:

"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

† Mat. xi. 25. Luke x. 21.

Then turning his discourse to his disciples again, that he might farther confirm them in the expectation of that eminent power which he had but lately promised them, and to beget in them a steady reliance on him for farther discoveries of divine mysteries, he said, "All things are delivered unto me by my Father; and no man knoweth who the Son is (as to his divine nature and offices) but the Father; nor who the Father is (as to his infinite goodness, justice, wisdom, and other divine attributes) but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him."

But to his disciples more directly and privately he said ^z, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things which ye see (the Messias, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, come in the flesh, preaching the gospel, working the greatest miracles, and opening the deep mysteries of the heavenly kingdom); for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

When he had now done speaking to his disciples, a certain lawyer having a design to intrap him, if he could, in his discourse, stood up, and temptingly asked him, "Master, What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

If he was mistaken in Jesus, yet was not Jesus mistaken in him; but seeing his evil intent in the question, referred the lawyer to his professed study, the law, asking him, "What is written in the law? How readest thou?"

He, to shew his readiness in the law (in the knowing whereof his righteousness chiefly stood) forthwith began to recite; "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself."

^z Luke x. 23, 25, 26, 27.

Which words are taken, not directly from the first draught of the law in Exodus, but from the repetition thereof (though not without some variation) in Deut. vi. 5. where it is more extensively related.

When the lawyer had ended, Jesus told him he had answered right^a (to wit, in reciting the law, which required him to love the Lord his God with all his heart, &c. and his neighbour as himself); and that if he really did so, as well as read so, he should live.

But the lawyer, willing to justify himself (or to shew how just he was) pertly asked, “And who is my neighbour?” For the Jews were grown so narrow-minded, that they confined all friendship and neighbourhood within the bounds of their own religious profession; not allowing themselves the liberty to exercise the duties of humanity, much less of common kindness, to any but themselves; though it were but in so small a matter as to shew a stranger his way, as Grotius on Mat. v. 43. delivers.

To recover them from this four error, and give them a truer notion of neighbourhood, our Lord answered the lawyer’s question [Who is my neighbour?] by the following relation, which some take to be an apologue, or parable; others a real story.

“A certain man, going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, fell among thieves, who stripped him of his raiment, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.”

“By chance there came down a certain priest that way, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.”

“A Levite likewise, when he was at the place, came and looked on him; and passed by also on the other side.”

“But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was, and when he saw him (though there was mutual enmity between the Samaritans and the Jews, yet) he had compassion on him; and (out of mere hu-

^a Luke x. 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33.

manity) going to him, he bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and, setting him on his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow, when he departed, taking out some money, he gave it to the host, and said, Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee."

"Which now of these three ^b (Priest, Levite, or a maritan) said Jesus to the lawyer, was neighbour to him that fell amongst the thieves?"

"He, replied the lawyer, that shewed mercy unto him. Go thou then, said Jesus, and do likewise." And so the discourse ended.

From this place Jesus passing on with his disciples, entered into the village called Bethany, which was within two miles of Jerusalem^c, John xi. 18. and a certain woman there, whose name was Martha, received him into her house.

She had a sister named Mary, who, it seems, lived with her^d. And although they were both devout women, and lovers of Jesus, yet Mary had the warmer zeal, and stronger drawings of spirit after him, which made her cleave the closer to him. So that neglecting the care of providing table entertainment for him, she sat down at his feet, and heard his words; which is a periphrasis of discipleship.

But Martha being cumbered in her mind about much serving (how to make a liberal entertainment for Jesus) and troubled that her sister had withdrawn her help, came to him, and in a complaining accent, said, Lord, "Art not thou concerned that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Speak to her therefore that she help me."

But Jesus, more pleased with Mary's devout zeal, than with Martha's too careful kindness, answered her thus; "Martha, Martha, Thou art careful and troubled (or troublest thyself) about many things; but one thing is needful."

^b Luke x, 36, 37. ^c Ver. 38, ^d Ver. 39, 40, 41.

This some interpreters have referred to the provisions which Martha was busied in making, supposing that by many things was meant messes or several services for the table; and by the one thing recommended as needful, one dish only. But the thought is too low.

I make no doubt but that, by the one thing which our Lord recommends here, as (chiefly and more especially) needful, he intended himself, the living food, and life of the soul; which his following words confirm to be his meaning, when he added: "And Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall never be taken from her."

Our Lord had a good while before this taught his disciples how to pray, Mat. vi. 9. Yet now (having been himself at prayer, when he ceased) one of his disciples desired him to teach them to pray^f, as John also had taught his disciples.

Whereupon he directed them to say the same prayer which he had given them before, for substance, but somewhat differing in terms; and though not very long in that place of Matthew, yet much contracted in this of Luke.

For not only that which is called the doxology (or glory be to the Father, &c). which is found in Matthew, but acknowledged to be no part of the prayer; and uncertain when, by whom, or why added there (of which see Bishop Sparrow's Rationale upon the Common-Prayer, page 23). is not at all in Luke; but a great part also of that which we now have in Luke, the critics tell us, is not in the ancient copies.

The words wanting in the ancient copies, according to Zegerus, are these [Our. Who art in heaven. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. But deliver us from evil.] But I suspect, says Zegerus, that these words have been transcribed hither, from Mat. vi. by some who were desirous that the prayer might be entire. Which sort of enlargings we find, adds he, in very many places among the Greeks. Grotius also, reciting

^g Luke x. 42.

^f Luke xi. 1.

the same omissions, says, "It is very credible that these words, which Luke had left out, were added in the book out of Matthew."

And as these give us the parts omitted, so Erasmus sets down the parts inserted, that is, the whole prayer, as it antiently stood in the text of Luke, thus: '*Pater, sanctificetur nomen tuum. Adveniat regnum tuum. Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodiè. Et dimitte nobis peccata nostra, siquidem et ipsi dimittimus omni debenti nobis. Et nè nos inducas in tentationem,*' i. e. 'Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.'

Agreeable to this is Hierom's Latin translation exactly. And Erasmus is of opinion, that the other parts, here omitted, have been added out of the other evangelists, that they might not seem to disagree; which, says he, I conjecture to have been also done in very many places besides.

But by what means soever this hath happened, it is not to be doubted but that our Lord delivered it to his disciples more full, and more agreeable to what he had given them before.

And as in that they were not then tied to that form, that they must exactly use those very words, but after that manner, Mat. vi. 9. so neither is it reasonable to think they were here; but that this, as well as that, was but a compendium of the heads of what it was fit for them to pray for. '*Neque enim eo tempore syllabis adstringebantur,*' says Grotius on Luke xi. i. e. 'For they were not at that time tied to syllables.'

And as concerning the diversity; more or less, between the words of this prayer, as delivered in each text, the observation of Jansenius, Bishop of Ipres, on this place, is worth our noting. '*Ut disceremus,* says he, '*in oratione non tam de verbis, quàm de rebus esse anxii; ac de spiritu orationis, diversis verbis orationem tradidit.*' i. e. 'Our Lord delivered this prayer in different expressions, that we might learn not to be
' so

‘ so thoughtful about the words in which, as about the things for which, and the spirit by which, we pray.’ See Cradock’s Harmony, chap. v. sect. 27. page 57.

Having thus, at the request of one of his disciples, instructed them again how to pray; he now, to encourage them to be both frequent and fervent in prayer, and to beget in them a firm confidence that they should be heard and answered, entertains them with a parabolical discourse of a person that gained his request of his friend by mere importunity.

“ Which of you, saith he, having a friend^s, shall go unto him at midnight (the most unseasonable time) and shall say, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine, in his journey, is come unto me, and I have nothing to set before him. And he, from within, shall answer and say, Trouble me not, the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed, I cannot rise and give thee.”

“ I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him (upon the score of friendship) because he is his friend; yet because of his importunity he will rise, and give him as many as he needeth.”

Hereupon he renews to them the counsel he had given them before, Mat. vii. 7. to ask, seek, and knock. Assuring them, that if they ask aright, it shall be given them. If they seek so, they shall find. And if they knock so, it shall be opened unto them.

This he confirms to them by a similitude drawn from the dealing of a father with a son. “ If, saith he, a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he, for a fish, give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? (a little venomous creature, which, as naturalists say, can creep into and hide itself in an empty egg-shell). Then he makes the inference: If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall

^s Luke xi. 5. 9. 11.

your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

This explains the foregoing words [Ask, and ye shall receive.] Shewing what it is that we are principally to ask for; namely, the Holy Spirit; which, who receives, and obeys, will not want any other good thing.

Here Luke delivers divers things, which have been already related from Matthew, chap. ix. 32. and chap. 12. 24. 39. 43, &c. Wherefore I forbear to repeat them here, and go on.

As Jesus was now closing his discourse to the people^b, a certain pharisee inviting him to dinner, he went in with him, and sat down to meat, not subjecting himself to the pharisaical superstition of washing his hands (how clean soever) just before he eat.

This the pharisee marvelled at; which our Lord observing (and not sparing his hypocrisy, though at his own table) thus spake unto him:

“ Now do ye pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but your inside is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, said he (to be so regardless of the outside, and so regardless in the meanwhile of the inside), Did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within also? Why then make ye such ado about washing your hands, and never heed how foul your hearts be? Let therefore those outward things (washing of cups, platters, hands, &c.) be less minded, and apply yourselves to do good (give alms according to your ability) and ye need not doubt but those outward things will be clean enough for you.”

But ye pharisees are all for ostentation, and outward shews, observing, even to superstition, the lesser matters, but too much neglecting the greater. And therefore, “ Woe unto you, for ye tithe mint and rue, and all manner of herbs, but pass over judgment (justice, and upright dealing) and the love of God (mercy and

^b Luke xi. 37, 39, 42.

compassion). These ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone, so long as this legal dispensation (under which ye are, and to which tithes were appropriated) shall last; which will be until I shall be offered up on the cross.

Nor did he stop there, but to nip their ambition and popular pride, added ⁱ, “Woe unto you pharisees, for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues ^k, and greetings in the markets.”

Then joining the scribes with them (who by profession were interpreters of the law) he said unto both, “Woe unto you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites ^l; for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them (and so are caught in them).

His thus joining the scribes with the pharisees, and bestowing the title of hypocrites on them both, made one of those lawyers wince; who thereupon said unto him, “Master, Thus saying, thou reproachest us also.”

This drew from our Lord a re-doubling of woes upon them too. “Woe unto you also, said he, ye lawyers, for ye lade men with burthens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burthen with one of your fingers. Woe unto you, for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, whom your fathers killed, Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers, for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. Therefore also (added he) said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute, that the blood of all the prophets, which hath been shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; even from the blood of Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple, 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21. Verily, I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation.

ⁱ Luke xi. 43. ^k Mat. xxiii. 6. ^l Luke xi. 44, 45, 46;

To these grievous woes he adds yet a third, unto those scribes, who, taking upon them the interpretation of the law, did neglect their duty therein.

“Woe unto you lawyers, said he^m, for ye have taken away the key of knowledge; ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in, ye forbad, or hindered.”

These arrogating to themselves the sole right, power, and ability of expounding the law of God unto the people, would not suffer the people to seek out the knowledge thereof for themselves; nor yet would open the way thereunto for them. So that what God had long before complained of by his prophet, Hosea iv. 6. was now verified in them: “His people were destroyed for lack of knowledge.”

But this home dealing of our Lord with them so enraged those scribes and pharisees, that they thereupon began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things, laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, whereof they might accuse him.

He, on the other hand, observing that by this time an innumerable multitude of people were gathered togetherⁿ (probably about or before the house of that pharisee with whom he had dined, as the manner of the people was to flock together after him, wherever they understood he was) took the opportunity again to expose the pharisees, warning his disciples (yet so as, in likelihood, the people also might hear) to beware of the leaven of the pharisees; which, said he, is hypocrisy.

Then going on, he repeated divers instructive lessons and cautions, which at other times, and on other occasions, perhaps also to other auditors, he had before delivered, as recorded, though not without some little variation, by Matthew, in chap. x. to which I refer.

When he had done speaking, one of the company (more intent, it seems, on his temporal, than spiritual

^m Luke xi. 52. ⁿ Luke xii. 1. 13.

concern) addressing himself to him, thus bespake him: "Master, Speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me."

To whom he answered, "Man, Who made me a judge, or a divider, over you? And thereupon he gave this general caution, Take heed and beware of covetousness; for a man's life (and indeed the happiness of his life) consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

But lest this should not sufficiently impress their minds, he, to shew them the folly of heaping up worldly treasures, from the great uncertainty of enjoying them, delivered himself in this parable to them:

The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully^o; whereupon he thought, and said too, but within himself, "What shall I do for want of room, wherein to bestow my fruits? Then having be-thought himself, he came to this resolution. This will I do, I will pull down my barns, and build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits, and my goods. And I will then sing a *requiem* to my soul, and say, Soul, Thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry."

But when he had thus concluded, God said unto him, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee" (that is, thou shalt die) and then, Whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?

Then to apply the parable, he adds, "So is he (or so will it be with him) that layeth up treasure for himself (thinking to make himself happy thereby) and is not rich towards God, in which all true and lasting happiness consists."

This to the people in general. But to his own disciples, he added, "Therefore I say unto you, take no thought (be not too thoughtful, or over-solicitous) for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on; for the life is more (more worth, and

^o Luke xii. 16. 20. 22.

of greater value) than meat; and the body, than raiment.”

To illustrate this, he wishes them to consider the ravens^p (an unclean fowl, Levit. xi. 15.) “For they neither sow, nor reap (make no provision for themselves); have neither store-house nor barn, and yet God feedeth them; how much more are ye better than the fowls, said he? And how much more reason then have ye to rely upon God for a suitable provision for you?”

Besides (added he, to set the matter more home upon them) “Which of you, by taking thought (by your most earnest carking and caring) can add one cubit to his stature? If then, said he, ye be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?”

Again, added he, “Consider the lilies, how they grow; they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” Their glory being innate and natural, the workmanship of God; his but adventitious, and artificial, the workmanship of men.

Then making his inference from the less to the greater; “If, said he, God so clothe the grafs (the general and common appellation for herbs) which is of so short duration, that it is in the field one day, and in the fire the next (either cast into the oven literally, or metaphorically said to be so, because it is withered, parched, and as it were burnt up by the scorching sun) how much more will he both clothe and feed you (provide all necessaries for you) O ye of little faith?”

“Therefore study not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; neither be tossed to and fro in your minds about it; for all these things do the nations of the world (who worship idols, which have no sense of their wants) seek after, whereas your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God (and his righteousness, Mat. vi.

^p Luke xii. 24, 27.

33.) and all these things (that are necessary for your well being) shall be added unto you."

Although therefore ye are but a little flock (despised for your meanness by the great herds of the world) yet need ye not fear wanting, "For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." So that ye may safely enough sell that ye have (to spare) and give alms, providing thereby for yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where neither thief approacheth, nor moth corrupteth. And it will be your advantage to lay up your treasure there, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Then to excite them to diligence and watchfulness, he adds, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and be ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding (which in those times and countries was usually celebrated in the night, Mat. xxv. 6.) that when he cometh, and knocketh, they may (not make him stand waiting abroad, but) open unto him immediately."

Such diligent servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find thus waiting, he assures them will be very happy, and high in the favour of their Lord, who will shew his kindness to them in a most intimate and unusual way of respect, set forth in those expressions of his girding himself, making them to sit down to meat, and coming forth himself to wait upon them, and serve them.

But they must not be weary of watching, and so give over before he comes; for as he will most certainly come, Heb. x. 37. so he expects that his servants should wait till he doth come. And therefore, if he come not in the second watch, they must wait till the third, if they will enjoy that blessing, which he will bestow on those servants, whom, whenever he shall come, he shall find so watching.

To prefs this duty of watchfulness the clofer on them, he ufes a parable of an houfeholder and a thief⁴. Wherein, as one obferves, the comparifon is not of perfon to perfon, nor of bufinefs to bufinefs, but of time to time. (See Cradock's Harmony, chap. v. feft. 73. page 174.)

“ If the good man of the houfe, faid our Lord, had known at what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have fuffered his houfe (through his own drowfy negligence) to be broken open.” And if a man would be fo watchful to prevent a lofs, why not as watchful to receive a benefit?

But as the houfeholder, fince he knew not at what hour the thief would come to affault him, had need to be always upon his guard; fo they alfo, fince they knew not at what hour their Mafter would come, fhould be always on the watch, waiting for him. “ Be ye therefore ready alfo, for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not.”

Here Peter interpoſing, propoſed this queſtion, “ Lord, ſpeakeſt thou this parable unto us (thy diſciples only) or even to all?” This led our Lord to open more particularly the duty of thoſe whom God ſhould appoint to take the care and overſight of others, in his church or family. And thus he thereupon went on:

“ Who then is that faithful and wiſe ſteward, whom his Lord ſhall make ruler over his houſhold, to give them (alluding to the œconomical order uſed in great families) their portion of meat in due ſeaſon? Bleſſed is that ſervant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing. Of a truth, I ſay unto you, he will make him ruler over all that he hath.”

But, added he, “ If that ſervant ſhall ſo far neglect his duty, and forget what his office requires of him, as not only to ſay (though but) in his heart, my Lord delays his coming; and from thence take the boldneſs

⁴ Luke xii. 39, 40, 41, 42. 45.

to beat (instead of feeding) the men-servants and the maidens; and also to pamper himself, by eating and drinking, even to drunkenness; the Lord of that servant will come, in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware; and will cut him in sunder (put him out of his family) and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers (turn him out into the wide world again).

For the punishment of the servants shall be according to the proportion of gifts and power which they had received from their master, and the degree or measure of the knowledge they had of his will.

And therefore that servant who knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself to perform it, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew it not, though he did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with but few. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

Here again, that they might not, through mistake, deceive themselves with an expectation of a life of outward ease and tranquillity, he tells his disciples (as he had done in effect before, Mat. x. 34.) I am come to send fire on the earth (not that imaginary purgatorial fire, the flames of which can be cooled, or even quenched, by liberal offerings to the priests of that communion, by which that fire, to them so profitable, was kindled; but) that fire, or fiery trial (as it is called, 1 Pet. iv. 12.) which would arise, or be raised, among men, upon the preaching or receiving of his gospel; whereby the godly would be evidently distinguished from the ungodly; the sincere converts from hypocrites. Which fiery trial he well knew would be (how uneasy soever to the natural part) so advantageous and conducive to the purity and spiritual growth of his people, that he rather desired the hastening, than the delay of its coming. And therefore he said, "What will I

^r Luke xii. 47, 48.

if it be already kindled?" (or what do I more desire, than that it were already kindled?)

But he well knew that he must lead the way, and first feel the heat of that fire himself; though not for his own sake, but for the sake of others. Therefore he added, "But I have a baptism to be baptised with" (*non fluminis, sed flammæ, seu proprii sanguinis*; not the watery baptism, that he had gone through under John, but a baptism into this fire, or even his own blood): so by a metaphor he expresses his approaching sufferings and death, which he was so far from shunning, or desiring to protract, that he cried out, "How am I straitened, or in pain, till it be accomplished!"

Then going on, he said, "If therefore ye suppose that I am come to give peace (outward tranquillity and quietness) upon earth, ye are mistaken; I tell you nay, but rather division. And that too, such a division, as shall be both very unequal and very unnatural; for from henceforth, where there shall be but five in one house, three of them shall be against two, and two against three; nay, the father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; and so in the rest of family relations.

Hitherto he had directed his discourse to his disciples. But now turning his speech to the people, he taxes their folly, in that they, who pretended to be so weather-wise, that, from the rising of the clouds, and the blowing of the winds, they could prognosticate rain and heat, did not apply themselves, to take notice of this time (the time of his appearance in the flesh for their redemption, if they rejected it not) of which there were more obvious and certain signs, than could be drawn from the face of the sky and of the earth concerning weather.

From this their so supine neglect of that, which, of all things, did most eminently concern them, while in the mean time they valued themselves not a little upon the skill they had, or thought they had, in things

⁶ Luke xii. 50, 53, 54.

of far less moment, having called them hypocrites, he, by way of reprehension, asked them "Why, even of themselves, they did not judge what was right?" And then, by a parabolical allusion to the usual and politick course of a debtor to his creditor, or of an offender to the offended, convening him before a magistrate, he again adviseth them (as he had done some before, Mat. v. 25.) to make it their main business, while they had time, to agree with their great creditor (to whom they were overwhelmed in debt) to seek reconciliation with God (whom they had most highly offended) lest, if they do not, they should provoke him to exact the rigour of the law of them, and drive them to the very utmost extremity.

While thus our Lord was speaking to the people, some that were present took occasion to tell him of the Galileans^u, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices :

That the reader (not much conversant in history) may the better understand who these Galileans were, and what was the occasion of Pilate's exercising this great severity upon them, it may not be amiss, in this place, to give some account of them.

These Galileans (called also Gaulonites) were reputed a sect (or rather, perhaps, a faction only) among the Jews, which took their denomination from one Judas a Galilean or Gaulonite, mentioned by Gamaliel, Acts v. 37.) who stiffly opposed the paying of tribute to the Roman emperor, telling his followers, that the payment of tribute was a manifest token of servitude. Of which, both Josephus (in the first chapter of his eighteenth book of the Antiquities of the Jews) and from him Grotius on this place, and Godwyn in his Moses and Aaron, l. 1. chap. 13. give some little account.

Godwyn, from Theophylact on the place, adds, "That the reason of this cruelty, exercised on those Galileans, is thought to be because they forbade sacri-

^t Luke xii. 587

^u Luke xiii. 1.

fices to be offered for the Roman empire, or for the safety of the emperor; which so incensed Pilate with anger, that taking the advantage when they were come to Jerufalem to sacrifice, he slew them while they were sacrificing, and so mingled their own blood with that of their sacrifices."

This probably had not been long done, when these people, whom our Saviour had been discoursing with, made the report thereof to him; for they seem to tell it for a piece of fresh news; and, as may be gathered from his answer to them, took it for a token of divine judgment, or vengeance, upon those Galileans, for some enormous sin by them committed*. For Jesus thereupon answered, "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent (that is, as the old translation reads it, amend your lives; which is the sure effect of true repentance) ye shall all likewise perish."

And to check their arrogance and self-conceitedness, and to shew them their own unworthiness, and how near their destruction was, he gave them the following parable:

"A certain man, said he, having a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, came and sought fruit thereon, but found none. Whereupon he said to the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years (so long it is supposed by this time to be, since he had entered upon his publick ministry) I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none; cut it down. Why cumbereth it the ground?"

But the gardener, or vine-dresser, answering, said, "Lord, Let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it, and if thereupon it bear fruit, well; if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."

About this time, as he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath-day, he saw a woman there, who, for eighteen years together, had laboured under

* Luke xiii. 2. 4. 6. 11.

an infirmity, inflicted on her by an evil spirit; which had bowed her so together, that she could in no wise lift up herself.

Her he called unto him, and having laid his hands on her, he said unto her, "Woman, Thou art loosed from thine infirmity; whereupon she was immediately made strait, and glorified God."

But the ruler of the synagogue, filled with indignation*, because Jesus had healed on the sabbath-day, said unto the people, "There are six days in which men ought to work, in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath-day."

The Lord thereupon gave this unruly ruler a sharp rebuke, and withal a plain conviction from their own practice.

"Thou hypocrite, said he, doth not each one of you, on the sabbath-day, loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound low these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath-day?"

This put all his adversaries to shame, and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him,

To encourage whom, that they might not take offence at the little and low beginnings of the gospel-way, he again resembles the kingdom of God (as we have it before, Mat. xiii. 31. and Mark iv. 31.) to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and cast into his garden, and it grew and became a great tree; so that the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

To this he added that other comparison (which also we have had before, Mat. xiii. 33.) whereby he likened the kingdom of heaven to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. Of which having spoken before, I forbear to speak now,

* Luke xiii. 14, 15.

Having wrought this miracle on the poor bowed-down woman, and justified his doing it on the sabbath-day, he passed on from thence, and going through the cities and villages, taught the people as he journeyed towards Jerusalem.

And by that time he was got thither, the feast of the dedication was come^y, which always fell in winter, and began on the five and twentieth day of the month Casleu; which answered to part of our December.

This feast is reputed to be of human appointment only, as being first instituted by Judas Maccabeus, when, having defeated the forces of Antiochus, he cleansed the sanctuary, built a new altar for burnt-offerings (instead of the old altar, which had been prophaned by the heathen) and dedicated it, 1 Maccab. iv. 47. 59.

And as this feast drew a great concourse of people to Jerusalem at that time, so it is probable that might draw our Lord thither also at that time, that he might take the opportunity to publish his doctrine, and make known himself in so great a confluence.

Being come to Jerusalem, he, as his manner was, walked in that part of the temple which was called Solomon's porch. Which name this porch (being built in the same place where Solomon's porch had stood, and in the same form which that bore) did still retain; though that porch which Solomon built had been long before destroyed by the Chaldeans.

Here the Jews surrounding him, said unto him, "How long dost thou hold us in suspense (making broad signs, and assuming to thyself high titles, as calling thyself the light of the world, John viii. 12. the good shepherd, chap. x. 11. and calling God thy Father, chap. v. 17, 18. thereby intimating that thou art the Christ?) If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly."

"I have told you, answered he, plainly enough, by the works that I have done amongst you in my Father's name; which being such as none other could work, do

^y John x. 22. 24, 25.

sufficiently bear witness of me, that I am he; yet for all this ye believe not; and the reason of this your so great infidelity is, "Because ye are not of my sheep, as I have formerly told you."

"For my sheep hear my voice. And as I know them, so they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life; so that they shall never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. For my Father, who gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand; and therefore none can be able to pluck them out of my hand; for my Father and I are one."

That word so provoked the Jews, that they took up stones again to stone him². Whereupon, to stop their sudden fury, he said unto them, "Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye (attempt to) stone me?"

They pertly answered, "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."

To take off the edge of this their grand charge, he thus reasons with them. "Is it not written in your law (the law which ye own, and profess to walk by) I said ye are gods?"

This is written (not in the five books of Moses, but) in Psal. lxxxii. 6. which yet is called the law, in a larger signification, as not only the book of the Psalms, but the books of the prophets, and indeed the whole Old Testament is sometimes called.

Now from those words, spoken of and to men [I said ye are gods] he thus reasons, "If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came (which the scripture expressly says he did, and ye will not, I hope, go about to deny or invalidate the scripture) say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified (that is, set apart) and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God?"

² John. x. 31. 34.

“ Besides, added he, If ye heed not what I say, yet mind what I do^a. And if I do not the works of my Father (works worthy of God, or such as none but God could do; such as curing all diseases; discovering the secret thoughts of men; turning their hearts as I please, and having the Devils at my beck, as Grotius on the place observes) believe me not. But if I do, then though ye believe not me, yet believe the works; that ye may know, and knowingly believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.”

Though the force of this reasoning made them let fall their stones; yet these last words of his [of his being in the Father, and the Father in him] offended them no less than his former. So that instead of stoning him, they sought now again to take him (as they had done before, John vii. 30.) probably with intention to have him before the Sanhedrim, to see if they could there intangle him.

But he escaping out of their hands, went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John had baptized (called Bethabara, John i. 28.) and there he abode. Choosing, as some think, to stay a while there, that the place itself might bring into the people's remembrance the divine testimony which John had there given concerning him, chap. i. 29. to 35.

And not unlikely it is that his tarrying there might have that effect on the people, unto whom also, no doubt (though no express mention be made of it) he, who used not to let slip any opportunity, improved his time in preaching the kingdom of heaven; for many, it is said, resorted unto him, and were so well affected with him, that remembering what John had said of him, they observed, that though John did no miracle, yet all things which John had spoken of this man were true; and many believed on him there.

But one of the company put him an odd sort of question, saying^b, “ Lord, Are there few that be saved?”

^a John x. 37. 39. 41.

^b Luke xiii. 23.

Such curious and unprofitable questions, it was usual with our Lord to pass slightly by, without vouchsafing a direct answer to; yet so, as from thence to take advantage to instruct the people, and so he did here.

For upon this occasion he said to them, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

And to make them sensible that the reason why such should not be able to enter in, was, because they neglected the proper season, and so lost the opportunity of entering while the way was open, he gives them the following parable, drawn from the master of a family, who, having invited guests to his house, is supposed to sit near the door, to receive and introduce them. But if any of them linger, and come not within the time appointed, he rises up, and goes in with those that came timely, and shuts the door against the negligent loiterers."

"When once, said he, the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door^c, and ye, standing without, begin to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, Open unto us; he will answer you short, and say unto you, I know you not, whence ye are. Then will ye begin to say, We have eat and drank in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets (implying, that there had formerly passed some tokens of more than common friendship betwixt him and them) all which notwithstanding, he will reply, I know ye not, whence ye are; therefore depart from me all ye workers of iniquity."

A sad time will it then be with you; for there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the holy prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out.

For they shall flock in from all quarters (they shall come from the East, West, North and South) and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And behold there are last, which shall be first; and first, which shall

^c Luke xiii. 25.

be laſt. The poor Gentiles, whom ye ſo much deſpiſe, ſhall get the ſtart of you, and anſwering the firſt invitation, ſhall enter the kingdom before you; and ye that have had the firſt offer, and neglected it, ſhall come lagging behind them.

This doctrine did not a little diſpleaſe the phariſees, who never liked to hear of the Gentiles being called at all; but highly diſdained the thoughts of their being preferred to them.

Wherefore, being very willing to be rid of Jeſus, and being alſo, as ſome think (for which ſee Groſius on the place) ſet on by Herod (who being offended with Jeſus, for his giving ſo ample a teſtimony to John, whom he had not long before beheaded, choſe rather to fright him, if he could, out of his jurisdiction, than incur aſreſh the diſpleaſure of the people, if he ſhould ſeize him, and put him to death^d) they came with a counterfeit ſhew of kindneſs, and adviſed Jeſus to get him out of Galilee (which was under Herod) and depart from thence, for Herod, they undertook to aſſure him, would kill him.

But he, ſeeing the crafty ſnare, and well knowing that neither fraud nor force could prevail again him, until his appointed hour was come, bid them go, and tell that fox (ſo, for his ſubtlety, he called Herod, as the prophets before were wont to deſcribe the greateſt kings and princes under the characters of ſuch wild beaſts, whoſe names their manners did repreſent; and as the apoſtle Paul did afterwards, as is generally ſuppoſed, call Nero, the Roman emperor, lion, 2 Tim. iv. 17. without any breach of the law, which forbade the reviling or curſing of rulers, not a juſt rebuking of them by God's command. Go tell him, ſaid he, that I caſt out Devils and cure diſeaſes (good works, and beneficial to him and his people; ſo that he need not be offended with me) and I ſhall not trouble him long neither; but to-day and to-morrow (intimating a ſhort time) and the third day (in a little while my

^d Luke xiii. 31, 32,

work will be finished) I shall be perfected. “Nevertheless, added he (whether he will or no) I must walk, that is, go on with my service, follow my office of preaching and healing, both to-day and to-morrow, and the day following (the little time that I have yet to live) and then I shall leave this coast, and return to Jerusalem. For it cannot be (it is very unlikely) that a prophet should perish out of Jerusalem;” not only as that city was then become the chief seat of cruelty; but as it was the seat of the Sanhedrim, the highest court of judgment among the Jews; by which only a prophet could be judged and sentenced.

This mention of Jerusalem, as the place of his suffering, drew from him this mournful exprobration of her. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee! How often would I have gathered thy children together, as an hen doth her brood, and ye would not. Behold, added he, your house (your whole state and polity, as well as your city) is, (that is, suddenly shall be, the present time being by an *enallage* put for the future, to shew the certainty and nearness of it) left unto you desolate. And verily I say unto you, ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

When the pharisees saw that with all their threatenings they could not fright Jesus out of that coast^f one of the chief of them invited him to eat with him on the sabbath-day. And having also invited some others, lawyers as well as pharisees, they all watched him, to see how he would behave himself among them on that day; which perhaps they the rather did, because there was in the company a man that had the dropsy, and they knew, by experience, that Jesus delighted in healing the diseased.

Though they watched him with an evil eye, yet we do not read that they said any thing to him; and yet

^e Luke xiii. 34.

^f Luke xiv. 1.

Jesus is said to answer; which implies that he knew their thoughts at least, and answered unto them.

His answer however was by asking them a question; which was, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-day?"

They, not willing to enter the debate with him, who had so often foiled them, held their peace. Whereupon he (taking their silence for a concession) took the hydropic man, and healed him, and let him go. And then answering again their murmuring thoughts (for we find not that they yet said any thing to him) he asked them, "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit^s, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath-day?" Tacitly inferring from the less to the greater, that if they, notwithstanding their superstitious zeal for the sabbath, would on that day take the pains to pull a beast out of a pit; how much more might he (who was Lord of the sabbath, Mat. xii. 8.) cure a man on that day, who had laboured under so grievous and dangerous a distemper? And this so puzzled them, that they could not answer him again to these things.

As they had watched him before, so now, that they came to sit down to eat, he watched them. And observing how they chose out for themselves the chief rooms, or places at the table, he, by way of parable, said, "When thou art bidden of a man to a wedding (or any other feast) sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden also; and he that did bid or invite you both, come and say to thee, Give this man place, and thou must then with shame take the lowest room."

"But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that inviteth thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher; then shalt thou have honour in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee."

For so contemptible a thing, and displeasing to all good men, is an ambitious mind and haughty car-

^s Luke xiv. 5. 7. 10.

riage, that whosoever strives to exalt himself above others^h (his equals, much more superiors) shall be sure to be as much debased in the opinion and esteem of others. Whereas, he that truly humbleth himself, not affecting superiority and precedence, shall not fail to be exalted, even above what himself would either desire, or willingly accept.

Hitherto his discourse was general to the company. Now turning his speech more particularly to him that invited him; “When thou, said he, makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor yet thy rich neighbours (only) lest they also invite thee again, and so a recompence be made thee.”

“But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed; for though they cannot recompense thee, yet thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.”

From this direction concerning feasting of the poor, some have conjectured (of whom Grotius is one) that the *agapæ*, or love-feasts, in the apostolical age, took their rise.

Now when one of the guests that sat at table with Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, “Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.”

This being a well known saying of the Jewish doctors, by which they set forth the happiness of such as should partake of the joys of heaven, our Lord took thence occasion, by the following parable, to shew, that it was their own faults that so few attained thereunto.

“A certain man, said he, made a great supper, and invited many; and sent his servants, at supper-time, to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. But they all began to make excuses. And though they severally assigned a several reason for their not coming; yet in this they all agreed, Not to come.

^h Luke xiv. 11, 12 15, 16.

“The first said, I have bought a piece of groundⁱ, and I must go and see it (which a wise man, one would think, would have done before he had bought it); therefore I pray thee, said he, have me excused.”

“The second alledged, that he had bought five yoke of oxen, and was going to prove, or try them; and therefore he also desired to be excused.”

A third urged, that he had married a wife. This, it seems, he thought would excuse him, not only from coming, but from asking to be excused for not coming; and therefore he bluntly answered, I cannot come.” And with these answers the servant returned to his master.

This first part of the parable interpreters generally refer to the Jews, who had the first invitation to the great gospel supper; and thus far of it to the priests, the scribes or lawyers, the doctors, the lofty professors among them, who were, it seems, too high, too fat, too full, too busy too far engaged in pursuit of the things of this life, to regard an invitation to the heavenly feast, but threw it off with trifling excuses.

Which when the master of the house had heard, he said to his servant, “Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city (still keeping within the Jewish pale, among the gathered people) and bring in hither the poor, the maimed, the sick, and the blind.”

These were of the lower rank of the Jewish people, such as hungered and thirsted after righteousness, Mat. v. 6. such as wanted relief, such as needed the physician, Mat. ix. 12. And these gladly received the invitation, and came in readily, Mat. xi. 5. For the servant returning, said to his Lord, “It is done as thou hast commanded: but withal he added; and yet there is room.”

The Lord thereupon said to his servant, “Go out into the highways, and to the hedges, and compel the people to come in, that my house may be filled; for I say unto you, that none of those that were bidden

ⁱ Luke xiv. 18, 19, 20, 21, 23.

(and have so slighted my kind invitation) shall taste of my supper.”

Here the calling of the Gentiles (who are thus represented as a scattered people, stragglers that wandered about in the highways, and lay loitering under the hedges) is plainly intimated; and with it a fearful sentence upon those, who, preferring their worldly affairs and carnal affections to the soul-satisfying food of the gospel, neglect the gracious visitations of God to their souls, and reject his kind invitations, which he gives by his servants, whom he purposely sends unto them.

From the word [compel] here used (with respect to those who were to be brought in from the highways and hedges) some froward patrons of persecution have had so little regard to the true sense of the place, as from thence to infer the lawfulness of using compulsion with outward force and violence in matters of religion, to enforce a conformity. But that is to offer violence to the text, as well as to common sense.

For besides that (as Grotius on the place observes) not only Justin, Athenagoras, Tertullian, Arnobius, Minutius Felix, Lactantius, and as many others, who lived before Augustine, that were of any note; but even Augustine himself, before the stubbornness of the Donatists (whom to press on every hand, he hastily snatched up this, as a dart to throw at) had drawn this from him, had in many books constantly asserted, that no man was to be compelled to the profession of the faith; the Greek word, ἀναγκάζειν, (rendered here to compel) cannot be understood of bodily pains, or threats of punishments. For guests do not use (says Grotius, *ubi supra*) to be compelled in that manner, but by earnest intreaty. And he instances in several other places, where the same Greek word is used, and rendered to compel or constrain; where yet no outward force or violence can be supposed to have been used, or intended, as in Mat. xiv. 22. Mark vi. 45. Gal. ii. 14. To which may be added, Luke xxiv. 29. where the two disciples, who in their way to Emmaus discoursed with Jesus unknown, being desirous to have more of his company,

company, are said to have constrained or compelled him to go in, and tarry with them. But how? Not by outward force and violence surely (they did not drag him in by head and shoulders, nor drive him in by stripes or threats) and yet they constrained him; but it was by earnest intreaty, no doubt; and persuasion; shewing him the reasonableness of it, viz. because it was towards evening, and the day was far spent. And doubtless the annotators on the Bible had a better understanding of the sense of the word [compel] in this place, Luke xiv. 23. for in their marginal note thereon, they say, "This compulsion cometh of the feeling of the power of God's word, after that his word hath been preached."

But from this (I hope not altogether unnecessary) digression, let us return to the history:

Our Lord had, at this time, great multitudes with him, and being sensible how insensibly some of them followed him, that he might make them more sensible what was the right way of coming to him, he turned and said unto them¹, "If any man come to me (with a purpose to learn of me, and be one of my followers) and hate not his father and mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

Thus we read the text, and that without the least suspicion of any corruption in it. But since to hate those near, those dear, those loving and beloved, those honourable and honoured relations, would be to violate the laws of nature and morality, to destroy filial piety, duty, gratitude, and all the bonds and ties of natural affection, and render Christianity the worst degree of barbarity; it cannot be that the word *μισέειν*, to hate, can be taken here in a strict, proper, and positive, but in an improper and comparative sense; importing that he, who would come to Christ, must love all relations, and himself too, less than Christ. So Matthew has it, chap. x. 37. "He that loveth father or mother, son or daughter, more than me, is not worthy of me;" which place doth well explain this

¹ Luke xiv. 26.

of Luke. And that the phrase [to hate] hath been elsewhere taken in that sense, appears in the story of Jacob and his two wives, Gen. xxix. where, because he loved Rachel more than Leah, ver. 30. Leah is said to be hated, ver. 31. Which yet she was not; but only less beloved than Rachel. So Tremellius and Junius note on the place; so interpreters generally expound it, and the two great criticks, Drufius and Grotius, by collation of other places, plainly prove it should be so taken. But to proceed.

Our Lord stops not here. But having told them, that if they will indeed follow him, they must prefer him to and love him more than all relations, how near, how dear soever; he adds, “And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple^m,” in reality and good earnest, whatsoever shew, for a time, he may make of being so.

In Mat. x. 38, the words are [he that taketh not his cross] that is, taketh not up his cross (as we read it in Mat. xvi. 24. Mark viii. 34. and Luke ix. 23). But here, to shew that it is not enough to take up the cross, and by and by cast it down again, Luke words it, “Whosoever doth not bear his cross;” not only take it, (Mat. x. 38.) and take it up (Mark viii. 34.) and that too daily (Luke ix. 23.) but continue under it, and persevere in bearing it.

What this cross is, or what is meant here by the word [cross] is not agreed by all; nor at all understood by too many. Some, not for want of ignorance surely, take it to be that material cross, framed of wood, to which our Saviour was fastened with nails at his crucifixion; a supposed chip of which, to those credulous zealots, can hardly be set at too high a price. And such as cannot obtain (as how should any) a piece of that non-existent wood, procure to themselves, at any rate, little pendent or portable crosses, framed in imitation of that, of wood, stone, silver, gold, or some other valuable matter. But these consider not, that

^m Luke xiv. 27.

our Lord did not say, he that beareth not *my* cross; but he that beareth not *his* (his *own*) cross.

Others, seeing and shunning this gross notion, understand by the cross persecutions, afflictions, and all manner of sufferings which befall Christians for their master Christ's sake; which no doubt is true, but not the whole truth.

For by taking up and bearing his cross, I take to be principally meant, that he who will be a disciple of Christ must take up and bear, or keep under (be continually subject to, and guided by) that inward principle and divine power, or manifestation or measure of the Holy Spirit (which is given or committed unto him) by which the flesh, as the apostle speaks, Gal. v. 24. that is, (the corrupt nature in man) is crucified, mortified, slain, with the affections (or passions) and lusts thereof. In which respect and sense the same apostle saith of himself, "I am crucified with Christ," Gal. ii. 20. And again, more generally, "Our old man is crucified with him, that (not the natural body, but) the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin," Rom. vi. 6.

That therefore they, to whom he spake, might not rashly, and without due consideration of the dangers, troubles and sufferings they might incur, take up the profession of Christianity, and with the next storm be driven from it again, to their shame and loss; he advises them to be at least not less considerate in this so great concern, than they are in their outward and secular affairs of less moment to them, but to compute the charge first.

"For which of you, said he, intending to build a towerⁿ (for instance, or any other structure) sitteth not down first, and counteth (or exactly casteth up) the cost? Left haply, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first and consulteth,

ⁿ Luke xiv. 2.

whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an embassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, added he, "Whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh not (that is, is not truly and intirely resigned, and given up, with full purpose of heart and mind to forsake) all that he hath (rather than forsake me, and the profession of my gospel) he cannot be my disciple."

Then making use of a proverbial saying among the Jews (which he had used more than once before, Mat. v. 13. Mark ix. 50.) to set forth the sad condition of such, as having once been seasoned with the saving virtue of the gospel, should, for fear of sufferings, or in love to the things of this world, abandon their holy profession of Christianity, and go back to the world again; he tells them, "Salt is good^o, but if the salt hath lost its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is fit neither for the land, nor yet for the dunghill (for it will neither bring forth fruit of itself, nor suffer any fruit to grow where it is laid, as Grotius observes) and therefore men cast it out." And because this doctrine, he knew, would not be grateful to every ear, he recommends it to such ears as could rightly understand and receive it.

Upon this all the publicans^p, and looser sort of people in the company (whom the sinful pharisees in contempt called sinners, being probably encouraged by the late parable of the supper, which such as themselves (the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind) were admitted to, and the prime invited guests, for their contempt of the grace offered, were utterly shut out, chap. xiv. 21. 24.) drew near unto him, that they might hear more of his doctrine.

This disturbed the supercilious pharisees and scribes, who murmuring at it, and at him for it, said, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them."

^o Luke xiv. 34.

^p Luke xv. 1.

Our Lord hereupon took occasion to set forth the universal love of God to man, and his tender care for the recovery of such as were in a lost condition, which he describes by three parables. One, of a shepherd that had lost a sheep. Another, of a woman that had lost a piece of money. And the third, of a father that had lost a son, commonly called the parable of the lost sheep, of the lost groat, and of the prodigal son.

Beginning therefore with the first of these, and directing his speech to those hypocritical pharisees and scribes⁹, he said, “What man of you having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety-and-nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And having found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And being come home, he calleth together his neighbours, and saith unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. Verily (said our Lord) I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety-and-nine just persons that need no repentance.”

To this he adds a second parable, thus. “Either what woman, having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”

Having, by these two parables of like importance, pretty well awakened their understandings, and engaged their attention, he presseth them with the third parable; of which Grotius saith, ‘*Inter omnes Christi parabolas, hæc sanè eximia est, plena affectuum, et pulcherrimis picta coloribus.*’ i. e. ‘Amongst all the parables which Christ delivered, this is a choice one; full

⁹ Luke xv. 4.

‘ of affections, and fet forth in the fairest colours.’ And thus he expressed it.

“ A certain man had two sons, the younger of which said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me (that is, which will fall to me at thy death); whereupon the father divided unto them his living” (that is, computing what would fall to each, gave the younger his part).

He, quickly after he had it, gathering it all up together, took his journey into a far country^r (far from God the heavenly Father) where he wasted his substance with riotous living (whence he is called the prodigal son). And when he had spent all, there arose a very great famine in that land to which he was gone; and he, having nothing left of his own to help himself with, began to be in want. Whereupon he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine (This was a suitable employment for him, who, since he left his father’s house, had lived so like a swine himself).

In this condition, being thoroughly pinched with hunger, he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him. It may be thought strange that he should need any one to give him that, which he himself could give to the swine he fed: but it seems to have been a merciful judgment on him, in order to awaken him to a sense of his sad condition, that he, whose business it was to feed the swine, could not (though he so much wanted and desired it) feed himself with what the swine he kept fed on; and being gone out of his place, and having behaved himself so ill where he was, nobody had so much pity for him, as to but stretch forth an hand to help him.

This wrought so far upon him, that it brought him to consider in how much worse condition he then was, than the meanest servant his father kept, who all had

^r Luke xv. 11.

bread (that is, food) enough, and to spare, while he lay there ready to perish for hunger.

Being therefore thus far come to himself (recovered out of that lethargic stupidity, which his riotous courses had cast him into) he said, "I will arise, and go to my father; and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven (that is, against God) and before thee (or against thee rather, as Beza renders it) and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants."

Having thus resolved in himself to make an ingenuous and plain confession (without any reserve, without any palliation or mitigation of his offence, or impeaching any other, as having been instrumental to draw him thereinto) he arose, and set forward to come to his father.

But when he was yet a great way off, his father seeing him coming (and knowing the reality of his repentance, and true contrition of mind that was upon him) had compassion on him, and (to shew it) ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him; which was a token of forgiveness. Whereupon the son (greatly comforted, no doubt, by this so kind, if not unexpected reception; yet not thereby elevated above a due sense of his own fault and unworthiness) said unto him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

More he purposed to have said, ver. 19. but probably was prevented by his father, who bid his servants bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet (as became a son, not a servant) and kill also the fatted calf (make the best provision they could) that they might eat and rejoice together. Giving this for a reason; "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

Thus far the parable livelily sets forth the state of those, who having asked and received of the Heavenly

^s Luke xv. 20.

Father a divine gift, an heavenly portion, a measure of the Holy Spirit, to profit withal; instead of making that good use of it for which it was given, have in a little time left the giver, set up with the gift, thought they could then live on the gift, without dependance on the giver, and so have lavishly wasted, and prodigally spent upon others, that which was given them for their own support and sustenance; whereby hunger and famine have come upon them; and distre having brought them to a sense of their spiritual loss, they have penitently and submissively returned to, and been graciously received by, their compassionate Father.

The other part of the parable very aptly exposeth the evil nature of those, who, grudging good to any but themselves, think all lost that goes besides their own mouths; and admirably describes the gentle dealing of an affectionate and tender father.

For as in the entrance of the parable we observed, that the father had two sons^t, of which this prodigal spend-all was the younger; so now, the parable going on, relates, that the elder son being in the field (employed in his father's business) when coming home, he drew nigh to the house, and heard musick and dancing; he called one of the servants, and asked him what these things meant? And when the servant told him his brother was come, and his father had killed the fatted calf, because he had received him safe and sound, he was so angry that he would not go in; whereupon his father, in great condescension, came out, and intreated him. But he surlily answering, said to his father, "Although I have served thee these many years, and have not at any time transgressed thy commandment; yet hast thou never given me so much as a kid, that I might make merry with my friends; but as soon as this thy son was come, who hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf."

To whom his father, with admirable patience, and exemplary mildness, answering, said, "Son, Thou art

^t Luke xv. 25.

ever with me, and all that I have is thine (reserved for thee); but inasmuch as this thy brother was dead (in sins and trespasses, having lost all sense of goodness) and is alive again (returned to a lively sense of his condition) was lost and is found; it was meet that we (all, not only I and he, but thou also with us) should make merry and be glad."

This parable is by divers diversly understood; some so applying it, that the two sons should personate mankind, under the two general heads of Jew and Gentile, which then comprehended all. Of which the younger should represent the Gentiles, who had undoubtedly received from God, the Father of both, a distribution of the heavenly gift and portion, as well as the elder brother, the Jews; but forsaking God, and going away far from him, soon wasted their heavenly substance, spending it upon idolatrous harlots. Yet at length coming, through spiritual hunger, to a sense of their loss, should penitently return, receive the gospel, and be graciously received by the merciful Father, and made partakers of the dainties of his house; at which the elder brother, the Jews (who in their own opinion had ingrossed heaven to themselves, and could hardly, without a miracle, be persuaded that their poor Gentile brother should ever be received to mercy) would grievously repine.

Others take the younger brother to represent all sinners in general, whether of Jews or Gentiles; the elder brother the supercilious, haughty, self-righteous scribes and pharisees, who were apt to look a-squint upon all others, Jews as well as Gentiles, that were not of their sect, or did not admire and Rabbi them.

And (without prejudice to the former application of the parable) this latter hath this peculiar advantage on its side, that both it, and the two other parables in the same chapter, were delivered to the pharisees and scribes, and that upon occasion of their murmuring at Christ, and upbraiding him that he received sinners, and did eat with them; when the publicans, and others whom

whom they called finners, drew near unto him, to hear him, ver. 1, 2.

Having thus smoothly reprehended those malignant pharisees and scribes, for their envying the good of others; he now turns his discourse to his disciples, and relates to them the parable of the unjust steward, thus.

“ There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and the same being accused to him that he had wasted his goods^u, he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.”

This startled the steward, and put him upon a consideration, not so much how to make up his accounts fairly with his Lord, as how to provide for himself for the future. “ What shall I do, said he, within himself? For my lord taketh away from me the stewardship; I cannot dig (I have not been bred to labour, and I am above beggary) to beg I am ashamed.”

At length he came to a resolution to go on as he had begun; that as he had wasted his Lord's goods hitherto, so now at parting he would waste them more; yet so as that the advantage should redound to himself. For in making up his accounts with his lord's debtors, he would release to each of them so much of their debts, as should engage them to be kind to him afterwards. “ I am resolved, said he, what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.”

To put therefore this project in execution, he called to him all his lord's debtors, and asking the first how much he owed to his Lord, and he confessing himself to owe an hundred measures of oil; “ Take thy bill, said he to him, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then asking another, How much owest thou? And he acknowledging that he owed an hundred measures of wheat; Take thy bill, said he to him, and write four-score.”

^u Luke xvi. 1.

His lord, when he understood the practice of his steward, commended his wit and policy, though not his honesty; acknowledging that he had done wisely (or craftily) though not fairly. And our Lord, having there finished the parable, adds, "For the children of this world are in their generation (in the things that belong to this life) wiser (more wary and provident) than the children of light" (the Jews, who were so reputed, to distinguish them from the Gentiles) were for the things that concerned their eternal well-being.

Hence he took occasion to advise his disciples to be as provident for themselves in a right and just way, as the steward in the parable was represented to have been for himself, in a wrong and an unjust way. "Make to yourselves friends (said he to them, alluding to the parable) of the mammon of unrighteousness" (so he called the riches of this world, either as being, for the most part, ill-gotten, or ill-used) that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." By which it is reasonable to suppose he did recommend to them the exercise of charity and beneficence towards all, the poor of the household of faith more especially, Gal. vi. 10. that the blessings and prayers of those, who had tasted the benefit of their liberality, might in some sort recommend them to the favour of the munificent Father.

And to excite all to this good disposition of well-doing, and that upon a right ground, he adds, "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much." Which words import, that to relieve the necessities of the industrious poor, is not merely an act of charity in him that does it, but an act of fidelity also, as men are stewards to God of his temporal riches; and that to withhold it from them, whose wants justly call for it, and who deserve it, is a sort of injustice, and renders them that so do but unjust stewards.

^w Luke xvi. 9.

And therefore it behoved them to behave themselves fairly in that respect, both for their own credit and interest; for who will trust them with more, whom they have not found faithful in the little they have been trusted with?

And because covetousness is a great obstacle to charity, and the immoderate love of riches is an enemy to liberality, he dehorts his hearers from the inordinate desire thereof, and subjecting themselves thereto^x, so as to let mammon (worldly riches) get the mastery of them; assuring them that they cannot serve God and mammon, for that no servant can serve two (such contrary) masters.

When the pharisees, who themselves were covetous, heard these things, they derided him, as reckoning he therein contradicted the law and the prophets; because the law contained promises of great increase, and abundance of riches and worldly substance to the godly, as in Levit. xxvi. 4, 5. and Deut. vii. 13. And both David (not to mention his son Solomon) and Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and others, who were well accepted of God, did possess great riches, and worldly wealth.

But our Lord soon checked their insolence, by telling them, “Ye are they that justify yourselves before men; but God (whom ye little think me to be) knoweth your hearts.” And though you value yourselves highly upon your wealth and worldly greatness, and upon the fair but false shew you make of sanctity and exact justice; yet what you so highly esteem (your covetousness and hypocrisy) is abomination in the sight of God

He tells them, “The law and the prophets were until John, (not that John’s dispensation did put an end to the law; though by pointing to Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every true believer, Rom. x. 4. he gave a great shake to it) and that since that time the kingdom of God (which is of an higher nature, and stands upon other terms than were propounded

^x Luke xvi. 13. 16.

under the law) is preached; and every man (poor as well as rich, publican as well as pharisee, Gentile as well as Jew) preffeth into it.

But that those cavillers might not thence take advantage to misreport him, as speaking against the law, he adds, "That it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than one tittle of the law to fail." Yet by touching again upon the matter of divorce^y (which he had handled before, Mat. v. 32.) he gave them a close intimation, that they who pretended so much zeal for the law, and were superstitiously observant of the ceremonial parts thereof, did themselves too frequently break the law, by indulging divorces without just cause.

Resuming then the discourse he had been upon, from the parable of the unjust steward, he adds here another parable, to shew the necessity and advantage of making a right use of riches.

"There was, said he, a certain rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day (one who spared no cost for back or belly, but eat and drank, and wore of the best). And there was also a certain beggar, who, being full of sores, was laid at the rich man's gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table." The rich man is not named (as in parables is not usual); and because the beggar is named, some take this to be not merely a parable, but partly historical, partly parabolical. The beggar is named Lazarus, which is generally taken to be a contraction of Eleazar, a common name among the Jews, signifying, as some say, "Destitute of help;" as others, "God my helper," or "The help of God;" in which respect it was well suited to the beggar's condition, who was wholly destitute of help from man, and whose only helper was God. And because the rich man is not named, common usage has named him Dives, which signifies "A rich man;" and the parable

^y Luke xvi. 18, 19.

from thence is usually called, The parable of Dives and Lazarus.

This poor beggar craved but a small alms, the crumbs only that fell from the rich man's table. Whether he had them or no, the text is silent. The old Latin translation, called Hierom's, says, he had them not (*Nemo illi dabit*). But the criticks deny that to be in any of the Greek copies, and suppose it to have been borrowed by some transcriber, from the parable of the prodigal son, Luke xv. 16. The dogs, however, more kind than their master, came and licked the poor man's sores.

“ In process of time, it came to pass that both these died, the beggar and the rich man². The beggar first, of whose burial we hear nothing, but that he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; that is, into the place of rest and happiness appointed for the faithful, and therefore compared to the bosom of Abraham, The Father of the Faithful.”

The rich man also died, and was buried; and that too probably with a funeral pomp and state, answerable to the course of his voluptuous life. He also, it may be supposed, was carried, and that by angels; but of another sort, and to another place; for the next account we have of him is, that he was in hell. Where being in torments, and lifting up his eyes, he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And now he, who in his bravery and jollity despised and neglected poor Lazarus on earth, craved to be relieved and eased in hell, by the means and ministry of this very Lazarus. He cried, and said, “ Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.” Thus Lazarus had been the beggar on earth; Dives was then become a beggar in hell. Lazarus begged for a crumb of bread from Dives, and had it not; Dives begs for a drop of

² Luke xvi. 22.

cold water from the tip of the finger of Lazarus, but could not get it.

For Abraham answered him ^a, “ Son, Remember that thou, in thy life-time, receivedst thy good things (riches, honour, mirth, pleasures, which thou accountedst, and made choice of, as good things) and Lazarus in his life-time received evil things (poverty, contempt, want, hunger, pains and sorrows) but now he is (deservedly) comforted, and thou art (justly) tormented, and that without hope of remedy. For, added he, besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they who would pass from hence to you (if any should be so mad) cannot. Neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.”

Dives, by this answer, put out of all hopes of any remedy for himself, began now to think of his relations on earth; wherefore addressing himself again to Abraham, “ I pray thee therefore, father, said he, that thou wouldest send him (Lazarus) to my father’s house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify to them (by giving them warning) lest they also come into this place of torment. What need that, said Abraham? They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. Nay, father Abraham, replied Dives, but if one went to them from the dead, they will repent. No, no, said Abraham, If they hear not Moses and the prophets (which were the ordinary means appointed by God for the instruction of his people, under that dispensation) neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

By this parable (wherein the rich man is not charged with any immorality or enormous vice, but only with spending his estate upon himself, in a voluptuous way of high living, and suffering his poor brother meanwhile to suffer hunger, and perish for want) our Lord both corrected the covetous pharisees (who had derided him for his liberality to the poor) and instructed his

^a Luke xvi. 25. 27. 29.

other hearers how to use and dispose of those temporal riches which God had made them stewards of, that their poor brethren might be benefited by them here, and they by that hereafter.

This insolent carriage of the pharisees towards him (in deriding him, Luke xvi. 14.) drew our Lord to repeat to his disciples what he had mentioned to them before, in Mat. xviii. concerning the unavoidableness of offences coming, and the woe to him through whom they come, which he sets forth by saying^b, "It were better for such an one, that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones."

Then, that no such offence should prevail upon any of them, so as to harden them against the offender, and shut them up from endeavouring to inform and reclaim them; he gave them this watch-word, "Take heed to yourselves; then adds, If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him, and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him." Where it is observable, that the obligation upon the offended to forgive the offending brother, is altogether conditional, depending upon the repentance and confession of the party offending, to be made to the party offended.

The apostles, hearing these things, besought the Lord to increase their faith. Whereupon he, to increase first in them a stronger desire after it, sets forth the virtue and efficacy of it to them, by this comparison, "If, said he, ye had faith but as a grain of mustard-seed (which, though but very small in bulk or quantity, is of a brisk, lively, spirituous, quick virtue and operation) ye might say unto this sycamine (or mulberry) tree, be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you." As if he had said, If ye had never so small a degree of the

^b Luke xvii. 2. 5.

true living faith, ye might work the greatest wonders by it.

But lest they should err again on the other hand, by over-valuing themselves upon or for their obedience and performance of what was required of them; he, to keep them right in that respect also, instructs them by another simile thus.

“ Which of you having a servant ploughing, or feeding cattle ^c, will by and by, when he is come from the field, say unto him, Go and sit down to meat? and will not rather say unto him, make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself and serve me, until I have eaten and drunken; and afterwards thou shalt eat and drink. Doth he thank that servant (when he has done so) because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants:” we have done (but) that which was our duty to do.

Our Lord, after this, setting forward towards Jerufalem, passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers; who, standing afar off, lifted up their voice, and said, “ Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.”

We read not here that our Lord either did or said any thing to these lepers, whereby to work a cure upon them; but, as giving it for granted that they should be healed, he only said unto them, “ Go, shew yourselves to the priests.” That the leper was bound by the law, Levit. xiv. to do in two cases, or for two reasons; the one, that he might be informed by the priest whether he had the leprosy or no (which in this case was needless, it being so apparent); the other, that the priest might pronounce him healed, if he was so; and thereby restore him to the society and conversation of his neighbours again. That was the end of Christ’s now sending these lepers to the priests. They, on the other hand, taking for granted that they should be

^c Luke xvii. 7. 11, 12.

healed, went their way, as he had bid them. And it came to pass, that as they went they were cleansed.

Of these ten^d, (who all, it seems, did partake alike of the healing virtue) but one had a grateful sense of the benefits received; and he too was a Samaritan; who, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God; and falling down on his face at the feet of Jesus, gave him thanks.

This Jesus observing, and resenting the ingratitude of the rest, said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? that none of them returned to give glory to God, save this stranger." So the Jews accounted the Samaritans, and so our Lord called this man, that he might the more sharply nip the boasting Jews, who soared above others in profession, but in performance fell below them.

Then turning to this thankful patient, who lay prostrate at his feet, he said unto him, "Arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole."

The pharisees not liking this favourable carriage of his towards the Samaritan, and as little the observation he had made of the ingratitude of the other nine, who probably were all Jews; to prevent him from prosecuting that subject any further, put a hasty question to him, asking him, "When the kingdom of God should come?" Meaning, no doubt, when the Messiah, whom they looked for, should come, as a temporal king, to reign over them; that they (which they expected) might reign with him, and cast off the Roman yoke they were under.

In answer to this he tells them, not when the kingdom of God should come; but that, whenever it came, it was not to come in such a manner as they looked for it; "For the kingdom of God cometh not with observation;" with outward shew, pomp and state, like the kingdoms of this world; nor should men be able to point it out, with a lo here it is, or lo there it is; "For behold, the kingdom of God (said he to them)

^d Luke xvii. 15. 20.

is within you." *In animis hominum*, in the minds of men, as Vatablus on the place observes.

From this mention of the kingdom of God, and the pharisees notion of it, as an outward and temporal kingdom, our Lord took occasion to intimate to his disciples his personal removal and absence from them; and to forewarn them of the false Christs which would come when he was gone, pretending to be the Messias, and attempting to set up an outward kingdom over them.

“The time (said he to his disciples) will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man^e (such as ye have already seen, that is, to enjoy my company, though it were but for one day) and ye shall not see it. And they (the impostors that shall arise in those times, to make you believe that I am come again, and so to draw you after them) shall say to you, See here, or see there; but go not after them, nor follow them. For the Son of Man shall not come after such a manner as they come, with outward force, strength and policy; but with a sudden, sharp, inwardly piercing stroke, like the lightning, that, breaking forth out of one part under heaven, shineth unto the other (that all may see it); so shall also the Son of Man be in his day. But first (even before he shall come in this manner) must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.”

And to make them yet more sensible and apprehensive of the danger of that day, and to prepare them for it, that being forewarned, they might escape the destruction which would come suddenly (when it did come) and inevitably upon the disobedient and regardless ones, he likens that day to the days of Noah (here called Noe) and the days of Lot.

In the days of Noah the world had fair warning, by Noah's preaching, 2 Pet. ii. 5. and the building of the ark; which yet they regarded not, but went on in their old courses, eating, drinking, marrying, and giving

^e Luke xvii. 22. 26.

in marriage (which being things in themselves lawful, must be understood to be done by them with excess, and in an unlawful manner) until the very day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

So likewise in the days of Lot^f, the sodomites not only eat and drank (that is, feasted and revelled, as the old world had done) but in a self-security, and fearless confidence of their own safety, bought, sold, yea, planted and builded (as if they should never be removed or disturbed) to the very day that Lot went out of Sodom, and then, all on a sudden, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all, not so much as dreaming of any the least danger.

Even thus (with respect to the certainty and unexpected suddenness of the destruction) shall it be, saith our Lord, in the day when the Son of Man is revealed, viz. to take vengeance of that rebellious, stiff-necked, and bloody people, the Jews, by the total destruction and subversion of Jerusalem, and the utter desolation of that perfidious nation; for thereunto are those words of Christ, by the generality of interpreters, modern especially, referred; though it is not altogether unlikely that a more spiritual meaning also may be couched under them.

To make them more sensible of the greatness of the danger, he cautions them, that he who in that day shall be upon his house-top (which was made flat to walk upon, Deut. xxii. 8.) should not come down to take his staff out of the house; nor he that should then be in the field, return back to look after, or take care of, his goods at home, but speed away, for the safety of his life; taking warning by Lot's wife, who but looking back (with desire after that which was to be destroyed) was turned into a pillar of salt; a pillar, for a lasting monument; of salt, to season others with due caution.

^f Luke xvii. 28. 31.

And to make them the more sensibly careful, he tells them^g, “ That whosoever shall seek (by indirect and unlawful means, such as a denial of him, or doing any thing contrary to the Christian faith or doctrine) to save his life, shall lose it; but that whosoever shall, for his sake, give up his life, and expose himself to the hazard of losing it (rather than flinch from his Christian testimony) shall preserve it.”

And that they might not be too much disheartened or discouraged, he lets them also know, that in that dismal and night-like day, there will be a distinguishing providence for the sparing of some; so that in all conditions, sexes, stations and relations, whether it be of them that rest and are at ease, or of them that are in labour and travel, though one be taken, another shall be left: if some perish, yet some shall escape.

The disciples then inquiring of him where this terrible storm would fall? he, using a proverbial speech, viz. (that whosoever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together) seems to point out Jerusalem to them (to which place the body of the Jews was in course to be gathered, at the time of the passover, and other solemn feasts) and the Roman armies would flock to them thither, who in their ensigns bore the eagle.

Thus interpreters generally go, that they may fit the place with a literal meaning, which yet hinders not, but that a spiritual and mystick sense may be fairly drawn from the words.

Having somewhat startled his disciples with the foregoing description of the approaching troubles, and well knowing what need they had to betake themselves to God for strength and preservation, he now, by the following parable, shews them how much it concerned them (and all men) to pray continually; and that not faintly, but fervently.

“ There was, said he^h, in a city, a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man. And there was a poor widow in that city; and she came to him, say-

^g Luke xvii. 33, 34, 37.

^h Luke xviii. 2.

ing, Avenge me of mine adversary. This for a while he would not do; but afterwards (that he might be rid of her importunate cries for justice) he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, left by her continual coming she weary me."

Having delivered the parableⁱ, he thus observed to his disciples upon it, and argues from it. "Hear, said he, what the unjust judge saith, and then infer from the less to the greater: If man, an earthly judge, and an unjust one too, would suffer himself to be prevailed upon by the earnest importunity of a poor widow; shall not God, the heavenly judge, and justice itself, avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, without making them bear long? I tell you, that he will avenge them speedily; though he can hardly find faith in man to believe it."

When he had to this effect expressed himself to his disciples, observing some of the pharisaical sect drawing nigh, who, trusting in themselves that they were righteous, despised others, he spake to them in this following parable.

"Two men went up into the temple (that is, into the courts of the temple, which were two, one for the Israelites, the other for strangers) to pray; the one a pharisee, and the other a publican (the pharisee being, in his own conceit, of the highest rank among the Jews; and the publican being, in the pharisee's opinion, of the lowest rank among the Gentiles).

The pharisee stood, and prayed thus with himself, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men, who are extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican."

Thus far he sets himself forth in negatives, boasting what he is not; now he vaunts himself in affirmatives, boasting what he is, what he does; of which he gives two instances, fasting and giving tithes.

ⁱ Luke xviii. 6. 10, 11.

“I fast, faith he, twice in a week.” These were set and solemn fasts, though not of divine institution, but by the appointment of their elders; and they were held on the second and fifth days of the week. In imitation whereof, the Christians also, that they might not be thought to come short of the Jews in outward devotion and shews of piety, appointed two days of fasting also in every week. And that they might not interfere with the Jews, for difference sake, took the fourth and the sixth, which are still observed among those who are called Episcopalians.

“I give tithes, added he, of all that I possess.” Tithes at that time (the legal dispensation, under which they were commanded, not being then yet fully ended) were due, and ought to be paid. But some doubt there was even then and before, concerning the extent of that tithing-law, whether it extended to all things of the lowest value, as pot-herbs, eggs, milk, cheefe, &c. Therefore it is probable this over-righteous pharisee used the word [give] rather than [pay] to shew that he exceeded or outdid what the law required, which was that wherein he gloried.

On the other hand the publican, having nothing to say for himself, nor any high opinion of himself, standing afar off (in the outward court of the Gentiles, and, it may be, as far off as he could in that, from a sense of his own unworthiness) would not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven, but smiting upon his breast, said^k, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

This was prayer, true and sensible prayer; whereas what the boasting pharisee uttered, had nothing in it either of the nature or shew of prayer. No wonder therefore that this poor humble publican went down to his house justified (as our Lord says he did) rather than the vaunting pharisee.

The time of the passover now drawing nigh, and our Lord being almost ready to go up to Jerusalem to it, he received a message from two sisters, who were not

^k Luke xviii. 13.

only very good women, and devout followers of him, but whom he greatly favoured, and had sometimes vouchsafed to visit, and accept some entertainment from, Luke x. 38.

These sisters, whose names were Mary and Martha, lived at a little town or village called Bethany (situate at the foot of the mount of Olives, distant about fifteen furlongs, somewhat less than two English miles, from Jerusalem) and had a brother named Lazarus, who at that time was sick; and they being very affectionate to their brother, forthwith dispatched a messenger to Jesus, with this only message, "Lord, Behold he¹, whom thou lovest, is sick."

This might be thought a short message, neither naming the patient, nor desiring the physician to come to him; but they sent not in compliment, but in simplicity and in faith. They knew Jesus loved their brother, and made no doubt but that he, who loved to do good to all, would not be backward to come to do good to one whom he so peculiarly loved; and they could not question his sufficiency. Yet it might have a little staggered them, when they found how little haste he made to come.

For when he had heard this message of Lazarus's sickness, he seemed to make but light of it, saying, "This sickness is not unto death; but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby;" to wit, by the manifestation of his divinity, in the restoring Lazarus to life, after he had been both dead and buried. Therefore, after he had heard of his sickness (notwithstanding his great love not only to Lazarus, but to both his sisters) he abode still two days longer in the same place where he was when he received the message, before he set one step forwards towards them; and made no great haste neither when he did go, that Lazarus might be buried before he came thither.

¹ John xi. 3.

After he had staid two days where he was, he said to his disciples^m, "Let us go into Judea again." They, who as yet loved ease and safety, put him in mind, that it was not long since the Jews sought to stone him, "And goest thou, said they, thither again?"

He, to take off their fear and apprehension of danger concerning either him or themselves, thus reasoned with them. "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day (within the time of those twelve hours, while the outward light shines) he stumbleth not; because he hath the light of this world to guide himself by, which would discover to him any stumbling-block, or cause of danger, that might lie in his way. But if a man walk in the night, he may be in danger to stumble, and receive hurt, because the light being withdrawn, he cannot see his way." Thereby intimating to them, that while his day lasts (the time allotted him by his Father to walk and work in here upon earth) how near soever it be to an end, they need not fear, no hurt or danger shall befall them.

Yet did not this so ease their minds, but that, as they went on their way toward Jerusalem, Jesus going before them, they were amazed and afraid as they followed him. Which he perceiving, took the twelve apart in the way, that he might more fully instruct them in, and prepare them for, those sufferings which he knew he should shortly undergo; of which he had given them divers hints before, Mark viii. 31. and chap. ix. 31.

Wherefore he tells them plainlyⁿ, "Behold, we are now going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished: for he shall be betrayed unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles; and he shall be mocked, and scourged, spitefully intreated and spit upon, crucified and put to

^m John xi. 6. ⁿ Mat. xx. 17. Mark x. 32. Luke xviii. 32.

death;

death; yet for all this, the third day he shall rise again."

This was very direct and plain as could be well spoken, and was enough, one would think, to have moved in them the highest passion of grief; yet so exceeding dull were they, so little apprehensive of any thing of this kind, that Luke (who was not one of the twelve, nor indeed a disciple at all, till after the ascension of our Lord) tells us, they understood none of these things; and using a figure called *pleonasmus*, adds, "This saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken."

Which great unaptness in them to understand these things, may be thought to proceed from that high expectation they had all along entertained (and which was strongly feated, as well in their understandings as in their desires) of a temporal kingdom, in which their master should reign, and they with him. To which the things here spoken (of his being delivered to the Gentiles, and by them crucified and killed) could by no means be reconciled.

This notion of a worldly kingdom had sunk so deep into their mindsⁿ, that two of the twelve, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, having their mother Salome with them for their advocate (by whose mediation they the rather hoped to prevail, and obtain their suit, because she was not only of kin to their master, but one of those women who did most commonly attend him, to minister to him) took an opportunity in his journey to make a request to him, which was, that one of them might sit on his right hand, and the other on his left, in the glory of his kingdom.

This was a bold petition, and received a suitable answer; for Jesus presently told them, "They knew not (neither mother nor sons) what they asked." But that they might know, he asked them, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am to be baptized with?"

ⁿ Mat. xx. 20. Mark x. 35.

Which was a bitter cup of sharp sufferings, and a bloody baptism, which they must be willing to drink off, and pass through, who aimed at such high preferments in his kingdom; for they that would reign with him, must first suffer with him. They, loth to lose their suit, for want of speaking up, confidently answer, “ We are able.”

Our Lord, favourably over-looking their weakness, tells them, “ Ye shall indeed drink of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am to be baptized with (that is, ye shall suffer great persecutions and sharp afflictions, and I will enable you to undergo them, and by that time ye will understand yourselves better, and be better advised what to ask). But when ye have done and suffered all, ye must not think to be your own carvers, but be content with the place and portion which your heavenly Father shall assign you; “ For to sit on my right hand, and on my left hand, is not mine to give, except to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.”

Having thus gently checked the ambition of the two^o, he now applies himself to calm the offended minds of the ten (for the ten, when they heard what the two had petitioned for, were moved with indignation against them), and withal to instruct them (and in them all his followers) how they ought to demean themselves in a mutual condescension one towards another.

Wherefore calling them unto him, he said^p, “ Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them, and are called benefactors; but it must not be so among you. But whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister or servant; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant also. Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and to give his life a ransom for many.”

^o Mat. xx. 24. Mark x. 41. ^p Luke xxii. 25.

When our Lord had composed this strife among his disciples, and informed them better, he pursued his journey towards Jerusalem. And Jericho lying in his way, when he came nigh unto it¹, a certain blind man, who sat by the way-side begging, hearing the multitude pass by, asked what it meant? and being told that Jesus of Nazareth passed by, he cried, saying, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me."

The clamour he made disturbing the people, they who went before rebuked him, to make him hold his peace; but he was so far from that, that he cried so much the more, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me."

Jesus therefore standing still, commanded him to be brought unto him; and when he was come near, asked him, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? Lord, answered he, that I may receive my sight."

Then said Jesus to him, "Receive thy sight, thy faith hath saved thee. Whereupon immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God."

The fame of this miracle, we may well think, would alarm the town, and raise a curiosity in many of the inhabitants to see him who had wrought it, as he passed through.

Amongst the many therefore that thronged to see him^r, there was one named Zaccheus, who was the chief among the publicans, a great man in substance, for he was rich; but a little man in person, for he was of a low stature.

He having a desire to see Jesus (that he might know what manner of person he was) and finding that in the crowd he could not do it, by reason of his dwarfishness, he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore (or wild fig-tree) that from thence he might have a full sight of him, knowing he was to pass that way.

¹ Luke xviii. 35.

^r Luke xix. 2.

When Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him^s, "Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house."

This (for aught I find) was the first man whose house Christ ever had invited himself to; and this perhaps was the first man too, that had expressed so great desire, and taken so much pains to see him.

It may reasonably be inquired, how it should come to pass, that Jesus, who it is probable had never seen nor heard of Zaccheus before, should call upon him by name. But it is as reasonable to conclude, that as his divinity was sufficient to inform him in all things, so his calling Zaccheus by his name, of whom he had no personal knowledge before, might be a means to reach Zaccheus, and dispose his mind to a consideration that Jesus was more than a mere man. And indeed, there was no doubt an uncommon working of divine providence in the whole transaction, that both kindled in Zaccheus so strong a desire to see and observe Jesus, and put Jesus to a stand, when he came where he was, that he could not go on without calling him down. Nor doth his inviting himself to be his guest seem to proceed from a voluntary freedom; but as if he had been under some necessity thereunto, which made him say, "Make haste, and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house." As if it had been so appointed by his Father, whose will he always did.

Not faster went Zaccheus up into the tree, than he came down again; for he made haste and came down. And as before he climbed up, he sought Jesus earnestly, so now being come down, he received him joyfully.

But this so friendly and familiar congress between Jesus and the publican gave no small offence to the people, who, when they saw it, murmured, saying, "That he was gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner." Though probably no more a sinner than others of them were, save that he was a publican, a toll-gatherer, or tribute-taker, and a chief one too;

^s Luke xix. 5.

all which, for their too frequent exactions, were hated by the Jews (who willingly would not have paid any tribute at all) and were therefore by them, not less despitefully than commonly, called sinners.

It is (and not without reason) supposed, that both our Lord said more to Zaccheus, for his instruction and confirmation, and that Zaccheus said more to our Lord (in thankful acknowledgment of the divine favour he had received, in being called, in so especial a manner, to the publick profession of the gospel, and a participation of the heavenly things) than is recorded by the evangelist. For the text delivers only, that after Zaccheus was come down, and stood before the Lord, he said unto him, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man, by false accusation, I restore (or rather will restore, the present tense being put, by *enallage*, for the future) fourfold unto him." And that thereupon Jesus said (rather to the rest concerning him, than to himself) "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is the Son of Abraham." Which his thus receiving of Christ into both heart and house rendered him in a spiritual sense and relation, if he was not so before in a natural, as being of the Jewish stock and nation, which is not fully agreed by the learned; some supposing him to have been a Gentile; others (as Castalio and Grotius) strongly arguing that he was an Israelite.

Our Saviour having said those words [This day is salvation come to this house, &c.] added, "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." When his disciples had heard this, he perceiving that their thoughts (which were always apt to run after an earthly kingdom) were now more than ordinarily raised, in expectation that the kingdom of God should immediately appear (supposing, it seems, that when he should come to Jerusalem^t, to which he was now pretty

^t Luke xix. 12.

nigh, he would actually take possession of the kingdom) for their better instruction gave them this parable.

“ A certain nobleman, said he, went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And before he went, he called his ten servants (a definite number being set for an indefinite) and delivered to them ten pounds (not in a company, but every one his pound to himself) and said unto them, occupy (that is, employ) it till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, “ We will not have this man to reign over us.” But when he had received the kingdom, and was returned, he did not presently fall upon those rebellious citizens that had wholly rejected him, but first called them to account, to whom he had committed his money to be improved, that he might understand how much every man had gained by trading with it.

Commanding them therefore to be called unto him, the first came and said, “ Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.” Wherein it is observable, that he modestly attributes the gain, or improvement that was made, not to his own skill or industry, but to the money, the gift which his Lord had intrusted him with. Whereupon his Lord said to him, “ Well, thou good servant, because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.”

The second came, and said, “ Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds; to whom likewise his Lord said, Be thou also over five cities.”

But there came another, and he said, “ Lord, Behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin; for I was afraid of thee, because thou art an austere man; one that takest up that thou laidst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.”

As this man brought in a different account from those of his fellow-servants, so he received a different answer and reward. For his Lord, taking him upon his own hypothesis, told him, “ Out of thy own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant; for if thou tookest me to be such an austere man as thou represent-

est,

est me, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow; Why didst not thou then give my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have received mine own with ufury? that is, with improvement.

When he had thus convicted him, he said to them that stood by, "Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds." This startled them, and they made bold to put him in mind that he had ten pounds already. But their Lord confirmed his decree with this reason; "For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath (something of his own, which he hath gained by the improvement of the stock committed to him) shall be given; but from him that hath not (that has made no profitable use, no improvement of the stock given him to trade with) even that which he hath (the original stock, the gift itself) shall be taken away."

Then having settled accoupts with those that at least owned him to be their Lord, he at last remembers them who had sent him that provoking message, ver. 14. and with these he had another sort of reckoning to make. "But as for those mine enemies, said he, who would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me."

By this parable, so fitly adapted to the present occasion, he both rectified the mistake of his disciples concerning the nature of his kingdom, corrected their unreasonable desire and expectation of it, and informed them what was needful on their parts to be done, if they would be partakers of it when it came. To the performance whereof he encouraged them, by the rewards proposed to the faithful and diligent, proportioned to the improvement they made of the divine gift committed to them, for the gaining of souls to him, and by the punishment inflicted on the slothful and slanderous servant, who not only made no improvement at all, nor attempted it, but falsely laid the blame of his own fault upon his Lord. And in the close of the parable, he plainly set before those Jews, who both

hardened

hardened themselves against his most gentle and kind invitations, and with the utmost contempt refused to come under his most just and mild government, what at the last their doom and punishment would be.

When Jesus had spoken this parable (which related to both his disciples and the multitude) he left Jericho^u. And as, at his entering into it, he found a blind man, whom he restored to sight; so now, at his going out of it, he found two blind men (so Matthew delivers, though Mark mentions but one, and calls him Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, which the word [Bar-Timeus] imports, and who probably was some more noted beggar than the other) sitting by the way-side.

These, when they understood that Jesus of Nazareth passed by, cried out, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on us." And when the people would have made them hold their tongues; they, not willing to lose such an opportunity, cried the louder, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David."

Their voice reached our Lord's ear, which was always open and attentive to the needy suppliants, and caused him to stand still, and command that they should be called to him. Whereupon the people, who before had chidden them for calling after him, now as willingly called them, saying, "Be of good comfort, arise, he calleth you."

This bespeaks an expectation, even in the multitude, that these blind beggars should receive some benefit from Jesus, more than a bare or common alms; and the blind men hearing it, presently got up, and came to Jesus; Bartimeus, either for haste or joy, casting away his garments.

When therefore Jesus had asked these (as he had done the other before) what they desired he should do unto (or for) them, and they had answered (as the other did) "Lord, that our eyes may be opened, that we may receive our sight;" he, having compassion on them, touched their eyes, and said (to each of them)

^u Mat. xx. 30. Mark x. 46.

“Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole:” whereupon they immediately received their sight, and followed him in the way.

Drawing nigh now to Bethany, he said to his disciples*, “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth (so, in scripture, is death often expressed) but I go, added he, that I may awake him out of sleep.”

His disciples, thinking he had spoken of taking rest in sleep, and understanding that to be a good symptom of health, said, “Lord, if he sleep, he will do well; so that Jesus was fain to tell them plainly, he was dead;” which was what he intended, when he said he sleepeth.

“But, added he, I am glad, for your sakes; that I was not there, to the intent that ye may believe that I am the Messiah; nevertheless, let us go unto him. And said Thomas, who is called Didymus (which signifies *a twin*) let us also go, that we may die with him.”

Bethany being near to Jerusalem, many of the Jews came from thence to visit the two sisters, and to comfort them concerning their brother; and while Mary entertained these in the house, Martha (who applied herself to the general care of the family business) had the opportunity of getting the first notice that Jesus was coming. For when he was come near the town, understanding that Lazarus had lain in the grave four days already, he made a stop there for a while, before he entered the town.

As soon therefore as Martha had heard where he was, she went and met him; and at the first greeting brake forth and said, “Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.” Yet, that she might not lose the benefit of his being now come, she added, “But I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.” Which shews she had not yet attained to a due sense of his divinity, and that the confidence she had expressed, that her brother had not died, if he had come before he died, was ground-

* John xi. 11. 20.

ed only on a persuasion, that he would have asked his life of God, and that God would have given it him, as he had done in like cases to some eminent prophets in former times.

Jesus, over-looking her shortness in this respect, told her positively, "Thy brother shall rise again^x." She not yet reaching the height of his intention, readily answered, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." But Jesus desirous to raise her up o a right pitch of faith, using a metonymy of the effect for the cause, told her plainly, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this? said he to her. Yea, Lord, replied she (a little more awakened than before) I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which was promised should come into the world."

When the discourse had ran thus far between them, he, as it is probable, asking for her sister, she went her way, and calling her sister privately aside, that their Jewish guests might not over-hear her, told her the Master (for so in that family he was wont to be called) was come, and asked for her. Which Mary no sooner heard, but she arose quickly, and came unto him, finding him without the town, in the place where Martha had met him.

The Jews mean while (who had been sitting with her to comfort her) when they saw Mary rise up so hastily, and go out, followed her, supposing she was gone to the grave to weep there.

But Mary, as soon as she was come to Jesus, falling down at his feet, and weeping, said (as her sister had done) unto him, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

When therefore Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping who came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled in himself, and asked, "Where

^x John xi. 23. 28. 32, 33.

have ye laid him? They said, Lord, come and see." So deeply was Jesus affected, that he not only groaned, but wept. Which these Jews observing, "Behold, said they, how he loved him! But could not this man, said others of them, who opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?"

Now when Jesus, who again groaned in himself, was come to the grave^y (which was a cave, having a stone laid on it) he bid them take the stone away. But Martha, too soon forgetting what her Lord had so lately said to her, and fearing lest some unwholesome smell should offend him, said to him, "Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he hath been buried four days.

These words proceeding from want, or weakness, of faith, Jesus put her by with this gentle reproof: "Martha, said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" that is, his glorious power, effectually working for the raising up of her dead brother to life again. Which very words, not being found in that discourse which he had with her before, may lead us to suppose that he spake more to her than is expressed in the text; or that what he now said was virtually included in what he then spake.

The grave-stone being now removed, Jesus (who before, though not verbally, yet vocally, with deep fetched groans, had prayed to his Father) now, lifting up his eyes, returns him publick thanks, saying, "Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me." Then added, "and indeed I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe (may have the more reasonable ground to believe) that thou hast sent me."

When he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, Come forth. And at that life-giving voice, he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face bound about with a napkin. Whereupon Jesus said to them that were present, Loose

^y John xi. 39. 41. 43.

him, and let him go; who by that act might be more assured themselves of the certainty of the miracle, and more able and ready to attest the truth of it.

This so great and conspicuous miracle had its due effect upon many of those Jews, who came to visit and comfort the two sisters; who, having seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But such is the diversity of men's minds, that some of the same company went their ways to the pharisees (who they knew were enemies to Jesus) and informed them what things he had done.

At this they were so moved with envy, that both the chief priests and the pharisees gathered together in council, that they might consider what course to take with him, to stop his growing fame^z.

Being thus assembled, some one amongst them breaking forth abruptly, as is usual under disturbance of mind, said to the rest, "What do we? For this man doth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him (and perhaps set him up for king) and then shall the Romans come, and take away both our place and nation (our city, and ourselves, demolishing the city Jerusalem, and destroying or transplanting the people, which was the very thing that afterwards befell them).

When this man had briefly opened the danger, another of them (whose name was Caiaphas, and who was high-priest that same year) in contempt of their dull and slow counsels, said unto them, "Ye know nothing at all (ye sit as if ye had no sense of the matter) nor consider, that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not."

"This (saith the evangelist) he spake not of himself, but being high-priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation." Not that his title of high-priest did intitle him to prophecy, or that the gift of prophecy was usually, or of course, annexed to

^z John xi. 47.

that office; but it being the will of God that this great mystery should be published amongst them, it pleased him to give it forth through the high-priest's mouth, as being likely to have more influence upon the rest of the council, coming from him, than if it had come from a private person, or one in a lower station among them.

As for Caiaphas (high-priest though he was) he spake he knew not what, God making use of his tongue to foretell what never reached his polluted heart. But the evangelist hath extended his words farther than to the Jewish nation only; making him to prophesy that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad, viz. the Gentiles, those other sheep, which himself had said he had, that were not of the Jewish fold, John x. 16.

What Caiaphas had said unto them made such impression on the rest of the council, that from that day forward they laid their heads together, to contrive how they should take him, and put him to death.

Wherefore Jesus, knowing their designs against him, walked no more openly among the Jews, but went thence into a country near unto the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim (or Ephrem) and continued there with his disciples.

But the Jews passover being nigh at hand, many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, that they might purify themselves (if they were under any legal pollution, or perform some vow that they had made, or on any other like occasion); and these sought for Jesus (in hopes, perhaps, to see some miracle wrought by him). Wherefore discoursing together about him, as they stood in the temple (where he used to be, and where they looked for him), they inquired one of another^a, "What think ye? That he will not come to the feast?"

^a John xi. 55.

The chief priests and pharisees, on the other hand, hunted after him on another account, that they might seize on him, in order to put him to death; and to that end they had given a commandment^b, that if any man knew where he was, he should make it known, that they might take him.

While thus on all hands they were big with desire and expectation of him^c, he advances towards them, and six days before the passover began, came (within less than two miles of them) to Bethany, the town where Lazarus lived, who had been dead, and whom he had raised from the dead.

Here a supper was provided for him, in the house of one Simon, surnamed the leper, because he had formerly had the leprosy, (of which it is supposed he was cured by Jesus) who is held to have been of the sect of the pharisees, but a favourer of our Saviour's doctrine, and somewhat of kin to Lazarus.

At this supper Martha served, or waited at table (an employment not unfuitable to her inclination, Luke x. 40. And besides, if Grotius be in the right, women did not use to sit down at such feasts) but Lazarus was one of them who sat at table with him.

As for Mary, the other sister, she was better employed; for she taking a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, anointed therewith the feet of Jesus.

Matthew names not the woman, but says, "There came unto him a woman, having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head (not on his feet) as he sat at meat." Mark, who for the most part transcribes Matthew, delivers it in the same manner, save that he says, she broke the box, and then poured the ointment on his head, without mentioning of his feet. But (if it be one and the same story which Matthew, Mark, and John deliver, which interpreters are not agreed upon) it is not unlikely but that some of the ointment, which was poured on his head, might

^b John xi. 57. ^c Mat. xxvi. 6. Mark xiv. 3. John xii. 1.

flow, and fall down upon his feet; which was the fittest place for the woman to use her hair instead of a towel.

However it was as to that, the house, John says, was filled with the odour of the ointment.

This good act of the woman was ill resented, it seems, by some of the men. Matthew says, when the disciples saw it, they had indignation; which intitling them *all* to it, had need to be read with a synecdoche.

Mark more warily says, there were *some* that had indignation within themselves. But John, in my opinion, lays the saddle on the right horse, when he appropriates this grudging humour to Judas. For he says, one of the disciples, Judas Iscariot (Simon's son, which should betray him) said, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" And the evangelist adds, "This he (Judas) said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and the keeping of what was put therein." And it may well be thought that he, who but a few days after could find in his heart to sell his Master for thirty pence, would be apt to murmur to see the worth of three hundred pence thrown away (as he accounted it) and so go beside his bag.

Whether Judas only was guilty of this fault, or some others also were, by his example or persuasion, drawn into the like error (though not from the like ground, nor with the like intention) to repine at the liberality of this pious woman, and account it but wasted and lost, which she had so devoutly bestowed upon her Master and theirs; yet our Lord (who well knew the integrity of her mind, and the fervent affection of her heart to him) took kindly what she had done, and rebuked him or them that maligned her for it.

"Why trouble ye the woman, said he^d? Let her alone; she hath wrought a good work upon me; she hath done what she could; against the day of my burying hath she kept this; and now she is come beforehand to anoint my body to the burying, for in that

^d Mat. xxvi. 10. John xii. 7.

she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial." Alluding therein to the common usage of those times to anoint or embalm the dead.

Then with respect to the pretended care they expressed for the poor, he told them, "They had the poor always with them, and might have opportunity enough to do them good whensoever they would; but they were not like to have him with them always, nor long."

But of this he assured them, with a Verily I say unto you, "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, there shall this also, which this woman hath done, how much soever any of you dislike it, be spoken of for an honourable memorial of her."

Bethany being so near Jerusalem, it was known there that Jesus was at Bethany, and that drew much people of the Jews thither^e, who came not for Jesus's sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

But this flocking of the people after Lazarus did so incense the high-priests (and their adherents) that they consulted how and upon what pretence to put Lazarus also to death, because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

The entertainment which Simon had given Jesus being on the sabbath-day at night, next morning, being the first day of the week, he set out from Bethany for Jerusalem, his disciples and a multitude of people attending him.

And when they were between Bethany and Bethphage, at the foot of the mount of Olives^f, Jesus sending forth two of his disciples, said unto them, "Go your way into the village over-against you, and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her (so Matthew: Mark and Luke mention only a colt); loose them, said he, and bring them

^e John xii. 9, 10. xix. 29. John xii, 12.

^f Mat. xxi. 1.

Mark xi. 1.

Luke

unto me. And if any man, added he, ask you why ye do so? Tell him the Lord hath need of them, and straitway he will send them hither.”

All this, says Matthew, was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, “Tell the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy king cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting on an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.”

From whence, or out of what prophet, Matthew took this, is not expressed; but generally referred by interpreters to the prophet Zechariah, chap. ix. 9. where the sense of what the evangelist here gives may be found, rather than the very words.

The disciples went, and found the colt (or ass and colt) tied by a door abroad, in a place where two ways met, and they loosed him. Which some of them that stood there seeing, said unto them, “Why do ye loose the colt? To whom they answering, The Lord hath need of him; they thereupon let him go.”

So they brought the ass and the colt to Jesus, and when they had put their garments upon them, they set him up thereon.

Now when Jesus set forward again, they that went with him (which, besides his disciples, were a very great multitude) spread their garments in the way as he went; and others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way; and besides all these, much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusale^m, took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him.

The carrying branches of palm, or laurel, on such pompous occasions as this, Causabon tells us was the usual manner of the Eastern people; and from the carrying of palms at this time, hath this day gotten the name of *Dominica Palmarum*, or Palm-Sunday, with some.

When now he was come even to the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of his disciples (not yet letting go their expectation of an outward kingdom for their Master, and themselves under him; but

but rather being heightened in their hope thereof, from this pompous progress to the royal city) began (more eminently) to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen; saying, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven (or peace be to him and his kingdom from heaven) and glory in the highest."

This stung some of the pharisees (who usually thrust themselves into the croud, that they might the more readily watch and insnare him), and they from hence took occasion to bid him rebuke his disciples for speaking so highly of him. But instead of doing so, he told these cavillers, that if these (his disciples) should hold their peace, the stones (the unconverted) would immediately cry out to supply their defect.

By this time being come near unto the city, he both wept over it, and brake forth into this compassionate lamentation for it; "If thou hadst known (or, O that thou hadst known, that is, regarded) even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side; and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou regardest not the time of thy visitation."

By this time they who accompanied him before, and they who came out of Jerusalem to meet him, falling into one body together, sent forth their joint and joyful acclamations; crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David (save, I beseech thee, the Son of David): blessed is the king of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest" (save, I beseech thee, thou that dwellest in the highest heavens)!

With this triumphant and pompous shew they entered the city, which put the citizens into no small amazement, and made them ask, "Who is this?" To whom some from among the multitude answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet of Galilee." And those people
who

who had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the grave, and raised him from the dead, did bear record also that it was he.

Not a little pleased may we suppose the disciples to be, finding so great a readiness in the people to advance what they themselves so much desired, an outward kingdom for their Master; for as yet they understood not these things. But afterwards, when Jesus was first crucified, and then glorified, they remembered that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

But not more pleased were they to see this honour done to their Master, than the pharisees were displeased, and inwardly vexed, to find the people so taken with him; which made them vent their discontent one to another privately among themselves, saying, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold the world is gone after him."

We do not find that Jesus made any stop after he was entered Jerusalem, until he came to the temple. He went not to the palace, but to the temple, to shew his kingdom (whatever his followers thought) was not temporal, but spiritual; his business there not matter of state, but religion; which we may well think was some disappointment to his disciples, as well as to the applauding people.

At this time he only went into the temple^s, and looked round about upon the things that were there, probably that he might take notice wherein the abuses lay, and what was to be reformed. Then having made his observations, and the evening-tide being by this time come, not willing to lodge in Jerusalem, he went out with the twelve unto Bethany; having sufficiently raised the expectation of the people by his so solemn entry.

Next morning, as he returned into the city, he was hungry. And seeing a fig-tree at some distance on the way, he came to it, to see if haply he might find

^s Mark xi. 11. 13.

any thing thereon; but when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves ^h. The reason of which Mark thus gives, “for the time of figs was not yet.” But may it be thought that Jesus did not know the time for figs? Or that knowing it, he would look for figs before the due time? Or that he would curse the tree for not bearing fruit before its time? Dr. Hammond would help the matter, by saying it was not a good fig-year. Dr. Lightfoot supposes this was not a common fig-tree, but an extraordinary one; of that sort which, he says, bears every year, but is three years in ripening. But if this tree was an emblem of unfruitful and unprofitable servants, how can it be supposed that it was unseasonable for ripe fruit to have been upon it, when Christ went to it for fruit to satisfy his hunger?

However, it is plain from both the evangelists, that this disappointment drew from Jesus that blasting word, “Let no fruit grow on thee (or let no man eat fruit off thee) henceforward for ever.” Whereupon the fig-tree presently withered.

But he with his disciples passed on into the city, and being come to the temple, he entered into it (that is, into the court thereof) and fell to work, to reform those abuses which he had observed there the day before. For he cast out all them that sold and bought in the (court of the) temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changersⁱ, and the seats of them that sold doves.

The pretence for making this place a market, was for the accommodation of them that came to offer sacrifices there; especially now at this great and solemn feast of the approaching passover. At which time not only sheep and oxen (by some, and on some occasions) but turtles or doves, and pigeons (by others, and on other occasions) were, by the law, required to be offered; and none was to appear before the Lord empty, but every one was to offer something. And because the offerers (at these solemn festivals especially) being

^h Mat. xxi. 12. 19.

ⁱ Mark xi. 15.

to come from all parts of the nation, could not bring their offerings with them, but must furnish themselves for their money when they came here, they thought on both hands, both buyer and feller, that this was the fittest place for them to drive their bargains in. And through the corruption of the times, the priests (who themselves not only were corrupted, but corrupters of others) were willing, for a corrupt interest (that they might get something to themselves thereby) to wink, at least, at this prophanation of the temple. For it is not to be doubted (says Grotius on the place in Matthew) but the priests made their bargain also to have some part of the gain, for the use they suffered them to make of the temple. But Scultetus is more positive. For having shewed that the Levites hunted after gain, by the exchanging of the money that was to be paid for buying sacrifices, which were sold in great numbers near the temple; he adds, yea, the priests so artificially managed the matter, that they often sold one victim to many persons before it was offered in sacrifice. And he shews how they did it, "There comes, saith he, one to offer sacrifice; to whom they put off a sheep, and take money of him for it, promising that they will offer it for him. By and by comes another, and he buys the same sheep of them." This he confirms by a relation out of Hierom, which, for the length of it, I forbear to transcribe hither; but the reader may find it in Scultetus's *Exercitat. Evangel.* l. 2. cap. 84.

As for the money-changers, whose tables were now thrown down, they were thought useful, not only in the common way of trading there used, but more especially for the changing of shekels into half shekels. For the law requiring every man, rich and poor, from 20 years old and upwards, to offer an half shekel to the Lord, *Exod. xxx.* these money-changers sat always ready to furnish every one with an half shekel that wanted, having some small allowance for the exchange.

When thus our Lord had purged the temple from these corruptions, and that with such authority, that he

he would not suffer that any man should so much as carry a vessel through the temple (unless it was appointed for the temple use) he thus reprov'd them who had thus polluted the temple. It is written, Isa. lvi. 7. "My house shall be called an house of prayer for all people^k, but ye have made it a den of thieves." So he called those (whether priests or people) who by driving this unlawful trade there, exacted gain one upon another; and by prophaning the holy temple, robbed God at once of both his right and his honour.

These words so galled the chief priests and the scribes, that they, together with the chief of the people, sought to destroy him, but could not find which way to do it; for as they hated him, so also they feared him, because all the people were very attentive to hear him, and were astonished at his doctrine.

For he taught daily in the temple, and that drew the blind and the lame to him thither; and there he healed them. Nor was that all that troubled him; but the very children also crying in the temple, said, "Hosanna to the Son of David."

The sight of the wonderful things he did, and the hearing what those children said, did so sorely displease the chief priests and scribes, that not knowing how otherwise to vent their anger, they upbraided him with the children's acclamations, saying, "Hearest thou what these say?"

Yes, replied he, I do; but have ye not read^l, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise." Which they might have read in Psal. viii. 2. with this only variation, that instead of [perfected praise] here, it is [ordained strength] there.

At the dedication of the first temple by king Solomon, provision seems to have been made for strangers (that were not of Israel, but came out of far countries) to come and pray towards that house, 1 Kings viii. 41. &c. which that devout Gentiles afterwards did, we

^k Mat. xxi. 13. Mark xi. 17. Luke xix. 46. ^l Mat. xxi. 16. Luke xix. 40.

have an instance (among others) in queen Candace's eunuch, who came out of Ethiopia to Jerufalem, to worship, Acts viii. 27.

Accordingly the evangelist John tells us^m, there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast.

It hath been doubted whether these Greeks (or Hellenists) were Jews by birth, but living in Greece, out of Judea, or profelytes to the Jews. The old bible note says, They were of the race of the Jews, and came out of Asia and Grecia; for else, the Jews would not have permitted that they should worship with them in the temple. But that they were permitted to worship with the Jews in the temple, or that they came with that intent or expectation, doth not appear. They might come to worship, and might be permitted to worship, though not in the temple, but in the outward court of the temple; into which all agree the lowest rank of profelytes might come and worship.

Dr. Hammond supposes these Greeks to be profelytes of the gate, who, though they were not permitted among the Jews to celebrate the feast with them, yet might both behold their solemnities, and also worship, at that time of public worship, in *Atrio Gentilium*, in the court of the Gentiles.

The profelyte of the gate, Godwyn tells us, was not circumcised, neither did he conform himself to Mosai-cal rites and ordinances; only he was tied to the obedience of those commandments, which among the Hebrew doctors go under the name of Noah's seven precepts. See Godwyn's Moses and Aaron, l. 1. c. 3. Of this sort of profelytes are they supposed to have been, who in Acts ii. 5. are called devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

These Greeks (whatever else they were) having heard, no doubt, of the fame of Jesus, from the many miracles he had wrought (especially this late and wonderful miracle, of raising Lazarus from the dead) had

^m John xii. 20.

it seems a great desire to see Jesus (that is, to have some conference, or conversation with him; for barely see him they might without asking).

In order therefore thereunto, they address themselves to Philip (who being of Bethsaida of Galilee, they might perhaps have some knowledge of) desiring him to introduce them to Jesus. He, not willing to undertake the matter of himself, consults Andrew about it. They both not knowing how safe it might be, or how taken by their Master, if they should bring strangers to him, without his consent or knowledge, went together to him, and acquainted him with the business.

Whether they were admitted or not, the text doth not express; but it is reasonable to think they were. For he, who was not wont to refuse any, would not be likely to deny admittance to these; and besides, the matter of the discourse he then entered upon, seems particularly adapted to such auditors as these.

For since not his disciples only, but all others who favoured his doctrine, or any way wished well unto him, both pleased and deceived themselves with a vain hope of his taking upon him an earthly kingdom; which not improbably the authority he had exercised the day before, in turning the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and over-turning the tables and seats of the money-changers and dove-sellers, might have somewhat heightened; he now entertains them with a discourse of his approaching sufferings, which was very remote from his being a king.

He begins with telling them ⁿ, “The hour is come (or coming, and that so near at hand as if it were just come) that the Son of Man must be glorified;” yet not in the manner they expected; but through sufferings and death, as his following words intimate. For, by a most significant metaphor, taken from grain, he shews both that it was needful he should die, and that his death will be a means of bringing many to life.

ⁿ John xii. 23.

This he brings in with a “ Verily, verily, I say unto you°, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone (it remains a corn of wheat only, and no more, not bringing forth any fruit, any more corns). But if it die (if it cease to be a corn, and, by the warmth and virtue of the ground into which it fell, become a root) it bringeth forth much fruit” (a great increase, many stalks, many ears upon those stalks, and many corns in each ear).

Then, that he might encourage his disciples, and the rest that heard him, not to shrink for fear of sufferings, he tells them, “ He that loves his life (more than he loves Christ, and therefore will either not take up the profession of his gospel, or having taken it up, will let it fall again, lest he should hazard his life by it) he shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world (that is, regardeth it not, in comparifon of his testimony to Christ) he shall keep it unto life eternal;” so that none need be faint-hearted, nor backward in following him.

Next he takes them upon their own hypothesis and desire of his being a king, and they his subjects or servants. For, says he, “ If any man (pretend to) serve me, let him follow me (and that through all ways and weathers, foul as well as fair, rough and hard, as well as smooth and soft) and where I am, there shall my servant also be.” But then again, for their encouragement, he adds, “ If any man serve me (thus faithfully, heartily, constantly) him will my Father honour.”

While thus he discoursed of his sufferings and death, a sense of the agony he was shortly to undergo gave him a sudden and sharp pinch, to which his nature, as man, was subject (being in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin, that he might the more compassionately bear with the ignorant, and them that are out of the way, for that he himself also was compassed with infirmity, Heb. iv. 15, and v. 2.)

° John xii. 24, 25, 26.

This caused him to break forth somewhat abruptly, and say^p, “ Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, Save me from this hour.” Yet, as recalling himself, presently adds, “ But for this cause (to undergo this death) came I unto this hour; therefore I will rather choose to say, Father, glorify thy name.”

So acceptable to the Father was this submission and resignation of the Son, that it was immediately answered by a voice from heaven, which said, “ I both have glorified it, and will glorify it again.”

This heavenly voice startled the standers-by, who heard it, and begat in them different apprehensions concerning it. Some saying that it thundered; others that an angel spake to him. For it was the opinion, says Grotius, of many among the Hebrews, that God spake not but by the ministry of angels; therefore, says he, The ten commandments, which God is said to have spoken, are ascribed to angels, Acts vii. 38. Heb. ii. 2.

Jesus not heeding their notions, how or by what means the voice came, tells them that which concerned them more, that this voice came not because of him, but for their sakes (viz. that they might believe in him, and so escape the judgment of this world; for he adds) “ Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of the world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men (men of all sorts, Gentiles as well as Jews) unto me.”

This phrase [of being lifted up from the earth] he used to signify what death he should die; namely, by being lifted up from the earth upon the cross.

But this was so uncouth to the people, who by no means liked to hear of his death, that they told him, “ We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever; how then is it, that thou sayest the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is the Son of Man, said they.?”

^p John xii. 27, 31. 34.

He not taking notice of their question to answer it, went on with the discourse he was upon before, to shew them how they might escape the judgment of the world; "Yet a little while, said he, is the light with you; walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for (as he that walketh in the light sees his way; so) he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While therefore ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light" (which none ever are like to be, who believe not in it; much less they who blaspheme and oppose it).

Our Saviour now observing that the backwardness of these people to believe on him proceeded much from their not knowing him to be indeed the Messiah, the Son of God, sent to redeem and save lost man; with greater earnestness cried out, "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me (only) but on him (my Father) that sent me^s; and he that seeth me (with the eye of true faith) seeth him that sent me."

"For I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me might not abide in darkness. And (though I have brought so much light into the world, that none can justly plead ignorance; yet) if any man shall hear my words, and believe not, I judge (or condemn) him not; for I came not (now in this appearance, or manifestation, as mediator between God and man) to judge the world, but to save the world."

"And yet he that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, even the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father who sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment (duly obeyed) is (the cause of, or gives) life everlasting. Whatsoever therefore I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak." And having thus spoken, Jesus departed, and withdrew himself from them.

^s John xii. 44. 47, 48.

The evangelist now adds his own observation^r, that though Jesus had wrought so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him. Whereby the saying of Esaias the prophet, chap. liii. 1. is fulfilled, viz. “ Lord, Who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm (the gospel, the power) of the Lord been revealed?” The reason of which so great incredulity, he infers from another place in the same prophet, chap. vi. 9, 10. which he so recites, as rather to give the sense, than the words, of the prophet, imputing their blindness and hardness of heart to a divine judgment upon them, for their wilful and obstinate rejecting the gospel, and refusing to believe the report given thereof. Which things, says John, Esaias said, when he saw his glory, and spake of him. Which in that sixth chapter, from ver. 1 to 5, is most elegantly set forth.

But though the evangelist had taxed those people in the general, to whom our Lord had preached this excellent sermon, with unbelief; yet that he might do right to all, he acknowledges, with a nevertheless, that even among the chief rulers, many (considering of what rank they were) did believe on him; that is (as Grotius words it) with a contemplative, not active faith; a consenting in themselves to the truth of his doctrines; not a professing those doctrines openly, and themselves to be his disciples. Which the following words evince, viz. “ But because of the pharisees, they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue” (by virtue of the decree, or agreement, made among the Jews not long before, John ix. 22.) Which sort of excommunication (or exclusion from the synagogue) extending (as interpreters and critics deliver) to a seclusion and separation from all society and commerce, both religious and civil, among the Jews, was (besides what other inconveniences attended it) accounted a matter of the highest disgrace. And that kept these fearful believers in the greater awe, because

^r John xii. 37, 42.

they stood upon their reputation; "they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."

When Jesus withdrew himself from the company, it is probable he went to Bethany (to which place, for privacy, he used to retire, and) where he had lodged the night before.

From whence setting forth for Jerusalem again in the morning, his disciples (that is, the twelve who always attended him, which was one end of their being chosen, Mark iii. 14. and John xii. 26.) when they came to the place where the fig-tree stood, which their Lord had cursed the day before, observed that it was dried up from the roots, at which they could not but marvel; saying, "How soon is the fig-tree withered away!" And Peter (forwarder than the rest) calling to remembrance what their Lord had said to it, made bold to put him in mind of it, saying, "Master, Behold the fig-tree, which thou cursedst, is withered away."

He seemed to take no farther notice of it, than from thence to confirm the faith of his disciples, saying unto them, "Have faith in God (in his omnipotency); for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this, which ye see is done to the fig-tree, but also, if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done. And indeed, all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. Wherefore when ye pray, Believe that ye shall receive the things ye pray for, and ye shall receive them."

But then two conditions are to be observed; first, that ye pray for things lawful and convenient (else it is a mercy not to receive, Jam. iv. 3.) Secondly, That when ye go to prayer, if ye have aught against any, ye forgive it; that your Father also, who is in heaven, may forgive you your trespasses; "for if ye do not forgive, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses; and then what ground can ye have to expect that he will give you the things ye ask of him?"

! Mark xiv. 21. Mat. xxi. 20.

Having gathered this fruit for his disciples from the withered tree, though he could get none for himself from it when it was green, he went on for Jerusalem, and into the temple; and the people, being forward to hear him, came early in the morning also to him in the temple.

As he was teaching there †, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him, and examined him by what authority he did these things (which he had done there the day before) and who gave him that authority?

He seeing it to be a cavilling question, quickly choaked them with another, which he thus introduced. “I also will ask you one question, which if ye answer me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven, or of men?”

This was a knotty question to them; such a dilemma, as they soon saw would catch them, turn their answer which way they would. They reasoned together about it among themselves, and brought it to this result. “If we shall say from heaven, he will ask us, Why then did ye not believe him? (and the testimony he bare to me, as the Lamb of God, John i. 29, and 36); but if on the other hand we say, It was of men, we fear the people, that they will stone us; for all men hold John was a prophet.”

They thought it safest therefore to return *ignoramus* to this question, and tell him plainly, “We cannot tell.” That he expected; and readily replied, “Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.”

But what think ye? added he (intending to puzzle them farther with some parables, whereof the first began thus:)

“A certain man, having two sons, came to the first, or eldest, and said †, Son, Go work to-day in my vineyard. He, without compliment or excuse, gave him a

† Mat. xxi. 23. Mark xi. 27. Luke xx. 1. ‡ Mat. xxi. 28.

flat denial, saying in plain terms, I will not; yet afterwards he repented of his undutifulness, and went."

"The father then coming to the second, or younger son, bid him go, as he had done his brother. He, seeming very complaisant, answered, I go, sir, but went not."

"Now which of these two, said Jesus to them, did the will of his father? They answer, and that truly, the first. Jesus replied upon them, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots (the most despised by you) go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness (which ye pretend so highly to) and yet, for all your fine words and fair pretences, ye believed him not, though the publicans and harlots believed him. Nay, so hardened were ye, that when ye had seen that the publicans and harlots did believe, yet ye repented not, that ye might believe him also."

In this parable, by the man that had two sons, is represented God; by the two sons, the Gentiles and the Jews; the Gentile, by the first, or eldest, as springing from Noah; by the second, the Jew, as descending from Abraham. And the chief priests and elders, in acknowledging the eldest son (the rough Gentile, who after he had refused, repented and did as the father had bid him) to have answered his father's will; which the smooth-tongued younger, the Jew (who promised fair, but performed nothing) did not, were unwarily drawn to condemn themselves, and justify the Gentiles, the object of their utmost contempt and scorn.

Having pinched them with this, he bespeaks their attention to another parable, which he gave them after this manner:

"There was a certain man, an householder^w, who planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a place for a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a

^w Mat. xxi. 33. Mark xii. 1. Luke xx. 9.

far country for a long time. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that he might receive the fruits of his vineyard; but the husbandmen caught the servant, and beat him, and sent him away empty. The owner sent another servant to them, and at him they cast stones; and having wounded him in the head, sent him away shamefully handled. Then he sent another servant, and him they killed outright. And thus his servants, as fast as he sent them, were shamefully intreated; some beaten, and some killed."

The master of the vineyard, seeing his servants could do no good upon these stubborn and unruly husbandmen; having one son, his well-beloved, resolved at last to send him, saying, "They will reverence my son sure!" Or as Luke, relating the same parable, has it, "It may be they will reverence him, when they see him (wherein what they should do is rather intended, than strictly what they would do).

But truly, when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoning among (or within) themselves, said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. So they took him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When therefore the Lord of the vineyard shall come, what (said Jesus to the priests and elders) will he do unto them? They answered, he will certainly destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their season."

Here again our Lord, by an apt and very significant parable, had drawn these blind chief priests and elders to pass sentence upon themselves, who (with the rest of the obdurate Jews before and then) were indeed those wicked husbandmen, who had not only not rendered any fruits of the vineyard to God (the great householder, who hath both heaven and earth in his family) but had beaten, stoned, killed, and evilly intreated his servants the prophets, whom from time to time he had sent unto them, to call upon them for fruits of righteousness, and who had now resolved to put to death their Lord's
only

only Son, the Son of his love, whom he had sent unto them, to bring them to a better mind, and thereby save them from death and endless torments.

These priests and elders having thus unwarily (but justly) given judgment against themselves, Jesus asked them*, “Did ye never read in the scriptures, Psalm cxviii. 22, 23. that the stone, which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner; which is the Lord’s doing, and is marvellous in our eyes?” And, adds he, “Whosoever shall (stumble and) fall on this stone (as ye have done on me) shall be broken; but whomsoever it shall fall upon (as it will certainly fall upon you, if you go on to despise, reject, and spurn at it) it will grind him to powder. Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation that will bring forth the fruits thereof.”

Though Matthew makes the priests and elders to give the answer to our Lord’s question, What should be done to those wicked husbandmen; yet both Mark and Luke relate the matter so, as if he had both asked the question, and answered it himself. And therefore when (according to them) Jesus had said, “The Lord of the vineyard shall destroy those husbandmen, and give the vineyard to others,” Luke says, “When they (the priests, &c.) heard it, they said, God forbid.” For by this time (dull though they were) they perceived he had spoken this parable against them. And that did so enrage them, that they would have laid hands on him presently, but that they durst not, for fear of the multitude; for the people generally took him for a prophet at least.

He, taking the advantage of their fear, bestows another parable on them (or on others that came in their room, if they went away, as Mark says they did) and it was to this effect:

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, who made a marriage for his son[†], and sent forth his

* Mat. xxi. 42. Mark xii. 10. Luke xx. 17. † Mat. xxii. 1.
servants,

servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding, and they would not come. He, favourably bearing that neglect, sent forth other servants, bidding them tell them who were invited, "Behold I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings (the substantial dishes and the dainties) are killed, and all things are ready; therefore come away unto the marriage. But they made light of it; and instead of coming, went their ways, every one as his mind led him; one to his farm, another to his merchandize (some after pleasures, some after profits) and the remnant took his servants, whom he had sent to invite them, and intreated them spitefully, and slew some of them. Which when the king heard of, he being wroth, sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt down their city."

That done, he said to his servants, "The wedding (or the provision for the wedding) is ready, but they that were bidden (if they would come now) are not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find invite to the marriage."

"Those servants thereupon going into the highways, gathered together all, as many as they found, good and bad; and the wedding was furnished with guests."

"But when the king came in to see them, he saw there a man who had not on a wedding-garment; whereupon he asked him, Friend, How camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding-garment? And the man was speechless" (had nothing to say for himself).

"Then said the king unto his servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; for many are called, but few are chosen."

This parable wounded them no less than the former; the scope of it being to shew, that God, the great King of kings, had by his servants (John Baptist, the twelve apostles, and seventy disciples) called the Jews once and again to partake of the benefits and blessings of the gospel (represented by a marriage-feast); but that they

they had slighted the invitation, preferred their pleasures and gainful employments before it, and thereby rendered themselves unworthy of it. Nay, some of them had been so ungrateful and wicked, as to do despite to the servants, who were sent on that kind errand to them, and even to slay some of them. Which barbarous ingratitude so provoked the king, that in high displeasure he sent forth his armies, and destroyed both them and their city. Which, though delivered by way of parable, contains a plain prediction of what, about forty years after, was actually done by the Roman armies under Vespasian and Titus, Roman emperors. And so far the parable did directly concern them.

The latter part of it shews, that upon the Jews rejecting the offer made to them, the servants were sent to call in the Gentiles (a loose, ungathered people, who were straggling about in the highways). "It was necessary, said Paul and Barnabas, to the blaspheming Jews at Antioch, Acts xiii. 46. that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us," &c.

The invitation to these being general, they came in, in great numbers, of all sorts, ranks, conditions and qualifications, worse and better.

By the king's coming to see his guests, and picking out the man that had not on a wedding-garment, we are taught that there is a divine eye which watcheth over all, and searches and sees what man cannot see. And that it is not enough to come at the call, and to sit down among God's people, as one of them, unless we have the due qualifications of God's people, couched under the emblem of a wedding-garment.

Which wedding-garment hath been by divers diversly defined. Ambrose (as cited by Cradock in his Harmony, page 146.) calls it faith and charity. Gerard (cited *ubi supra*) says, The wedding-garment is true faith in Christ, which puts forth itself by love, and the exercise

exercise of good works. Piscator (*ibid*) says, The wedding-garment is true holiness, which is twofold; one, the holiness of the sacrifice of Christ imputed by faith; the other, the holiness which is wrought in the soul by sanctification of the Holy Spirit, which shews itself by an holy life. But that this is couched under the term of a wedding-garment, is because the invitation in the parable is to a wedding-feast; and, according to the usage of those times and countries, every one that came to such a feast, was obliged to put on a singular or peculiar garment suitable to that solemnity.

Lastly, and which is not of the least concern for all to take good notice of, the want of this wedding-garment cause this man to be not only turned out of the company, but to be bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The priests, scribes and pharisees, finding they were foiled in their former question, which they put to Jesus [by what authority he did those things] and that they had lost ground thereby, and given him occasion to pinch them with his parables, resolved now to take another course, and to entangle him (if they could) in his talk or discourses; and in order thereunto, having consulted together about the way or manner of doing it, they sent out unto him some of their disciples, with the Herodians.

Who, or what, these Herodians were, is not agreed by interpreters. Some take them to have been a distinct sect among the Jews, of Herod's institution or setting up, and taking denomination from him; and that their chief error was, that they took Herod to be the Messiah, and celebrated his birth-day with superstitious solemnities; setting in the windows lighted candles, with garlands of violets round about them.

Others think they were not a distinct sect of themselves, but were some of Herod's soldiers only.

But the general and most likely opinion is, that they were some of Herod's friends or courtiers, who in favour of him, and to keep up his reputation and interest

interest in the emperor's court, and good opinion, stood as stiffly for the Jews paying tribute to the Romans (by whom they were brought into subjection) as the pharisees stood against it.

The plot was laid amongst them, that these, who were sent forth as spies to watch him, should pass themselves just men; men that by no means would do a wrong thing, and therefore were desirous to be informed by him in the matter they had to propose to him.

And before they would propound it, they, taking him to be like themselves, thought they might the sooner beguile him, if they did soothe him first. Wherefore they smoothly said unto him^z, "Master, We know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man (either to flatter him or fear him); for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore what thou thinkest, Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?"

Great was the crafty policy of the pharisees, in the choice both of the question, and of the agents they sent to propound it; whereof the one part sought much to curry favour with the people of the Jews, in standing up for their liberty against their paying of tribute, a sign and effect of bondage; the other labouring as hard to ingratiate themselves with Herod, by contending for the payment of tribute to his great benefactor, and lord paramount, the Roman emperor.

The question was somewhat like a dilemma, having two sharp points in it, either of which they concluded would catch him. For if he should assert the lawfulness of their paying the tribute, they that were of the pharisees sect should take advantage from thence to set the people against him, which was what they much desired; but if, on the other hand, he should deny it to be lawful for them to pay the tribute, the Herodian party should presently lay hold of him, and

^z Mat. xxii. Mark xii, 13. Luke ii. 20.

deliver him up unto the power and authority of the governor, which was what they most desired. But their contrivance being formed in the wisdom that is earthly and devilish, the divine wisdom defeated it, and disappointed them.

For no sooner had they proposed the question, but he, perceiving their hypocrisy, and wicked craftiness, said unto them, "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the tribute-money, that I may see it." They thereupon bringing him a penny, he asked them, "Whose is this image and superscription that is upon it? They tell him it is Cæsar's. Nay, said he, seeing ye know and own it to be Cæsar's, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's."

This was answer enough to the question, which extended no farther than to give tribute to Cæsar. But as the answer he had given would please the Herodians, and yet disappoint the pharisees; so that he might wholly silence the pharisees, that they should not be able to slander him to the people, he added, "And render unto God the things that are God's." Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's. Where it is observable, that our Lord varies the term of the question. For the question was, Is it lawful to [give] tribute, &c. He in his answer substitutes the word [render] return, or restore, instead of [give]; which he did upon their acknowledgment that it was his right and due, from its having his image and superscription upon it.

When they had heard his answer, it amazed them. They might well have said, had they had ingenuity enough, as the officers they once sent to apprehend him said, John vii. 46. "Never man spake like this." Though they would not acknowledge his divine wisdom, yet they marvelled at it. And seeing they could not take hold of his words, either to expose him to the hatred of the people, or draw him within the reach of the law, they held their peace, and slunk away.

The pharisees thus again foiled, and for the present balked, the Sadducees (another sect among the Jews, who agreed as little with the pharisees, as Herod and Pilate did one with the other; yet, like them, could agree to ensnare Jesus) had a mind to try their skill and strength upon him.

The Sadducees took name from Sadoc, the founder of their sect, who was a scholar to Antigonus Sochæus (who succeeded Simeon the Just, about the time of the beginning of the second temple). Antigonus, it seems, had taught his scholars, that they should not serve God like mercenary servants, merely for reward; but should serve him without expecting any reward. Sadoc, and one Baithus his fellow-scholar, so far mistook their master's meaning therein, that from thence they inferred there were no future rewards or punishments; but that all the reward or punishment men had for their good or evil deeds was in this life. This led them into many errors, whereof one was a denial of any resurrection or future state. See Drusius and Cameron in the Criticks, and Godwyn's Moses and Aaron, l. i. c. ii.

Upon this ground it was that the Sadducees now came to puzzle Jesus (as they intended and hoped they should) with a nice question, which depended upon the resurrection. And having observed that the pharisees got nothing by their daubing, they bluntly opened their case thus:

“ Master, Moses wrote unto us^a, that if a man die having no children, and leave a wife behind him, his brother should marry his wife, and raise up children to his deceased brother. Now there were with us seven brethren, and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased; and having no issue, left his wife unto his brother. The second brother took her, and died without issue; and so did the third; and the rest in their order, even unto the seventh: and last of all the woman died also. In the resurrection therefore, when

^a Mat. xii. 24. Mark xii. 19. Luke xx. 28.

they shall all rise, whose wife shall she be of the seven, for they all had her to wife?"

When they had thus cunningly stated their case, and put the question upon it, Jesus answered them (as Matthew gives) "Ye err, not knowing (or as Mark words it more softly, by an interrogative, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not) the scriptures, neither the power of God? For had ye known (that is, attentively read, considered and understood) the scriptures, ye might have been better informed by what Moses relates. How in the bush, God, speaking unto him, said, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now since it is an acknowledged maxim, that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; ye might thence have well inferred, that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose bodies had been then long dead and buried, must then be alive in their souls and spirits, and must be capable of a resurrection in cœlestial, spiritual, glorious bodies; else he, who is not the God of the dead, but of the living, could not be their God."

Again, had ye known the power of God, ye would have understood how, or after what manner, and into what state and condition, the dead are by that power raised. For whereas you grossly think they are subject to the like infirmities, passions, affections, conditions, desires and necessities, in or after the resurrection, as they are here in this world; you therein err greatly; for they who shall be counted worthy to obtain a being in that other world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are in respect of that, and other natural things, as the angels of God, which are in heaven. Neither then have they any need to marry; for one of the great ends of marriage being procreation of children, for continuing the species by a succession of others, in the room of those that are taken away by death; there is no need of marriage in the resurrection, because they can then die no more.

When the multitude heard our Lord's answer to these carping Sadducees, they were astonished at his doctrine; and some of the scribes that were in the company, and had heard them reasoning together, said, "Master, thou hast answered well." But as to the Sadducees, they were put to such a nonplus, that none of them after this durst ask him a question.

But when the Pharisees had heard that Jesus had put the Sadducees to silence, as well as themselves, they took heart again; and getting together, one of them^b, who was a scribe, or lawyer, asked him, "Master, which is the first (that is, the chiefest or greatest) commandment in the law?"

Our Lord readily answered (not out of the decalogue, as it is given in Exod. xx. but out of Deut. vi. 4, 5). The first of all the commandments is, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is *One* Lord (not *many*, as the rest of the nations had): And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment." And this one would think had been answer enough to the question; for the question extended no farther.

But our Lord took all occasions to instruct and improve those that came unto him, if he found any thing of worth in them. Therefore he added (as what he knew was not less needful for this lawyer to know) "And the second is like unto this, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment, said he, greater than these; for these are so great and comprehensive, that on them depend all the law and the prophets."

It is probable this scribe, though he came to try our Lord with this question, did it rather from a curiosity of mind, than of malice, and so was somewhat mended by the discourse. For when he had heard our Lord's answer, he confessed to it, saying, "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth; for there is *One* God, and there

^b Mat. xxii. 36. Mark xii. 28.

is no other true God but he. And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding (or mind) and with all the soul, and with all the strength; and withal to love one's neighbour as one's self; this is indeed more (of more regard, and more acceptable to God) than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices (that is, than all the ceremonial law): upon which discreet answer of his, our Lord was pleased to tell him, he was not far from the kingdom of God.

These several sorts of men, Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees, having so often assaulted Jesus with their questions; he now, while the pharisees were yet together, put a question to them concerning himself.

“What think ye, said he, of Christ? whose Son is he?” They took this for a very easy question, and readily answered, “He is the Son of David.”

But, replied he, “If Christ be the Son of David, how then doth David, by the Holy Spirit, call him Lord, saying, “The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David therefore call him his Lord, how then is he his Son? For do men use to call their sons their lords?”

This so puzzled them, that none of them was able to answer him a word; neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more such tempting questions; but the common people heard him gladly.

Wherefore directing his discourse to them, and to his disciples, whom he intended to fence against the hypocrisy, pride, and ambition of the scribes and pharisees, he tells them^d, that so long as the scribes and pharisees (whose office it was to read and expound the law unto the people, and are thence said to sit in the seat of Moses) did indeed sit therein, and keep within the compass of it (teaching nothing but what Moses had taught, and what was agreeable to the law of God given by Moses) they should observe and do what these, out of that law, should bid them observe; not

^c Mat. xxii. 42. Mark xii. 35. Luke xx. 41. ^d Mat. xxiii. 1.
rejecting

rejecting the law of God, because read and expounded to them by corrupt men.

But though under that weak and low ministration of the law (which made nothing perfect, Heb. vii. 19). this indulgence to such corrupt teachers was, through a sort of necessity, then permitted (the teaching office then running much in a line) yet under the higher and brighter dispensation of the gospel (which is the power God to salvation, Rom. i. 16.) wherein no man can lawfully take this office to himself, but he that is immediately called of God thereto, and is gifted, furnished, and qualified by him for the due performance and discharge thereof; it may by no means be allowed, that Christians are from hence obliged to hear a sermon against drunkenness from the mouth of a drunkard; a discourse against whoredom from a whoremonger; a declamation against covetousness from a griping extortioner, and the like. For since the gospel ministry depends entirely upon the call, choice, and mission of Christ, and that holiness is a characteristick, and as it were the Shibboleth of it; it cannot (without an impious reflection upon the wisdom and purity of God) be supposed that such impure and vicious persons are called or appointed by him to that service, but rather that they take it upon themselves for corrupt and selfish ends.

Yet when our Lord did encourage the people to observe what the scribes and pharisees (the allowed expounders of the law then) should recommend to them out of the law; yet he warned them not to follow their example, nor do after their works; for, said he, "They say, and do not (they do not perform themselves^c, what they preach unto and präis upon others). For they bind grievous burthens (of superadded rites, and traditions of their elders) heavy to be borne; which they themselves are so far from taking up, that they will not touch them with one of their fingers."

^c Mat. xxiii. 3, 4.

Then going on to fet them forth in their particular and various colours, he fays^f, “All their works which they do are for oftentation, that they may be feen and admired of men.”

To which end they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments.

These phylacteries were little scrolls, or labels of parchment, in which the ten commandments, and some other part of the Mofaick law, were written, which they bound to their arms and foreheads, that they might be thought more zealous observers of the law. Which practice they grounded on Deut. vi. 8. where the Lord by Moses having enjoined the Israelites to keep the commandments, statutes, and judgments, which had been delivered to them, and to take all opportunities to inculcate them to their children, by talking continually of them, when they fat in their houses, when they walked in the way, when they lay down and rose up, and by writing them on the posts and gates of their houses; lest they themselves should through forgetfulness omit to do this, he bids them bind them for a sign or memorial upon their hands, and wear them as frontlets between their eyes, that being in fight, they might not be out of mind.

Together with these phylacteries, they also wore, for the same end, borders or fringes at the bottom of their garments, in which were interwoven some thread or ribband of blue. And because they, who did wear these phylacteries and fringes of the largest size, hoped to be accounted the most religious and devout; therefore did the pharisees make their phylacteries broader than ordinary, and the fringes or borders of their garments larger; which being done in superstition, and for oftentation, was that our Lord blamed them for; for otherwise he himself, as all the Jews, did wear them, in observance of the law, Numb. xv. 38. But the pharisees (who loved to out-do every body) not only enlarged their fringes, but used to wear sharp

^f Mat. xxiii. 5.

thorns in their fringes ; that by the continual pricking of the thorns, whether they walked or sat still, they might be the more mindful of the commandments, as Godwyn, from Hierom, informs us. See his Moses and Aaron, l. 1. c. 10.

All they did was to be seen of men ; and all they aimed at in that, was to gain respect and donatives from men. For which reason they affected to walk in long robes (emblems of gravity) and loved to be (respectfully) saluted in the market-places, and to sit in the chief seats in the synagogues, and to have the uppermost rooms at feasts, which they hoped would make the common people reverence them, and call them *Rabbi*, a title they were very ambitious of.

The word *Rabbi* signifies a *Master* (in learning) or a *Doctor* (of note, one of many) ; and became a title a little before our Saviour's incarnation, when honorary titles were greedily hunted after by the pharisees, and flatteringly given by the people, and that with an ingemination or re-doubling of the word, *Rabbi, Rabbi*, that they might (if it were possible) have enough of it. See Cameron on the place, in the Criticks, and Godwyn's Moses and Aaron, l. 1. c. 7.

Now as our Lord blamed the pharisees for their ambitious affectation of such swelling titles ; so that his disciples might not add fuel to this hungry fire in others, nor suffer it to kindle in themselves, he charges them, that they should neither give nor receive such false and vain titles.

“ Be not ye, said he^s, called *Rabbi* (master, or doctor): for One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren (school-fellows). And do not ye call any man your Father upon earth (in a spiritual or religious sense) for One is your Father, (the begetter or author of your faith, Heb. xii. 2.) who is in heaven.”

“ Neither, added he, be ye called masters (in respect of religion): for One is your master, even Christ.” Whereby all empty, vain, and groundless titles of

^s Mat. xxiii. 8. 10:

father, maſter, or what elſe, that are not grounded on true, real, and proper relations, are forbidden by Chriſt to be uſed by his diſciples^h. “But he that is greateſt among you (in his own opinion) ſhall be your ſervant.” For it is a great miſtake in any one, to think to raiſe himſelf in the eſteem of others, by advancing himſelf above others; for by how much a man over-values himſelf, by ſo much he is under-valued by them at leaſt that underſtand him and themſelves. “Whoſoever ſhall exalt himſelf, ſhall be abaſed; but he that ſhall abaſe (or humble) himſelf, ſhall be exalted.”

Having thus cautioned his diſciples, that they take heed, that they be not drawn, by example or perſuaſion, into any of theſe phariſaical vices, which he had reprov'd the phariſees for; he now, turning his diſcourſe to the ſcribes and phariſees, declaims more directly againſt them, and denounceth eight ſeveral woes upon them; whereof the firſt is their hindering the people from coming to him,

“Woe unto you, ſaid he, ſcribes and phariſees, hypocrites (for that is the common epithet he gives them): for ye ſhut up the kingdom of heaven againſt men.” This Luke expreſſeth by their having taken away the key of knowledge; alluding (as it is thought) to a cuſtom then in uſe among the Jews, that when any one was admitted to interpret the law and the prophets to the people, he was put into poſſeſſion (as it were) of that office, by the delivery of a key and writing-tables to him. See Cameron and Grotius on Luke xi. 52. in *Crit. Sacr.*

And indeed, the alluſion to a key was very apt and ſignificant; for theſe man-made doct'ors, and interpreters of the law, had locked up all ſcripture-knowledge (all knowledge of divine and heavenly things, leading to the kingdom of heaven) in the cloſet of their own private interpretations, and then took away the key, ſo that none could come to any knowledge of the hea-

^h Mat. xxiii. 11, 12, 13.

venly kingdom, but what, and as, these ecclesiastical key-keepers, or turn-keys, would vouchsafe to open to them; who yet would not fail to provide beforehand to be well paid for turning the key. Thus they would neither go in themselves, nor suffer them to go in who had a desire to it, and were ready to enter.

Again, “Woe unto you, said he¹, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, for ye devour widows houses, and for a pretence make long prayers.”

Herein he chargeth them with three high crimes, covetousness, cruelty, and gross impiety. Covetousness, in devouring (that is, gaping after, and greedily seeking) the houses (that is, the estates or goods of their hearers). Cruelty, in taking all they could get, even from the poor widows, who had more need to have been taken care of, and helped, than thus fleeced. Impiety, in committing this rapine under the cloke of religion, under the shew of greater piety and devotion than ordinary; prostituting to their abominable greediness the most excellent of religious exercises, prayer; and even spinning out the thread of their prayers to the utmost length; that from the consideration of the time and pains they had therein spent and taken, they might engage their hearers to a suitable and bountiful remuneration to them, or a more liberal oblation to the corban, or common treasure of the temple, which these had a share of. This was their great policy; this their great wickedness; “therefore (said he to them) ye shall receive the greater condemnation.”

Again, “Woe unto you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, said he, for ye compass sea and land to make one profelyte; and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more a child of hell than yourselves.”

To take much pains in gaining strangers from Heathenism to Judaism, so it were done in a right way, and to a right end, had not been blame-worthy. Since therefore our Lord spake woe to them for what they

¹ Mat. xxiii. 14, 15.

had done of that kind, it bespeaks, that whatever means they had used in doing it, they had done it to a wrong end; not to make profelytes to God, and the true religion, but to disciple them to themselves, and to their own sect, that they might make advantage to themselves of them; and, by rivetting them fast, at their first coming over to Judaism, in their ill-grounded traditions besides the text, and perverse glosses on the text, render them more obstinate enemies, if possible, to the Christian religion, than themselves were.

Next he condemns their prophane trifling in the case of swearing, and their making a mere nose of wax of an oath:

“Woe unto you, ye blind guides, said he^k, that say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing (not at all binding); but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple (the corban, or treasure of the temple) he is a debtor (that oath will bind him). Ye fools and blind; for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?”

So again ye say, “Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty (if he do not perform his oath). Ye fools and blind! for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Whereas the true state of the case is, That he that shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all that is thereon. And he that shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.”

But these covetous scribes and pharisees regarded neither temple nor altar, further than conduced to their own advantage. Therefore the gold in the treasury, and the gift on the altar (of both which they did partake) were by them preferred before either the altar, or the temple, or him indeed to whom both altar and temple were dedicated and belonged.

^k Mat. xxiii. 16,

Again, he taxes their hypocrisy, in making a great shew of devotion, and exact observance of the law, even in the least particles of it, while at the same time they neglected, omitted, and disregarded the principal parts thereof.

“Woe unto you, said he¹, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, for ye pay tithes of mint, and annise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.” Judgment, in not regarding to do right to every one, as it falls in your way; mercy, in not being compassionate and charitable to the afflicted and needy; faith, in not keeping your words, and standing to covenants and agreements in your civil dealings among men.

But though he blamed them for their hypocrisy, in pretending to be so abundantly religious in the exact performance of those lesser matters, while they willingly over-looked the greater; yet withal he tells them, these lesser things (the tithing of mint and other pot-herbs) ye ought to have done (that is, if ye will observe the traditions of your elders; but not from any commandment in the law, says Drufius on the place in *Crit. Sacr.* or, as Grotius has it, “seeing ye will needs interpret the law that way, ye ought to perform it; yet so as not to omit the greater and better parts”). Which because they did, he threw that proverbial speech in their teeth (then in use, and applicable to those that were most scrupulous where there was least occasion, and made no scruple where there was most cause) “Ye blind guides, who strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.”

Again, said he, “Woe unto you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites; for ye make clean the outside of the cup, and of the platter, but within are full of extortion and excess.” You think, by a fair outside, to hide the foulness of your doings; and therefore, though the wine and the meats which ye serve in your cups and platters be gotten by extortion, or other evil means, and spent

¹ Mat. xxiii 23. 25.

profusely in riot and excess; yet ye think to cover it all over with a fair outside, and cleanly shew of honesty; but that will not do. “Thou blind pharisee, Cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.”

Thus by a metaphor taken from those that are careful and curious in washing, scouring, and cleansing the outside of their vessels, which are always in sight; but regardless how foul they are within-side, which is out of common sight; he closely reproveth these false pharisees, who mattered not how foul, corrupt, unjust and wicked they were inwardly, in the sight of God, so they could carry a fair outside, a shew and appearance of great justice, devotion and sanctity, in the sight of men.

Therefore (with another Woe unto you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites) he tells them^m, “They were like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but within are full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness; for even so, said he, ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.”

Hence he proceeds to his eighth (and, in this place, last) woe against them, for their gross dissimulation, in pretending an high regard and esteem of and for the prophets, and a dislike of their fathers persecuting of them; whereas they themselves at the same time were acted by the self-same spirit of persecution; and were resolved to do by him and his followers, as their fathers had done by the prophets, and worse.

“Woe unto you therefore, said he, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous; and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye are witnesses unto (or against) yourselves, that ye are the children of them that killed the prophets (not only in your calling them

^m Mat. xxiii. 27. 29.

your fathers, but also in your treading in their steps). Fill ye up therefore, added he, the measure of your fathers; ye serpents, ye generation of vipers; for how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

Here are words of the harshest found used by him, who had before forbidden the use of some other terms of milder import, Mat. v. 22. Whence we may learn, that it is not the bare words or syllables, but the mind, spirit, or affection, wherewith they are spoken, which makes the use of those words condemnable, or not.

Our Saviour having convicted these scribes and pharisees, that although they, to hide their brutish natures from the people, would seem to disavow the cruelty of their fathers in killing the prophets; yet were themselves, even in that respect, no better, but would do the same, when it came in their way; now goes on to tell them, "Behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes (using, as one observes, the names then in use among the Jews, for those who should afterwards be known by other names). And some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and scourge others of them in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city. That upon you may come (or whereby upon you may come) all the righteous blood (that is, all the guilt of and punishment due for the shedding thereof) from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye (in your fathers) slew between the temple and the altar."

Our Lord having for this time done with the pharisees, he now (using a metonymy of the containing for the contained) directs his speech to the inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem in general, in an exprobration of them, and lamentation over them, crying out; "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! Thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them who are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as

ⁿ Mat. xxiii. 34.

^o Luke xiii. 34.

an hen gathereth her chicken under her wings, and ye would not?"

"Wherefore, behold your house (your city, temple, habitation) is (decreed to be) left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth (after once ye have executed your designed cruelty upon me) until ye (shall be glad to) say (as the little children did the other day, though ye were then offended with them for it) Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Now as he sat over-against the treasury, he beheld how the people cast money ^p, and other gifts, into the treasury; and many that were rich cast in much.

Among the rest there came a poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make but one farthing. Which he observing, called his disciples to him, and said unto them (by themselves, that he might not raise a feud between the rich men and the poor widow) "Verily I say unto you, this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they that have cast into the treasury; for they did cast in of their abundance, but she, though she wanted, hath cast in all she had, even all she had to live on."

Our blessed Saviour going now out ^q, departed from the temple (into which it is supposed he never entered more). And as he went out, his disciples came to him, to shew him the buildings of the temple, desiring him to observe what manner of stones it was builded with, and with what rich and costly gifts it was adorned.

But he, little regarding those things which they so much admired, and willing to wean them from gazing after outward glories, tells them plainly, "The days shall come (and quickly too) wherein of all those goodly buildings, there should be so great and total a destruction, that there should not be left one stone upon another, which should not be thrown down."

^p Mat. xii. 41. Luke xxi. 1. ^q Mat. xxiv. 1. Mark xiii. 1. Luke xxi. 5.

This, about forty years after, was literally performed, when the city was destroyed by Titus the Roman general, the temple burned down to the ground by the rebellious Jews themselves, and a plough drawn over the foundations thereof by Turnus Rufus, as histories relate.

Whereby was fulfilled also a prophecy of the prophet Micah, chap. iii. ver. 12. Where (having taxed the heads of the house of Jacob, and the princes of the house of Israel, that they did abhor judgment, and pervert all equity; that they built up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity; that the heads thereof did judge for reward, and the priests thereof did teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divined for money; and yet would lean upon the Lord, and say, "Is not the Lord among us? None evil can come upon us") the prophet denounced this judgment, "Therefore shall Zion be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house, as the high place of the forest."

As Jesus departed from the temple, so he went out of the city also, and sat down upon the mount of Olives, over-against the temple, and in sight of it^r; and his disciples being with him, four of them, namely, Peter, James, John, and Andrew, getting closer to him than the rest, asked him two questions privately, desiring him to tell them, "When these things should be? and what should be the sign when all these things should be fulfilled, which he had foretold, of the destruction of the city and temple? Of his own coming (whether to judgment, or as a temporal king to reign over them? Which notion, strong desire had so rivetted in their heads, that it would not easily slip out of their minds) and of the end of the world?" By which they are by most supposed to mean, the end of the Jewish common-wealth and polity; that the kingdom of the Messiah might succeed it, which they reckoned would introduce a new world.

^r Mat. xxiv. 3. Mark xiii. 3. Luke xxi. 7.

Our Lord, having heard their questions^s, seemed not so regardful to answer their curiosity and inquisitiveness therein, as to forewarn them of the dangers that would attend themselves, and direct them how to avoid them.

“Take heed, said he, that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many; and that time draweth nigh: Go ye not therefore after them.”

Of these, Drufius says there were many, and names for one Barchochebas, whose name importing “the son of a star,” his followers applied to him that ancient prophecy, uttered by Balaam, Numb. xxiv. 17. “A star shall come out of Jacob.” But after they had found themselves deceived by him, they changed their tone, and instead of Barchochebas, “the son of a star,” they called him Barchoziba, “the son of a lie.”

Theudas (not he whom Gamaliel spoke of, Acts v. 36. but another impostor of the same name) mentioned by Josephus (in his 20th book of the Antiquities of the Jews, chap. ii.) is accounted another of these false Christs. As is also Judas of Galilee (mentioned by Gamaliel, Acts v. 37). with Dositheus, and some others.

“And ye shall hear, added Jesus, of wars, and rumours of wars; but see that ye be not terrified nor troubled; for all these things must come to pass; but the end (of the Jewish polity, and Jerusalem’s misery) is not yet.”

“For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places.” And though these (one would think) were the most grievous afflictions; yet they are but “the beginning of sorrows.”

To these famines may be referred that great dearth, which Agabus the prophet, coming from Jerusalem to Antioch, foretold by the spirit should be throughout

^s Mat. xxiv. 4. Mark xiii. 5. Luke xxi. 8.

all the world, in the days of Claudius Cæsar. Upon which occasion the disciples sent relief to the brethren in Judea, by Barnabus and Saul, Acts xi. 28. Which probably was the same that is mentioned by Josephus, l. 20. Antiq. c. 2. At which time queen Helena (mother of Izates, king of Adiabena) a profelyte to the Jewish religion, going in devotion to Jerusalem, and when she came thither, finding the city so oppressed with famine, that many of the people died for want of food, sent her servants in all haste to Alexandria and Cyprus to buy corn and dried figs, which she distributed among the poor.

To the famines, pestilences, and earthquakes, mentioned by Matthew and Mark, Luke adds, that there shall be fearful sights, and great signs from heaven[†]. Of which Josephus, in his 7th book of the Wars of the Jews, reports divers. As of a comet, in form of a fiery sword, which for a year together did hang over the city. Of a light seen about the altar and temple, on the eighth day of the second month (called April) at the ninth hour at night, so bright, as if it had been bright day, and remained so for half an hour. Of the inner gate of the temple, which being made of massy brass, so heavy, that it required the strength of at least twenty men to shut it, opened of itself, though fastened with locks of iron, and strongly barred. Of a vision in the air, of iron chariots all over the country, and an army in battel-array, passing along in the clouds, and begirting the city. Of the voice which the priests heard in the temple, at the time of the evening sacrifice, which said, "*Migremus hinc*, Let us depart from hence." And of the warning given by Jesus the son of Ananus, a simple country fellow, who four years before the war began, and when the city flourished in peace and plenty, went about all the streets of the city, crying out, "A voice from the east; a voice from the west; a voice from the four winds; a voice against Jerusalem and the temple; a voice against new-married

[†] Luke xxi. 11.

men and women ; a voice againſt all this people ;” and ſo continued to do, both night and day, but on feſtivals eſpecially, for the ſpace of ſeven years and five months. Nor could he be beaten out of it, though cruelly beaten for it, till in the time of the ſiege, ſeeing what he had foretold come to paſs, he ceaſed for a while ; and then going on the walls about the city, he cried out again with a loud voice, “ Woe, woe to the city, to the temple, and to the people, and woe to myſelf alſo.” Which words were no ſooner uttered, but a ſtone ſhot out of an engine ſmote him, of which he died, lamenting them all.

Hitherto our Lord had acquainted his diſciples with the general calamities, wherein they might well expect to bear a ſhare in common with their countrymen and neighbours. But now he forewarns them of what they were to expect, and what ſhould befall them more particularly as his diſciples.

“ They ſhall lay hands on you, ſaid he^u, and ſhall deliver you up to the councils, and to the ſynagogues, to be afflicted and beaten, and imprifoned ; and ye ſhall be brought before kings and rulers, for my name’s ſake, for a teſtimony againſt them ; but it ſhall turn to you for a teſtimony of your faithfulneſs to me, and conſtancy in my doctrine.”

“ But when ye ſhall be ſo brought before them, take no thought before-hand what ye ſhall ſpeak, neither premeditate what anſwer to make ; but whatſoever ſhall be given you in that hour, that ſpeak ye ; for I will give you a mouth and wiſdom, which all your adverſaries ſhall not be able to gainſay or reſiſt ; for it ſhall not be ye that ſpeak (of yourſelves) but the Holy Ghoſt in you. Yet ye ſhall be hated of all men for my name’s ſake ; and ye ſhall be betrayed by both parents and brethren, and kinsfolks and friends, and ſome of you ſhall they cauſe to be put to death.”

Instances of the fulfilling of theſe things upon the apoſtles themſelves, unto whom they were ſpoken, and

^u Luke xxi. 12.

others in that very age, are given by Luke, in his history of the apostles acts; but they lie scattered. Wherefore, for the satisfaction and ease of the reader, I will here draw some of them together.

Soon after the ascension of our Lord, and the more plentiful pouring out of the Holy Ghost upon his apostles and disciples at Jerusalem, at the feast of Pentecost (foretold by the prophet long before, Joel ii. 18. and promised by Christ just before his ascension, Luke xxiv. 49). the great numbers of converts (about 3000 at once, Acts ii. 41). brought to the Christian religion, by the powerful preaching, and wonderful miracles wrought by the apostles, had so incensed the priests against them, that they laid hands on them, and put them in hold, Acts iv. 3. and the next day brought them before the council, where were gathered together their rulers, elders and scribes, Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, with John and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, to strengthen the faction against them. And although at that time they escaped pretty easily, being dismissed with only a sharp threatening; yet it was because Christ had then given them (as he had promised he would, Luke xxi. 15). a mouth and wisdom, which their adversaries were not able to gainsay, Acts iv. 13.

It was not long after this, ere upon like occasion (of multitudes of believers being added to the Lord, Acts v. 14). the high priest with his followers (of the sect of the Sadducees, ver. 17.) being filled with indignation, laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison, ver. 18. And though they were delivered thence by a liberate from heaven (the angel of the Lord opening the prison-doors, and bringing them forth, and sending them to preach in the temple, ver. 19, 20); yet from thence were they fetched, and set before the council, examined and beaten, ver. 26, 27. 40. and had probably been then slain, ver. 33. had not God prevented it at that time, by the wise council of Gamaliel, ver. 34, &c.

At Philippi in Macedonia, Paul and Silas were stripped, and whipped with many stripes, and afterwards cast into prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks, yet were wonderfully delivered, Acts xvi. from ver. 16. to the end.

And at Jerufalem Paul was beaten by the Jews, and had been killed, had he not been rescued by the Roman captain, Acts xxi. 31, 32. And if we will take the account of some of Paul's sufferings from his own pen, he tells the church at Corinth, 2 Cor. xxiv. that five times he received of the Jews forty stripes, save one, i. e. thirty-nine stripes at each time. And that he was thrice beaten with rods, which is supposed to be by the Gentiles; and once stoned, viz. at Lystra, by the people, but at the instigation of the Jews, Acts xiv. 19.

As to putting to death, the first and great instance is in Stephen, the proto-martyr of the Christian church, whose story is set forth at large in the 6th and 7th chapters of the Acts.

Soon after which followed the death of James (the brother of John, and son of Zebedee) whom Herod the king killed with the sword, Acts xii. 1, 2. so making him drink of his master's cup, as he had foretold him he should, Mat. xx. 23.

The like death had doubtless then befallen Peter also, had not God in a wonderful manner delivered him. For king Herod observing that he had pleased the wicked Jews, by cutting off the apostle James, apprehended Peter also, and put him in prison, delivering him (for the more safety) to four quaternions of soldiers (that is, sixteen in number, each quaternion containing four men) intending, after the passover, to bring him forth to the people. But earnest prayer being made mean while, without ceasing, by the church to God for him, it pleased God (who had further service for Peter yet to do) to send his angel into the prison (but the night before Herod had designed to bring him forth to publick execution) who raised Peter, sleeping fast between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and brought him forth, scarce well awake, through all the guards, and through the iron-gate that led

led into the city (which opened to them of its own accord) and set him safe at liberty in the street, near the house where many of his friends were gathered together, praying for his deliverance, Acts xii. But to proceed.

Our Lord having thus prepared his disciples to expect persecutions and cruel sufferings, he then, to comfort and encourage them to undergo these fore trials, using a proverbial speech (well understood by them, as being often used to express the safety of him or them to whom it is applied) tells them, that notwithstanding all these things, there shall not an hair of their head perish^w; thereby giving them to understand, that all these sufferings, being undergone for his sake, shall turn to good account to them; and that nothing that doth so may be said to perish, or be accounted lost. But that he that shall endure to the end shall be saved.

Which that they might do, he recommends patience to them, that that may have the possession and government of their minds and spirits; that they may not be hurried, troubled, disturbed, or startled, when these exercises shall attend them, and so turn aside, as too many (for want of that excellent virtue) would do, when those sufferings for religion should grow high and hot.

This also he forewarned them of, by telling them, that because iniquity should abound, the love of many would grow cold^x. Where our Lord useth the word iniquity to express perfection by, and that most aptly; for the word [*iniquus*] (from whence *iniquitas*, *iniquity*) being compounded of the negative particle *in* (for *non*, not) and the adjective *æquus* (even, equal, just) shews iniquity to be contrary to equity; unequal, uneven, unjust. Well therefore may persecution be called iniquity, since nothing is more unequal and unjust than it; because it breaks that royal law (as the apostle James rightly calls it, James i. 8.) which re-

^w Luke xxi. 18, 19. ^x Mat. xxiv. 12.

quires every one to love his neighbour as himself, Levit. xix. 18. (which the apostle Paul says, doth comprehend all other commandments, at least relating to moral duties, Rom. xiii. 9). and is directly contrary to Christ's express command, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do even so to them," Mat. vii. 12. But he that persecutes, vexes, afflicts, molests another for his religious conscience, would not be persecuted, vexed, afflicted, molested by another, for his own religious conscience.

But notwithstanding all the opposition that shall be raised against it, and endeavours that shall be used to stop and hinder the promulgation of the gospel; yet before Jerusalem shall be utterly destroyed, his gospel (which he calls "this gospel of the kingdom," because it is that divine power by which his kingdom is set up in the hearts of men) shall be preached in all the world (a synecdoche of the whole for the chief parts of the world) for a witness unto all nations (unto whom it shall be so preached); and then shall the end (of the Jewish polity) come.

"When therefore, added he^y, ye shall see the abomination of desolation (so called because it makes desolate, Dan. xi. 31. and xii. 11). spoken of by Daniel the prophet, chap. ix. 27). stand in the holy place; then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains."

By the abomination here mentioned, some take to be meant the statues of the Roman emperors; others the Roman army under Titus; which the words in Luke seem to favour^z, "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh."

And then, "Let them which are in Judea flee unto the mountains (for shelter); and them that are in the city, depart out of it; and let not them that are in the countries enter into the city." (But let them all, who

^y Mat. xxiv. 15. ^z Luke xxi. 20, 21.

have believed in me, make all the haste they can to get out of the reach of the Roman army.)

And to shew the greatness of the danger, and great need of making speed to escape it, he adds, "Let him which is on the house-top (which was flat-roofed) not come down to take any thing out of his house^a (that is, not tarry, when he is come down, to look after his goods; come down, but not to take his goods with him; but leaving all, flee forthwith to save his life). Nay, let not him that is (at work) in the field, return back to take (so much as) his clothes; but haste away without them."

Which figurative speeches are here used to set forth the extremity of the danger; not admitting the least delay. And therefore the condition of such is here lamented, as should then be with child, or give suck; which would render them less fit and able to make their escape therefrom. And for the same reason they are exhorted to pray that their flight be not in winter (when they cannot travel fast, for the incommodiousness of ways and weather) nor on the sabbath-day; when (without giving great offence to the superstitious Jews) they could not travel above a sabbath-day's journey, which was but two miles, and would not carry them out of the reach of the danger.

These so terrible times he calls the days of vengeance^b (wherein all things that were written against the Jewish nation should be fulfilled); for, said he, "There shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people; so that they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem (the holy city) shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Which some (with little charity to the poor Jews) refer to the end of the world; others, to the full coming in of the Gentiles; after which, there is ground to hope the Jews shall be visited again, re-called, and re-accepted.

^a Mark xiii. 15. 17. ^b Luke xxi. 22.

Divers other things and passages there are, in this deep discourse, which our Saviour had, at that time, with his disciples; some whereof have been already touched, on other occasions, in other parts of this history; and others, being for the most part figurative speeches, and of uncertain signification (with respect to the times to which they should be referred) have caused much diversity of opinion among interpreters. Wherefore, that I may not too far stray from my intended purpose, waving those enigmatical expressions, I shall pursue the historical part.

Our Saviour having, towards the close of this discourse, in each of these three evangelists, recommended to his disciples watchfulness, that they might be ready and prepared to receive him, whensoever he (who was now almost ready to leave them) should come again to them, now shews them the danger of neglecting that watchfulness, and due preparation, by a parable of ten virgins, which he thus delivers:

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins^c, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. Of these, five were wise, and five were foolish;” which they discovered in this, that though they took their lamps (as the wise did) yet they took not oil with them, to keep the lamps burning, when that oil which was then in them should be burnt out and spent; but the wise took oil in their vessels, with their lamps.

The scope and drift of this parable is obvious, viz. to recommend and shew the need of watchfulness: but the scheme and contrivance of it is taken from the custom or common usage of celebrating marriages in those times and countries.

The manner then was, that marriages were solemnized in the evening, in an assembly of the godly, and that usually in the house where the bride lived; from whence afterwards the bridegroom conducted his bride to his own house by torch or lamp-light. And as the

^c Mat. xxv. 1.

bridegroom had his companions (called the children of the bride-chamber, Mat. ix. 15. and the friends of the bridegroom, John iii. 29). so had also the bride her bride-maids, who, with their burning torches or lamps, both went forth to receive the bridegroom, and conduct him to the bride, and afterwards lighted her home to the bridegroom's house. These in number were wont to be five (some think ten); but here, in the parable, the number is doubled, that five of them through their folly failing, there might be still five to perform the service, and the bride not fall short of the usual attendance.

“While the bridegroom tarried (came not so soon as he was expected) all these virgins, as well the wise as the foolish, slumbered and slept.” Where, probably, slumbering is applicable to the wise; sleeping downright to the foolish; and thus they all lay till midnight.

“At midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh: Go ye out to meet him.”

This cry reached and raised them all; and to work they went to trim their lamps; which the wise virgins, having stock of oil in their vessels, both could do, and did. But the foolish, finding their oil was spent, and knowing they had no supply of their own, went a begging to the wise; saying, “Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out.”

“Not so, replied the wise virgins, lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.”

“Away went the foolish (like fools) to buy, and in the mean time came the bridegroom; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage-feast, and the door was shut.”

Afterwards came also the other virgins (fools as they were) saying, “Lord, Lord, open to us; but he answering, said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.”

Interpreters, both ancient and modern, have laboured, though variously, to bring every clause and sen-

tence in this parable (even the advice of the wife to the foolish, in the 9th verse, to go to them that sell oil, and buy for themselves) to a significant agreement with the general scope and design of the parable. But parables should not be extended beyond their due scope, and main intention; some things being added as fillings up and ornaments, which belong not strictly and properly to the matter or thing signified by the parable.

Now the main scope of our Saviour, in this parable, being to inculcate into his hearers the necessity of watchfulness and diligence; watchfulness, that they may hear his call, at what time soever he shall come; and diligence, that they may be ready, and duly prepared to receive him when he comes; it may suffice, perhaps, in this place to observe,

1. That it will not be sufficient nor available to any one to be called a virgin, to be reputed a saint, to have a name to live, and yet be dead, Rev. iii. 1.

2. That a profession of the truth (emblem'd by the lamp) will not hold out, will not bring to an entrance into the kingdom, without the possession of the truth itself; it will not avail that the conversation be somewhat (yea, much) reformed; that it be free from the gross pollutions and common spots of the world; that it shine for a while, like a burning lamp, if there be not a supply of oil in the vessel to feed it continually, and keep it still burning clear. If the heart (the repository or vessel wherein the stock of spiritual oil is laid up and kept) be not established with grace, Heb. xiii. 9. if Christ dwell not in our hearts by faith; if we be not rooted and grounded in his love, Eph. iii. 17; if we be not rooted and built up in him, Col. ii. 7; if we abound not in the work of the Lord, and that always, 1 Cor. xv. 58; if we have not in us that divine well of spiritual water, which springeth up into everlasting life, John iv. 14; if the unction from the holy one, the anointing which we have received of him, abideth not in us, 1 John ii. 20. 27. the lamp (of religious profession) how bright soever it may blaze for a while,

a while, will by degrees burn dim, and at length go quite out.

3. The great difference that is between the true Christian and the false, the wise virgin and the foolish, with respect to the weakness or infirmity of each. Though it may so happen, that the wise may be overtaken with heaviness, with drowsiness, and may chance to fall into a slumber; yet they do not undress, nor address themselves to sleep; they do not let their lamps go out; but having the spiritual oil of divine life in their vessels (their hearts) they are always provided, and ready, at the first call, though it be at midnight, to meet the bridegroom of their souls, and enter with him to the marriage-feast. So that such an one might say with the church of old, "I sleep, but my heart waketh," Cant. v. 2. And with the royal Psalmist, "When I awake, I am still with thee," Psal. cxxxix.

18. Whereas the negligent fools not only give themselves up to sleep, but that without any foresight and forecast, or care; so that when they are roused by an unexpected cry, at an unlooked-for hour, they have all to seek. Their lamp is gone out, they have no oil in their vessels (no supply of grace in their hearts): then in vain do they run to and fro to borrow, beg, or buy (if they could) of others, who (if they would) cannot then help them. For,

4. Though the wise had enough to serve their own turn; yet they had none to spare. They could not part with any, lest they should want themselves; which may serve to correct the vanity of those people, who (though neither wise, nor perhaps virgins) pretend to have such a stock of oil, such an overplus of good works, such a redundancy of merits in their communion, that they can furnish with indulgences and pardons all others, how many soever, that want; so they will but take them off their hands at their prices.

5. Lastly, It is observable, that all have a day, a time, an opportunity afforded them to prepare to meet the spiritual or heavenly bridegroom. The foolish, as well

well as the wise virgins, heard alike the midnight-cry, which was made alike to them all, but not with like success to all; for they only who were ready, went in with the bridegroom to the marriage; and thereupon the door was shut. And when once the door was shut, the season for entering over, the time past, the opportunity lost, they that came afterwards, the loiterers, though reputed virgins, might stand without, and call as long as they would, "Lord, Lord, open to us;" all the answer they had was, "I know you not." To prevent which dismal doom, and lamentable disappointment, was the design of this virgin parable; which therefore closeth with this watch-word; "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day, nor the hour, wherein the Son of Man cometh."

Which seasonable caution and exhortation to watchfulness that he might more fully imprint on the minds of his hearers, our Lord subjoins in this place another parable (commonly called the parable of the talents) of somewhat like import with this; which, with some little variation in circumstances, is delivered by Luke in chap. 19. and from thence already taken into this history; for which reason I forbear to recite the parable here, and go on to relate what Matthew reports our Lord to have said, after he had delivered this parable, which I do not find in Luke, or elsewhere.

In verse 31 of this chapter^d, our Lord sets forth a type or representation of the general judgment, thus, "When, says he, the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep (the righteous) on his right hand, and the goats (the unrighteous) on his left. Then shall the king (viz. Christ himself, in his kingly capacity) say unto them on his right hand (for with the righteous he will begin; the dead in Christ

^d Mat. xxv. 31.

shall rise first, 1 Thes. iv. 16.) Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; I was naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

The righteous not glorying in any thing they had done (as well knowing that whatever good they do, it is not of or from themselves, but by and through the virtue of his life and power working in them) will modestly ask, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?" Then shall he answer them, "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Having done with the righteous (those on his right hand, he will turn to those on his left hand; and to them he will say, "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." For ye have done quite contrary to these on my right hand; "for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not."

As the righteous were backward in owning the good they had done, so these unrighteous were forward to justify themselves. Wherefore they expostulated the matter, saying, "When saw we thee an hungred, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?" But their answer from him will be, "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me; and therefore, ye shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

As the general scope and drift of this discourse was to excite his disciples, and other hearers, to a compassionate

tionate pity to the afflicted faints; to a charitable beneficence to all the members of Christ, in their wants and necessities; so it is more particularly to be observed from thence,

1. That true righteousness stands not in talking, but in doing. The righteous (here placed on Christ's right hand) are such, of all ages, sexes, conditions, as have been exercised in the practice of these truly Christian virtues and duties, of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, entertaining the stranger, visiting the sick, and standing by and comforting the imprisoned, or otherwise suffering members of Christ.

2. That for these the kingdom was prepared from the foundation of the world; so that they receive it not by merit, but by grace.

3. That our blessed Lord, in his most royal estate, upon the throne of his glory, disclaimeth not to call the least of his faithful followers his brethren.

4. That there is, even in this life, so near a connection, so close a communion between the true members of this mystical body, and the head thereof, Christ Jesus; that he rejoices and suffers with them, and accordingly repents and rewards the good and evil offices done to them, as done unto himself.

5. That the fire, into which the cursed are adjudged to depart, is not said to be prepared for them, as the kingdom is said to have been prepared for the righteous; but the fire is said to have been prepared for the Devil and his angels; and wicked men subject themselves to it, by their joining with the Devil and his angels, in yielding to their temptations to evil.

6. That they who are here sentenced to this fearful punishment, are not here charged with crimes committed, but with duties omitted, in not feeding, not clothing, not receiving, not visiting, not owning Christ in his afflicted suffering members. And if they shall suffer so extremely, who do not exercise charity and mercy to the poor members of Christ's spiritual body, in not giving them food when hungry, in not clothing them when naked, in not visiting them when sick, in

not owning and comforting them when in prison, &c. what will become of them, or what may they justly expect, who rob them of that whereon they should feed; thereby exposing them not to hunger only, but even (as much as in them lies) to starving? Who strip them of their clothing, and leave them naked? Who cast them into prison for the exercise of a good conscience, and by cruel usage bring sickness on them?

After our Lord had ended this discourse to his disciples, it is very probable that he went in the evening (as he used to do) from the mount of Olives to Bethany, where he supped with them.

When supper was (thus far) ended^c, Jesus being sensible that his hour was near come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own that were in the world, he continued his love to them unto the end. And to give them now, before he left them, an ample testimony thereof, as well as an example of the greatest humility and condescension; though he knew that the Father had given all things into his hand, and that as he was come from God, so he was going to God again (which sets forth the greatness of his majesty, power and glory) yet he took upon him the meanest and most servile office that could well be performed. For arising from supper, and laying aside his (upper and looser) garments, he took a towel, and girded himself therewith. Then pouring water into a bason, he began to wash the feet of his disciples.

When he came to Peter, he, with a tone of admiration, said, "Dost thou come to wash my feet!"

Jesus answered him, "What I do (that is, the intention of my doing this) thou knowest not yet; but thou shalt know hereafter."

"Alas! said Peter, I can never consent that thou, my Lord and Master, shouldest stoop so low as to wash the feet of me, thy servant."

Jesus thereupon raising his discourse (according to his usual manner) from outward to inward, from car-

^c John xiii. 2.

nal to spiritual things, tells him, "If I wash thee not (if I do not cleanse and purify thy heart and inward parts) thou hast no part with me."

Peter, now somewhat better understanding him, replied, "Not my feet only, Lord, but my hands also, and my head;" that is, my whole body, all over.

Nay, said Jesus, "He that is washed, needeth not, save to wash his feet; but is clean every whit." Alluding, perhaps, to the manner of bathing, wherein the person bathed, being washed all over, doth only wash his feet in the slip or entrance into the bath, that no dust or soil may stick on them in coming out. And (added he) "Ye are clean (not soiled with the foul thoughts of betraying me) but not all of you;" for he knew who should betray him; therefore, said he, "Ye are not all clean."

When now he had washed their feet round, and had taken his garments, and was sat down again, he said unto them, "Know ye what I have done unto you? (Do ye understand the ground and reason why I have done this unto you)? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am (your Master in teaching and instructing you; and your Lord in redeeming and defending you). If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." And that they might not slight it as too mean an office for them to stoop to, he tells them, with a Verily, verily, "The servant is not greater than his Lord, neither is he that is sent, greater than he that sent him." Therefore since he, whom they acknowledge to be their Lord, he who sends them, hath not disdained to do this to them, they who are but his servants, and sent by him, should not think much to do the like one to another. And to hearten them to it, he tells them, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Yet he adds, "I speak not of you all; for I know whom I have chosen; but that scripture is fulfilled, which says, he that eateth bread with me, hath lift up his heel against me." Wherein
he,

he, no doubt, alluded to the treacherous counsel of Achitophel; who in his treachery to king David, the type of Jesus, might himself pass for a type of Judas.

“ I tell you of this treachery, said Jesus to the disciples, now before it comes, that when it is come to pass, ye may not be staggered by it; but may be the more confirmed in your belief that I am he,” the omniscient God.

And lest the rest of them should be in fear that the treachery of one should redound to the shame and discredit of them all, he assures them not only that he would continue them in his service, but would account the receiving of them, his messengers, as done unto himself. “ Verily, verily, said he, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.”

When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit^f, as well from the sense he had of his own danger, as the abhorrence of the traitor’s crime. Wherefore, as hitherto he had given them but general intimations of his being to be betrayed, he now comes closer to them, and in a direct testimony tells them with the assurance of a “ Verily, verily, one of you that eateth with me shall betray me.”

This both startled and troubled them all; the innocent and the guilty. The innocent were surprized with amazement and trouble, at the mention of so horrible a thing. The guilty was no less surprized with amazement and trouble, that his traitorous thought should be discovered, while it was but an embryo; before it was brought forth, or thoroughly formed in his intention.

But as yet he was not singled out; the charge being general, lay among them all, and none of them (but the traitor himself) knew where it would fall. Wherefore they all put themselves upon their purgation; and though they looked one on another, as doubting of whom he spake, yet did they not attempt to cast it

^f John xiii. 21.

one upon another, by saying, Lord, Is it he? Or he? Or he? But every one (except Judas) said, one by one, "Lord, Is it I?" To whom our Lord answering still in a general way, said, "One of you twelve that dip-peth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me." Then added he, "The Son of Man goeth, as it is written of him; but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed; it had been good for that man if he had not been born." Upon this the traitor himself, Judas, had the impudence to ask, "Master, Is it I?" To whom Jesus gave no other answer, but, "Thou hast said." This is supposed to be so spoken to Judas, that the rest did either not hear, or not understand it. Wherefore, inasmuch as the traitor was not yet sufficiently marked out from the rest (which some think Jesus had hitherto purposely forbore, that he might give Judas time and opportunity to repent, and so have come off, without being discovered to the rest) Peter, who, it seems, sat farther off than John (who, being his Master's peculiar favourite, sat (or rather lay) next unto him, so that he leaned on his bosom) beckoned unto John*, that he would ask Jesus who it should be of whom he spake?

He then, lying on Jesus's breast, said softly unto him, "Lord, Who is it?" "It is he, replied Jesus softly also, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it." And when he had dipped it, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. He is called Iscariot, says Vatablus, because he was of the tribe of Issachar; the second syllable of which word being taken away by the figure syncope, of Issacariot (a man of Issachar) is made Iscariot. And he was so called, to distinguish him from another apostle of the same name, Judas the brother of James, mentioned Luke vi. 16. and John xiv. 22. where he is called "Judas not Iscariot;" the same (as is generally held) that wrote that general epistle, which goeth under the name of Jude; though Grotius is of another mind.

* John xiii. 24.

No sooner had Judas received the sop, but Satan entered into him; not that the sop gave Satan entrance, but that Judas, through his own guilt, apprehending that by the delivery of the sop unto him he was discovered, was more imbittered, and hardened in his mind, to carry on and go through with what he had before intended. The Devil had before, by wicked suggestions, put into his heart to betray his Lord; but now that he saw his treasonable designs detected, he opened his heart to the Devil, and Satan actually entered into him; whereby he was more hotly and vehemently stirred up by Satan to put in execution the horrid wickedness he had contrived. And that he might lose no time, as soon as he had received the sop, he went immediately out.

Yet for all his haste, before he could get out, Jesus (who saw the inside of his evil heart, and knew what he went about) to let him see how little he regarded what he could do, said unto him^b, "That thou dost (or intendest to do) do quickly."

Though the rest of the company heard this, yet no man at the table understood for what intent he spake this unto him; but some of them thought one thing, some another; as that, because Judas had the bag, Jesus had ordered him to buy those things that were needful against the feast; or that he would give something to the poor.

The evangelist observes, that when Judas went out, it was night. And so to be sure it is to every one that goes out, as he did, with a purpose to betray Christ, in any respect, whether it be in his doctrine, or in his members.

When once the traitor was gone from among them, our Lord began to rejoice with his disciples, in the sense of the glory which his approaching death would quickly bring him to. Now, said he, is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him; and if

^b John xiii. 27. 30, 31.

God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself; yea, he shall straitway glorify him.

Then compassionately considering the condition of his disciplesⁱ, and what a loss they would be at when he should be taken from them, speaking to them in the most tender and pleasing compellation of little children, he tells them he has but a little time to be (personally) with them; and that after he is gone, they will seek him; but, added he, as I said unto the Jews, "Whither I go, ye cannot come;" so now (but upon better ground) I say unto you.

"Yet before I leave you, I give, said he, unto you a new commandment, that ye love one another; which I therefore call new, because it rises higher, and extends farther, than the common measures and degrees of love among mankind. For to love thy neighbour as thyself, Mat. xix. 19. and to love one's enemy, chap. v. 44. will not reach the height of that love which I now recommend to you, and injoin you. But as I have loved you, so as for your sakes to descend from my glory, deny myself, and have exposed myself to hardships, contempt and sufferings, and even to death itself; "so also do ye love one another." For this will be a badge and token, and as it were my livery upon you; whereby all men will know that ye are my disciples, if ye have and exercise this love one to another.

Peter was somewhat uneasy in his mind at a word which Jesus had spoken just before, when he told them, "Whither I go, ye cannot come." Wherefore he made bold to ask him, "Lord, Whither goest thou? I go, answered Jesus, whither thou canst not follow me now; but (for thy comfort and encouragement, I tell thee now) Thou shalt follow me hereafter." "But why, Lord, replied Peter, cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake." Ay, said Jesus, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Alas! man, thou knowest not yet what it is to lay down

ⁱ John xiii. 33, 34. 36.

thy life; thy will out-goes thy strength, and thou art not sensible of thy own present insufficiency. But I assure thee, that notwithstanding this thy self-confidence, “the cock shall not crow (twice, says Mark, chap. xiv. 30). till thou hast denied me thrice.”

How this went down with Peter, we have not any account; but we may well think it must needs have been an awakening and a saddening word to him.

While Jesus had been thus preparing the eleven to bear his departure and absence from them^k, the twelfth, the traitor Judas, had made what haste he could to hasten that departure. For when, having received the sop, he departed from his master (with the Devil in him) he betook himself (as the Devil directed him) to the palace of Caiaphas, the then high-priest. There he found the chief priests, scribes, and elders of the people, and the captains (of those bands of soldiers which were appointed for the guard of the temple, and to see the decrees of the Sanhedrin executed) assembled together, consulting how they might take Jesus by craft or subtilty, and kill him; but they concluded among themselves, that it was not fit to attempt it on the feast-day of the passover (which was now but two days off) lest there should arise on that occasion an uproar amongst the people, whom they stood in fear of.

Among these traitorous conspirators against our Lord, the traitor Judas boldly thrust in^l; and observing what they were consulting about, bluntly asked them, “What will ye give me? and I will deliver him unto you.”

They, glad of the unexpected offer, promised to give him money; and he promising to deliver Jesus to them, they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver; the lowest price of a man, at which the life of the meanest servant was set, Exod. xxi. 32.

Very different are the opinions of interpreters concerning the value of these pieces of silver. The anno-

^k Mat. xxvi. 1. Mark xiv. 1. Luke xxii. 1. ^l Mat. xxvi. 15.

tators on the old Bible say, Every one of them was in value about four-pence half-penny of old sterling; which would make the whole to be eleven shillings and three-pence. But generally these pieces of money are taken for shekels. Of which yet there were two sorts, the common shekel, used in civil matters, and the shekel of the sanctuary, used only in religious cases. This was in value two shillings six-pence of English money; the other but half so much, viz. one shilling three-pence. Vatablus takes these pieces of silver to be the common shekels, which amounted to one pound seventeen shillings and six-pence. But Grotius and most others reckon them to be the double shekels, which, doubling that sum, makes the price to be three pounds and fifteen shillings. But the lowest sum seems to be the likeliest, because it was set forth long before by the prophet Zachary, chap. xi. 12. to be a mean, base, contemptible price.

How much, or little soever it was, the price being set and accepted, and thereby the bargain made, and confirmed by payment on their side, and by promise on his; from that time Judas sought opportunity how he might conveniently betray his master unto them, in the absence of the multitude, to avoid the danger of a tumult. And thus the priests and Judas parted; they glad of the prize, and he of the price, how low and base soever. And now the traitor, having got his money, returned (as some think) to his Master at Bethany.

The next day, which was the first day of the feast of unleavened bread^m, when the passover was to be killed, the disciples came to Jesus, and said, "Where wilt thou that we go and prepare for thee, that thou mayest eat the passover?" Whereupon he sent forth two of his disciples, Peter and John, bidding them go into the city to such a man, whom we may suppose he named to them, though none of the evangelists have recorded his name. And that they might the more readily

^m Mat. xxvi. 17. Mark xiv. 12. Luke xxii. 7.

find his house, he told them there should meet them a man bearing a pitcher of water, and bid them follow that man into the house where he should enter. And say to the good man of the house, "The Master saith, my time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house. Where therefore is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he will shew you, said he, a large upper room furnished and prepared; there make ready for us."

These two disciples, following their Master's direction, found as he had said, and made ready the passover there. Which having done, it may well be thought they returned to their Master, to give him an account thereof.

Be he (probably observing in his disciples an unusual sadness, from the hint he had so lately given them of his being like to be suddenly taken from them, and that by the treachery of one of them) began a consolatory discourse to them, to bear up their spirits, that they might not be overwhelmed with grief and sorrow, or despair, when the time of his departure should come. And thus he bespake them:

"Let not your heart (not hearts, but heart; to shew they should be all alike-minded, and of one heart) be troubled". Ye believe in God (ye have a faith and confidence that God both can and will protect, defend, and save his); believe also in me (have like faith, trust, and confidence, that I, who am God, both can and will provide for, and take care of you, when I shall be outwardly gone from you)."

Which that ye may with the greatest assurance do, I now tell you "That in my Father's house there are many mansions (places of rest, peace, and safety); and I go to prepare a place, or mansion, there for you. If it were not so, I would have told you (therefore do not suspect that I would deceive you, or neglect you): and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am,

there ye may be also.” And this my outward absence should trouble you the less, because both “whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know.”

This he might well suppose of them, having just before mentioned to them his Father’s house, ver. 2. which all acknowledge to be heaven (called by Solomon his dwelling-place, 1 Kings viii. 30. 39. 43, &c). and having also (not long before, Mat. xvi. 21. and Luke ix. 22). told them that he must suffer and be slain; which was the way appointed for him to go to his Father’s house.

But his disciples (not quick of apprehension in that case at other times, and now through grief, and fear of losing him, perhaps more dull than ordinary; nor easily letting go the pleasing notion they had misconceived, of an outward and temporal kingdom for him, and for themselves under him) hearing him now speak of his father’s house, in which were many mansions, and that he was going to prepare a place therein for them, and then to come and fetch them thither; could not think of any thing else but some stately and strong structure (a royal palace, or impregnable tower or fortress) wherein their master and they might live together in peace and pleasure. But where this desirable palace stood, none of them could tell.

Wherefore Thomas, one of the twelve, in the name of them all, said unto Jesus, “Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how then can we know the way?”

Our Lord, intent at that time to improve their understanding, lets fall the discourse of the place he was going to, and the way to it; and from Thomas’s words took occasion to tell them, which was the right, the ready, and indeed the only way for them to walk in, if they would come to his Father; namely, himself. “I am, said he, the way, the truth, and the life (the true way to eternal life): no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” By following me; walking

in my steps; making my life the example and pattern of his; walking as I walk, in holiness and innocency, in obedience and submission to the will of the Father in all his requirings; in self-denial and patient suffering for the truth, when called unto it, as I now am. By believing in me, that I am truly God, as well as truly man; and that all my promises to you, and to all men, shall be truly and certainly made good and performed; and by seeking life in me, unto whom my Father hath given to have life in myself, as he hath life in himself, John v. 26.

Having opened to them this way of coming to the Father, he adds (as a gentle sort of exprobatation of their ignorance) “If ye had known me (rightly and truly, in my divine nature and properties) ye should have known my Father also. Then, that he might not too much depress them, he tenderly added, “and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him (viz. in seeing me):” whereby he plainly intimates his union with the Father.

But Philip (another of the twelve) observing him to speak of coming to the Father, said unto him^p, “Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.”

This dulness and indifferency drew from Jesus a more quick reply. “Have I been thus long with you, said he, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? I tell thee, he that hath seen me (with the spiritual eye, as the only begotten of the Father) he hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? How canst thou choose but believe it? For the words which I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father, in whom I am, he speaketh through me. Neither do I of myself the works which ye have seen me do; but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doth the works by me. But if ye cannot believe me upon my word, at least believe me for the very work’s sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that

^p John xiv. 8.

believeth (with a true faith) on me, the works that I do, shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to my Father (who, as he can do all things, so he will do any thing that I shall request of him). Whatsoever therefore ye shall ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son, by manifesting his love to the Son, in granting whatsoever he desireth of him. If therefore (I say) ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."

"But then, added he⁹, think it not a sufficient token of your love to me, that ye are sorry for me in my sufferings; but if you love me indeed and heartily, let it be seen by your keeping my commandments. Which if ye do, I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you (in me, while I am with you) and shall be in you (when I am gone from you, and the Holy Ghost, according to the prophesy by Joel, chap. ii. 28. shall be plentifully poured forth upon you").

"Be assured therefore that I will not leave you comfortless (like orphans, or friendless children, destitute of any to defend, take care of, and instruct them) no; I will return to you. For though in a while the world shall cease to see me, yet ye shall still see me (by the eye of faith, and shall know that I live, from your own being kept alive by me; for) because I live, ye shall live also. And at that day ye shall experimentally know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you; so that we shall all be in the Father."

To persuade them yet farther to manifest their love to him by their obedience, he tells them again, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be

⁹ John xiv. 15. 21.

loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

At that word, Judas^r (not Iscariot, but the brother of James) willing to be farther informed what manner of manifestation of himself this would be, put in, and asked him, "Lord, How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?"

In answer to which, our Lord still keeping to his former proposition, said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and he that doth so, my Father will love him, and we (both my Father and myself, who are one) will come unto him, and make our abode with (or in) him. Which is such a way of manifestation, as the world (yet at least) is not capable of. For he that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings; or he that keepeth not my sayings, loveth me not: and inasmuch as it is evident that the world keepeth not my sayings, it follows that the world loveth me not. This ye may take for a sure rule; for the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.

"These things, added he, having this opportunity, I have spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things (necessary for you to know, as well for the instruction of others, as for your own defence), and shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

Then drawing to a close of his present discourse, that he might cheer their hearts before he left them, he said unto them, "Peace I leave with you." And that they might not mistake what sort of peace he meant, and so be disappointed and startled, when troubles and sufferings should fall upon them, he explains it, by saying, "My peace (inward peace, peace of mind, peace of conscience, that peace that will bear up the spirit through and over all troubles, afflictions, temptations and dangers; that peace) I give unto you; which, as

^r John xiv. 22. 26.

it is not the world's peace, so I give it you not as the world giveth; for the world giveth, and taketh back in a moment; but my peace shall never depart from you, if ye do not depart from me."

"Let not therefore your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid^s; for as ye have heard me say unto you, I go away; so ye have also heard me say, I come again unto you (I go away outwardly, as to my bodily presence, and come again inwardly, in spirit). And therefore, if ye loved me (understandingly, and with true judgment) ye would rejoice, because I said, I go to my Father; for my Father (in his paternal relation) is greater than I."

"And now I have told you (of my sufferings and death) before it come to pass; that when it is come to pass, ye may believe (that I am God, one with my Father; and so may not be terrified or shaken in mind). But hereafter I will not (I shall not have opportunity to) talk much with you; for the prince of this world (Satan) cometh (to beset and assault me) though he hath nothing in me to work upon."

"But, added he, that the world may know that I love the Father, and am perfectly resigned, in a submissive obedience to all his requirings (and in an especial manner to answer his command in laying down my life for the redemption of mankind), arise, let us go hence, and prepare for it."

Then going into the city to the house he was to eat the passover in^t, when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

This hour both Matthew and Mark call the evening; under which term interpreters comprehend the whole time from noon to night, making a double evening; the former reaching from noon to sun-set, which they call the evening of the sun declining, or going down; the latter from sun-set to night, which they call the evening of the sun declined, or gone down. Some

^s John xiv. 27. 30, 31. ^t Mat. xxvi. 20. Mark xiv. 17.
Luke xxii. 14.

little difference they make as to the precise hour; some reckoning it to be at their ninth hour (which with us is the third hour after noon); others at their tenth (which answers to our fourth).

The fourteenth day of the first month, in the evening (or between the two evenings, as the margin hath it, Exod. xii. 6). was the time appointed for the eating of the passover, at the first institution thereof. To which we may suppose our Saviour punctually kept; though the Jews (such especially as were most observant of the traditions of their elders) did sometimes, on particular occasions, change the day, and put it off to another, as it seems they did that year. For Jesus kept it the evening before he suffered; but they kept it not until the next evening, which was after he had suffered. For the evangelist John tells us, chap. xviii. 28). that though they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the hall of judgment, yet they would not go into the judgment-hall themselves, lest they should be defiled; but kept out, that they might eat the passover in the evening; which this day was called the preparation to, John xix. 14.

It is said in the text, he sat down. But because the manner of sitting down to eat, then in use among the Jews, differs altogether from the way of sitting at table now, it may not be amiss in this place to give the reader a short description of their sitting at table when they did eat, according as Godwyn hath delivered it, in his Moses and Aaron, l. 3. c. 2.

The table being placed in the midst, round about the table (which itself was also round) were placed certain beds; sometimes two, sometimes three, sometimes more, according to the number of the guests. Upon these they lay down in manner following. Each bed contained three persons, sometimes four; seldom more. If one only lay upon the bed, then he rested the upper part of his body upon his left elbow; the lower part lying at length upon the bed. But if many lay on one bed, then the uppermost did lie at the bed's head, laying his feet behind the back of the second: and in like manner

manner the third or fourth did lie; each resting his head in the other's bosom. And thus John leaned on Jesus's bosom, John xiii. 23. Some other particulars he relates, as their putting off their shoes at table, to preserve the beds on which they lay from being soiled; but this may suffice to give the reader a general information of the manner of their sitting, or rather lying at meat.

The evangelists, both Matthew and Luke, expressly mention the twelve to be with him at this supper. But who, without amazement and horror, can think of the unparalleled impudence of Judas, who having but just before sold his Master to the murdering Jews (and in all likelihood having the price of him then in his pocket) could have the face to come and sit down with his Master at the same table, and eat with him out of the same dish! O devilish hardness! Not to be equalled by any thing, but the inimitable patience and transcendent goodness of our blessed Lord, in suffering the perfidious traitor to sit by him at the same table, and dip with him in the same dish, without inflicting some eminent punishment upon him; who could as easily, by a divine stroke, have struck him immediately dead, as he had before, by his divine word, raised others from death to life.

But our meek Lord, as soon as he was sat down with the twelve^u, said unto them (without any note of distinction) "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

"Then he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves; for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine (of this fruit of the vine, says Matthew) until the kingdom of God shall come" (until that day, says Matthew, when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom").

^u Luke xxii. 15. 17. ^w Mat. xxvi. 29.

“ And

“ And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you ; this do in remembrance of me.”

“ Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you ;” (for many, says Mark ; to which Matthew adds, for the remission of sins).

Besides other variations in this account, as given by these three evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke (for John, the fourth, hath nothing of it) it is observable, that those words in Luke [“ This do in remembrance of me”] on which the observers of this sacrament (as they call it) ground the institution thereof, is not in any of the other evangelists. Matthew, who only of the three was present at that paschal supper, and so was an eye and ear-witness of all that was done and said at it, hath not those words, or any of like import, in the account he hath given of it. And Luke, who gives these words, could have them but by hear-say, or information from others, as himself fairly acknowledges, in the proem to his book, chap. i. ver. 2.

And indeed it is the general agreement of interpreters, that at this paschal supper there was not any thing done by our Lord, but what was commonly done by the Jews, in their yearly celebration of the passover feast.

The bread which our Lord took, blessed, brake and gave to his disciples, was no other but the very same bread, for kind, substance and use, as himself, at other passovers before and then, and the Jews customarily, did use and eat with the flesh of the paschal lamb. So also concerning the wine.

But as the paschal lamb itself was a type or figure of Jesus (the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world, John i. 29), so when he brake the bread, which was to be eaten with the paschal lamb, he said to them, “ This (bread) is (a type or figure of) my body, which is given (to be broken) for you. And when he gave them the cup of wine, he said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves, and drink ye all of it ;

for

for this (cup of wine) is (a type or figure of) my blood, of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

Now that the reader may see that this breaking of the bread, this recommending the wine, to all the company, were but the common rites of the passover feast, I shall here transcribe out of Cradock's Harmony of the Four Evangelists, chap. vi. sect. 1. the account he gives of the manner of the Jewish celebration of the passover, as he says it is delivered by their own writers; omitting only such parts or passages as are not directly pertinent to the present occasion. Thus he begins:

1. 'When all things appertaining to the feast were prepared, and all persons that belonged to that company ready, the chief man of the company takes a cup of wine, and blesteth it in some such words as these; "Blessed be thou, O Lord, who hast created the fruit of the vine," &c.'

2. 'The table was then furnished with provisions of several sorts, viz. bitter herbs, unleavened bread, the body of the paschal lamb roasted whole. The latter Jews added, it seems, of their own heads, a dish of thick sauce, called *charoseth*, made of dates, figs, raisins, and vinegar mingled together (which was not commanded in the law) as a memorial to them of the clay, in which their fathers laboured (to make bricks) in the land of Egypt.'

3. 'The chief man of the company takes the four herbs, and blesses them, &c. And eats thereof the quantity of an olive, and distributes to the rest, &c.'

4. 'Then he takes the dish or charger, which held the unleavened bread or cakes, and (laying by a piece of the unleavened cake, to be taken afterwards with the paschal lamb, at the close of the supper) he blesses the bread in such words as these; "Blessed art thou, O Lord, who bringest forth bread out of the earth, &c. Then he breaks it, and eats of it.'

5. 'When this is finished, he begins the second cup of wine, and the rest follow him. Then children used to be brought in, and were made to ask, "What is the

‘ the reason this night differs so much from other
 ‘ nights?’ instancing in many particulars of the festival
 ‘ solemnities. Then the Master of the feast begins a
 ‘ narrative, or discourse, how they were all servants in
 ‘ Egypt; and as that night God redeemed them, &c.
 ‘ This kind of declaration, or shewing forth the occa-
 ‘ sion of the passover, and God’s wonderful goodness
 ‘ to them, in their deliverance, they call *Haggadah*.
 ‘ Hence the apostle may be supposed to have borrowed
 ‘ this phrase, “ As often as ye shall eat this bread, and
 ‘ drink this cup, ye declare, or shew forth, the Lord’s
 ‘ death,” 1 Cor. xi. 26. This annunciation, or shewing
 ‘ forth to their children, the Lord’s wonderful good-
 ‘ ness and mercy, we find commanded, Exod. xii. 26,
 ‘ 27, and chap. iii. 8.

6. ‘ Then he takes that part of the unleavened cake
 ‘ that was laid aside before, and blessing it, and giving
 ‘ thanks for it as before, he distributes to every one a
 ‘ piece to eat with the paschal lamb; of which each
 ‘ person was bound to eat as much as the quantity of an
 ‘ olive at least.’

‘ The breaking of bread therefore, at which our
 ‘ Saviour did institute the commemoration of his body,
 ‘ seems to be this second breaking of bread, viz. in
 ‘ time of supper (for it is said ἐσθίουτων αὐτῶν, as they
 ‘ were eating) or towards the end of supper. For after
 ‘ this, nothing more was to be eaten that night.’

7. ‘ All this done, they drink up the third cup,
 ‘ called the cup of blessing or thanksgiving after
 ‘ meat. Paul calls it by this very name, 1 Cor. x. 16.
 ‘ The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the com-
 ‘ munion of the blood of Christ? &c. And this third
 ‘ cup, which was after supper (that after they had
 ‘ done eating, and was the conclusion of the supper)
 ‘ was the cup which our Saviour (as it seemeth) ap-
 ‘ plied to a new spiritual signification,’ &c.

8. ‘ After this they sung the *ballel*, or hymn. The
 ‘ Jews, at their three great feasts, viz. of unleavened
 ‘ bread, or weeks of Pentecost, and of tabernacles,
 ‘ were wont to sing their great *ballel* (as they call it)
 ‘ or

‘ or at least some part of it, which contained those six
 ‘ eucharistical Psalms, from the cxiii. to the cxix.
 ‘ Whether our Saviour and his disciples did sing this
 ‘ particular *hallel*, or some part of it, or some other
 ‘ more immediately suited and accommodated to this
 ‘ occasion, we are not assured; but certain it is, that
 ‘ they did sing an hymn after this paschal supper, before
 ‘ they departed. So that if these rites were then in
 ‘ use among the Jews, it may from thence appear, that
 ‘ the bread and wine which our Saviour distributed at
 ‘ his last passover, and appointed to signify and repre-
 ‘ sent his body and blood, were not wholly without the
 ‘ extent of the paschal supper, but within the compass
 ‘ of it, and rites belonging to it; only applied by him
 ‘ now to a new evangelical use and signification. And
 ‘ he dealt no otherwise in this sacrament, than he did
 ‘ before in that other of baptism, which he seems to
 ‘ have founded upon that old practised rite among the
 ‘ Jews, of purification by water. So that our Saviour,
 ‘ in instituting both sacraments of the New Testament,
 ‘ seems to have taken the old rites of the Jews, and to
 ‘ have ordained them to a new evangelical use and
 ‘ mystical signification; and so (as one says) to have
 ‘ put a new superscription upon the old metal.’

Thus Cradock, not much varying herein from the
 account Godwyn had before given of the same matter,
 in his *Moses and Aaron*, l. 3. c. 2. By which the ob-
 servant and unbiassed reader may see, that that which
 is called the Lord’s supper, was indeed the Jewish
 paschal supper, performed with all the rites and cere-
 monies belonging to the Jewish passover, or then used
 by the Jews, in their celebration of that feast; which
 Godwyn seemed sensible of, and therefore to obviate
 the objection, which he foresaw might reasonably be
 brought against him, he says, “ If any man here object
 that I seem to make the blessed sacrament of our
 Lord’s body and blood a Jewish ceremony; I answer,
 No: and so puts it off, by alledging an institution of a
 new sacrament at that time, by those words of our
 Lord, viz. “ This is my body; This cup is the New
 Testament in my blood,” &c.

The validity and force of which words for the instituting a sacrament, as well as the suitability of a sacrament (which is a type, figure, shadow, sign, or representation of something) to the dispensation of the gospel (which is the substance and end of types; figures, signs and shadows) doth highly concern all those, who are in the practice of those things called sacraments, and zealous for them, to consider well of, and thoroughly to examine.

But I proceed; not having either design or inclination to raise any dispute on this subject, especially in this place.

It was the manner, it seems, of the Jews, at the close of their suppers, to sing an hymn, or song of praise and thanksgiving to God^x; and so our Lord and his disciples now did, as both Matthew and Mark deliver. And they both say, that when they had sung that hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

But Luke interposes a discourse that passed between our Lord and Simon Peter, which Matthew had touched, but not so fully, before, Mat. xxvi. 34. Thus it was.

The Lord said^y, "Simon, Simon, Behold, Satan hath desired to have you (thee, and the other ten of you; for Judas he has already) that he may sift you as wheat (shake and toss you to and fro, as when wheat is shaken in a sieve); but I (foreknowing the frailty of thy forward temper) have prayed for thee, that (though thou shouldest slip) thy faith may not (utterly) fail; and when thou art converted (hast by repentance recovered thyself from this lapse) strengthen thy brethren."

This went hardly down with Peter, who confidently answered, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison, and to death." But he said it to one that knew him better than he knew himself. Who thereupon replying, said, "I tell thee, Peter, The cock shall not crow this day, before thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me."

^x Mat. xxvi. 30. Mark xiv. 26.

^y Luke xx. 31. 34.

Then intending to give them a close hint of the imminent dangers they must expect to meet with, in the general and extreme calamities and miseries that were coming upon that nation; to encourage them to go steadily on in his service, without fear or surprize, from the experience they had already had of his providential care over them, he asks them, "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes² (Mat. x. 9). lacked ye any thing? Nay, said they, We lacked nothing."

"But now, replied he, so great will the trials be, that he that hath a purse will have need enough to take it, and his scrip too; and he that hath no sword, will find more want of a sword than of his garment. For I say unto you, added he, that this that is written [And he was reckoned among the transgressors, Isaiah liii. 12.] must yet be accomplished in me; for the things (that have been foretold) concerning me are very near to have an end."

His disciples, not rightly apprehending the scope of his discourse, but thinking he had put them upon providing for his and their own defence, said, "Behold here are two swords." To which, as a slight check to them, he replied, "It is enough." Which shews he intended not to arm them with outward weapons for his or their own defence; but rather by the metaphors of purse, scrip, and sword, to forewarn them of, and prepare them for, those dismal and distressing times that would ensue after his death. And so the stream of interpreters run.

When this discourse between our Lord and his disciples was ended, Luke also gives an account that he came out with them, and went (as he was wont) to the mount of Olives.

But it is supposed by some (and that not without good probability) that yet before they left the house, wherein they had eaten the passover together, our blessed Lord entertained his disciples (the eleven at least) with that very sententious and excellent dis-

² Luke xxii. 35, 36. 38.

course, which is recorded in the 15th and 16th chapters of John; full of divine instructions; fatherly admonitions; repeated exhortations to brotherly love; timely forewarnings of approaching dangers, trials and sufferings; encouraging promises of divine support therein and there-through; and many sweet consolatory expressions. Which when he had ended, he poured forth unto his Father that heavenly prayer, which takes up the 17th chapter of John.

When he had ended his prayer, we may with good assurance conclude that he departed thence; John also relating, that when Jesus had spoken these words^a, he went forth with his disciples over the Brook Cedron.

The rest of the evangelists agree that he went into, or to, the mount of Olives. John says he went over the brook Cedron, which was in the way to that mount.

Cedron was a valley, lying on the east-side of Jerusalem, between the city and the mount. And because at some times, upon great rains, and descents of much water to it from the hills about it, it flowed like a brook, it was called a brook; and Cedron (as some suppose) from cedar-trees growing on the sides thereof, as the mount was called Olivet (2 Sam. xv. 30). or the mount of Olives, from the plenty of olive-trees growing thereon. In the Old Testament it is called Kidron, the same which king David passed over, when he fled from his rebellious son Absalom, 2 Sam. xv. 23.

In his passage thither it is supposed he said to his disciples^b (as Matthew, and from him Mark relates it) "All ye shall be offended because of me (shall be surprized with fear, and shall fly and forsake me) this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad".

This prophecy is thought to be taken from Zech. xiii. 7. Where the prophet personating the Lord of Hosts,

^a John xviii. 1.

^b Mat. xxvi. 31. Mark xiv. 27.

speaking to his sword, says, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd; smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." But our Saviour, accommodating the place to the present occasion, alters the words from [Smite the shepherd] to [I will smite the shepherd] yet Grotius will not admit that those words of the prophet did directly relate to Christ.

But our Lord (as his manner usually was by some comfortable expressions to soften what he had at any time said unto them^c, that seemed hard or harsh) not only now intimates his resurrection, but tells them expressly, "After I am risen again, I will then go before you (which shepherds then used to do before their sheep) into Galilee," that they and he might meet again there.

Peter (conscious to himself of his real intention and firm resolution to stick close to his Master, come what would on it) could not well digest that word, that they should be so offended because of him. Wherefore he boldly told him, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended."

But Jesus, who knew how short his own strength would be from carrying him through, answered him again (as he had done before, John xiii. 38). with a "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, that this very night, before the cock shall have crowed twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." To deny, is a higher degree of desertion than barely to fly.

This raised Peter's zeal to a greater height; so that expressing himself with more vehemency, he replied, "If I should die with thee, I would not deny thee in any wise." And so likewise (led perhaps by his example) said all the rest.

By that time his discourse was ended, Jesus was come (according to Matthew and Mark) to a place called Gethsemane, which signifies (say some) "the valley of fatness;" an olive-press (say others) from

^c Mark. xiv. 28. 30, 31, 32.

a common prefs there placed, for pressing the olive growing by.

It was a village, on the other side the brook Cedron ^d, at the foot of the mount of Olives. And in this village was that garden, into which John says Jesus entered with his disciples, that is, with the eleven.

For though we have not direct notice when Judas left them; yet we may well conclude he had left them before they came thither; and most likely so soon as the paschal supper was ended, that he might have sufficient time to muster up his forces in readiness, to put in execution his devilish design for the apprehension of his Master.

Mean while, our blessed Saviour, being in the garden with his disciples, said unto them, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder; and do ye pray also, that ye enter not into temptation."

Then taking with him Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, (James and John) he withdrew from the rest about a stone's cast; and beginning to be sorrowful, and very heavy, he said unto them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here, and watch with me. Then kneeling down, he prayed; and afterwards going a little farther, he fell on his face, and prayed, that, "if it were possible, the hour might pass from him."

"O my Father, said he^e, If it be possible (and all things are possible to thee) let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Upon this there appeared unto him an angel from heaven^f, strengthening him.

Whereupon he came back unto his disciples (those three, probably, whom he had selected from the rest) and finding them asleep (whom he had enjoined to watch and pray) he gave them this gentle reproof; "What! could ye not watch with me one hour?" But unto Peter more particularly, "Sleepest thou? Simon!" Couldst not thou watch one hour? Thou, who pro-

^d John xviii. 1.

^e Mat. xxviii. 39.

^f Luke xxii. 43.

feffedest thou wouldest live and die with me? Art thou fallen asleep already?

Then to them all together, repeating his cautionary counsel, "Watch ye and pray, said he, lest ye enter into temptation;" adding, as a strong motive thereunto, "The spirit truly is ready and willing^g, but the flesh is weak."

Then going away the second time, he prayed again, much after the same manner as before, but with more earnestness, by reason of the agony that was upon him; which was so great, that his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground^h.

Under all which, so great was the resignation of his will to the will of his Father, that he concluded, "O my Father, if (or seeing, as Grotius reads it) this cup may not pass away from meⁱ, except I drink it, thy will be done."

Having finished this prayer, he rose up, and came to his disciples, but found them asleep again; for their eyes were heavy by reason of sorrow; and they had nothing to say to him in their own excuse. Wherefore leaving them again, he went away, and prayed the third time, saying the same words as before, that is, with the same submission to his Father's will.

And now (the agony under which he had laboured being taken off) he comes again to his disciples; and letting them know that they had lost their season, and slept away the time wherein they should have watched and prayed with him, he tells them they may now sleep on, and take their rest (if they could, for they would soon meet with that that would keep them awake); for, said he, "The hour is come, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." Wherefore, added he, "Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand."

Before the word was out of his mouth, came the traitor Judas in sight; who, being one of the twelve,

^g Mat. xiv. 38. ^h Luke xxii. 44. ⁱ Mat. xxvi. 42. 45, 46, 47.

knew the place, because his Master oft-times resorted thither with his disciples.

With him came some of the upper rank of the priests, pharisees, and elders of the people^k, with the captains of the temple, and a band (or part of a band) of Roman soldiers, which at those high festivals (when so great a confluence of people flocked together) were appointed to guard the temple, to prevent seditious tumults among the people; and besides these a great multitude of the mob or common people (armed with swords, staves, and other weapons, and) having Judas at the head of them, as their leader and guide, Acts i. 16. and bringing lanthorns and torches with them to seek him by, though it was then a full moon.

When Jesus saw Judas coming up towards him^l, he in a courteous manner said unto him, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" Not that he was ignorant what he came about; but that he might awaken in him a due sense and consideration of the wickedness of his undertaking.

Judas, no whit startled at it, came up directly to him; and having before given it for a token to his company (whereby they might know Jesus from the rest) that whomsoever he should kiss, that was he; he said unto him, "Hail, Master; and kissed him." Whereupon Jesus said to him again, "Judas! betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?"

When they who were about him (viz. his disciples) saw what was likely to follow, they said unto him, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" And before he could or did return answer^m, Peter (as forward now of his hands, as he had been before of his tongue) having a sword, drew itⁿ; and striking at one of the company (who probably was a busy active fellow, and most forward to lay hold on Jesus) cut off his right

^k Luke xxii. 52. ^l Mat. xxvi. 50. 48, 49. ^m Luke xxii. 49.
ⁿ Mat. xxvi. 51. Mark xiv. 47.

ear. The man's name was Malchus, and he was servant to the high-priest.

This officious act of Peter's^o was so far from being approved by Jesus, that having forthwith charged him to put up his sword into the sheath, he let him know, that though the fighting dispensation was not then fully ended and over, yet that all they that of their own heads, without a lawful call thereto, did take the sword to kill or assault others, were liable by the law to perish by the sword; that is, to suffer death as murderers and manslaughterers.

And the more to check Peter's rash and unseasonable zeal, he asks him^p, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" As much as to say, "Art thou so little sensible of the end of my coming into the world, and of the work I have to do before I go out of the world, that thou wouldest oppose Providence, and disappoint the end of my coming? If I myself would do that, I need not be beholden to thy sword for it. For thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he would presently give unto me more than twelve legions of angels? (a sufficient strength and power to deliver me) but how then, added he, shall the scriptures be fulfilled, which have declared that thus it must be?"

Then, that he might to the very last do good, even to his enemies^q, he touched Malchus's ear, and healed him; thereby giving them an evidence both of his divine goodness and power.

And knowing all things that should come upon him, he stepped forwards towards those that were come to apprehend him (Judas also, who betrayed him, standing with them) and asked them, "Whom seek ye?" And they answering^r, "Jesus of Nazareth;" he replied, "I am he."

This was a word with power, and shewed him to be a king indeed, Eccles. viii. 4. For no sooner had he

^o Mat. xxvi. 52.

^p John xviii. 11. 53.

^q Luke xxij. 51.

^r John xviii. 4. 6.

uttered these words, [I am he] but they went backward, and fell to the ground.

This, one would think, might have been enough to have over-ruled their envy, and made them to desist from their enterprize, and depart. But they, too much hardened in evil to be wrought upon for good, got up and came forward again. Whereupon Jesus asked them again, "Whom seek ye?" And they saying as before, "Jesus of Nazareth;" he replied, "I have told you that I am he. If therefore, added he, ye seek me, let these (my followers) go their way^s." And this was done, that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake (in that heavenly prayer of his to his Father, John xvii. 12.) "Of them which thou gavest me, I have lost none."

Then addressing himself to the chief priests and elders of the people, with the captains of the temple, and the multitude that were come against him, he expostulated the case with them, as to the manner of their coming, thus. "Are ye come out, said he, as against a thief^t, with swords and staves, to take me? I sat daily with you in the temple, teaching, and ye did not stretch forth an hand against me; but this is your hour, and the power of darkness;" the hour, wherein the power of darkness is let loose to work through you against me.

As soon as he had said this (or perhaps while he was yet speaking to them) the band of soldiers, with their captain, and the officers of the Jews, took Jesus, and bound him^u; upon which all the disciples (they who had but just before engaged to stand by him, and live and die with him, and the most confident of them, Peter) forsook him, and fled.

It happened that there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body. Who he was, is altogether uncertain; but probable it is, that he might be one that lived or lodged near the

^s John xviii. 8, 9. ^t Mat. xxvi. 55. Mark xiv. 48. Luke xxii. 52. ^u John xviii. 12. Mat. xxvi. 56.

place where this was transacted; who, being roused from sleep by the noise that was made, leaped out of his bed in that posture, and ran in to see what the matter was^w. Him some of the company laid hold on; but he, leaving the linen cloth behind him, fled from them naked, and so escaped their hands.

There was strength enough of officers, soldiers, and rabble to have guarded Jesus, without binding him^x. But Judas having before warned them to hold him fast (as Matthew relates it) and to lead him away safely (as Mark has it) they did not think, it seems, that they had him safe enough, unless they bound him.

Being bound, they led him away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was the high-priest that same year. Not that the priesthood was but an annual office, for regularly it was for term of life. But the iniquity of the times, and the ambition of men, made too frequent changes in it.

This was the same Caiaphas, who prophetically gave council to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people, John xi. 50.

Only John mentions his being led to Annas; the rest so express it, as if, upon his apprehension, he had been brought immediately and directly before Caiaphas. And though interpreters, both elder and latter, have troubled themselves (more perhaps than they needed) to find out and adjust what part of our Saviour's examination and trial was before Annas, and what before Caiaphas; and how many of the three times Peter denied him before the one and the other of them; yet I find small ground (if any) for such a nice inquiry, since John, after he had mentioned the high-priest's (who was Caiaphas) examination of Jesus, concerning his disciples and doctrine (chap. xviii. 19). tells us, by a hystorology, that Annas had sent him bound to Caiaphas the high-priest, ver. 24. Nor does there appear any cause for their leading him to Annas at all, unless it were done out of respect to Annas,

^w Mark iv. 51. ^x Mat. xxvi. 48. Mark xiv. 44. John xviii. 13.
both

both as he was father-in-law to the present high-priest, had been high-priest himself; but the year before, and is by some thought to have been the immediate bargainer with Judas for the betraying his master; perhaps also it might be done to gain time, till notice could be given to Caiaphas that Jesus was actually taken, and in custody; that the Sanhedrin (or great council) might be convened for his trial, which yet needed not much time to effect; for by that time they could bring Jesus from Annas to Caiaphas, the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes (the whole body of the Jewish council) were all assembled together at his house.

Thus, ah thus! was our blessed Lord, who came to free mankind from the bonds of sin and eternal death, himself led bound from one of his persecutors to another, in order to be put to death.

Though all his disciples (even he who had been accustomed to lie in his bosom, and valiant Peter also among the rest) at the first brunt forsook him, and fled; yet could not Peter go quite off; but he, and one more, still hankering after their Master, and observing whither they led him, followed after him, but afar off; so greatly were they divided between love and fear.

Who that other disciple was, is not expressed, nor well agreed amongst expositors. Some take it to be one of them who are spoken of, John xii 42. where it is said, that "among the chief rulers also, many believed on him; who yet, because of the pharisees, did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue." Others (whom Grotius therein favours) think it to be the man at whose house Jesus had so lately eaten the paschal supper; but I rather take it to be John the evangelist, who used to speak so covertly of himself.

That other disciple, being known to the high-priest, had the readier access; and therefore went in with Jesus into the palace of the high-priest; but Peter, not

† John xviii. 15.

having confidence enough to trust in, nor interest to get in, was fain to stand without at the door.

That being observed by the other disciple, who was better acquainted in the house; he went out, and spake unto her that kept the door^z (for it was the manner of the Hebrews, as Grotius observes, to use women for porters, or door-keepers) and so, by her means, brought in Peter.

He being thus introduced, and willing to see the end of this matter, what would at length become of his Master^a; went and sat down with the servants, to warm himself at their fire, having too much lost the divine heat in himself.

As soon as the council was sat, and all things ready for the examination^b, the high-priest asked Jesus two general questions. First, concerning his disciples (that is, why, or for what end or purpose, he gathered disciples) thereby insinuating a charge of a design in him to raise rebellion; at least, to disturb the publick peace. Secondly, concerning his doctrine, that he might (if he could) accuse him of sedition or heresy.

To the first of these questions our Lord answered nothing, as knowing it depended on the latter, and would stand or fall with it; for if ^{all} doctrine was true and right, no matter how many were gathered to it. If it was the doctrine of the Messias long before promised and prophesied of, and daily expected and waited for by all the Jews; if all Israel should have embraced it, and followed him upon it; there could not have been either sedition or schism justly charged upon it, or upon him for promulging it.

Waving therefore that first question, he answers to the latter concerning his doctrine; yet so as not to let go his legal right and privilege of being convicted by the evidence of others; not drawn to accuse himself. Wherefore to that he answered thus:

“What I have delivered at any time for doctrine, I spake openly to the world. I ever taught in the syna-

^z John xviii. 16. ^a Mat. xxvi. 58. Mark xiv. 54. ^b John xviii. 19.

gogue, or in the temple^c, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret I have taught nothing (that is contrary to what I used to teach in publick) Why therefore askest thou me? Ask them that heard me, what I have said unto them: Behold, they know what I have said."

With that, one of the officers who stood by, struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, and said, "Answerest thou the high-priest so?" But as he did and spake this in rebuke to Jesus for not answering the high-priest (in his opinion) respectfully enough; so Jesus answered him again in the way of reproof for striking him unjustly, "If, said he, to that over-officious officer, I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil (demonstrate it, and convict me of it) but if I have spoken well, why smitest thou me?"

In which case, this divine pattern of meekness did not turn the other cheek (which himself, in other cases, recommended, rather than to revenge the former injury, Mat. v. 39); but, being thus abused in a court of judicature, before which he then stood arraigned for his life, and that too by an officer of that court, he used his natural and civil right to defend himself, and his own innocency, without offending the other, who both by word and hand had so unjustly and illegally offended him.

Nor was there indeed any indecency or disrespect shewed to the high-priest, in our Lord's answer to him: but it was a very fair and direct way (as Clarius on the place observes) to refer him for an account of what he had taught, to them that used to hear him teach.

And though all due respect is to be given to magistrates; yet should it not be extended to the prejudice of a just and righteous cause.

^c *Debetur quidem* (says Grotius on the place) *magistratibus reverentia; sed non quæ reis tuendi libertatem tollat, i. e.* 'Regard is due indeed to magistrates; but

^c John xviii. 20, 21, 22.

‘not such a regard as may take from the accused the liberty of defending themselves.’

When the high-priest and council found they could not draw Jesus to accuse himself^d, they betook themselves to their witnesses, of which they had more than a good many; for the chief priests and elders, and the whole council indeed, sought false witnesses against Jesus, that they might put him to death^e, but found none. That is, found none whose evidence would reach to take away his life. Otherwise they had witnesses enough; for many false witnesses came, and gave evidence against him; but their witness, or testimonies, agreed not together.

At last came two false witnesses (for under two they knew they could not convict him by the law, Deut. v. 15). These probably they hoped would effectually do their business. But if they agreed no better in the evidence they gave, than the account we have of their words does, they were far enough from being agreeing witnesses.

For Matthew reports them to have said^f, “This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.”

But Mark relates their words thus^g, “We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.”

The difference is great and obvious. By the first account they charge him with saying [I am able to destroy the temple of God]. By the latter, he is made to say [I will destroy this temple that is made with hands]. By the first, they make him say [I am able to build it (the temple of God) in three days]. By the latter [I will within three days build another made without hands].

As lame and as false as this evidence was, the high-priest (not hoping to get any better, and willing

^d Mat. xxvi. 59.

^e Mark xiv. 55, 56.

^f Mat. xxvi. 61.

^g Mark xiv. 58.

to make the most he could of this) arose, and standing up in the midst of the assembly, fell again to interrogating Jesus upon this evidence^b; saying to him, “Answerest thou nothing? What is it that these witnesses against thee?”

And finding that even thus he could not draw forth any thing from Jesus (who knowing the invalidity of the evidence, and not regarding their accusations, gave them no answer, but still held his peace) he now asked downright, “Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” By Matthew’s relation, it seems the high-priest did more solemnly press him to answer, by saying to him^c, “I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.”

From which words [I adjure thee, &c.] some over-earnest advocates for oaths have adventured to affirm, that Caiaphas did tender an oath to Jesus, and required him to answer upon his oath; whence they would infer the lawfulness of swearing among Christians.

But not here strictly to inquire whether it was the proper province of the high-priests, under the Jewish polity, to administer an oath; or whether the oath, *ex officio* (used here in former times by Popish bishops) was of so long a standing, as to have been then and there in use; it may perhaps be enough (and I hope not too much) here to intimate, that if that form of speech had, in some cases, in those times, the force of an oath, and Christ’s answering thereupon might be supposed to give a sanction to it; yet inasmuch as it was spoken under the dispensation of the law (which, how near soever to an end, was not then fully ended) his submission thereunto, or complying therewith, is no example to his followers in the Christian dispensation, any more than his being circumcised, and observing the paschal feast, with other Jewish rites.

Besides Grotius, though he acknowledges that form of adjuring to have had, in some cases, the force of an

^b Mat. xxvi. 62. Mark xiv. 60, 61. ^c Mat. xxvi. 63.

oath; yet he says it is sometimes used, '*Gravi obtestatione, per nomen divinum, religionem alicujus animo injicere, quod Latini veteres dicebant obsecrare,*' i. e. 'To cast a religious awe on the mind of another, by a solemn obtelation, or beseeching in the name of God, which the antient Latins called, 'To pray for God's sake.' Of which having given divers scripture instances, he adds, '*Qui sensus huic loco est proprius, ut & Mat. v. 7. i. e.*' Which sense is proper to this place,' as also to that in Mark v. 7. Vide Grot. in Loc. And Leigh, in his Crit. Sacr. (*Verbo 'Εξορκίζω*) having said, '*Græcis scriptoribus hoc verbum significat jurejurando aliquem adstringere,*' i. e. 'With Greek writers this word signifies to bind one by oath;' adds, '*Quod non videtur Caiaphas à Christo postulasse; aut, si postulavit, Christus recepisse,*' i. e. 'Which (viz. an oath) neither Caiaphas seems to have required of Christ, nor Christ to have taken it, if he had required it.'

But though Jesus would not answer to the frivolous accusations of his professed enemies; yet when this question, of so great import for all to know (which so immediately concerned his divinity) was put to him (whether with an oath or without) he who presently after told Pilate, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth," would by no means refuse or delay his answer.

Wherefore after he had a little kept them at a bay (as it were) as Luke relates it, by telling them^k, "If I tell you, ye will not believe; and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor yet let me go," he answered the high-priest by a known phrase, importing a concession of the question; "Thou hast said (so Matthew words it); or, "Ye say that I am." (So Luke, in answer to the whole council). But Mark gives his answer in plain terms, "I am."

^k Mat. xxvi. 64. Luke xxii. 67. Mark xiv. 62.

Nor stopped he there, but added ^l, “Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power (that is, of God, that being one of his great attributes) and coming in the clouds of heaven.”

Now they reckoned they had enough ^m; his own words were sufficient. To affect therefore the spectators, and make the ignorant people believe there was some matter in it, the high-priest rent his clothes, and cried out, “He hath spoken blasphemy.” Then added, “What farther need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.”

Then, as appealing to the rest of the council, “What think ye?” said he ⁿ; whereupon they all condemned him to be guilty of death.

No sooner was that word pronounced, but the officers, soldiers, and people that stood about Jesus, reputed him now as an out-law, unto whom nothing could be done amiss, fell on him most barbarously on all hands. Some mocked him, some spit in his face; others blindfolded him, by covering his face; and then some with their doubled fists did buffet him on the face; others, even the servants, did box or strike him with the palms of their hands; and when they had so done, they said unto him, “Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who it is that smote thee?” and many other things blasphemously spake they against him. And indeed, it was not a low degree of blasphemy against him, that they bid him prophecy who it was that struck him when he was hood-winked; for it struck at his divinity, and tacitly and with a derision denied his omniscience.

While thus our blessed Lord had made a good confession, (viz. that he was the Son of God) before the high-priest and council, his servant Peter most shamefully denied him before the high-priest's servants, and other by-standers.

^l Luke xxii. 69. ^m Mat. xxvi. 65. Mark xiv. 63. ⁿ Mat. xxii. 66. Mark xiv. 64. ^o Luke xxii. 63, 64, 65. Mat. xxvi. 67, 68. Mark xiv. 65.

For he, having gotten in by the intercession of another disciple, had thrust himself amongst the servants, under pretence of warming himself at their common fire, and being in an uneasy and restless condition of body as well as of mind, one while standing, another while sitting, now within, anon without, not knowing how to employ his time, or to behave himself, was snapped on a sudden by the damsel that had let him in; who asking him ^p, “Art not thou also one of this man’s disciples?” He answered, “I am not.” And, to remove all suspicion and further inquiry, added, “I know him not;” and then slipped aside into the porch (that by shifting places he might escape being questioned), and presently the cock crew (for midnight); yet was not Peter sensible enough to take notice of it.

Before he came out of the porch again, another maid observing him, said unto them that were there, “This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth. And though this, being spoken not to him, but others concerning him, did not necessarily require an answer from him; yet so apprehensive was he of the danger of being taken for a disciple of his then suffering Lord, that he again denied him, saying ^q, “I do not know the man ye speak of; and bound it with an oath.”

Hitherto he had been attacked by a couple of servant maids only, whose impertinent questions, as coming from such idle busy-bodies, he might, one would think, have easily passed over with contempt and silence, under the circumstances especially wherein he stood; but now, returning again to the company at the fire (for he could not stay long in a place) he was set upon by the men also, and that more generally; some of them telling him, “Surely thou art also one of them;” another confidently affirmed, saying, “Of a truth this fellow also was with him.” And a third (one of the high-priest’s servants, being kinsman to

^p John xviii. 17. Luke xxii. 57. ^q Mat. xxvi. 72. ^r Luke xxii. 58, 59.

Malchus; whose ear Peter had cut off, which gave him good occasion to take notice of him^s, and remember him again) coming in as an ocular evidence against him, said, "Did not I see thee in the garden with him?"

Besides these close and home charges, they offered to convict him by his speech or language^t. "Thy speech betrayeth thee, said some of them. Thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto, said others."

I know this is taken by many to import no more, but that there was some little difference in pronunciation (at least) between the Galileans and other Jews, in their speech or dialect, by which they might be distinguished, and readily known one from the other. And Grotius thereupon observes, that the Galilean speech came nearer to the Samaritan and Syriac idiom, than that of Jerusalem did; which may well enough be admitted, and yet have no force in it to convict Peter of being a disciple of Jesus, because he used the Galilean dialect; unless we could suppose they, who urged Peter's speech against him, were so inconsiderate as to conclude, that all the Galileans (or who spake their idiom) were disciples of Jesus; which probably not one of a thousand was.

May it not therefore be reasonably supposed that there was something more particular in Peter's converse (other than and besides his Galilean dialect), something peculiar to the school of Jesus, which Peter had so thoroughly learnt, and was so well grounded in, that notwithstanding the disorder his present exercise had cast him into, it was obvious and discernable unto them he conversed with, and discovered him to them to be a disciple of Jesus, as his pronunciation did that he was of Galilee; as afterwards the same Peter, with John, from their boldness of speech (being known to be otherwise unlearned and ignorant men) were both marvelled at by the rulers of the Jews, and taken notice

^s John xviii. 26. ^t Mat. xxvi. 73. Mark xiv. 70.

of in an especial manner, that they had been with Jesus, Acts iv. 13.

But whatever the servants or others in the high-priest's house saw or observed in Peter, to persuade them that he was a follower of Jesus; all they could do or say to him could not prevail with him to own himself to be so. He had, at the first onset, denied it. He had, upon a second attack, confirmed his denial with an oath. Now this third assault drove him to an higher pitch of obstinate denial. So that (say Matthew and Mark) he began to curse and to swear, saying, "I know not the man of whom ye speak." Where by cursing is understood an imprecation of some evil upon himself, if he were as they said of him.

This imprecation was immediately followed by the cock's crowing the second time. Upon which, his denied Lord (who knew that Peter's heart was sincere, though over-set with the weight of the present temptation) turned, and looked with a compassionate and healing eye upon poor Peter, who had now more reason than ever to have said, "Lord, Save me, or I perish." For now had Satan gotten him in his sieve, according to his desire (Luke xxii. 31). And had he not now felt the effect of his Lord's prayer for him (*ibid.*) Satan would have sifted all the good out of him.

Yet this second voice of the cock, but more especially the look of his merciful Lord, who at the same time touched his heart, by his divine grace within, awakened Peter from his lethargic fit. He remembered thereupon the word which Jesus had said unto him, "Before the cock shall have crowed twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." Whereupon he went out and wept (so they all say, but Matthew and Luke add) bitterly. "He went out, and wept bitterly."^u And well he might, for a bitter time no doubt it was with him, when the sense of so heinous a sin was come over him. For (as one writes thereupon) '*Tam enorme peccatum not erat pœnitentiâ persunctoriâ expiandum,*' i. e. 'So enormous a

^u Mat. xxvi. 74. Mark xiv. 71. ^w Mat. xxvi. 75. Luke xxii. 62.

‘sin was not to be expiated by a slight repentance.’ Jansen, cited by Cradock, in Harm. Evang. c. 6. sect. 11. And ‘*Majora crimina majoribus abluuntur fletibus,*’ *i. e.* ‘The higher the crimes be, the higher tides of tears are required to wash them out.’ Ambros. *ibid.*

Two reasons, more especially, are conjecturally assigned why the Lord suffered Peter to fall in this manner. First, that he might learn by this how frail and weak he was; and therefore should not presume upon his own strength any more. Secondly, that he (to whom the care and feeding of the sheep and tender lambs of Christ was afterwards committed, John xxi. 15, &c.) might the more readily pity and bear with the weak and infirm ones among them, and not deal too harshly with them, if they offended. But to proceed:

While Peter was thus gone aside, to bewail in private his public transgression, it is probable those indignities were offered to our Lord (by the officers of the court, while the council was withdrawn to consider what way to proceed judicially against him) which we have touched on before.

For the scene hitherto having been all night-work (wrought in the dark by the power of darkness) as soon as it was day, the chief-priests, and the elders of the people, with the scribes, and indeed the whole council, held a consultation about him. Luke makes them bring him into their council-chamber again that morning, and there to interrogate him afresh. Which others taking to be no other than his former examination in the night, having touched it before, I repeat it not here.

The result of this their consultation was, they bound Jesus (who probably had been unbound, during the time he was under examination before them); and then leading him away, delivered him to Pontius Pilate, the then governor of Judea, under Tiberius the Roman emperor.

It was early in the morning, when these blood-thirsty Jews brought Jesus to Pilate’s house, or judg-

ment-hall^{*}; yet would not these high hypocrites enter into the hall of judgment, lest (forsooth) they should be defiled, and thereby made unfit to eat the passover.

So that Pilate, the Roman governor, was fain to go out to them, and ask them, “What accusation bring you against this man?”

This looks like a great condescension in him, so great a person, in so great authority. But then it must be considered also, that the accusers and prosecutors of Jesus were not mean persons, but of the highest rank among the Jews, the chief priests and elders of the people, even the whole Sanhedrin. So that it was not a condescension of a great man to a poor or low man, but of one great man to many great men.

As soon as Pilate was come out unto them, and had asked them what accusation they brought against Jesus, they first tell him in general that he may take it for granted that he is a malefactor, else they had not brought him to him. And when that would not do (for Pilate thereupon bid them take him, and judge him according to their law) they then, alledging that it was not lawful for them to put any man to death, loaded him with a bead-roll of capital accusations[†]; telling Pilate that they found this fellow (so in contempt they called the Lord of the whole world) perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar; alledging that he himself is Christ, a king.

These were charges of an high nature. To pervert a nation! To forbid the subjects to give tribute (pay their taxes) to their prince! To assert himself to be a king in the kingdom of another, to whom himself is but a subject! “What greater crimes, what higher treasons, could a man have been charged with?”

To all these accusations laid against him by the chief priests and elders, Jesus was wholly silent[‡]. Which Pilate observing, said unto him, “Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?” Yet would not even that draw from him a word of answer to

^{*} John xviii. 28, 29, 30, 31. [†] Luke xxiii. 2. [‡] Mat. xxvii. 13.
their

their false charges; infomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

But when Pilate himself asked him^a, “Art thou the king of the Jews?” He readily answered, by way of concession, “Thou sayest it;” but explained it afterwards, shewing what a sort of king he was, and of what nature his kingdom was. For when Pilate, upon the clamours of the Jews, going into the judgment-hall, called Jesus before him, and judicially asked him, “Art thou the king of the Jews?” Jesus answered him by asking, “Sayest thou this of thyself? Or did others tell it thee of me?” Pilate began to huff at that, as if he took it for a disparagement to him to be thought knowing in the Jewish stories; and therefore answered somewhat scornfully, “Am I a Jew?” Thine own nation, and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me. “What hast thou done?”

Jesus then implicitly acknowledging himself to be a king, answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. And that is evident from my being thus delivered up. For if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence.”

“Art thou a king then, said Pilate? Thou sayest that I am a king, replied Jesus, and that most truly:” adding, “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth; and every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice.”

Such language as this Pilate’s ears had not been used to; wherefore he hastily asked Jesus, “What is truth?” (What is that thou callest truth, or what dost thou mean by that word)? But recollecting himself, and considering that that was not his present business, as a judge, to inquire into, not tarrying for an answer, he went out again to the Jews, and plainly acknowledged to them, that he found in Jesus no fault at all.”

^a Luke xxiii. 3. John xviii. 33, 34, 35, 36, 37

So far was this from pacifying the Jews, that it made them cry out the more fiercely against Jesus, saying, "He stirreth up the people (meaning to sedition, or rebellion) teaching throughout all Jewry^b, beginning even from Galilee to this place."

The mentioning of Galilee put Pilate in a muse, and made him ask whether the man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction (for Galilee was under Herod) he sent Jesus to Herod, who himself also was then at Jerusalem.

Exceeding glad was Herod to see Jesus; for he had been desirous of a long season to have seen him^c, because he had heard many things of him; and not only so, but he hoped also to have seen some miracle done by him.

But he was greatly disappointed of his expectation; for so far was Jesus from gratifying him with any miraculous work, that though Herod put many questions to him, and the chief priests and scribes stood up against him, and vehemently accused him to Herod, yet did he not vouchsafe one word of answer to either him or them.

Herod therefore, with his men of war, set him at naught; and having made himself sport enough with him, he in mockery put on him a gorgeous robe, to make him look like a mock-king, and in that dress sent him back to Pilate. And so highly pleased was Herod, that Pilate had given him the opportunity of seeing Jesus (whom he had often heard of, but never seen before) that though they two had been at daggers drawing (as the proverb is) between themselves; now laying aside their mutual enmities, they were reconciled the same day one to the other.

Some think the grudge, on Herod's side, arose from Pilate's having slain some of the Galilean Jews (who were subjects to Herod) and mingled their blood with their sacrifices; of which we read in Luke xiii. Others suppose that Pilate had made some incroachment on

^b Luke xxiii. 5. 7. ^c Luke xxiii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

Herod's jurisdiction. Whatever had been the ground of their quarrel, they were now on this occasion made friends. But (as one says) '*Amicitia maledicta quæ in Christo persequendo coalescit.*' i. e. 'It is a cursed friendship which is contracted by persecuting Christ.'

When Pilate had now received Jesus back again from Herod, he called together the chief priests, and the rulers, and the people, and thus bespake them :

"Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people^d; and behold, I having examined him before you, have found no fault in him, touching those things whereof ye accuse him. No, nor yet Herod; for I sent you to him, and lo, nothing is by him done to him, that might intimate he judged him worthy of death. I will therefore chastise him, and then release him. For ye know (added he) that ye have a custom that I should release unto you some one prisoner at this your passover-feast."

When and whence this custom arose is not clear, though it is not thought to have then been of any long standing. Grotius runs it no higher than Augustus. '*Puto ab Augusto hanc gratiam concessam populo judaico.*' i. e. 'I think this favour was granted to the Jewish people by Augustus,' says he, on Matt. xxvii. 15. And for the reason of it, *De Dieu* (cited by Cradock in his Harm. Evan. c. 6. sect. 14). tells us, '*Viri eruditi proferunt hoc potius festo quàm alio, dimissum fuisse captivum, ut educti olim è captivitate Egyptiacæ populi monumentum esset.*' i. e. 'Learned men deliver that a prisoner was wont to be released at this feast, rather than at another, that it might be a monument of the people's deliverance in old time out of the Egyptian thralldom.' However, a known custom it seems it was (claimed by the Jews, and acknowledged by the governor) that at the passover-feast he should deliver unto them a prisoner of their nomination and choice; not whom he thought fit, but whom they would.

^d Luke xxiii. 14, 15, 16.

He had at that time in bonds a notable prisoner, called Barabbas^e, who was not only a robber, but for a certain sedition and insurrection made in the city, and for murder committed in the insurrection, was cast into prison.

Him therefore (as the most infamous of his prisoners^f, and for that reason least likely, as he thought, to be chosen by the Jews) Pilate set up as a competitor for liberty with Jesus; for he was very desirous to release Jesus, if he might, because he plainly saw that it was for mere envy that the Jews had delivered him to him.

When therefore he had put them in mind of their custom, by which they expected he should release one unto them; and the multitude thereupon crying aloud, desired him to do as he had ever done unto them; he put the question to them, "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas? Or Jesus, who is called Christ?" And the chief priests and rulers having tutored the people to ask Barabbas, and that Jesus might be destroyed; they cried out all at once, "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas."

Pilate thereupon, still willing to release Jesus, making as if he did not rightly understand them, put the question to them again, "Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?" They answered, "Barabbas." He, willing to try them yet farther, said unto them the third time, "What then shall I do with Jesus, who is called Christ?" They all said unto him, "Let him be crucified." Why, replied he, "What evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him; I will therefore chastise him, and let him go. But they cried out the more vehemently, "Let him be crucified."

Pilate therefore, finding he could not prevail by words or persuasions, to mollify the minds of the Jews towards Jesus, took him, and caused him to be scourged, with what intent is not agreed; some think-

^e Luke xxiii. 19. ^f Mat. xxvii, 17, 18. 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, ing

ing it to be done for examination only^s, to make Jesus (who was so backward to answer him) discover who or what he was; and what he had done to provoke the Jews so highly against him. Others think that it was done as a preparative to his crucifixion; it being the Roman manner to scourge those first, who were sentenced to be crucified. Nor want there some, who suppose it was done for neither of these ends; but to try if, by a severe scourging, he might beget some compassionate relenting in the minds of the Jews towards Jesus, and so bring him off without farther punishment. Which supposition carries in it the most favourable excuse of Pilate, for scourging a man whom he himself had so often declared he found no fault at all in. But for my own part, I rather incline to think that this scourging of Jesus was ordered by Pilate, though against his will, as a fore-runner of his crucifixion; and that the rather, because thereupon he was, as it were, given up to the Roman soldiers as a condemned person, for them to vilify and abuse at their pleasure.

For upon this scourging, we read, "The soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head. And they put on him a robe of purple, or scarlet, and a reed in his right hand" (scepter-like): then bowing the knee before him, they, in mockage to him, said, "Hail, king of the Jews! and spitting on him, took the reed out of his hand, and smote him on the head therewith."

Here were pain and scorn conjoined. Scorn in the crown, as it was an emblem of regality, set on his head in contempt of his kingship. Pain from the thorns of which it was made. A soldier's red coat (for so it is supposed it was) put on him instead of a royal robe, the ensign of Imperial majesty. A contemptible reed put into his hand, to represent a golden scepter. Bowing the knee in derision, and saying, "Hail, O king," with the utmost contempt and scorn. And then, to complete the ignominy, not only spitting on him, but

^s John xix. 1, 2, 3.

taking the reed, or cane (their mock-scepter) out of his hand, and laying him on the head with it.

Ah! Who can represent to the eye of his mind our blessed Lord thus dressed, thus handled, thus dealt with; seeing his body torn with the stripes he had received, the blood trickling down from his temples, and himself made the scorn and contempt of his enemies; and shall withal consider (as he ought) that this guiltless one, this immaculate Lamb, underwent all this for his sake, to free him from guilt and eternal punishment; can abstain from tears, and not sensibly partake of the dolours he underwent?"

In this deplorable condition and ridiculous dress did Pilate bring forth Jesus again to the Jews; and setting him before them, said^b, "Behold the Man (see in what a miserable condition he is, and relent of your cruel purposes against him); and take notice, that I bring him thus forth unto you, that ye may know that (although at your instigation I have dealt thus severely with him, yet) I find no fault in him."

But when the chief priests and officers saw him, they, with obdurate hearts, and extended throats, cried out, saying, "Crucify him, Crucify him."

"Nay, said Pilate, if nothing else will satisfy your rage, but to have him crucified, take ye him, and crucify him, if ye will; for as for my part, I have told you already, and that more than once, I find no fault in him."

Alas! cried they, "It is not lawful for us to put him, or any man at all, to death. But we have a law, and by that law of ours he ought to die; because he made (that is, in their sense, feigned) himself the Son of God."

What law they referred particularly to, or intended to assign, is somewhat uncertain. Some think they had respect to that law against blasphemers, Levit. xxiv. 16. Others, that against false prophets, in Deut. xviii. 20. Neither of which is direct to the purpose, nor

^b John xix. 5, 6, 7.

applicable to his case, otherwise than by inference. However, by starting this new charge (which probably they might think would more puzzle Pilate, as being beyond his reach, and bring him to a readier compliance with them) they manifestly let fall their former accusations of seditious practices against the Roman government, which came more directly under Pilate's cognizance; and thereby gave Pilate a fair opportunity (had he had eyes to see, and a heart to lay hold on it) to have quashed all their invidious complaints against him, and to have fairly discharged Jesus.

But as God would not suffer that¹, which would have tended to disappoint his great end, in sending his Son into the world to suffer death for the redemption of the world, so Pilate, also having already, to gratify the Jews, overshot himself, and gone beyond the due bounds of right and law (as well as the dictates of his own reason and conscience) in scourging an innocent and (in his own judgment) faultless man; and suffering him to be so abused and vilified by his soldiers, as he had been, was startled at this new charge, and somewhat fearful, lest (not knowing the quality of the prisoner) he should have done more already to him than he could answer.

For the Romans, as the rest of the heathen nations, being polytheists; and the Pagan theology admitting not only many gods and goddesses, but even descents also of deities, besides their deified heroes, Pilate might be apprehensive, that if Jesus should prove to be of such a deified extraction, his having treated him so ill, might draw down divine vengeance upon himself.

Wherefore going into the judgment-hall again, and calling Jesus before him, he asked him, "Whence art thou?" (What is thy extraction?) but Jesus gave him no answer; as indeed no cause he had; "for how could he expect justice, much less favour, from him that had dealt so unjustly by him already?"

¹ John xix. ix.

Pilate, not pleased with his silence, because it left him still in the dark, said unto him (in somewhat a rougher tone) "Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee? and have power to release thee^k?"

Jesus had before acknowledged (implicitly at least) that he was a king, and had told Pilate, that "his kingdom was not of this world;" so that Pilate had no need to ask of him again who or whence he was; and therefore Jesus was silent to that needless question. But now that Pilate began to boast of his power over him, he takes him down with a short but nipping answer, saying, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above;" therefore, added he, "He (and they) that delivered me unto thee (all that have had a hand or head in it; Judas in the first place; the chief priests, elders and rulers in the next place; and the whole people indeed that are active in or consenting to it) hath (and have) the greater sin." Not that thou art free from sin in complying with their importunate clamours (which thou plainly seest proceed from their envy, Mat. xxvii. 18. Mark xv. 16.) against me an innocent man, whom thy own conscience acquits from guilt, and hath forced thee to declare, "thou canst not find any fault in me, John xviii. 38. But my betrayers, they who have given me up to that power thou so much gloriest in; these, having the heavenly oracles that testify of me; reading (or having opportunity to read) those divine prophecies which foretold my coming; having seen (most of them) the great, the good, the wonderful works which have from time to time, and from place to place, been wrought by me, through that divine power, compared to which thy boasted power is but mere impotency; these have the greater weight, the deeper dye of guilt upon them, as having sinned more wilfully, and against more clear light and conviction.

^k John xix. 10, 11, 12.

Jefus's answer fo reached Pilate, that from thenceforward he fought to releafe him. Which the envious Jews obferving, they heightened their clamours againft Jefus, crying out to Pilate, "If thou letteft this man go, thou art not Cæfar's friend; for whofoever maketh himfelf a king (in any part of Cæfar's empire, without his knowledge, or againft his mind) fpeaketh againft Cæfar."

This they thought would clench up Pilate clofe to them; and fo indeed it did; for when Pilate had heard that faying (well knowing how apt the Jews were to fuggelt complaints to the court at Rome, by their agents there, and how jealous a prince the emperor Tiberius was) he went and fat down again on another tribunal or judgment-feat¹, in more open view, in a place that was then called the *pavement*; being a place raifed higher than the reft of the ground, by fquare ftones, pitched or laid thereon; and from that rifing, called Gabbatha in the Hebrew tongue, that is, in that which then went for, and was vulgarly fspoken inftead of, the Hebrew, which was the Syriac tongue, with fome fmall mixture of Hebrew words in it.

On this high raifed tribunal Pilate fitting, caufed Jefus to be brought forth again, and fhewing him to the Jews, faid, "Behold your king." But they, in great difdain, cried out, "Away with him; Away with him; crucify him."

"Shall I crucify your king, faid Pilate? We have, replied the chief priefts, no king but Cæfar."

While Pilate was thus perplexed what to do, divided between his defire to releafe Jefus, and his fear to difpleafe the Jews, he received a cautionary meffage from his wife, as he fat on the judgment-feat, in thefe words, "Have thou nothing to do with (or againft) that juft man^m (viz. to pafs fentence of death upon him); for I have fuffered many things this day in a dream becaufe of him."

¹ Joha xix. 13, 14, 15. ^m Mat. xxvii. 19.

This warning from his wife wrought so far upon Pilate, that though he had not strength enough to withstand the loud voices of the Jews, instantly requiring that Jesus should be crucified; but when he saw that he could not prevail any thing, but that rather a tumult was in danger to be made, he suffered the clamours of them, and of the chief priests, to prevail over him; yet before he would pass the sentence, he took water (a cleansing element, and type of innocency, and washing his hands therewith before the multitude, made this protestation for the clearing of himself, viz. "I am innocent of (shedding) the blood of this just person; see ye to it." (Ye who have, in a manner, driven me to it). And so blindly hardened were the people, deluded by their priests, that they all, as with one voice, answered; "His blood (that is, the guilt, and consequently the punishment, of shedding his blood) be upon us, and upon our children."

This closed the work, and upon this Pilate (holding himself free from guilt, and out of danger of punishment, both which the Jews had transferred from him to themselves) and willing to content the people, gave sentence that it should be as they required^a. And thereupon releasing unto them Barabbas, whom (though a robber and murderer) they had desired, he delivered Jesus to their wills; that is, to be crucified, as they would have him.

Here Matthew, and after him Mark, bring in the account of the scourging of Jesus, and the indignities put upon him by the soldiers, in crowning him with thorns, arraying him in purple, &c. which John (whom I herein follow) delivers to have been done before sentence; and I accordingly have touched it before.

All this while, from the first apprehension of our Lord until now, we have had no account, no mention of Judas; who was (next to Satan) the first and immediate actor in this tragedy, by betraying his Lord, at

^a Mat. xxvii.

Satan's instigation, into the hands of his blood-thirsty enemies the Jews, who had long sought his life.

But now that he saw he was condemned (whether this [now] is to be referred to the judgment of the Sanhedrin before (Mat. xxvi. 66. Mark xiv. 16) as some would have it; or to the sentence of Pilate. for his present crucifixion, as others) the evangelist Matthew (who alone of the four mentions this part of the story touching Judas^o) tells us that he repented himself.

What sort of repentance this was, may be understood from the event or issue of the business, his hanging himself, &c. He repented himself, rather than his sin; and being touched with remorse for what he had done, it is probable he wished it undone, or that he had not done it.

Some have entertained such favourable thoughts of Judas, as to suppose he had a notion that Jesus would not have suffered himself to be taken, and brought under the sentence of death; but would have found means to have escaped the hands of his enemies now also, as he had done (and he had seen him do) sometimes before; and that from this apprehension Judas was emboldened to betray him. Of which (if my notes mislead me not, for I have not the book at hand to compare them with) I have read something in John Godwyn's *Redemption Redeemed*, page 126. But how quaint soever this conjecture may seem to others, Judas's cautionary counsel to them that apprehended Jesus to hold him fast, Mat. xxvi. 14. and to lead him away safely, Mark xiv. 44. plainly speaks, to my understanding, his fear, not his hope, that Jesus would escape. Nor do I take his repentance (if it may properly be called so) to have proceeded from godly sorrow, but from a desperate horror of mind.

Which yet had this effect upon him, that he brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders; and made before them an open confession,

^o Mat. xxvii. 3.

or acknowledgement of his offence, saying^p, “I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.”

They having served their own ends by him, and regardless now what became of him, roughly answered, “What is that to us? Look thou to that.”

Which when Judas heard, and saw that they would not give him so much ease, as to take the money of him again, he threw down the thirty pieces in the temple (or in the court of the temple rather) and departing from them, went and hanged himself.

This was the miserable and wretched end of that miserable and wretched traitor Judas; who for a little filthy lucre betrayed his master (the Lord of life and glory) into the hands of his avowed enemies to be crucified.

The author to the Hebrews (chap. 6. ver. xi.) giving the reason why such, as after they have made some good progress and proficiency in the Christian religion, fall away therefrom, cannot (at least without very great difficulty) be renewed again unto (or by) repentance, says, “They crucify unto themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” O that there might not be found among the sons of men any one, that, in a mystical or metaphorical sense, should betray the Son of God, as this Iscariot Judas did literally and actually!

While Judas was thus employed about his own execution, the chief priests, finding he was gone, and had left the pieces of silver lying there before them, took them up, and (like ceremonious hypocrites as they were) pretending that it was not lawful to put them into the corban or treasury^q (the chest which stood thereby, to receive the gifts that were offered to the temple) because it was the price of blood (though they themselves had made no scruple to give them as the price of blood) they took counsel (laid their heads together) and bought with them the potter’s field (a piece of ground, which, having been digged and

^q Mat. xxvii. 24.

^s Mat. xxvii. 6, 7.

delved for pot-earth, was probably fit for no other use, and so could be purchased at a low price, as this was) to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called the *field of blood* long after. Thus (says Grotius) those filthy priests condemned themselves, in accursing that as a grievous sin in the seller, which they themselves were the buyers of.

Then was fulfilled (says Matthew) that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet^r, 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 they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord appointed me.”

Here again interpreters are at a loss. The evangelist’s naming the prophet Jeremy (in whose book nothing of this prophecy is to be found) instead of the prophet Zachary (in whom it is found, at least the substance of it, Zach. xi. 13.) hath put them to a stand, and set their wits at work to reconcile it.

Some conjecture that Zachariah had two names, whereof Jeremiah was one; and so Matthew might indifferently call him by either. But this is merely precarious.

Others would have it that Matthew did therefore ascribe this prophecy to Jeremy, because his name stood first in that volume of the prophets wherein the prophecy of Zachary was mentioned. But though some of great name have gone that way, that seems far-fetched, and is far from giving satisfaction.

Others suppose that this prophecy was really uttered by the prophet Jeremy, though not committed by him to writing, and so digested among his other prophecies, but left among other such sayings of his as were committed to memory, and delivered down to posterity traditionally. And that the prophet Zachary (who is thought to have been a great admirer of Jeremiah, and affected to imitate his stile and sayings) committed this, amongst others, to writing; but that the evan-

^r Mat. xxvii. 9.

gelist chose to give it under the name of Jeremy, the first author of it. But this also is *gratis dictum*, and smells too much of contrivance.

Neither want there some, both antient and modern, who seem taken with an apocryphal story, delivered by Hierom, that in his travels a Nazarene Jew shewed him an apocryphal book of the prophet Jeremy, in which these words, as cited by the evangelist Matthew, were extant under the name of the prophet Jeremiah. But neither did Hierom, when he had read it, approve that this place should be referred to apocryphal authority; nor yet Erasmus, who (as well as others) give this account of the matter from Hierom.

Not to recite all the conceits that have filled mens heads on this subject^s, that seems most ingenuous and plain, which Drusius delivers as his sense thereon. '*Jeremiæ nomen irrepfisse videtur loco Zachariæ, vel culpâ manus exscribentis, vel certè memoriæ vitio.*' *i. e.* 'The name of Jeremy seems to have crept in, in the place of Zachary, either by the fault of the writer, or assuredly by a failure of memory.'

Which might the more likely be, if (as Grotius says) many oracles of the antient prophets were kept among the Jews, not in writing, but in memory; although in after-times, they who had received them from their parents, noted them down privately. And this he tells us, '*Pro certo haberi debet.*' *i. e.* 'Ought to be taken for certain.' But leaving this, let us return to see what in the mean while became of our Lord.

When once Pilate had passed the sentence of death upon him, the soldiers^t, animated (no doubt) by the Jews, divesting him of their mock regale (the purple robe at least) put his own raiment on him again, and led him away to crucify him.

And as the manner was, that such malefactors as were to be crucified, carried on their shoulders each one the cross on which he was to suffer^u; so they laid

^s Mat. xxvii. 31. Mark xv. 20. ^t John xix. 17. ^u Luke xxiii. 26.

on Jesus also his cross, which he bearing went forth with them.

But whether it were that they thought the weight of it too heavy for him to go on with; or that they had a mind to lay that ill office upon another (whom they had an ill-will to, as supposing him to bear good will to Jesus) they laid hold on one Simon a Cyrenian * (who, coming out of the country, was passing by) and pressing him into their service, they took the cross from off Jesus, and laying it upon Simon, compelled him to bear it after Jesus.

This Simon is supposed to have been, if not an open disciple, at least a secret well-wisher to Jesus; and this opprobrious office, which they now put upon him, was likely to make him a publick confessor of Christ. The evangelist Mark not only describes him from his country Cyrene, but tells us also he was the father of Alexander and Rufus; which would have added nothing to his character, had not those sons of his been men of note in the Christian church, at the time when that evangelist wrote. And it is thought they, at least the latter of them, then lived at Rome (where Mark is supposed to have written his gospel) and that it is the same Rufus, whom the apostle Paul (in his epistle to the Romans, chap. xvi. ver. 13.) so kindly salutes; with this testimony added, "that he was chosen in the Lord." And doubtless it was a family both worthy in itself, and dear to the apostle, which made him salute the mother of Rufus also, calling her his mother and mine; his in nature; mine in affectionate kindness and Christian care. But Simon himself not being there mentioned, it may be supposed he was then dead.

The place they had our Lord to, and where he was to be crucified, was called in the Hebrew tongue Golgotha; which being interpreted, is *the place of a skull*, taking that name from the skulls of men there executed; from whence it was also called Calvary.

* Luke xxiii. 26, 33

As he went thither, there followed him a great company of people*, and of women, who also bewailed and lamented him. But he turning unto them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me; but weep for yourselves, and for your children. 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 which never gave suck."

By which proverbial speeches, he darkly hinted to those commiserating women, who tenderly bewailed his suffering condition, what he had before more plainly and largely opened to his disciples (in Mat. xxiv. Mark xiii. and Luke xxi.) concerning those extreme miseries and insupportable calamities which would inevitably come upon that city, nation and people, for their injustice and cruelty to him.

The sense of which that he might set more home upon the minds of these people, he (alluding to a passage in the prophet Hosea (chap. x. ver. 8.) which related to the wretched condition of Samaria, that is, of Israel, whose metropolis, after the division of the tribes and kingdoms, Samaria was) adds (with some inversion of the words) "Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, fall on us; and to the hills, cover us." So much better it were to be buried alive, than to see and undergo the approaching miseries.

And to shew how just and equal it would be, for those desolating calamities to come upon that generation, and how reasonably they might expect them, he subjoins, "For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" As if he had said, "If you, who have long been the peculiar people of God, and who profess to be a living people, can find in your hearts to deal thus with me, the Lord of life, the root and fountain of all living sap and virtue, from whence all greenness flows; what may you expect should be done to you (who are indeed a cankered, dry, sapless stock, fit for nothing but the fire) by the Romans, a

* Luke xxiii. 27, 28. 30, 31.

people whom, in comparison of yourselves, ye account but rude and barbarous?"

When he had to this effect expressed himself to the gazing multitude, which, with various affections, attended him to his suffering, he went on, having two other, who were malefactors indeed, led along with him, to be put to death also.

This was a very malicious policy, contrived and procured (in all probability) by his wicked enemies, the persecuting priests and rulers of the Jews, to misrepresent him the more easily to the undiscerning multitudes; who being apt to judge of men by the company they are in, or have with them, and seeing Jesus suffer with and between two known and notorious thieves^v, might the more readily be led to conclude he was such another as they were, a malefactor as well as they.

Being come to Golgotha, or Calvary, the place where he was to suffer death, they offered him a potion or cup to drink of.

This was according to the manner or custom of the Jews, who, in pretence of pity to the sufferer, were wont to give him a cup of wine (which they grounded on Prov. xxxi. 6.) with a grain of frankincense in it, which would so stupify the senses, that the condemned person would less feel the pain of his punishment. And this cup, says Godwyn, was so usually given before execution, that from thence the word *calix*, a cup, is sometimes in scripture put for death itself; as in those speeches of Christ, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" John viii. 11. And, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," &c. Mat. xxvi. 39 and 42. Moses and Aaron, lib. v. c. 6.

But these wicked wretches, partly in mockery, partly in cruelty, instead of wine and frankincense, offered him, says Mark, wine mingled with myrrh, or (as Matthew hath it) vinegar mingled with gall. Which

^v Mat. xxvii. 34. Mark xv. 23.

when he had tasted, he refused to drink of. Whether his refusal prevented their offering any cup to the two thieves, I know not; but either they drank not at all, or drank not that which would intoxicate the brain, or stupify the sense; for one of them had sense enough to revile Jesus; the other to rebuke him for it, as we shall see anon.

When they saw he would not drink, they made no more delay, but stripping off his clothes, they lifted him up upon the cross, and with nails driven through his hands and feet into the wood, they fastened him unto it.

Which when they had done, he praying to his Father for them^z, said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" thus confirming by his own practice the precept he had given to his disciples before, Mat. v. 44.

The two malefactors, whom they had provided to defame Jesus by, they crucified also with him; placing one of them on his right-hand, and the other on his left, so that Jesus was in the middle between them. Whereby that scripture, Isaiah liii. 12. which saith, "And he was numbered with the transgressors," was fulfilled; as our Lord foretold it must be, Luke xxii. 37.

It was customary with the Romans to put a title or superscription upon the crosses on which the malefactors suffered. Accordingly Pilate wrote a superscription, and caused it to be set upon the cross, over the head of Jesus; which Matthew and Mark call his accusation.

Mark gives it only in these words, "The king of the Jews^a."

Luke gives it, "This is the king of the Jews."

Matthew has it, "This is Jesus the king of the Jews."

But John says it was, "Jesus of Nazareth king of the Jews."

^z Luke xxiii. 34. ^a Mark xv. 26. Luke xxiii. 38. Mark xxvii. 37. John xix. 19.

This inscription was written in letters of Greek, Latin and Hebrew^b (says Luke); or in Hebrew, Greek and Latin (says John). These were the three prime languages at that time; upon which Grotius has (as I take it) a pretty significant note to this purpose, viz. That this inscription was written in Latin, for the majesty of the Roman empire (to which that tongue was vernaculous). In the Hebrew, for the sake of the place (Jerusalem) where the punishment was inflicted. In the Greek, for the benefit of those great multitudes of Hellenists (that is, such Jews as did understand and use the Greek tongue, and the septuagint translation of the Bible) that came together to the passover. And this, adds he, is not unworthy to be noted, that by divine direction, the cross of Christ, after the manner of emperors, bore upon it the titles of nations not yet brought, but shortly to be brought, under subjection to him. For he it was to whom the religion of the Jews, the learning of the Greeks, and the power and strength of the Latins ought to give place. Thus he.

This inscription was read by many of the Jews, who resorted thither to see the execution (for though the place where Jesus was crucified was without the gate, yet it was nigh to the city). And among the many that read it, the chief priests (we may well think) were not the backwardest.

But they did not like that Jesus should be therein published to the world, "The king of the Jews." Wherefore they went to Pilate, and bluntly said unto him, "Write not the king of the Jews, but that he said, I am king of the Jews."

It was not, probably, without a divine direction, that Pilate wrote as he did; whereby that which was designed for an infamous accusation of Jesus, as affecting and aspiring to worldly greatness and empire, was turned to a sort of proclamation of his just and rightful title, who, as the Eastern wise-men, at his birth said, was born king of the Jews, Mat. ii. 2. And

^b John xix. 20.

Pilate, perhaps by this time sensible that he had yielded too far already to the importunities of those insinuating priests, as bluntly answered them, "What I have written, I have written;" and so left them to help themselves as well as they could.

Which because they could not do, they fell foul upon our blessed Lord himself^c, joining with the scribes and elders in mocking and reviling him, saying, "He saved others (which was true, both in his saving many, and raising some from the dead) himself he cannot save" (which was false, for he could, but would not save himself, that he might save mankind). "If, said they, he be the king of Israel, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God, added they: Let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God."

This set the people on, who stood there as beholders, or at least encouraged them to go on^d; so that they, falling in with the rulers, derided him also, saying (as they had done) "He saved others, let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God."

They also that passed by railed at him, wagging their heads, and saying^e, "Ah! Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, if thou be the Son of God, and come down from the cross."

Nor did the soldiers spare him, but they also in mockery came to him, and offering him vinegar, said^f, "If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself."

Nay, one of the thieves (for so Matthew, mentioning the thieves together, chap. xxvii. 44. is explained by Luke, chap. xxiii. 39, &c.) which were hanged beside him, railing on him, cast the same in his teeth, saying, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us."

But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" As if he had said, "Hast thou no fear of God

^c Mat. xxvii. 41. Mark xv. 31. ^d Luke xxiii. 35. ^e Mat. xxvii. 39, 40. Mark xv. 29. ^f Luke xxiii. 36, 37, 39, 40.

upon thee now, at such a time as this is; when thou thyself, as well as I, art under the same painful punishment and grievous torment that this man is? And we indeed justly; for we receive but the due reward of our evil deeds²; but this man hath done nothing amiss."

Then having thus checked his fellow, acknowledged his own guilt, and borne witness to the innocence of Jesus; he addressed himself to Jesus with this short, but full prayer, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

This petition (bespeaking faith in the petitioner, that Jesus was indeed the Son of God, the Messiah, who had a spiritual kingdom, which he was now going to take possession of) was so well accepted by our Lord, that in answer thereunto he said unto him, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

O notable thief! thus in a moment to steal heaven. So gracious an answer was enough to make him forget his present pain, and even to die now for joy, as before he was ready to do for anguish and torment. Who would not have wished himself in his place, to have had the like favour?"

But this answer, spoken to a grand malefactor, that he should be that day with Christ in paradise, sets aside two dark opinions; one, of the Popish purgatory; the other, that our Lord himself descended into hell, the region or place of infernal and damned spirits; which of all places was most remote from that paradise, or place of rest, peace, and divine pleasure, in which our Lord gave this happy thief assurance he should that day be in with him.

While Jesus was thus hanging on the cross, exposed to the scorn and utmost contempt of his enemies, the soldiers who were upon the guard that day (and who were more immediately concerned in the execution) being a quaternion of Roman soldiers (consisting of

² Luke xxiii. 41, 42, 43.

four persons) took his garments^h (probably as the perquisites of their office) and dividing them into four parts (to every soldier a part) they cast lots upon them, which part each soldier should have. But because his coat (which some take to be his under garment (see Zegerus on the place, John xix. 23. in the Criticks^g) being woven from the top throughout) was without seam, and so could not be divided without spoiling it, they said among themselves, "Let us not rent it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall beⁱ." Which they doing, the scripture was thereby fulfilled (in its ultimate signification and extent) Psal. xxii. 18. Where the prophet David, bemoaning himself, and setting forth the eager desire of his enemies to destroy him, saith, "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

About this time began that memorable darkness to arise, and spread itself; which, for the time it lasted, turned the day into a kind of night^k.

But before we come to speak particularly of that eminent darkness, it may, perhaps, be needful to take notice of that seeming difference among the evangelists concerning the time of our Lord's suffering, which did much perplex some of the old expositors.

It arose from hence, that the evangelist Mark says, it was the third hour when they crucified Jesus, Mark xv. 25. And yet John says it was about the sixth hour when Jesus stood before Pilate sitting on the judgment-seat, in the place called the pavement, John xix. 13, 14. Which made some of the ancients suspect the text in Mark had been altered. But later interpreters, especially Grotius, have bestowed some pains in setting it to rights.

They tell us, that the Jews beginning their civil day at sun-rising, or (according to us) at six in the morning, did make a two-fold division of it; one into twelve hours (as we do) which they called the lesser

^h John xix. 23. Mark xv. 24. ⁱ Mat. xxvii. 45. ^k Mark xv. 33. Luke xxiii. 44.

hours; the other into four, which they called the greater hours; and taking its denomination from that lesser hour which began the greater. By which division of the day into four parts or quarters; the first (beginning at one with them, six with us) reached to three with them (which answered to nine with us). Their second quarter (beginning at three with them, nine with us) reached to their sixth, or twelfth hour at noon; and was called from the hour it began at, the third hour. Their third quarter (beginning at their sixth hour, or twelfth) reached to the ninth hour, which reached to our third hour afternoon. And the fourth and last quarter in the division (beginning at their ninth hour, our third afternoon) reached to their twelfth hour, or six at night.

This way of computation makes room for John to say it was about the sixth hour (for that is his word, not precisely or exactly the sixth hour, but about it, drawing on towards it) when Pilate gave the sentence on Jesus; and for Mark to say, it was the third hour when they crucified (or began to crucify) him; that is, he was put upon the cross before the third hour (according to this way of reckoning) was quite out. And indeed, it is the general opinion, that our Lord was nailed to the cross much about the eleventh hour, according to our computation. So that, says Grotius, Christ was crucified before the (Jewish) sixth hour; the darkness began after the sixth hour, and Christ was dead a little after the ninth hour; that is, the third hour afternoon with us.

Now as to the darkness, three of the evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke mention it¹; and they all agree it arose about the sixth hour with them, and continued until the ninth (that is, from twelve at noon to three afternoon with us).

For the extent of it, Matthew, and from him Mark, say it was over all the land; which may be taken to bound it to the land of Judea. But Luke says it was

¹ Mat. xxvii. 45.

over all the earth^m. Which, if taken largely, will extend it as much too far, as the restraining it to Judea strictly may limit it to too narrow a compass. For as it could not be universal (which Grotius well observes) because it was not then day all the earth over, or in all parts of the world; so, if credit may be given to historians, this darkness having been observed and wondered at by divers persons in divers other countries and parts of the world, is a plain evidence that it extended beyond Judea. Cradock, in his *Harmony*, chap. vi. sect. 16. page 293. tells us in a marginal note, that Apollophanes and Dionysius the Areopagite, are reported to have seen this wonderful eclipse in Egypt; and that Dionysius should thereupon say, “Either the Deity suffereth, or hath sympathy with that which suffereth.” He quoteth there also (from Eusebius’s *Eccles. Hist.* lib. 9. cap. 6. but mis-quoteth I think the place) Lucianus a martyr, and presbyter of Antioch, challenging the heathen to search their own annals; wherein, said he, ye shall find, that in the time of Pilate, when Christ suffered, the light of the sun being driven away, the day was interrupted with darkness. And Grotius says, the ancient astrologers and chronographers have taken notice of this darkness; which they might the rather do, because the sun (as Luke has it) was darkened, and that when the moon was at the full; at which time no eclipse of the sun can naturally be, the moon being then in direct opposition to the sun; whereas the moon must be in conjunction with the sun to cause an eclipse of the sun, by the interposition of her dusky body between the sun and the earth, which can be only at the new of the moon.

Among the many spectators who came thither with various affections to see this tragical scene acted, some there were, but those not many, of our Lord’s true friends and steady followers.

^m Luke xxiii. 44.

The evangelist John names our Lord's mother, and his mother's sisterⁿ, whom he calls Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen; and he might have named himself also (would his modesty have let him); for he (and of the twelve, he only, that appears) was there.

Matthew indeed says many women were there, which followed Jesus from Galilee^o; such as used to minister unto him (that is, took due care to provide necessaries for him). Amongst whom he reckons up only Mary Magdalen, Mary the mother of James, and Joses (supposed to be the same whom John calls the wife of Cleophas) and the mother of Zebedee's children; not mentioning the mother of our Lord, who certainly was there herself; and felt, no doubt, the point of that sword, which good old Simeon had long ago foretold her should pierce through her soul also, Luke ii. 35.

These John said stood by the cross of Jesus^p; afar off, says Mathew; with whom agrees Luke. Probably not close by, the guards of soldiers possessing the nearest parts; nor yet at any great distance, but as near as they could well come; and some perhaps nearer than others.

So near at least they were, that Jesus seeing his beloved mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing by her; as he had always in temporal things been subject to her as a son, so now at last his bowels rolling in filial affection to her, as his mother (now, in all likelihood, a poor widow) he said unto her, "Woman, behold thy son;" and to him, "Behold thy mother." Which short bequest (made only by a nuncupative will) they both so well understood, that from that hour that disciple took her unto his own house.

It was now much about the ninth hour (answering to our third afternoon) when Jesus not feeling that so powerful presence of his Father with him, supporting his manhood under the heavy weight of his sufferings, as

ⁿ John xix. 25. ^o Mat. xxvii. 55. ^p John xix. 25.

formerly, cried out with a loud voice ⁹, “Eli, Eli (or, as Mark reads it, Eloi, Eloi) lama fabachthani;” which being interpreted, is, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

These words (taken, as some think, from P^sal. xxi. 1.) the skilful in the oriental tongues tell us are neither pure Hebrew, nor pure Chaldee or Syriac; and being either not well and distinctly heard, or not rightly understood by the common people that stood by, some of them (supposed to be the Hellenists, or Greekish Jews, who understood not Hebrew) when they heard him say, Eli, Eli; from the affinity in sound between that word and Elias, thinking he had called upon the prophet Elias for help (whose personal return from heaven to earth was much, but vainly, expected by the Jews) said, “Behold he calleth for Elias.”

Whereupon one of them ran straitway, and taking a sponge, filled it with vinegar (some think intending by that to hasten his end before Elias should come to help him; others, to prevent his falling into a swoon, and so dying before Elias came): which the rest observing, they all cried out together, “Let be (or let alone); Let us see whether Elias will come to take him down, and save him.”

But Jesus, knowing that all things (relating to his suffering state) were now accomplished, that the scripture (P^sal. lxix. 21. “In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink”) might be fulfilled, said ^r, “I thirst.” Upon which, he that had filled the sponge ready with vinegar (out of a vessel of vinegar that was set thereby) put up the sponge upon a reed, or stalk of hyssop (which is said to grow large in that country, as well as the mustard, Mat. xiii. 31, 32). and put it to his mouth.

When therefore Jesus had received the vinegar, he said ^s, “It is finished.” And crying again with a loud voice, he said, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and bowing his head, gave up the ghost.”

⁹ Mat. xxvii. 46. Mark xv. 34. ^r John xix. 28. ^s Luke xiii. 46.

Immediately upon our Lord's resigning his spirit into the hands of his Father, the veil of the temple was rent in twain[†], that is, in the midst from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.

Some disputes have been among the learned, about the veil of the temple that was now rent; and what was signified by the renting of it. As, whether it was the outward, or the inward veil; that which parted the court of the people from the court of the priests (or the court, from the *sanctum* or holy place) or that which divided the *sanctum* from the *sanctum sanctorum*; the holy, from the holy of holies, or holiest of all.

But no doubt it was the innermost veil which was rent, that which the author to the Hebrews calls "The second veil;" that which hung before the holiest of all, Heb. ix. 3. into which the high-priest only entered, and that but once a year, ver. 7. else would not the renting of it have been of such eminent signification as it was. For as that veil was a figure of the flesh of Christ, which covered his Godhead; so the renting of that veil, now at his death, did signify, that by the renting of his flesh upon the cross, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, Heb. x. 10. we have liberty with boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, ver. 19, 20.

Of this veil Wilson (in his Christian Dictionary, *verbo* Veil) says, it was a costly and precious hanging; whereby the most holy place was divided and separated from the holy place. For which he quotes Exod. xxvi. 31, 33. Then adds, "This was the veil that was rent in twain at the death of Christ, to shew the determination and end of the whole Levitical and ceremonial law; as one saith, *In morte Christi omnia le-*

[†] Mat. xxvii. 51.

‘*galia terminantur,*’ *i. e.* ‘In the death of Christ all the ceremonies of the law, or legal services, are put to an end.’

Now when the centurion (who was a Roman captain over an hundred soldiers, and was there with his band to guard the execution) and they that were with him watching Jesus, observed that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, and saw the earthquake, and those things that were done^u, they feared greatly; and the good captain glorified God, saying, not only as Luke has it, “Certainly this was a righteous man,” but, as both Matthew and Mark give it, “Truly this was the Son of God.”

The people also, who came thither to that sight, beholding the things that were done (*viz.* the extraordinary darkness, the earthquake, the renting of the rocks, &c.) smote their breasts in token of sorrow^w, and returned.

Amongst other prodigies which happened at that time, one was, that the graves were opened, probably by the earthquake, and renting of the rocks (in which the sepulchres usually were cut) which made way for the arising and coming forth of many bodies of saints which slept; but not until after the resurrection of our Lord, to which therefore the account thereof shall be referred.

The day being by this time far spent^x, and it being the preparation to the passover (to wit, the evening before it) that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the next day, which was not only the sabbath-day, but an high day too, even a double sabbath (the first day of the paschal feast, which was always a sabbath, falling that year upon the day of the weekly sabbath) the Jews besought Pilate, at whose disposal the crucified bodies were, that their legs might be

^u Luke xxiii. 47. Mat. xxvii. 54. Mark xv. 39. ^w Luke xxiii. 48. ^x John xix. 31.

broken (to hasten their death, or prevent their escape) that so they might be taken away.

Which when Pilate had granted, the soldiers came, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him.

But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they did not break his legs.

But one of the soldiers (not named in the holy text, but by others called Longinus) with a spear pierced his side; and though his breath was expired, yet his body still retaining some natural warmth, so that the blood was not yet stagnated, forthwith there came out blood and water. Concerning which Cradock gives this note, '*Potuit aqua exire è latere, pericardio perfoſſo; eſt enim illud aquâ refertum, ad æſtum cordis refrigerandum,*' *i. e.* 'There might come water out of his side, when the *pericardium* (or thin skin which encompasses the heart) was pierced through; for that skin is filled with water, to cool and assuage the burning heat of the heart.' Harm. Evan. chap. 6. sect. 16. p. 259. marg. And Grotius, on the words [blood and water] says, '*Tactò pericardio, in quo eſt aqua & sanguis circum. Nondum autem refrixerat corpus, ità ut fluxum facillè ferret.*' *i. e.* 'The *pericardium* being pricked, in which is water and blood on all sides. And the body was not yet grown cold, so that it might well bear or admit a flowing.'

The piercing of his side, Erasmus says, was not done of cruelty, but for a trial whether he was certainly dead. As, adds he, in a slaughter of enemies, if it be doubted whether one that lies as if he were dead, be dead indeed, or hath any life yet in him, they strike a dagger into his foot or leg; because at that stroke he that is not yet thoroughly dead will move himself. And Grotius says, the soldier pierced his side, as doubting whether he was really dead, and willing to try whether from the sense of that stroke he would move or stir himself.

Yet were not any of these things, as Erasmus on the place observes, done by chance, but all by Divine

Providence; lest any should boast that Christ was not really dead^y. And besides, these things were done, says the evangelist John, that the scripture should be fulfilled; which speaking of the paschal lamb (that was a lively type of Christ) saith, "Neither shall ye break a bone thereof," Exod. xii. 46. Which the evangelist applying to Christ, the anti-type of that lamb, and taking the sense rather than the syllables, reads it, "A bone of him shall not be broken." But Grotius inclines rather to think that the scripture here referred to, is that of David, Psal. xxxiv. 20. where is set forth the special care which God takes of the godly man.

Thus also was that other scripture fulfilled (or was way made for the fulfilling of that other scripture). Zech. xii. 10. Where the prophet, speaking in the person of God, having said, "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications," adds, "And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced," &c. which clause only of the sentence the evangelist taking, and changing the first person *me* into the third person *him*, reads it, "They shall look upon him whom they have pierced."

This act of the soldier in piercing the side of our Lord, the evangelist John, who often in modesty speaks of himself in the third person delivers with great assurance, upon his own personal knowledge, as having been an eye-witness thereof; which he thus expresseth, "And he that saw it bare record (or he that bare record saw it) and his record is true, and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe."

Some more than ordinary cause it may be supposed there was, which moved the evangelist to assert this passage so earnestly as he doth, for the confirming the faith of those he wrote unto, in the reality and certainty of our Lord's death; which probably might be this:

^y John xix. 3, 36.

Dr. Hammond on the place says, there were hereticks of the first ages which affirmed Christ to have suffered death only in appearance. Though some of them were early, yet probably the other three evangelists (Matthew, Mark and Luke) had written before these appeared; and none of these three make any mention of this passage of the soldier's piercing the side of Jesus: but John writing some years after the last of them (in which interval it is likely some of those hereticks were got up) delivers this passage, not touched before by any of the rest, both to refute that error of those who held that Christ suffered death not really, but in appearance and shew only; and to confirm Christians in the true belief of the reality of his sufferings and death. For, says Dr. Hammond (with respect to those hereticks) the coming out of this blood and water upon the piercing of his side confuteth them: for there being a *capsula* on the left side of the heart, called the *pericardium*, which hath water in it of continual use for the cooling of the heart; the coming out of the water with the blood here, was a testimony of the wounding of his very heart; the entering of that iron, the spear, into his soul; and so an evidence and demonstration of his being really dead. The water also, says he, was the emblem of all spotless purity; and the blood was the evidence of his fortitude and constant patience, in laying down his life for the truth of God; both serving against those two baits of temptations, whereof the Gnosticks made use to seduce the orthodox Christians, namely, the allurements of carnal pleasures, and terrors from the apprehension of persecutions: Christ's purity, represented by the water; serving against the former, as his patience, represented by the blood, against the other.

When now the evening was come^z (which must be before our sixth hour afternoon; for the Jews reckoned the evening of the day from their nine to twelve, which is from our three to six) because it was the pre-

^z Mat. xxvii. 75. Mark xy. 42. Luke xxiii. 50. John xix. 38.

paration, that is, the day before the sabbath, there came one Joseph of Arimathea (a city of the Jews, supposed by some to be the same with Ramah, or Ramathaim, the birth-place and dwelling-place of the prophet Samuel, 1 Sam. xix. 20. and chap. vii. 17). This Joseph was an honourable person; Mark calls him an honourable counsellor, whence some suppose him to have been one of the council or senate of the city Jerufalem at least, if not of the great council, the Sanhedrin; which yet it seems most likely he should be of, because Luke says he had not consented to the counsel and deed of them; which seems to imply he was one of them.

He was not only a rich man, as Matthew reports; but he was a good man, and a just, as Luke testifies of him; he was one of them that waited for the kingdom of God, as old Simeon is said (Luke xxii. 5). to have waited for the consolation of Israel; that is, in hope and expectation of the coming of the Messiah to set up his spiritual kingdom in and amongst the people, and he was also a disciple of Jesus; but secretly, alas! for fear of the Jews. For the Jews, we read, had before agreed that if any man should confess that he (Jesus) was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue, John ix. 22. which was the reason why, though many among the chief rulers, of whom it is probable this man was one, did believe on Jesus; yet, because of the pharisees, who were the swaying party in all their councils, they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue, John xii. 42.

This good man, who before (while Jesus was at liberty, and personally present with and among his disciples, to instruct, encourage, and comfort them) was so timorous, that he concealed his inward sentiments of him, and affection to him^a; now, that the Lord had yielded up his spotless soul into the hands of his Father, being emboldened by his great fortitude and constancy in his sufferings, went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved

^a Mat. xxvii. 58. Mark xv. 43. Luke xxiii. 52. John xix. 38.

of him, who only had the power of dispose of it, the body of Jesus; as it was yet hanging on the cross.

Pilate marvelling if (or that) he was already dead, called unto him the centurion, and asked him, "Whether he had been any while dead?" and when he understood it by the centurion, he commanded that the body should be delivered to Joseph.

Joseph having obtained the grant, first bought him some fine linen, to make a shroud of, and then went and took down the body of Jesus from the cross.

Which while he was doing, Nicodemus also^b; (who at the first came to Jesus by night, John iii. 1). came thither, bringing with him a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight; and he joining with Joseph in this acceptable service, they together took the body of Jesus, and wound or wrapped it in the linen clothes, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews was to bury.

This Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews, John iii. 1. And though he at the first, as others of his rank and station, was not forward to follow Jesus openly, yet he was not backward to stand up for him, and plead his cause against his fellow pharisees in the council; though he was, for so doing, reproached by them, John vii. 51, &c. And now he came openly, as well as Joseph, to perform the last office (as it is called) of friendship and duty to our Lord, in the decent interment of his body.

When they had thus embalmed the corpse they laid it in a new tomb^c, which Joseph had hewn out in a rock, for a sepulchre for himself, in a garden of his which was hard by the place where our Lord was crucified; in which tomb never any man before was laid: divine Providence so directing, that the certainty of his resurrection might not be brought into question, upon any suggestion or surmise, that some other dead body, not his, was raised to life, if any other dead

^b John xix. 39. ^c Mat. xxvii. 60. Mark xv. 46. Luke xxiii. 53. John xix. 41.

body had ever been laid in that tomb or sepulchre before.

When they had thus done, they rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

But divers devout women, as Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of Joses (with other women who came with him from Galilee, Luke xxiii. 55.) sitting over-against the sepulchre, beheld where he was laid, and took good notice how and after what manner his body was laid. Which when they had well observed, they returned; and having prepared spices and ointments, they rested the sabbath-day, according to the commandment; intending, when the sabbath should be over, to anoint the body therewith more fully and exactly than at that instant Joseph and Nicodemus, for want of longer time, could do.

But though these rested, yet would not the malice of the chief priests and pharisees against our Lord, as well dead as living, suffer them to rest; but the next day (though it was not only their weekly sabbath, which at other times and on other occasions they were wont to pretend an high zeal for, and used to quarrel with Jesus^d for doing any thing, how good soever, on it; but it was that high day, John xix. 31. whereon the paschal feast and the weekly sabbath fell together, yet) they went to Pilate together; and being come to him, they said, "Sir, we remember that that deceiver (so they contumeliously and most falsely called him, in whose mouth no guile was found, 1 Peter ii. 22). while he was yet alive, said, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore said they that the sepulchre be made secure 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 not seeming to regard what they pretended so much to fear, but willing to be rid of their troublesome importunities, turned them off with this short

^d Mat. xxvii. 62. 65,

answer: "Ye have a watch, go your way, and make it as sure as ye can."

This watch is supposed to be that band of Roman soldiers which were appointed to guard the temple (at the times especially of these solemn feasts, when the Jews from all parts resorted thither in great numbers) to prevent any sedition, disorder, or tumult.

Away forthwith went these malicious priests and pharisees and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch^e; that had it been possible they might have hindered the rising of our Lord. Which, though done with a most wicked intent by them, was doubtless ordered by a Divine Providence, that (as one observes) when Christ arose, he should have a testimony of his resurrection, even from his very enemies.

Thus have we seen our blessed Redeemer hanged on the cross by his enemies on the sixth day of the week; and on the same day towards evening taken from the cross by his friends, and laid into his grave; where his body remained under the treble guard of the stone, the seal, and the watch, until the morning of the first day of the week following. So that he was in the grave two whole nights, one whole day, and two small parts of two other days; which put together, with the help of a *synecdoche* of part for the whole, is taken to make up the prefixed time of three days and three nights, Mat. xii. 40. It was most convenient, says Cradock, that he should rise the third day; and neither sooner nor later. Not sooner, that the truth and certainty of his death might appear: not later, that his body might not be corrupted in the grave (as was foretold it should not, Psal. xvi. 10). and that by a longer delay of his resurrection, the faith of his disciples might not be too much shaken.

Let us now attend his resurrection, which was thus; and thus discovered:

When the sabbath was ended and past, and it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, very early in

^e Mat. xxvii. 66.

the morning, and while it was yet dark, Mary Magdalen^f, and the other Mary (whom Mark calls the mother of James) and Salome, and with these certain others (according to Luke) among whom Joanna is named for one, Luke xxiv. 1. and 10. taking with them the spices they had bought, set forward towards the sepulchre; but before they got thither, the sun was risen, or rising.

Though they had seen the body laid into the sepulchre, and the stone rolled unto the door thereof, yet they knew nothing of the sealing the stone, and setting the watch to guard the sepulchre; that having been done the day after they had been there. So that their only care at present seemed to be, whom they should get to roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre (for it was great) they that might go in, and perform the service they intended^g, in anointing the body of our Lord.

But when they were come to the place, they found that difficulty removed; the stone was rolled away. For there had been a great earthquake, occasioned by the descending of the angel of the Lord from heaven, who came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

The countenance of this angel was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the keepers (the watchmen who were set to guard the sepulchre) did shake, and became as dead men. But they were either fled, and gone before the women came, or else had hid themselves for fear.

Some diversity there is among the four evangelists in the delivery of this part of the story, which interpreters have strained hard to reconcile. But the difference lying more in circumstantial, than in the substance, I, who pretend not to write either a direct paraphrase, or a comment, but an history, shall deliver the matters of fact with as good coherence as I can.

^f Mat. xxviii. 1. Mark xvi. 1. Luke xxiv. 1. John xx. 1.
^g Mat. xxviii. 2.

The angel observing the women were surprized with fear, said unto them, "Fear not ye (for though the guards had just cause to fear, and to fly too; ye have none) for I know that ye (with a devout and pious mind and affection) seek Jesus who was crucified. But why seek ye the living among the dead? (that is, in the grave or sepulchre, the place of the dead) he is not here, for he is risen; as he said he should do. However, come, see the place where the Lord lay."

They thereupon entering into the sepulchre^b, saw there a young man (that is, an angel in the appearance of a young man) sitting on the right hand, clothed in a long white garment, which put them into a fresh fright. But he said unto them, "Be not affrighted; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified; but he is risen, he is not here; behold the place where they laid him. And remember how he told you, while he was yet in Galilee with you, that the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. Wherefore go ye your way, and tell his disciples, and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you," Mat. xxvi. 32.

They thereupon remembering his words, departed from the sepulchre with fear and great joyⁱ (fear, from the vision they had seen; joy, from the good tidings they had heard) and though they said not a word of it to any man as they went, for fear the priests and pharisees should get hold of it, yet as soon as they were come where the disciples were, they told all things unto them. But their words seemed to them as idle tales, so that they believed them not.

Yet Peter (understanding, perhaps, that he was especially taken care of, and particularly named by the angel) ran unto the sepulchre^k, to see how matters stood there; and with him ran also John (who, according to his usual manner, covers himself under the character of the other disciple whom Jesus loved).

^b Mat. xvi. 5. Luke xxiv. 3. ⁱ Luke xxiv. 8. ^k John xx. 3.
According

According to John's relation of the matter, this should have been upon Mary Magdalene's first sight of the stone being rolled away, and before she had been in the sepulchre, or been informed by the angels of our Lord's resurrection. For she told them, by way of complaint, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him;" which she could not have said, after the angels had told her, "He was risen." But that agrees not with the account given by the other three.

However therefore it was as to that, they set out together; and John being it seems the best footman, outran Peter, and came first to the sepulchre¹; but went not then in, only stooping down he looked in, and saw the linen clothes lying, in which the body of our Lord had been wrapped.

But when Simon Peter came up to him, he made no more ado but went into the sepulchre, and saw not only the linen clothes lie, but the napkin also that had been about his head, not lying with the other linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

Then went John in also, and he saw, and believed: so he says himself; which words seem fairly to import, that he believed Jesus was risen. But interpreters generally take it in another sense; namely, that upon sight of the clothes, he believed Mary's report, "that they had taken away the Lord," &c. And indeed the following words favour that interpretation; which are, "For as yet they knew not the scripture" (understood not the prophecies, Psal. xvi. 10). that he must rise again from the dead.

Peter and John having seen and observed what they could, went home again; but Mary Magdalen, who followed them to the sepulchre, stayed there without the sepulchre weeping. And as she wept, she stooped down, and looking into the sepulchre, saw two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. They

¹ John xx. 4. 8.

asking why she wept, she answered, "Because they have taken away my Lord; and I know not where they have laid him."

When she had thus said, turning herself back, she saw Jesus standing, but knew not that it was Jesus. He said unto her, "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" She, supposing him to be the gardener, (for it is likely her eyes were withheld from knowing him, as two others of his disciples soon after were, Luke xxiv. 16). answered, "Sir, If thou hast borne (or removed) him from hence (supposing he understood whom she meant) tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away" (out of thy way).

Jesus thereupon said unto her, "Mary!" though she knew him not by sight, she immediately knew his voice, and turning herself again towards him, said unto him, "Rabboni! which is to say Master;" and, as it seems, hastening to lay hold on him, that she might embrace, though it were but his feet (which she had, not long before, anointed and wiped with the hair of her head, John xii. 3). he stopped her by saying, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brethren, said he (for by that endearing compellation, he now, for their greater comfort and encouragement, called them) and say unto them, I ascend up unto my Father, and your Father (my Father by nature and union; yours by adoption) and to my God, and your God."

She thereupon (postponing her earnest desire of enjoying the presence of her long-lamented and new-risen Lord to her due obedience to his commands) went and told the disciples, as they mourned and wept, that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her^a. Yet they, though they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen by her, believed not.

But the other women who had been before with Mary at the sepulchre, and had then heard what the

^a John xx. 14.

^a Mark xvi. 11.

angels said unto her concerning his being risen, now hearing Mary Magdalen so solemnly affirm that she had seen the Lord himself, went back (as some think) to the sepulchre again, in hopes probably that they might have the happiness to see the Lord also, as she had done; and being there again informed by the angel that the Lord was risen, and sent back in haste to carry the account thereof to his disciples, were met by our Lord on the way in their return, who said unto them, "All hail" (as much as to say, "Peace be unto you"); whereupon they came to him, and holding him by the feet, worshipped him; though, it seems, not without some tokens of fear mixed with their joy, which made Jesus say unto them, "Be not afraid. But go tell my brethren that I would have them go into Galilee, and there they shall see me."

While these good women were hastening on this good errand, behold some of the watch, who had been so terrified early in the morning with the earthquake and vision of angels, came into the city, and gave an account to the chief priests of all the things which they had seen done.

This so perplexed the priests, that getting the Sanhedrin together, they consulted what to do in the case, and brought it at length to this conclusion; that they gave a large sum of money unto the soldiers, that they should say his disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

And though they bribed high to get the soldiers to father this so notorious falsehood, yet would they hardly have prevailed with them to do it, had they not also given them assurance, that if this should come to the governor's ears (to whom they, as Roman soldiers, were accountable, and whom they knew to be a strict observer and severe exactor of military discipline) they would persuade him, and secure them. Upon which hopes they took the money, and did as they were taught, that is, told the lie; but did not, it

• Mat. xxviii. 9, 11, 12, 13, 14.

seems, keep their Master's counsel, but in time divulged it; by which means this horrible fraud (invented by the chief priests and elders, on purpose to stifle the resurrection of our Lord, and thereby not shake only^p but utterly destroy the faith and hope of all his followers) was discovered.

And indeed, as the wickedness of this contrivance of theirs was great, so the folly of it was not small; for who could they think (not bereft of common sense) would give credit to a relation made by such as confessed they were all fast asleep, when the thing they related was pretended to be done? Yet this account which those sleepy dreamers gave, the evangelist tells us, was commonly reported among the Jews at the time when he wrote his history; which is supposed to be at least eight years after our Lord's ascension.

To this place and time may be referred that eminent passage which the evangelist Matthew relates^q, of the arising of the bodies of many saints that had slept (whose graves had been opened when the former earthquake was, at the moment of our Lord's death) who now, after his resurrection, came out of the graves (which were made without the city) and went into the holy city, (so the Jews were wont to call Jerusalem, Isaiah xlvi. 2. lii. 1. and Dan. ix. 24). and appeared unto many as a testimony of the resurrection of Jesus. For who could doubt that he could rise from the dead, who saw those, whom they knew to have been dead, rise out of their graves, and walk about the streets?

Thus was the morning, or fore part of that day spent, whereon our Lord arose.

In the afternoon of the same day he appeared in another form (or habit) unto two of them^r, as they walked into the country. Of these two, one is named Cleophas by Luke, ver. 18. The other, not named at all, is variously guessed at by interpreters to little purpose. Some suppose it to be Luke himself^s who writes it; but he, in the proem to his treatise, fairly

^p Mat. xxviii. ^q Mat. xxvii. 52. ^r Mark xvi. 12. ^s Luke xxiv. 13.

disclaims it, distinguishing himself from those who were eye-witnesses, Luke i. 2. as Grotius well observes. Others take it to be Nathaniel, but without good ground. Drusus, I think, is in the right; who though he gives the conjectures of others, says for himself, '*Non nominatur; curiosum igitur, quærere ipsius nomen.*' i. e. 'He is not named;' it is but a piece of curiosity therefore to seek his name.'

Be it therefore what it will, Cleophas and he went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs: which accounting eight furlongs to a mile, makes seven miles and an half, and is reckoned to be the work of two hours and an half for an ordinary footman to walk.

On the way as they walked, they talked together, in a sorrowful tone and manner, of all the things which had happened. And while they were communing together, and reasoning about it¹, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them, as a stranger that was travelling the same way (their eyes being, by his divine power, with-holden from knowing him) and observing their discourse, he asked, "What manner of conversations are these which ye have one to another, and are sad?"

Whereupon Cleophas (wondering that he, having heard their discourse, should seem ignorant of the subject they talked of) asked him, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and dost not know the things which are come to pass there in these days?" (which are now the common discourse of all men there?) "What things," said he? "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth," replied they, who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people. And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him (so Peter afterwards said to those early converts, Acts ii. 36. God hath made that same Jesus Lord and king,

¹ Luke xxiv. 15, 17, 18, 19.

whom ye crucified, that is, prevailed with Pilate to crucify).

But, said they, "We trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel from the Roman bondage. (For as to a redemption from the bondage of sin and Satan, the proper work of the Messiah, they were too worldly-minded, and too high in an expectation of an earthly kingdom, as yet to understand it as they might have done). And besides all this, added they, this is the third day since these things were done" (that is, since he was crucified).

Yea, and certain women also of our company (or society, followers of him) who were at the sepulchre early this morning, made us astonished, when they came and told us, not only that they found not his body there, but also that they had seen a vision of angels, who told them he was alive; whereupon certain of them who were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even as the woman had said; but him they saw not.

When thus far our Lord had patiently heard the ground of their grief, in that they had not yet an assurance of his being risen, as it seems they expected (which probably was to have seen him come in royal majesty, with an irresistible power, to take the kingdom upon him; not to have the bare title, as he had on the cross, of king of the Jews, but to be king of the Jews actually and indeed) he said unto them, with commiseration of their weakness, "O fools, and slow of heart, to believe all that the prophets have spoken (especially now, that ye have had the advantage of information, as yourselves acknowledge, from such of your own as ye can confide in; that Jesus is risen, and is alive; hath there any thing yet happened, which ye were not forewarned of, or had not just ground to expect). Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?"

^a Luke xxiv. 21, 22, 24, 25.

Then beginning at Moses, and going through the prophets, he expounded to them, in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself^w; that is, those prophecies and passages which more immediately related to his sufferings, death, and resurrection, &c.

This entertained them so long on the way, that by that time he had done, they drew nigh unto the village, whither they were to go. To which when they were come, he made as if he would go farther; but they intending to tarry there, and being, from the pleasure they took in his conversation and discourse, desirous to have more of his company; they, by a friendly invitation, did even constrain him to abide with them, urging the unseasonableness of the time for going farther; "For it is, said they, towards evening, and the day is far spent."

He thereupon yielding to their importunity, went in to tarry with them. "And it came to pass as he sat at meat with them, he took bread (though properly he was their guest, and it was the manner of the Jews for the master of the house, or of the feast to bless the bread; but he knew himself to be their master, though they did not yet know themselves to be his disciples; wherefore he took the bread) and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to them."

Immediately thereupon their eyes were opened (not that their eyes had been closed before, but the restraint which had been laid upon their discerning faculty was taken off, and now removed) and then they presently knew him. Whereupon he forthwith disappeared, or vanished out of their sight.

Then did they recollect, and impart one to the other, how it had been with them while he discoursed with them. "Did not our hearts, said they one to another, burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"

This unexpected sight of their Lord altered their purpose of tarrying there all night, and made them

^w Luke xxiv. 27, 28, 30, 31, 32.

refolve to return to Jerufalem, to impart this good tidings to their brethren there.

Wherefore, as full now of lightsome joy, as they were before of heavy fadness, they rose up forthwith, and got to Jerufalem timely enough, although it was late, to take the apostles *, and others that were with them, together, before their meeting was ended. Which probably might hold the longer, for the welcome account Peter might have to give them, of the Lord's having appeared to him.

Of this appearance of our Lord to Peter, we have no scripture account, but that touch which Paul gave afterwards to the church at Corinth, 1 Cor. xv. 5. and what is said of it here in Luke. So that of the place, manner, or exact time thereof, we cannot affirm any thing with certainty. But as to time, it is supposed it was this very afternoon, a little before his appearing to those two that went to Emmaus; and that he, being nearer at hand than they, had got in before them to the rest of the disciples, and made report thereof unto them, before the two from Emmaus were come in.

For as soon as these came in, some of them that were there with the eleven before (as this place is generally understood) welcomed them with this joyful news, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." Whereupon they as readily gave them an account of their country journey, what they met with in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

As they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and said unto them, "Peace be unto you." At which they were terrified and frightened, supposing they had seen a spirit †; for they could not conceive how a man could come among them without their knowledge, and without opening the doors, which were shut for fear of the Jews.

Mark also mentions his appearance unto the eleven, Mark xvi. 14. But says it was as they sat at meat; and that he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness

* Luke xxiv. 33, 34, 35, 36. † John xx. 19.

of heart, because they believed not them who had seen him after he was risen. The circumstance of their being at meat, when he came in among them, is neither very likely in itself (they being then under great sorrow and fear) nor agreeable with his asking them (Luke xxiv. 41). "If they had any meat there^y." Nor doth either Luke or John mention his upbraiding them with unbelief and hardness of heart; as Mark doth not of his shewing them his hands, feet, and side, or of his eating with them.

But Luke relates that partly to blame their fear, the effect of unbelief, and partly to comfort them, he said unto them, "Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts 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 when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands, his feet, and his side, John xx. 20.

Though (in the common proverb) seeing is said to be believing, because it is a rational ground or cause of believing; yet, as they could not believe before for fear, so now could they hardly believe fully and steadily for joy and wonder: joy, to see him; wonder, how he got in; which they needed not have wondered at, if they indeed took him for a spirit only.

But he, pitying their weakness, and willing to give them the utmost satisfaction, asked them if they had any meat there. Whereupon they giving him a piece of a broiled fish^z, and of an honey-comb, he took it of them, and did eat before them.

Which when he had done, reminding them of what he had formerly said unto them, he now told them, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, namely, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me."

Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scripture, and said unto them,

^y Luke xxiv. 41. 38. ^z Luke xxiv. 42. 44, 45.

"Thus

“ Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day (that is, it behoved mankind that Christ should suffer^a, &c). And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem; and, added he, ye are (and shall be) witnesses of these things.”

Then having said again unto them, “ Peace be unto you;” he added, “ As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” Then added, “ Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.”

Which high power they who now pretend unto, had need be well assured in themselves, and give good evidence unto those upon whom they undertake to exercise it, that they are sent of Christ, as he was sent of his Father; and that they have received the Holy Ghost by his immediate breathing on them, as he did on his disciples; not by their breathing on one another, or having been breathed on by others (no better, perhaps, than themselves) upon any pretence of delegation, or deputation thereunto from him.

These words of Christ, concerning remitting or retaining sins, being spoken to all his disciples there assembled, are sufficient to evince that what of the like sense and tendency he spake before to Peter, Mat. xvi. 19. was not peculiar or appropriate to him; but related to all his faithful brethren and colleagues, alike as to him.

Although Mark and Luke mention the eleven as being together when Jesus came in, yet by John we are told that Thomas was not then with them.

This Thomas is here called one of the twelve, now that since the fall of Judas there were but eleven of them left, because he was one of that number, which, when they were first chosen, was twelve. So likewise,

^a John xx. 21, 22, 23, 24.

now that they were reduced to eleven, though one was absent, the rest bore the general title of the eleven.

Thomas was his Syriac or Chaldaic name; his Greek name was Didymus, which signifies a twin, (one of two born at one birth) and thence he was called in Latin, *Geminus*, or *Gemellus*.

He it seems was absent before, when Jesus shewed himself to the rest of the eleven^b; but when he came among them again, they told him in short (but in likelihood more largely than John relates it) "We have seen the Lord."

He not willing to take a matter of that import to himself upon report from others, and having by his absence before missed the advantage of hearing his Master blame the rest for not believing them who had seen him after he was risen, Mark xvi. 14. now somewhat resolutely answered; "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side too, I will not believe" (that he is risen, and that it is really he himself).

Great was the condescension of our Lord to poor Thomas, who doubtless he knew would be, as a slow, so a sure believer, when once he came to have a satisfactory ground for his faith; and therefore would not let him go off for want of rational demonstration. But after eight days, when his disciples were within and Thomas with them, Jesus came in, the doors being shut, and, standing in the midst, first gave them his usual salutation, by saying, "Peace be unto you."

Then not staying for backward Thomas to come unto him and view his wounds, he calls him out before them all, saying, "Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold (search and try) my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing."

That Thomas, for all his former resolution, did put his hand into the side of our Lord, or his finger

^b John xx. 25, 26, 27.

into the print of the nails, is not (that I observe) expressed in the text, so much as by implication. He had, I suppose, no need now of those external evidences. Though he reached not his hand to the Lord's side, the Lord, by the invisible hand of his divine power, reached through his side to his heart, and touched him to the very quick. He began with him in such a manner, as must needs convince him of his omniscience; for he let him see, that he not only knew what was in his heart (the terms on which he stood) but what had been in his tongue, the expression of his lips. For as Thomas had said he would not believe, unless he thrust his hand into his side; so Jesus invites him to reach thither his hand, and thrust it into his side. Nor did those other words of Christ reach the ear of Thomas, or wrought on his natural understanding only, but a divine and efficacious power, no doubt, accompanied them, and set home upon the heart of Thomas those words of his tender and merciful Lord, "Be not faithless, but believing."

No longer now doth Thomas stand out, no longer doubt; but in a full assurance that it was indeed his Lord (who had been dead, and was now, by the power of his Godhead, risen from the dead) and in a full sense of his great goodness to him, in his so gracious condescension to his weakness, cries out, "My Lord, and my God!" A short, but full confession; whereby, as he had before fallen short and come behind all the rest of his brethren, in not believing that his crucified Master was risen, he now out-stripped them all, not only by owning his resurrection, in calling him his Lord (which he had been before he suffered, and could not have been now if he had not risen) but also by acknowledging his divinity, in calling him God; not forgetting withal to put in his own claim of an interest in him, in calling him *his* God.

His favourable Lord did not reject his faith because it was no sooner; but only said unto him, "Thomas,

• John xx. 28, 29.

because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed ^d." In which words interpreters think there is an enallagy of time, the præterit tense being put for the future; according to which they read it, "Blessed or happy are they that shall not see, and yet shall believe." And indeed, of those to whom our Lord had already appeared, we find not any who did believe until they had seen, and some not very readily then.

The evangelist John going on tells us, that Jesus did many other signs, in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in that book of his; but that these (viz. of his coming into the room amongst them when the doors were shut, discoursing with some of them undiscovered, and then vanishing out of their sight) were written that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, we might have life through his name.

Our Lord had, both before his passion, Mat. xxvi. 32. and after his resurrection, as well by his angels, Mat. xxviii. 7. Mark xvi. 7. as by himself, Mat. xxviii. 10. directed his disciples to go into Galilee, and promised them that they should see him there; but they, not giving credit to the report of them that brought the message to them, delayed their going into Galilee, and continued still at Jerusalem. Our Lord therefore, out of his super-abundant goodness and condescension to their weakness, vouchsafed to visit them in Jerusalem, and give them assurance of the certainty of his resurrection by indubitable proofs. Whereupon, being now well satisfied that he was really risen from the dead, they left Jerusalem, and went into Galilee; from whence we have the next account of them thus.

"After these things ^e (viz. his appearing to Thomas and the rest at Jerusalem) Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples, at the sea of Tiberias (which was in Galilee); and on this wise shewed he himself."

^d John xx. 30. ^e John xxi. 1.

There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus^f, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples.

Peter told the rest that he had a mind to go a fishing, and they told him that they also were willing to bear him company. So forth they all went together, and entered into a ship immediately; but that night (though night is accounted the best time for that sort of fishing) they caught nothing.

When the morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore; but the disciples (drowsy and tired with watching and working, and perhaps dejected or out of humour for their ill success) did not so much heed him, as to know that it was Jesus.

He calling to them, asked them, "Children, have ye any meat?" and they answering No, he bid them cast the net on the right side of the ship. They thereupon cast on that side; and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

This was a very apt emblem of their future success in the spiritual fishery, who were henceforth to become fishers of men, Mat. iv. 19. By which they might learn, that if they went to work of themselves, in their own will, wisdom, strength, and ability, and without him, they would but labour in vain; take pains to no purpose; cast the net on the wrong side; toil, but take nothing. Whereas, if they stayed till he came, took counsel of him; followed his directions; cast their net where he bid them; they would not fail of good success, but would have a plentiful draught.

This so sudden change in their affairs startled some of them; and the first that took it rightly in was John, the disciple whom Jesus loved. He presently imparted his sense to Peter, telling him, "It is the Lord."

When Simon Peter heard that, he girt his fisher's coat unto him (for he was, says the text, naked, that is, stripped to his under garments); and being not far from shore, but so near, that he might safely wade

^f John xxi. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

thither; not willing to stay so long from his Lord, as the ship would be in coming to land, he cast himself into the sea; but the other disciples came in a little ship, dragging the net with fishes.

As soon as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread*. This they might well take for a great miracle; for since they had been so long so near the place, and in sight of it, they could assure themselves no human hand had been there to do it.

Then Jesus bidding them bring off the fish which they had now caught, Peter went up, and drew the net to land, full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three. Under which number it is supposed some mystery is couched. Grotius says, '*Notant quidam tot piscium numerari genera; eoque significari ex omnium genere capturam fore.*' i. e. 'Some observe that there are so many kinds or sorts of fishes; and that thereby is signified, that of every sort of men some shall be caught.'

Clarius also, another of the criticks, tells us, that Oppianus the poet, who wrote of fishery, observes that there are one hundred fifty and three sorts or kinds of fishes.

But that which increased their wonder was, that although there were so many, and such great fishes, yet was not the net broken. Which Grotius takes to be a preface of the admirable unity of them, who by the labour of the apostles should be gathered into the church.

When now this miraculous dinner was ready, Jesus called them to come and dine; and himself, as master of the feast, came and took bread, and gave them, and fish likewise. And none of the disciples durst ask him, "Who art thou?" knowing that it was the Lord, and being probably down in their minds; partly from the sense they might have of their own unworthiness, in having forsaken him in his greatest trial and exercise;

* John xxi. 9, 10. 12.

and partly also from the consideration of the great distance that was now, more than formerly, between him and them, since he, by his resurrection from the dead, had put on immortality, whereas they still remained in a mortal and low state.

This appearance of his now to them, is accounted the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead. Which is to be understood of his shewing himself to them so generally, and to so many of them together. For otherwise, taking in all his appearances to particular persons, this is reckoned the seventh time of his being seen by some or other of them.

For on the first day of his resurrection he appeared five times. First, To Mary Magdalen by herself, John xx. 14. Secondly, To the other Mary, and other women with her, Mat. xxviii. 8. Thirdly, To Simon Peter by himself, John xxi. 34. Fourthly, To Cleophas, and his companion, at Emmaus, ver. 31. Fifthly, To the eleven, Thomas being absent. Then a week after, to the eleven again, when Thomas was present, John xx. 26. which was his sixth appearance. And now seventhly, to these at the sea of Tiberias, where he entertained them with a double miracle.

When now they had dined, Jesus, singling out Simon Peter, put him to a threefold acknowledgment of his love to him; and gave him thereupon a threefold command or exhortation to future diligence and faithfulness, in the discharge of his ministerial office, or apostleship.

Simon, Son of Jonas, said he, lovest thou me more than these love me^b? Peter answered, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. Feed my lambs then, said Jesus to him.

Then again he said unto them the second time, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" leaving out the comparative [more than these]. Yea, Lord,

^b John xxi. 15, 16.

replied Peter, as before, Thou knowest that I love thee. Feed my sheep, said Jesus.

The third time he put him to it in like manner, saying, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me¹?" At that Peter was grieved, as thinking his Lord put it too hard upon him, or questioned the reality of his love; not considering, or perhaps not at that instant remembering that he had three times, one after another, openly denied him; and that with circumstances of great aggravation.

However, though it seems he took it hardly to be so often purged upon the same subject, he answered, "Yea," and appealing to his Lord's omniscience (who, he found by experience, knew him better than he knew himself) added, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee. Feed my sheep," said Jesus thereupon again to him.

Then fore-warning him what he must expect to meet with and undergo in his latter age, he said unto him, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young thou girdedst thyself, and wentest whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This he spake, signifying unto Peter by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he said unto him, Follow me."

But as Peter turned himself about, he saw John also following. And since Jesus had been pleased to give him some intimation what should hereafter befall him, a curiosity, it seems, arose in his mind, to know also how it should fare with John. Wherefore pointing to him, he said unto Jesus, "Lord, and what shall this man do?"

To check this busy and over-curious mind in Peter, Jesus said unto him, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me." Mind thou

¹ John xxi. 17, 18. 20. 22.

thine own business, keep in thine own station, and leave the rest of my disciples to my ordering.

This saying getting abroad among the brethren, a wrong inference was quickly raised from it; which was, that that disciple (John) should not die^k. Yet Jesus did not say, "He shall not die;" but, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

Now the stile is changed from the singular number, in which it had all along run, unto the plural; not I, or he, as before, but we. This (says the text, ver. 24). is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. We! what We?

This, with some other passages at the close of the 20th chapter, hath caused some to question, whether this 21st chapter was written, and published by John, together with the rest of the book; or added afterwards by some others, from notes of his, found after his death.

Grotius, on John xx. 30. thus delivers his sense of it. *'Omnino arbitror quæ hic sequuntur conclusionem esse totius operis; & ibi finiisse Johannem librum quem edidit. At sicut caput ultimum Pentateuchi, & caput ultimum Josuæ, post Mosis & Josuæ mortem additum est à Synedrio Hebræorum; ita & caput quod sequitur, post mortem Johannis additum ab ecclesia Ephesina; hoc maximè sine, ut ostenderetur impletum quod de longævitate, ac non violentâ morte Johannis dominus prædixerat. Cætera autem quæ in eo capite narrantur, addita ad demonstrandum tempus, locum & occasionem illius oraculi, argumento est, quod in fine capituli, clausula huic similis reperitur, & quidem hoc modo, 'Οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθῆς ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία αὐτῶν: quibus verbis ecclesia ostendit se de supra-positis à Johanne, & de his etiam quæ ex privatis ipsius commentariis erant deprompta, minimè dubitare; cùm alioqui si Johannes hoc scripisset, dicturus fuisset, ut supra, 'κακῶν ὄϊδεν ὅτι ἀληθῆν λέγεις, c. 19, 35. i. e. ['I am*

^k John xxi. 23, 24.

‘ altogether of the opinion, that those words which here
 ‘ follow, are the conclusion of the whole work; and
 ‘ that there John finished the book which he published.
 ‘ But that, as the last chapter of the Pentateuch, and
 ‘ the last chapter of Joshua, were added by the Sanhe-
 ‘ drin of the Hebrews, after the death of Moses and
 ‘ Joshua; so also the chapter which follows here, (viz.
 ‘ the 21st of John) was added after John’s death, by
 ‘ the church of Ephesus; for this end chiefly, to shew
 ‘ that that was fulfilled which the Lord had foretold,
 ‘ concerning the long life, and natural (not violent)
 ‘ death of John. But that the other things, which are
 ‘ related in that chapter, were added to demonstrate
 ‘ the time, place, and occasion of that oracle, it is an
 ‘ argument, because in the end of the chapter, there
 ‘ is a clause like this repeated, and that after this man-
 ‘ ner, “ We know that his testimony is true.” By
 ‘ which words the church shews, that she hath not the
 ‘ least doubt concerning the things which John had
 ‘ set down before, and these also, which were taken out
 ‘ of his private commentaries. Whereas otherwise, if
 ‘ John himself had written this, he would have said as
 ‘ before, “ And he knoweth that he saith true,” chap.
 xix. 35]. Thus far he.

And truly, When John had said (in chap. xx. ver.
 30). “ many other signs did Jesus in the presence of his
 disciples, which are not written in this book,” it may
 well administer ground to question, whether those signs,
 which are mentioned after in the chapter following,
 were written by him, or inserted by some other hand
 (but by the direction of the same spirit) after his
 death. Which yet hath no tendency to derogate any
 thing from the authority of the text, which depends not
 on the person writing, but on the spirit dictating to the
 writer.

But as toward the end of the 20th chapter (which
 all agree the evangelist himself wrote) we are in-
 formed, that Jesus did many other signs in the pre-

fence of his disciples, which are not written in that book; so in the last verse of the last chapter, and of the whole book, we are told, that Jesus did many other things also, which if they should be written every one, the pen-man supposed that even the world itself could not contain the books which should be written.

Which wide expression, divers have divers ways attempted to explain without a figure. But doubtless they do it best, who fairly acknowledge it to be an hyperbolical speech, intended only to set forth the abundance of our Lord's both works and sayings, which must needs require a multitude of books to express them all fully and at large in. Which sort of figurative way of speaking would sound, perhaps, less harsh to vulgar ears, if they understood and rightly considered that that way of expressing things to the height, is both very common in other writings, and not altogether uncommon in the Holy Writings; as we read, Deut. i. 28. of cities walled up to heaven.

I have now gone through the whole book of John. Some little parts remain yet of the other three evangelists; whereof that which in order of time comes next, is to be taken out of Matthew, who thus delivers it:

“Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain¹, where Jesus had appointed them to come to him.”

This the evangelist immediately subjoins to the account he gave of the vile combination between the priests and the soldiers, to hinder the belief of our Lord's resurrection; without taking any notice of his having appeared before to any but the women. Which omission is the more to be wondered at, inasmuch as Matthew was himself present when he appeared to the eleven, without Thomas, and when afterwards he appeared to them again, with Thomas.

¹ Mat. xxviii. 16.

That he mentions not the Lord's appearance to some of them at the sea of Tiberias, so remarkable as it was, is the less to be wondered at; for that probably he was not one of them that were there; and in likelihood had not heard of it. For he relates their going into the mountain in Galilee, as if they had gone already thither, by the Lord's appointment, without making any stop or stay till they came there. Whereas they were in Galilee, when they were at the sea of Tiberias, where they had that memorable and miraculous draught of fishes; and where our Lord put Peter to so close a profession of his love to him.

This mountain they now went to, is supposed to be that on which our Lord made that excellent sermon to his disciples, recorded in the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of Matthew, not far from Capernaum. And this mountain being made choice of for the place, and the meeting here being appointed (as Matthew says) by Jesus himself, it is very likely, that to this place his disciples, followers, and favourers, did generally flock from all the adjacent parts, to both see and take their leave of their crucified and risen Master, before his ascension to his Father: this place being so far distant from Jerusalem, and out of the reach of both Pilate and the council of Jerusalem, that not only they who should come thither from Jerusalem, but all others from other parts, might hope to be in safety there.

And as this seems to have been the most general assembly, to which our Lord had shewed himself since his resurrection; it is most likely to be that which the apostle Paul mentions, 1 Cor. xv. 6. where, recounting the several appearances of Christ after his resurrection (according as he had received information thereof himself from others, which differs much from the accounts given by any, or all the evangelists), he says, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once.

Of this great number, Matthew here mentions the eleven disciples only, and says, "When they saw him, they

they worshipped him ;” yet adds, “ but some doubted.” Which, unless it be understood of some of those five hundred who had not seen him before, would sound somewhat harshly of any of the eleven.

To prevent which, since Matthew mentions the eleven only, some have thought fit to change the tense of the doubting verb, from the preter-imperfect to the preter-plu-perfect; so reading it instead of *some doubted*, *some have doubted*; as indeed not only Thomas, but, for a while, most of the rest had done.

When they had paid their adorations to Jesusⁿ, he coming to them, and speaking to them, said, “ All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them into 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, even unto the end of the world.”

Mark adds, “ He that believeth^o and is baptized (which he certainly will be, if he believe aright) shall be saved; but he that believeth not (and consequently is not baptized with this spiritual baptism) shall be damned.”

And to shew what sort of faith this was, to which salvation was promised, he tells them what the effects of it should be.

“ These signs, said he, shall follow them that believe; In my name (by my power) they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents (without danger); and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”

But nothing of this could they do of themselves, or without the divine power. Therefore Luke continues our Lord’s speech to them thus^p: “ And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you (which was the pouring forth of the Holy Ghost upon

ⁿ Mat. xxviii. 18, 19, 20. ^o Mark xvi. 16, 17. ^p Luke xxiv. 49.

them, John xv. 26. Acts i. 5. and 8). but tarry ye in the city of Jerufalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”

See here now a golden chain of many precious links, depending one upon another.

1. The ground of this commiffion from him to them was the fulnefs of power given unto him. “ All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye therefore, and teach,” &c.

2. Yet were they not to go upon this fervice, about this fo important bufinefs, until they alfo had received of the fame power; until they were thoroughly furnifhed with power, effectually to carry on the work they were fent to do. “ But tarry ye, until ye be endued with power from on high.”

3. When thus endued with power from on high, then were they to go forth in that power; and therein and thereby to teach fo powerfully, as by their teaching to baptize thofe they taught. “ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them.”

4. So that the baptizing was the proper and genuine effect of the teaching. For indeed, that teaching was not a bare verbal preaching or fpeaking to the hearers ears only; but it was a fpeaking to their hearts, and begetting in them a true and living faith. It was a difcippling them, or making difciples of them.

5. The baptizing was into the name of the Father, &c. A putting them under and in fubjection to the name, that is, the divine power, life, and virrue of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoft.

6. They who were thus by the powerful preaching difciple, and thereby baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoft, fhould be faved. But they that believed not, would be damned; becaufe without this baptifm they could not be faved, and without believing they could not be thus baptized.

7. They

7. They who by this powerful baptizing preaching should be brought unto this living faith, should have their faith distinguished and confirmed by those extraordinary signs, which, in those early ages, wherein the Christian religion was to be introduced and settled in the world, should follow them for convincing evidences thereof.

The apostle Paul tells us, that after this general meeting on the mountain in Galilee, where our Lord appeared to so many at once, he was seen of James. Which Paul sure must have from some verbal relation; for none of the four evangelists say any thing of it; nor he of the time, place, or manner of it.

It is thought by some (and not without good probability) that when our Lord parted with his disciples at the mountain in Galilee, he ordered his apostles to return to Jerusalem, the place where he had appointed them to wait for the promise of the Father, the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit upon them.

Whither being come, he appeared to them there again^p, and from thence led them forth as far as to Bethany; where having again commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait there for the promise of the Father, which they had heard of him; he gave them this reason why they should tarry there, and not enter forth with upon their baptizing ministry: "For John truly, said he, baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence." As if he had said, The baptism with water (which John baptized with) ye are sufficiently qualified for already, and have already used; but ye are now to enter upon an higher ministrations than that of John; the spiritual baptism, the baptism with the Holy Ghost; which before ye can administer to others, ye must be baptized with your

^p Luke xxiv. 50.

felves. So that it is plain, that they were to baptize with the same baptism, which they themselves were shortly to be baptized with; which was (not that with water, which they had been baptized with, and had baptized others with, before; but) the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

The disciples, observing that now, since his resurrection, the Lord had spoken more than ordinarily to them concerning power; as not only that all power, in heaven and in earth, was given unto him, but that they also should be endued with power from on high; and being too apt to understand it all in favour of their darling notion of a temporal kingdom, made bold to ask him now at parting, "Whether he would at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

To which he mildly answered^q, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put into his own power. But ye shall receive power (not to reign in an earthly kingdom, but to preach my gospel, and suffer for it) after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you;" and (by that power ye shall be enabled to be, and) ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." So comprehending all people, Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles.

When he had thus, in few and gentle words, corrected their old error, and reminded them of their new service and duty, he lifted up his holy hands, and blessed them^r; and while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and was taken up and carried into heaven, a cloud receiving him out of their sight.

"And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven^s, as he went up, behold two (in the appearance of) men stood by him, in white apparel; who said unto them, Ye men of Galilee, why

^q Acts i. 6. ^r Luke xxiv. 50. ^s Acts i. 10.

stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

Then, when they had seen the Lord ascend^t, and heard this angelick testimony concerning his return, they worshipped him; and returning with great joy from mount Olivet (from whence he was taken up) unto Jerusalem; they were, for some time, continually (or daily) in the temple, praising and blessing God. To whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.

^t Luke xxiv. 52.

The End of the FIRST PART.

SACRED HISTORY.

P A R T II.

AFTER that the evangelist Luke (whom the apostle Paul calls the beloved physician, Col. iv. 14.) had written his former treatise (as himself calls it, Acts i. 1.) wherein he briefly comprehended an account of the conception, birth, life, travels, doings, sayings, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ; he applied himself to compile an history of the lives, travels, labours, discourses, miracles, and sufferings of the apostles and disciples of our Lord, more especially of those three apostles, Peter, John, and Paul; of the latter of whom he was a steady companion, bearing him company in most of his travels and services in the work of the gospel.

That history, under the title of the Acts of the Apostles, he dedicated to Theophilus; but whether that was the proper name of some particular person, then eminent in the Christian church, or a common appellative for any devout and pious Christian, who truly loved God, is a question not yet determined, nor easily determinable; and perhaps not of the greatest moment, if it were determined.

Having, by way of introduction, delivered both the manner of our Lord's ascension, and (amongst other passages mentioned in the close of the former part of this book) his command to his disciples to tarry for some time at Jerusalem, that they might there receive the promise of his Father^u (the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit upon them); he relates, that when they were come in from the mountain called Olivet, they went up into an upper room, where abode both 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, who were the eleven apostles, with divers others, not only the devout women who were wont to wait upon our Lord while he was on earth, and Mary, the mother of our Lord (of whom this is the last mention we have); but many also of his brethren, or kinsmen, to the number in the whole of one hundred and twenty, continued together, for the space of ten days time, with one accord (in great unity of spirit, and agreement of mind) in prayer and supplication unto God for the accomplishment of his gracious promise unto and upon them.

In which time, a sense of the breach made in the apostolical number, by the defection of Judas the traitor, coming (by divine direction, no doubt) upon the mind of Peter; he stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled" (so the text, but Dr. Lightfoot on it says, it should be read, not *have been*, but *be* fulfilled) which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us (he was one of the twelve), and had obtained part of this ministry."

"Now this man was the means that a field was purchased with the reward of his iniquity. Which when

^u Acts i. 13. 16. ^w Acts i.

he had committed, falling headlong, he burst afunder in the midft, and all his bowels gushed out."

"It was a known thing unto all the dwellers in Jerufalem^x, infomuch as that field (which was bought by the priests with that money which he had received of them, as the price of his master's blood, and threw down to them again in the temple, Mat. xxvii). is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to fay, *the field of blood*. For it is written in the book of Pfalms, Let his habitation be defolate, and let no man dwell therein, Pfalm. lxxix. 25. and let another man take his charge or office," Pfalm cix. 8.

The apostle Peter here applies to Judas these words (which had long before been uttered by David, in the bitterness of his soul and anguish of his mind, from the extremity of his hardships, against his cruel enemies in Saul's court, and especially, as some think, against Doeg the Edomite, chief herdsman to king Saul, upon his having slain the priests of the Lord, 1 Sam. xxii. 18. The apostle then proceeds :

Wherefore of these men, who have accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus was conversant among us, beginning from the baptism of John (the time that he was baptized by John, which was before he had gathered any disciples) unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

This was the great care and business of the apostles and disciples of our Lord in that age, to give as frequent, full, and clear evidence as might be of his resurrection, as that which was a chief article of the Christian faith; which fairly evinced, and thoroughly believed, made an easy way for the belief of all the rest; even his divine and miraculous conception, which was not more above the power of nature, than his resurrection was. And if faith must recur to a

^x Acts i. 19.

power above nature for the latter, it might there find sufficient ground for the former also.

This proposition for the electing of a new apostle into the place of the old apostate, springing from a divine motion in one, found ready entrance in all the rest^y; wherefore they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

And then, referring the choice entirely to the Lord, they prayed, saying, "Thou Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place."

Then giving forth the lots, the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles, and so the number twelve was made up again.

This needful work being done, the assembly did not thereupon break up, the company did not scatter, or depart asunder, but continued together, according to their Lord's command, intently waiting for the accomplishment of his promise, the more plentiful pouring forth of the Holy Ghost upon them; and spent their time (as may reasonably be supposed) for the most part, in waiting on the Lord, and in prayer and supplication to him, as he, by his Holy Spirit (a measure of which they had received before) led them thereunto; until the ten days were expired, which remained between his ascension and the approaching feast of Pentecost. For that feast being (and taking its name from its being) the fiftieth day from the feast-day of the passover, on which day our Lord arose, and the day of his ascension being the fortieth day after his resurrection; there remained ten days from his ascension to the fiftieth day, or Pentecost.

^y Acts i. 23. 26.

And now, when the day of Pentecost was fully come^z, we find them altogether in one place, and with one accord, or in one mind.

This is supposed to be the very day, on which the law was given on mount Sinai. And as the delivery of it was then introduced, and attended with thunders, lightnings, fire, and smoke, which caused admiration and consternation in the spectators and hearers, Exod. xix. so now also was this great and extraordinary work ushered in (as I may say) with great and extraordinary attendance, to the astonishment of the beholders.

“For on a sudden 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 a thorough baptism. They were now baptized with the Holy Ghost indeed; and that in the strict and proper sense of the word [baptize] which signifies to dip, plunge, or put under; for they were truly dipped, or plunged, into the Holy Spirit. They were brought wholly under it, and into compleat subjection to it; so that it was not only in them, but over them and did cover them throughout.

And indeed very wonderful, and withal very significant and instructive, was this divine appearance to them.

The sound which came from heaven, and that so forcibly as to be compared to the rushing of a mighty wind, might well instruct them, that they were to publish the gospel of salvation to mankind with an heavenly sound, and in that mighty power and divine efficacy, that it should fill the world,

^z Acts ii. 1, 2.

as this sound had filled all the house where they were; which, in that respect, might then well pass for a type of the world.

The cloven tongues might well set forth unto them the diversities, both of people to whom, and languages in which, they should sound forth these glad tidings.

The similitude of fire upon those tongues betokened not only the brightness which should accompany their testimony, but the warm zeal which should be kindled in them, and through their ministry in others, for the propagation of the glorious gospel.

And its sitting or resting upon each of them, shewed it was not peculiar to some, not appropriated to the apostles only, but was common to all the disciples there present, without any distinction of order, age, condition, or sex. For the women were there assembled together with the men, Acts i. 14. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, chap. ii. 4. *All*, apostles and disciples, men and women, old and young, and began to speak with other tongues, &c.

This rendered it the more exactly agreeable to the prophecy of the prophet Joel (to which the apostle Peter expressly refers it, Acts ii. 16). by whom the Lord had promised, that he would pour forth his spirit, not only in general upon all flesh (that is, upon all mankind, without distinction of sex), but particularly and expressly upon daughters as well as sons; upon the hand-maids as well as the man-servants, Joel ii. 28, 29.

And since the end of this so plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit at that time on the disciples, is on all hands acknowledged to be for the enabling them to preach the gospel; the imparting thereof indifferently to some of each sex, and filling them all (both of one sex and the other) with the Holy Ghost, is a fair indication that God intended to make use of his servants of either sex

in that service; and that women are not excluded by God, and consequently ought not to be debarred by men therefrom, on the account of their sex only.

Nor let any, even of those who have the least favourable thoughts of women, think it strange, that so high and extraordinary gifts should be conferred on that sex, which is accounted the weaker. But let them consider, that that admirable gift of tongues was not so in the power or at the command of any of them^a to whom it was given, that they could use it in their own will, or time, when and as they themselves pleased; but only when and as the spirit was pleased to give them utterance.

This so wonderful operation of the Spirit of God upon his servants, could not long be contained within the walls of that house wherein they were assembled, but quickly broke forth, and was noised abroad. Whereupon the multitude (not the mere mob, but great numbers of sober and religious people) came together.

For there were dwelling (and at this time more especially, by reason of the feast abiding) at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven: which is an hyperbolical speech, all nations being synecdochically put for many; and perhaps there might then be Jews there from all the nations under heaven, in which any Jews did then dwell. But the enumeration which comes after, of the particular countries they were of, seems to restrain it, for the most part, to the Eastern world.

Now when the fame of this so unprecedented a miracle had drawn this company together, they were amazed; because every man of them heard the disciples speak in his own language.

And at this they, being all confounded, marvelled, saying one to another, "Behold! Are not all

^a Acts ii. 6.

these who speak, Galileans?" that is, Jews of Galilee, whose dialect did somewhat differ both from that of Jerusalem, and from the several dialects also of other Jews, living in other parts of the world.

"How is it then, said they, that we hear every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" viz. Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Cretes, and Arabians (but all Jews and proselytes; that is, either Jews by nation, or Jews by religious profession) we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

Some working heads have apprehended that the disciples spake but in one language, but that the matter spoken was carried, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to the ear of every one of the hearers in his proper tongue; in which mistake so wise a man as Erasmus seems to have been.

Against this opinion, good old Castalio (a man both of great honesty and learning) in his annotations on this place, declaims with more than usual vehemency, as a notion that not only opposed the plain text (which expressly says, they spake with other tongues^b, ver. 4. as the Spirit gave them utterance); but transferred the miracle from the tongues of the divinely-inspired speakers, to the ears of the amazed and confounded hearers; so turning the gift of tongues into a gift of ears.

Against this, Grotius also gives this guarding caution. '*Noli iis credere, qui miraculum in auribus audientium factum asserunt,*' i. e. 'Believe not them, who assert that the miracle was wrought in the ears of the hearers.' And he enumerates many texts of Holy Scripture against it.

^b Acts ii.

Evident it is, that the hearers admired the miracle in the speakers. We, said they, do hear them speak in our tongues, &c. And they were amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, "What meaneth this?"

Yet in such a multitude, there wanted not some, who through ignorance, or envy, or both, rather than confess to the divine power, chose to asperse the disciples with drunkenness, as having over-charged themselves with drink^c. And these mockingly said, "These men are full of new wine." Thereby at once discovering both their malice and their folly; as if wine, new or old, could enable men to speak in languages they had never learned, nor understood before.

This scandal however (how improbable soever) was fit to be removed, and advantage thence taken to inform the auditory of the meaning of this so extraordinary, and to them amazing work.

Peter therefore standing up with the eleven (as co-witnesses with him to the truth of what he should deliver) and lifting up his voice, that he might the better be heard of all, said unto them; "Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell (or at this time abide) at Jerusalem, hearken to my words; and be this known unto you, that these are not drunken (as some of you suppose them to be) seeing it is but the third hour of the day." Which (bounding the day within twelve hours, from six in the morning to six at night) will answer nine in the morning with us.

Had the discourse related to these countries and times, the argument taken from the earliness in the morning, would, I doubt, have been of little force to have acquitted them from the suspicion of having drunk too liberally; but the case there was otherwise.

^c Acts ii. 13, 14, 16.

Their third hour was the time appointed, under the Mosaic dispensation, for their morning sacrifice; unto which all such as pretended to any degree of devotion were wont to come fasting. And for the lewder or looser sort, such as take liberty to revel and be drunk in the night^d, 1 Thes. v. 7. they would, in all likelihood, have slept themselves sober again before that time of the day.

Having thus removed the evil suspicion of some, he goes on to improve the opportunity, for the information and benefit of them all, thus:

But this is that, said he (that is, this is agreeable to that, and is indeed a performance or accomplishment of that) which was spoken by the prophet Joel, chap. ii. 28, &c. viz. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants, and on my handmaidens will I pour out in those days of my spirit, and they shall prophesy: and I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath, blood and fire, and vapour of smoke; so that the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: and yet it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Thus far the apostle recited the prophet; yet rather according to his sense than his syllables, as the reader that will compare the places may observe.

The chief stress of the prophet's words (so far at least as concerned the apostle's present purpose) lay in the prophetick promise of the general and plentiful pouring forth of the Holy Ghost in those latter days, and the various effects thereof, expressed

^d Acts ii. 16.

in the terms (agreeable to the legal dispensation, under which the prophet lived and wrote) of seeing visions, dreaming dreams, and prophesying; yet the apostle followed the prophet farther, into those minatory denunciations of judgments, metaphorically set forth by shewing wonders in heaven, and signs in earth, blood, fire and smoke, turning the sun into darkness, and the moon into blood, &c. emblems of great calamities, and grievous miseries, which should come upon that people, the Jews, before that great and notable or terrible day of the Lord should ultimately come upon their city and them, to the utter destruction of it, and final dispersion of them. All which the apostle ran through, probably that he might come to that comfortable close; that notwithstanding all this, "Whosoever should call on the name of the Lord (that is, should worship him in truth, and in sincerity of heart) should be saved;" viz. from the destruction of that horrible day.

Having thus by citing a prophet of their own, in good esteem with them, removed any misconceived prejudice out of the minds of his hearers, and thereby conciliated their good opinion; he proceeds to open to them the great mystery of Christ's resurrection, and the effects thereof in that wonderful operation of the Holy Ghost upon them, which they themselves, to their amazement, had seen; and also, the great guilt which lay upon the Jewish nation for their injustice and cruelty to him, in putting him to death; and thus he enters it:

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth (so he calls him, that they might the more readily understand whom he meant, because so he had been usually called by and amongst the Jews), a man, added he, approved of God among you, by miracles, wonders, and signs, which

God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.”

With great prudence did the apostle insinuate to his hearers, that the person he was now about to speak of to them, was indeed a man of God; one signally and eminently owned and approved by God, and that in such a manner, by such wonderful and miraculous works wrought by God through him, as could leave no room for any doubt thereof, especially with them, amongst whom they were wrought; and which some, if not many, or most of them must needs have seen, and been eye-witnesses of. And therefore, for the truth and certainty thereof, he durst appeal to their own knowledge.

By which appeal having obliged them to at least a tacit acknowledgment that Jesus was really sent of God, he gives them then an home stroke, by telling them; “him being delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God^f ye (that is, your nation, your rulers, and perhaps some of yourselves also among the rest) have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” Which yet, by reason of his divine nature, could not have been done by them, had not the fore-knowledge and determinate counsel of God delivered him unto them. Which clause the apostle probably might add on purpose to assert, by implication at least, his divinity; which afterwards he more plainly handles.

For going on, he tells them, God had raised up this Jesus, having loosed the pains (cords or bands) of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

To persuade this, he urges the saying of David, which he applies to Christ. “For, saith he, David speaketh concerning him (Christ when, in Psalm xvi. 8, &c. he saith), I foresaw the Lord always

^f Acts ii. 23, 24, 25.

before my face, for he is at 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 (in the grave, or state of death), neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption (to lie so long in the grave as to be corrupted). Thou hast made known unto me the ways of life: thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance."

Thus the apostle delivered (or thus at least Luke hath given) the sense rather than the words of the Psalmist, from which he varies not a little; yet in the main retains enough to prove his proposition of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Which the better to evince, he thus bespeaks their further attention:

"Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David." This is a title we do not find given to David, either before or after; and now probably to sweeten these Jewish auditors.

Then he tells them concerning David, "he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, (Psalm cxxxii. 11.) that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne (so the apostle explains and applies what was spoken indefinitely to David); he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell (or the grave) neither did his flesh see corruption." In which words he must needs be understood to speak of Christ, not of himself, because his own flesh did see corruption; corrupt in the grave, as other mens do.

^c Acts ii. 29.

Having thus smoothed the way by the testimony of so great a man, and with them so venerable, as the royal prophet David, he now directly asserts and attests the resurrection of Jesus, thus: "This Jesus, said he^s, hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."

Therefore, added he, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost (of which see John xiv. 16, and xv. 16). he hath shed forth this wonderful operation thereof, which ye now both see and hear.

Which exaltation, or ascension of Christ into heaven, he confirms to them by another testimony of David, who they all knew was not himself personally ascended into heaven; and yet he himself says, Psalm cx. 1. "The Lord said unto my Lord, (which could be none but Christ) sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool." Which words our Lord himself also had before urged to the Pharisees, in proof of his divinity, Mat. xxii. 44.

Thus having fairly led his auditors along through the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord, the apostle closes his discourse with this close and home application; "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye (the house of Israel) have crucified, both Lord and Christ;" that is, King and Messiah.

So clear and demonstrate was this account concerning Christ, so powerfully delivered, and set so home by the Holy Spirit on the hearts of many of the hearers, that when they heard it, they were pricked in their heart (struck with a sharp sense of and remorse for what they had done); and thereupon said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

^s Acts ii. 32, 33. 39. 36. 37.

In answer whereunto, Peter said unto them, "Repent (that is, amend your lives) and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost ^h."

That the baptism here mentioned was the baptism of John (still in use among the Jewish Christian believers, or converts from Judaism to Christianity, more especially, who were naturally tenacious of ceremonial rites, and could not easily let them go) may be gathered from the terms of it, repentance and remission of sins, exactly agreeing with the terms of John's baptism, Mark i. 4. And it is not into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as Christ's baptism is expressed to be, Mat. xxviii. 29. but in the name of Jesus Christ only: which form John is supposed to have used in his baptism. For Paul told the Ephesian disciples (who had not so much as heard whether there was an Holy Ghost, though they had been baptized into John's baptism) that John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Jesus Christ, Acts xix. 4. But the baptism of Christ, the spiritual baptism which the apostles and disciples had now been so eminently baptized with, was yet to come; "and ye *shall* receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

"For the promise, said Peter unto them, is unto you (as well as to us) and to your children (if they also come to believe) and to as many as are afar off (either in place or time, Jews or Gentiles) even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (or, as shall answer the call of God). And with many other words did he testify and exhort them; concluding with this saying, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation."

^h Acts ii. 38, 39:

Then they that gladly received his words were baptizedⁱ; and the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls, who continued stedfast in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every one, because of the many wonders and signs which were done by the apostles.

And all that believed were together as one family, and had all things common; for they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to and amongst their company, as every one had need. And they continued daily, at certain times in the day, with one accord (or unanimously) in the temple; and at other times breaking bread from house to house (that is, feeding at a common table together, sometimes at one house, sometimes at another); and in that manner did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, who gave them favour with all the (unprejudiced) people. "And the Lord added to the church daily such (says our English version) as should be saved." Those (says Dr. Gell on the place, remains, page 696.) who *were* saved: those, who following the apostles counsel, to save themselves from that untoward generation, (ver. 40.) did (as Vatablus words it) separate themselves from the perverse men of that age, who denied Jesus to be Christ; and so received the Christian faith.

Soon after this, Peter and John went up together into the temple^k, at the hour of evening prayer (which was the ninth hour with them, the third in the afternoon with us): and a certain man lame from his mother's womb, who was carried and laid every day at the gate of the temple which was called *beautiful*, to ask alms of them that went into the temple, when he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked an alms. And Peter thereupon fastening his eyes

ⁱ Acts ii. 41. 44.^k Acts iii. 1.

upon him, as did John also, said unto him, "Look on us:" That made him give the more heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them.

Then said Peter to him¹, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee. In the name (that is, power and virtue) of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk." And taking him withal by the right hand, he lift him up, and immediately the feet and ankle-bones of the cripple received strength, so that leaping up, he stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God."

The people thereupon, who saw him now walking and praising, and knew that it was he who had used to sit for alms at the beautiful gate of the temple, were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. Wherefore, as the man who had been lame, and was healed, held Peter and John (probably through grateful affection for the benefit received, and perhaps too for fear, lest if they should go from him, his lameness might return); the people ran together, and flocked unto them in the porch which was called Solomon's, greatly wondering; which when Peter saw, he thus addressed himself unto the people:

"Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? and why look ye so earnestly on us, as though we, by our own power or holiness, had made this man to walk?" Ye mistake the case, which is far otherwise; and thus it is:

"The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus, whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. Ye, I say, denied the holy one, and the just, and desired (an unholy and unjust

¹ Acts iii. 6. 9. 13.

one) a murderer to be granted unto you, instead of him; and ye have killed the prince of life, whom notwithstanding God hath raised from the dead, which we are witnesses of.

Now, said he^m, it is his name (his virtue and power) through faith therein, which hath made this man strong, whom ye see to be now strong, and know to have been altogether impotent. Yea, the faith which is by him (which is wrought by Jesus the author of faith) hath given that poor cripple this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

This was a severe reproof, and might be likely to irritate some of them. Wherefore the apostle, tempering his stile, added, "And now brethren, I reckon that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath thus fulfilled."

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted (from your Jewish hardness and obstinacy, to the Christian faith) that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Others read it, "That the times of refreshing (the gospel-times) may come from the presence of the Lord (upon you also, as they are come, and more and more coming, upon us who have believed in him). And he shall send Jesus Christ (in this his spiritual ministration and appearance) who before was preached unto you; and whom (with respect to his outward person, or manhood) the heaven must receive, until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoke by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

"For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

And it shall come to pass, that every soul that will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people, Deut. xviii. 15. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days (the refreshing times of the gospel). And because ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, when he said unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed: therefore God, having raised up his Son Jesus, hath sent him unto you first, to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities. Not only turning their iniquities from them, by a non-imputation of them to them, but turning them from their iniquitiesⁿ; which doubtless is one of the highest blessings.

As thus the apostles were preaching to the people, the envious priests having got the Sadducees to join with them, and the captain of the temple to assist them, came rushing upon them, being angrily grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead.

As these were persons of different factions and interests, so their dislike to the apostles preaching proceeded from different grounds.

The captain of the temple (whose charge was to guard the porches and avenues of the temple, to prevent sedition or tumult, by the frequent and great confluences of the Jews thither), might perhaps fear, lest some disturbance might arise, to the breach of the publick peace, from the apostles preaching; whereby such great numbers of people were drawn together.

The Sadducees no doubt were offended that a resurrection was preached at all; which was utterly denied by all of their sect.

ⁿ Acts iv.

The priests (though not disliking that the resurrection should be preached, yet) took a double offence. One, that the resurrection was preached through Jesus, him whom they hated, him whom they had, with the utmost scorn and contempt, rejected, and put to the most ignominious death. The other, that the apostles being not of the priesthood (not in holy orders, as the phrase now is), but private persons, mere lay-men, should teach the people at all.

Thus, though on different grounds, engaged, they laid hands on the apostles (Peter and John) and put them into hold (thrust them into prison) until the next day; because it was now towards night.

By this means, probably, they thought to prevent the spreading of the Christian doctrine; but in that they were greatly mistaken. For many of them who heard the word believed; so that the number of the men was now about five thousand°. Some are willing to think, that there were about five thousand converted now. But others, with better reason, conclude that the converts now added made the three thousand that were converted before, chap ii. 41. with the one hundred and twenty of the first stock, to be about five thousand now in all.

On the next day a kind of general muster was made; their rulers, and elders, and scribes, and Annas the high-priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and (to make the greater shew, or, if need should be, to strengthen the interest of the priesthood by numbers) as many as were of the kindred of the high-priest, were gathered together in common council at Jerusalem.

And when they had set the apostles in the midst, they asked them, "By what power or by what name have ye done this?" where we may observe they

° Acts iv. 4, 5.

make name and power to be synonymous; terms of one and the same signification.

“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them^p, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined concerning the good deed done to the impotent man; that is, by what means he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name (that is, the power) of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, and whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.”

Then by an elegant metaphor, taken from architecture, he added, “This is the stone which was set at nought by you builders, which is become the head of the corner: neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among (or to) men, whereby we must be saved.”

Now did the apostles begin to experience the fulfilling of that promise of the Lord unto them, when warning them not to take thought, or premeditate what answer to make, when they should be brought before rulers, kings, or councils for his sake; he assured them that the Holy Ghost should teach them in that hour (or instant) what they should say; and that it should not be they, as men, that should then speak, but the Holy Ghost in them, Mark xiii. 9, 10, 11, and Luke xii. 11, 12. For now did Peter, being filled with the Holy Ghost, speak so to this great council as filled them with wonder.

For when they saw the boldness of Peter and John (that they were not at all daunted at the state and grandeur of so great an assembly) the freedom of speech they used (without fear of what the council could do unto them), and withal perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men (that

is, not bred up in their schools, not versed in the school divinity of those times; though otherwise well versed in the Holy Scriptures then extant, as appears by their ready citing and apt applying of the holy text of the Old Testament to the several purposes they were upon); they marvelled, and took knowledge of them (either from information of others, or the observation of some of themselves, who might have been of those that attacked Jesus in the temple, Mat. xxi. 23. and might there have seen these disciples of his with him, and from thence remember), that they had been with Jesus.

And beholding the man that was healed standing with them^a (for he like an honest true man, seeing the apostles were brought in trouble and danger for his sake, would not forsake them; but gratefully stood by them who had, so beneficially to him, stood by him) the matter of fact was so plain that they could say nothing against it.

This put them to a stand, so that they knew not well how to proceed, or what to do or say unto the apostles. Wherefore they commanded them to go aside out of the council; and then conferring among themselves about them, they said, "What shall we do to these men? For that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all that dwell in Jerusalem, and we ourselves cannot deny it. But, that it spread not farther among the people, let us straitly threaten them that they speak henceforth to no man in this name."

When they had thus concluded, they called them in, and commanded them that they should not teach; no, nor so much as speak at all, publicly or privately, in the name of Jesus.

But Peter and John boldly answered, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. But whatever

^a Acts iv. 14. 16. 18, 19.

your judgment therein may be, yet we cannot but speak the things which we have both seen and heard.

The council wanted not will to have handled them more severely, but they saw the cause would not bear it. Wherefore, when they had farther threatened them, they let them go; not finding any way how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done. That is, they ascribed the miracle to God, as wrought by his immediate power; and that the rather because the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

The apostles thus dismissed went to their own country^r (whether to the rest of the twelve only, or to the hundred and twenty disciples of the first stock, or to the whole body of the believers, is uncertain) and made report to them of all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

Which when they heard (who probably were then assembled to supplicate God for their deliverance) they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, "Lord, Thou art God, who hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thy hand (thy power) to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name (the power) of thy holy child Jesus."

When they had thus offered up their prayers to God, the place wherein they were assembled together was shaken by the wonderful power of the

^r Acts iv. 23. 31.

Holy Spirit, with which they were all filled, and by which they were enabled to speak the word of God with boldness.

And with great power did the apostles bear witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. By which word [*grace*] some understand [*favour*] from the people, others [*liberality*] or open-heartedness one towards another; which answers well both to what went next before, and to what follows next after.

For the multitude of them that believed were of one heart^s and of one soul; neither did any of them say that ought of the things which he possessed was so his own, that it should not be communicated to the necessities of his brethren. By which means matters were so well managed, with that indifferency and equality, that there was not any amongst them that lacked. For as many as were possessed of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles feet; out of which, distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

Of which sort of liberal community, a particular instance was in Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas. He, though he was a Levite, had land (perhaps in the island of Cyprus, whereof he was) which he sold, and bringing the money laid it at the apostles feet; who, it seems, were then the common treasurers or receivers of the church's common stock. And herein Barnabas answered well his name, which signifies *a son of consolation*; for by casting his estate into the common stock or treasury, for the common relief of all, he administered consolation to many.

Some think Barnabas might be possessed of this land in right of his wife. However, had he held it as a Levite he could not have sold it; for the

^s Acts iv. 32. 34. 36.

Levites might not alienate what they possessed as Levites. And indeed, had it been of that tenure, as he might not as a Levite have sold it, so neither could he as a Christian hold it.

This community, some say, was not of all their goods, but of some part, and that part which every one would voluntarily consecrate for the publick, or particular necessities of the saints; as appears from what Peter said afterwards to Ananias, Acts v. 4. And as it was used only in Jerusalem, and in those first beginnings only of Christianity, so we do not read that it was made a precedent for after-times, or other places. See Cradock's Apostolical History, chap. i. sect. 4. page 11. marg.

'Videtur (says Streso, in Cradock, ubi supra) ipsis jam tum revelata fuisse futura destructio terræ & urbis Judaicæ; & necessitas exulandi. Usi igitur sunt prudentiâ; maluerunt bonis suis ecclesiæ consulere, quam omnia perdere. Quod fecerunt, non fecerunt ex præcepto, sed libere.' i. e. 'It seems, the destruction of the land, and of the city of Jerusalem, and the necessity of their leaving their country, was even then already revealed to them. Therefore using prudence, they had rather provide for the church with their goods, than lose them all. What they did in this case, they did not by command, but freely.'

Such was, says another, the state of the church at that time, as was never like to be again. It was but newly born. It was all in one city. The most of the people far from their own homes (by their coming up at that time to Jerusalem to the feast of Pentecost), and all in a possibility (nay more, I may add, a probability) to be soon scattered by persecution. Therefore this example cannot be a copy for after-times to follow as a command, or to imitate as a perfection. Lightfoot on the place, in Cradock's Apost. Hist. page 20.

But as Barnabas and many others did thus give up their estates for the common support of the Christian

Christian brethren that wanted, and that in great sincerity, no doubt, and devotion to God; so there wanted not some who out of an ambition to be well thought of, and to be accounted somebody among them, sold their estate as the others did; but with an insincere and fraudulent mind.

Of this an instance now follows[†], in the deplorable story of Ananias and Sapphira his wife.

This man having a possession, sold it, but kept back to himself part of the price; his wife also being privy to it. And whereas others brought the whole price of what they had sold, he brought a part only of it, and laid that at the apostles feet as if it had been the whole.

This was a very high offence; a complication of many grievous sins together. First, There was great hypocrisy in it; a desire to be thought godly, devout, charitable, without any regard to real godliness, devotion, or charity. Secondly, there was great falshood in it; it carried in it the nature of a lie, and was contrived to deceive. Thirdly, It spake a great contempt of God, and tended to divest him of two most excellent attributes of his, omniscience and justice; as if he either could not know it, could not find it out; or knowing it, would not punish it.

Such indignities the Divine Majesty will not bear. Wherefore he immediately opened this foul fraud to his servant Peter. And he thereupon beginning at once with the man, said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled (or why hast thou joined with Satan, that he should fill) thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, in fraudulently keeping back part of the price of the land? What need hadst thou to do this? While it remained unfold, was it not thine own? It was altogether in thine own choice, whether thou wouldest have sold it, or no. And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Thou

[†] Acts v. 1. 3.

mightest even then have chose whether thou wouldest have brought any part of it, or no. Both selling and bringing was wholly arbitrary, and at thy own disposal; none did, none could, require it of thee. Why then hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men (only) but unto God."

No more said Peter, nor needed; for Ananias hearing these words (which he too well knew to be true) and divine vengeance striking them home upon him^u, he fell down, and immediately gave up the ghost; and great fear thereupon came, as well it might, on all them that heard these things. And certain young men arose, wound him up, carried him out, and buried him.

About three hours after came in his wife, little thinking she was his widow; for she knew nothing of what had befallen her husband; but probably was big with expectation of praise or commendation for what they had done.

What she said to Peter, or the company, is not expressed; nor whether she said any thing; though it may be supposed she did, and that what she said related to their sale. For the text says, Peter answered unto her, and his answer was, a farther enquiry about the sale.

"Tell me, said he, whether ye sold the land for just so much (naming the sum her husband had brought): to which she replied, yea, for so much;" which must be understood, "and no more."

Then said Peter to her^v, "How is it that ye have agreed together, to tempt the spirit of the Lord (to try whether it be a discerning spirit, or no)? Behold, the feet of them that have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.

So heavy a stroke as this was, and coming so unexpected, to hear of her husband's being buried (and she knew nothing of it) who she knew within

^u Acts iv. 7. ^v Acts v. 9.

three or four hours before was alive and well, was enough to strike down any one, and so it did her*. For she fell down straitway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost; and the young men, who had newly buried her husband, coming in, and finding her dead, carried her forth, and buried her by her husband.

This second judgment coming so close at the heels of the former, set home the terror which the former had raised; for hereupon great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many others also as heard thereof.

But as, in these instances, the Lord was pleased to signalize his justice, in a due punishment on these, and for a terror to all such hypocrites (and so good effect it had, that of the rest of such-like hollow pretenders, whose hearts were not sincerely and entirely given up to God, no man durst join himself to the Christian society, for fear, probably, of Ananias's fate); so after this necessary execution was done, he was pleased to let forth his mercy in beneficiary and healing operations; so that many signs and wonders were wrought among the people by the divine power and virtue, manifesting itself through the apostles, which made the people magnify them.

Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches; that at least the shadow of Peter, as he passed by, might overshadow some of them.

Besides which, there came also a multitude out of the cities round about to Jerusaleum, bringing sick folks, and them who were vexed with unclean spirits; and they were healed every one. And by this means, believers were the more added to the Lord; multitudes both of men and women.

But as they who cannot, or will not, do good themselves, are most apt to be offended with them that can and do; especially if they apprehend the

* Acts v. 10. 15.

good done by others may be likely to diminish their own power or fame; so in this case, the high-priest, and all they that were with him, were filled with indignation against the apostles^r, and that the rather, for that the apostles took all occasions to preach up the resurrection of Jesus; which to these (who were most of them at least of the Sadducees, who denied any resurrection at all) was the most offensive thing that could be. These therefore rising up against the apostles, who were all with one accord in Solomon's porch, laid hands on them, and put them into the common goal.

But in the night the angel of the Lord, opening the prison-doors, brought them forth, and said, "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life (not this natural life, but that spiritual and heavenly life, for preaching which ye have been put in prison)." As if he had said, Go preach to the people the doctrines of the gospel, which lead to eternal life.

The apostles, thus both delivered, commissioned and encouraged by a messenger from heaven, entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught.

Mean while the high-priest, and they that were with him (they that were of his faction) having called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel (not those only who were of the council in Jerusalem, but any others also, of other cities or places of Israel, who at that time, by reason of the feast, or otherwise, were at Jerusalem) sent to the prison to have the apostles brought before them.

But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and said, "The prison truly found we shut, with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors (which it seems was the manner then used, for the greater

^r Acts v. 17. 19. 21. 23.

security); but, added they, when we had opened, we found no man within." So that the keepers, it seems, though they stood before the prison-doors, did not see when they were opened, nor knew that the prisoners were brought forth; the doors being shut again, as well as opened, without their privity.

Now when the high-priest, and the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard those things, they doubted of them, whereunto this would grow.

But while they were in astonishment about it, in came one, and told them^z, "Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people."

The captain thereupon, with the other officers, went to them, and by gentle persuasion brought them without violence; which they durst not use towards them, for fear, if they should, the people would have stoned them.

And when they were brought and set before the council, the high-priest (not charging them with having broken prison, and made an escape; nor taking any notice that they had been in prison, that they might not be forced to hear how they came out) only asked them, "Did not we straitly command you, that ye should not teach in this name? And yet behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

The apostles might very well have answered, Upon whom else should it be brought, but upon you, who, by a direful imprecation, took it upon yourselves; when ye said, "His blood be on us, and on our children," Mat xxvii. 25.

But Peter and the other apostles (willing to wipe off the charge of disobedience to magistracy) answered, "We ought to obey God rather than men." (and so we told you then, Acts iv. 19). And that ye may know that what we have done, in teaching

^z Acts v. 24. 25. 28, 29, 30.

in his name, is by the command of God, we now tell you again, "That the God of our fathers hath raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree^a. Him hath God exalted with his right-hand (his mighty power) to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins (which depends upon repentance). And of these things we are his witnesses, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."

When they heard that, they were cut to the heart (with anger and rage) and consulted how they might slay them.

But there being one in the council, whose name was Gamaliel, a pharisee, and a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, he (seeing the council run so high, and fearing the effects of rash and precipitate counsels) commanded that the apostles should be put forth a little while; and then thus bespake the counsel:

"Ye men of Israel, Take heed to yourselves, what ye intend to do, as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody, to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves; but he was slain, and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought."

"After this man rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him; but he also perished, and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed."

"And now, I say unto you, refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel, or this work, be of men, it will come to nought (of itself). But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it. Therefore beware what ye do, lest haply ye be found to fight even against God."

^a Acts v. 30. 34. 38.

This good counsellor's name, Gamaliel, imports, *God's reward*. And as it may well be supposed he spake this by a divine motion, or impulse from God, so we need not doubt, but that he had God's reward, or a reward from God for it.

He is supposed to be the son of that good man, Simeon, who embraced Christ in his arms, when he was an infant, and spake those blessed things of him, which are recorded in Luke ii. 28, &c. he was the master, instructor, or tutor of that afterwards eminent apostle Paul, Acts xxii. 3.

To this grave doctor's good advice they all so far agreed^b, as to let fall their sanguinary thoughts of putting the apostles to death; yet they followed not wholly his counsel; for he wished them to refrain from them, and let them alone; but instead of that, these malicious Sadducees, when they had called the apostles in, caused them to be beaten; and then commanding them that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, let them go.

But oh the joy which thereupon filled their hearts, and the increase of courage which they received from God; for they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer (not only pain, but) shame for his name. And so far were they from observing the council's command, not to speak in that name, that daily in the temple, and in every house, or family (where they had occasion to come) they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

The Christian church was, by this time, grown somewhat numerous, by the plentiful accession of converts to it. The gospel-net, at the first draught, caught three thousand, Acts ii. 41. At the next draught they became five thousand, chap. iv. 4. And now we read of multitudes, both men and women, chap. v. 14.

^b Acts v. 40. 42.

So great a number of persons, of different degrees, conditions, qualities, dispositions and tempers, being all together in one place (one city, Jerusalem) though they accorded well in the main, yet it is not to be wondered at, if some little murmurings on particular occasions might arise among them.

They had cast themselves, in their own zeal, into such a form and way of living, as one household or family, in such a sort of community, that they did all either eat together, at common tables, furnished at the common charge; or had (the poorer sort at least) a daily allowance out of the common treasury, answerable to their particular occasions.

And though they were generally Jews, yet the Jews (since they had been conquered by the Romans) being many of them dispersed through Greece, and living promiscuously among the Greeks, not only refused and forgot their native language, and used the Greek tongue, but were, by the Jews that lived in Judea, but indifferently accounted of, and distinguished from them by the name of (not Hellens, or Greeks, but) Hellenists, or Grecians, whereas they called themselves Hebrews.

Among these there now arose a murmuring^c, viz. of the believing Grecians against the believing Hebrews. The ground of which was, because the widows of the Grecians were, it seems, neglected in the daily ministrations; or at least they apprehended so. Various conjectures interpreters have raised about this neglect in the daily ministrations. Some think the ground of the offence to be, that those Grecian widows were slightly overlooked, and not admitted equally with the Judean widows, to wait in person upon the apostles, and serve them in ministerial offices, but that the Judean widows ingrossed this more honourable employment to themselves.

^c Acts vi. 1.

Others suppose that the Grecian widows were put upon the meanest, hardest, and most base and servile employments in the family, and that that gave the ground of distaste.

But they doubtless are in the right who conclude, that (as Grotius expresses it) the Grecian widows, who were either sick or weak, or overcharged with children, received less from the common stock than the widows that were born in Judea. And this, he thinks, happened by the apostles making use (as he supposes they did) of Jews born in Judea to make the distribution.

However it was as to that, that this murmur (which at present seemed to be but light) might not run to a worse matter, the apostles (willing *principiis obviare*, to crush it in the bud) called unto them the multitude of the disciples (some think the hundred and eight only, who were of the first stock, Acts i. 15. and said unto them, "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God (the preaching of Christ Jesus to be the Word) and serve tables (take upon us the particular care and service of providing necessaries, and distributing them to the whole community). Which word [*serve tables*] sufficiently shews whence the Grecian murmur rose.

"Wherefore, brethren, added they (that we may avoid the censure of partiality in this case, we leave it to you to make choice of the men) Look ye out, among yourselves, seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this business. But as for our parts, we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word," viz. of preaching Christ.

It may be worth the reader's while to stop a little here, and to consider the qualifications required by the apostles in those men who should be chosen into this so low an office, as serving tables, or (as the modern phrase is) of being overseers of the poor.

They were to be men of honest report; well reported of for their honesty, that there might be no room for suspicion of their embezzling, or mis-employing the church's stock. They must be free from scandal, of an unspotted reputation.

They were also to be such as were full of the Holy Ghost. Not such as would laugh, and mock at the mention of the Holy Ghost, and would deride them that professed to be led by it: but such as by the Holy Ghost could discern and distinguish between false pretenders, and faithful believers. Which gift had not the apostles had, they might have been imposed upon by Ananias.

Together with these excellent qualifications, they were also to be well indued with wisdom, that they might carry themselves discreetly in their office, and might know how prudently to prevent and keep down, or wisely to stop and compose, any little discontents, which in so numerous a family might be apt, at some time or other, to break forth.

So well did this proposal please the whole multitude^d (of them to whom it was made) that thereupon they made their choice; fixing upon Stephen (a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost) and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicholas, who being of Antioch, was first a profelyte to Judaism, and thence a convert to Christianity.

These they presented before the apostles, who, when they had prayed, laid their hands on them; which was a Jewish ceremony, importing that the person on whom hands were so laid, was approved, and appointed to the office or charge he was chosen to, and thereby distinguishing him from others.

Of this imposition of hands, the Bible-note on this place says, "This ceremony the Jews observed in solemn sacrifices, Levit. iii. 2. and also in prayer and private blessings, Gen. xlviii. 14. And likewise

^d Acts vi. 5, 6.

in the primitive church it was used, either when they made ministers, or gave the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Which gifts being now taken away, the ceremony must cease." If so, why then do they use it still?

As this choice of deacons was made to free the apostles from that family care (if I may so call it), that they might be the more at liberty to preach the gospel, so it is very likely that they did so with greater assiduity than they could before, and that from thence proceeded that accession of converts to the Christian faith, which is taken notice of in the next verse, where we read; "And the word of God increased (the preaching of the gospel was more frequent and constant) and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly." Which it is not so likely it should do merely upon the choosing of those deacons, which was a private act of the church within itself, to which they that were without were not privy.

Of these seven deacons, Stephen only and Philip afford us matter of historical remark. The other five are scarce remembered in the Holy Scripture any more; not but that we may well suppose they were useful, and faithful in their diaconary office.

What we have of Philip will come hereafter; that of Stephen comes now in this place.

He being full of faith and of power (through the Holy Ghost, which he was full of when he was chosen, ver. 5). did great wonders and miracles among the people; and that procured him much envy, and many opposers. For certain of the synagogue, which was called the synagogue of the libertines, were against him.

These libertines were the sons of those Jews, who (when Judea was conquered by Pompey, and made tributary to the Romans) were sold for bond-men, and afterwards being made free by the emperor Tiberius, had a part of the city granted them to

dwell in. And such a Jew, who was so set free, was by the Romans called *Libertus*, a freeman; but the son of such an one was called *libertinus*, a libertine. Four thousand of these, Grotius, from Tacitus, tells us, were sent into Sardinia; and that this synagogue at Jerusalem was built at the charge of these libertines, who placed in them learned men for masters.

These libertines, together with Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia, and of Asia, rose up against Stephen, and disputed with him. But when they were not able to resist the wisdom^f, and the spirit by which he spake (or which spake in him) they suborned men, who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God."

By these false accusations having stirred up the people, with the elders and the scribes, they came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, or Sanhedrin; before whom they set up false witnesses, who said, "This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place (meaning either the temple more especially, or, more generally, the city) and the law. For we have heard him say, That this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us."

Though it is certain Stephen said not this, because the witnesses that said he did say so are charged with falsehood; yet very well he might have said it, without being thereby guilty of blasphemy.

Yet some, I perceive, incline to think, that though Stephen did not speak those words *in terminis*; yet it is probable he spake something of that import. For Cradock has a marginal note on the place (in his *Apost. Hist.* p. 31). which says, Stephen might speak of the desolation of the city, and destruction of the temple, from Dan. ix. 26, 27. and from Christ's

^f Acts vi. 10.

own prediction, Luke xix. 43, 44. Mat. xxiii. 37. He might speak that the ceremonies and shadows must vanish, now the substance is come; and of the disannulling of the Mosaical rites, to give way to a more excellent spiritual worship; and yet not speak these things with any abomination of the temple, or the service thereof, as they possibly suggested.

But if he touched, though never so little, or so lightly, upon changing the customs, or any of the ceremonies, delivered by Moses, it is no wonder if it drew those bigotted Jews upon him.

For as one on this place notes, ‘*Unde observamus quàm facilè corda hominum externis ceremoniis adhæreant in cultu. Nulla acrior contentio ecclesiam exercuit, quàm quæ est de sacramentis & externis ceremoniis. Ratio est, quia homines ad verum, internum, & spirituale cultum minimè proclives sunt. Tamen ad colendum Deum obligati, in externo ceremoniarum cultu, qui corporalis est, & animalis, adedq; naturali homini possibilis & facilis, acquiescunt, & in eo fiduciam ponunt.*’ Streso, as cited in Cradock’s Apost. Hist. page 31. *i. e.* ‘We hence observe, how easily the hearts of men cleave to outward ceremonies in worship. So that no sharper contention hath ever exercised the church, than that which is concerning sacraments and external ceremonies. The reason is, because men are not at all prone or inclinable to true, inward and spiritual worship; and yet being obliged to worship God, they take up their rest in the outward part of the worship, which consists in ceremonies, which is bodily and animal, or natural, and so is both possible and easy to the natural man; and in that they place their confidence.’

Stephen, thus set before the Sanhedrin, plainly discovered, by the clearness and cheerfulness of his countenance, the innocency of his heart, and the easiness of his mind, at rest and in perfect peace with God, notwithstanding the imminent danger he was in; which was so evident, that it was taken
notice

notice of by his persecutors. And all that sat in the council looking stedfastly on him^s (to try if they could dash him out of countenance) saw his face, as it had been the face of an holy angel.

When they had heard the charge^h, the high-priest said, "Are these things so?" This we may suppose he spake to Stephen; and it imported as much as if he had said, "Art thou guilty, or not guilty?"

Stephen accordingly thereupon put in, and began to make his defence; to which he thus bespake their attention: "Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken." By which comprehensive terms having engaged the whole court (not only the senators, but the under officers, and all the people that were there, as spectators), not tying himself strictly to the particulars of the charge exhibited against him, so as directly to either confess or deny it; but eying the more general service he had before him, to shew them how greatly they erred, in thinking God had so confined himself to their temple, and temple-worship, and took so great delight therein, that he could not be worshipped acceptably in any other place or manner, he made a short recital or recapitulation of many, if not most, of the principal passages in the Old Testament, from Abraham down to David. Therein not only briefly touching the gracious dealings of God both to Abraham himself, and to his seed after him, and their unfaithfulness to him, but closely shewing for how many ages Abraham and his posterity, the holy patriarchs, did worship God, with good acceptance, before they had either any set or fixed place or form to worship him in. For which I refer the reader to the account itself, given by Stephen in this 7th chapter of the Acts.

Passing over therefore the former parts of Stephen's oration, I shall only for the present observe, that when he had drawn down his account of those

^s Acts vi. 15.

^h Acts vii. 1.

things to the building of the temple by Solomon, he gives their temple a shrewd shake, by saying, "Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands."

Which, that it might not too much startle or offend them, he confirms by the testimony of God himself, who by his prophet Isaiah said¹, "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool, what house will ye build me, saith the Lord? Or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things?" Isaiah lxvi. 1, 2.

This one would think was enough to have convinced any one (not judicially hardened) how little regard God had, even then, to the mere outside of religious worship, whether with respect to place, or manner of performance. So that Origen (according to the account Grotius gives of him) seems to have had a right notion of the matter; for thus Grotius speaks of him :

'Sensit Origenes Deum, cum templum sibi fieri permisit à Solomone, pari id fecisse proposito, quo & altare & victimas indulxit; nempe ut se populi genio aptaret, ac eos ritus sibi vindicaret, quos alioqui populus falsis diis erat impensurus.' i. e. 'Origen was of opinion that God, when he permitted Solomon to make him a temple, did it with the like purpose as he gave way to altars and sacrifices; namely, that he might accommodate himself to the genius of the people, and claim those rites to himself, which otherwise the people would bestow on false gods.'

How warily soever Stephen expressed himself, and how strongly soever he backed what he said with the divine testimony; yet his saying God dwells not in temples made with hands seems to have highly displeas'd the council, as bearing too hard (in their partial apprehensions) upon their temple. I call it theirs, because it ceased now to be God's. And upon this it is (not without good probabi-

¹ Acts vii. 48, 49.

lity) supposed that they opposed him, and would not suffer him to go on; which might make him, in a warm, but true zeal, against their blind zeal, cry out thus:

“Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears^m (who, though ye glory so much in the circumcision of your foreskins, have yet neither hearts to receive, nor so much as ears, patiently and quietly to hear me out), ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them who fore-shewed the coming of the Just One (Jesus Christ) of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers; who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.”

Well was it for Stephen, that he got time to clear himself of them thus far. For no sooner had they heard these things, but, being cut to the heart, they (for mere rage) gnashed on him with their teeth.

Which he not regarding, but, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven; and seeing there the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, he cried out amongst them, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.”

This raised their rage to madness. So that crying out with a loud voice, and stopping their ears (that they might hear no more such blasphemies from him, as they took that to be) they ran upon him with one accord; and having cast him out of the city, they stoned him to death; the witnesses laying down their clothes at the feet of a young man, whose name was Saul; who also was consenting with them unto the death of this holy man.”

^m Acts vii. 51. 55. 57.

Thus they barbarously murdered good Stephen, calling upon the name of the Lord, and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

And as his Lord (and ours) when he was upon the cross, prayed for his enemies (probably many of them these self-same men) saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" Luke xxiii. 34. so this good man, while the stones flew on him from the hands of his stony-hearted persecutors, kneeling down, cried with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge".

Thus did holy Stephen, whose name signifies a *crown*, or *crowned*, receive the crown of martyrdom^o, being the first martyr in the Christian church; whom, being dead, devout men carried to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

Though this storm arose upon Stephen only, yet it fell not with him. His innocent blood was so far from quenching the flame that was kindled in those fiery zealots for the temple and temple-worship, that it rather increased it. And they, being more hardened by the guilt of shedding his blood, went on more furiously, carrying on the persecution they had now begun against the whole church, or congregation of the Christian profession which was at Jerusalem.

For that confident and forward youth, Saul (who had testified his consent to holy Stephen's death, by taking upon him the charge and care of the clothes of those suborned and perjured witnesses who stoned him) thrusting himself boldly into this mischievous work, made havock of the church; not only molesting them in their publick meetings, but even following them home, and entering into every house, haled out both men and women, and committed them to prison.

And to that height they carried it, that many, or most of them that believed, and who were not

^o Acts. vii. 60. ^o Acts viii. 2, 3, 4.

yet imprisoned (of whom many were but young in the knowledge and profession of Christianity, and weak in the faith) betook themselves to flight; and were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles, who continued still at Jerusalem, to bear up the testimony of Christianity there; and, for aught appears, were preserved out of the hands of the persecutors for that time.

But though fear, no doubt, prevailed on many to quit the place, and shun the suffering, yet was it not only fear that wrought upon all; for some, without question, had other motives on their minds, and felt divine drawings of their spirits, at that time, to leave Jerusalem, and visit other places, as well without Judea, as within it, for a service which God had for them to do; though they themselves, perhaps, might not then distinctly understand it.

For God, who often brings good out of evil, and makes sometimes the designs of his enemies subservient to his own ends, to promote and carry on the work he has in hand, did now take advantage from the fierceness of the Jews, who by this persecution drove many of his people from Jerusalem, to draw out some among the rest, who by that means should have opportunity to preach the gospel, and spread the Christian doctrine both sooner and farther than otherwise they were likely to have done.

Among those who were thus on this occasion scattered, some, we find, went to Damascus; of whom Ananias was one, whom we shall hear of hereafter, at Acts ix. 10. Others, as it may be supposed, went then to Rome, and among them Andronicus and Junia, whom persecuting Saul, being changed to preaching Paul, in his epistle to the saints at Rome, salutes, and acknowledges to be not only his kinsfolks (or of his kindred, rather than kinsmen; if Junia was a woman, as Drusus is positive she was, and the wife of Andronicus, as

Grotius delivers); but that they were in Christ before him, and of note among the apostles, Rom. xvi. 7.

Others, it is evident, from Acts xi. 19. upon this dispersion, travelled as far as Phœnice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to the Jews there, and at first to them only. For as the Christians were now scattered by this storm, raised by the Jews against them on the account of religion, so the Jews themselves had long before been scattered by a civil storm (if I may so term it) when they were first brought into subjection to the Romans by Pompey. Which gave occasion to the apostles (both James and Peter) to inscribe their epistles, the one to the scattered tribes, the other to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, &c. James i. 1. and 1 Peter i. 1.

Of them that at this time went to Samaria, Philip (not the apostle, but) the deacon was one. And as they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word (for it seems, upon this dispersion, they were all made ministers; they who were hearers before, being preachers now)^p; so Philip going down into the city of Samaria, preached Christ unto the Samaritans. For Jews among them we are not to expect; the inveterate enmity between Samaritans and Jews not admitting any intercourse of so much as neighbourly conversation until now.

But now that Philip was come unto them, and not only preached, but wrought many great and wonderful miracles, in casting out unclean spirits, and healing the diseased among them (for unclean spirits, crying with loud voices, came out of many that were possessed with them; and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed) it not only filled the city with joy, but had that good effect upon the people, that with one accord they gave heed unto those things which Philip spake.

^p Acts viii. 5. 7.

There was at that time a certain man there called Simon², who in former times had used forcery in that city, and had thereby so bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one, that they all, from the least to the greatest, gave heed to him, and said, "This man is the great power of God;" which was the very thing he boasted of himself, and laboured that others might believe of him.

But although, by reason of the forceries wherewith this wicked man had of a long time bewitched these Samaritans, they had too great regard unto him; yet when they heard Philip preach the things which concerned the kingdom of God, and that in the name (that is, the authority and power) of Jesus Christ, they believed, and were baptized, both men and women.

Which when Simon saw (fearing perhaps that he might lose his place and interest which he had got among them, if he did not fall in and swim with the stream) he himself believed also (or, at least, made as if he did) and was baptized too; and being thus got in with them, he, who went for some-body before, would fain go for some-body still; and therefore he kept close to Philip, associating himself with him more especially. And when he beheld the miracles and signs which were done, they had no better effect upon him than to fill him with wonder; not to bring down and bow his spirit into a true subjection to that divine power by which they were wrought.

Yet some, I know, there have been, who have had more favourable thoughts of Simon. One wherof hath thus said of him. *'Non puto fidem Simonis fuisse meram simulationem, sed fidem historicam, quæ verè convictus credidit Jesum Christum (in cujus nomine Philippus prædicabat, & miracula faciebat) esse Deum; & se, ac Diabolo (cujus vi ipse suas edebat præstigias)*

² Acts viii. 9. 12, 13.

‘*majorem.*’ *i. e.* ‘I do not think that Simon’s faith was mere dissimulation, but an historical faith; whereby, being truly convinced, he believed that Jesus Christ (in whose name Philip did preach, and work miracles) was God, and was greater than himself, and than the Devil too (by whose power he himself wrought his juggling tricks’). See Streso, in Cradock’s Apost. Hist. page 43 margin.

Which favourable opinion (though I think it has not many patrons) I am the rather willing should pass, for Philip’s credit, who, no doubt, admitted him in the judgment of charity, upon his open profession of the faith; leaving his sincerity in that profession to the searcher of hearts to discover, which it was not long before he did.

For as soon as the notice of this great work (that Samaria had received the word of God) came to the apostles at Jerusaleml, they sent unto them Peter and John; which was no great sign of Peter’s primacy, if he was deputed by the rest.

When these two apostles were come down among them, they prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost; that is, in those miraculous gifts of tongues and healings, wherein the Holy Ghost did exert himself in those early times, for the better fitting and qualifying of some persons in the church for the publick services of the church. For as yet the Holy Ghost was not fallen, in this extraordinary manner, upon any of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When therefore the apostles had prayed for them, they laid their hands on them, and then they received the Holy Ghost, viz. in that extraordinary manner of working miracles, &c.

This pleased Simon not a little. He wanted to be at this work. And two reasons more especially might probably induce him to desire it. One, that he might keep (or recover) that credit by working

true miracles, which he had before gained by his playing the juggler. The other, that if need should be, he might get a penny by it.

Wherefore when he saw that through laying on of the apostle's hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money^s, saying, "Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost."

This he thought would be a pretty way of merchandize, and might turn to good account; for no doubt, he that would have given money for it, did not intend to part with it again without money.

Now was Simon's heart laid open, and his hypocrisy discovered. The boil of his profession brake, and shewed the corruption which lay hidden under it; which Peter being sensible of, and inflamed with zeal against both it and him for it, brake out thus upon him:

"Thy money perish with thee (thou and thy money perish together), because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. As for thee, thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter (this divine gift, or this gospel of salvation which we preach); for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought thy heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity."

Simon, thus disappointed of the advantageous bargain he hoped to have got, takes thought now only how he might come off without loss. Whether he had heard what befel Ananias, is uncertain; but he seemed to be in fear of some imminent judgment's falling upon himself.

The apostles (for it is probable, from his answer, that John also had spoken to him, as well as Peter) had exhorted him to repent; and advised him to

^s Acts viii. 18. 20. 24.

pray unto God for forgiveness. He never heeded that, but replied, "Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken (of my perishing, as well as my money) come upon me."

That they did so, we do not find; but this we find, that when they had testified (perhaps against him) and preached the word of the Lord (to others in Samaria), they returned to Jerusalem; and, in the way, preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

Philip, mean while, was sent another way, upon another service^t. For the angel of the Lord said unto him, "Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is desert."

Philip thereupon arose, and went; and in his way, behold an Ethiopian, an eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem to worship (at the late great feast of Pentecost) was returning home; and as he sat in his chariot, he was reading in the book of Isaiah the prophet.

Thither had Philip been directed by the angel of the Lord; but being now come to the place where his service lay, he is farther directed by the spirit of God in himself. "The spirit then said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to his chariot."

Philip thereupon ran thither to him, and hearing him read the prophet Isaiah, made bold to ask him, "If he understood what he read."

This might look like a busy intrusion, and a bold question, from such a man as Philip (a stranger, a traveller, and probably, in outward appearance, under but mean circumstances) to a person of the eunuch's quality.

^t Acts viii. 26. 29.

But so far was this great courtier from taking it for an affront, or being offended with Philip for it, that with great humility and modesty he answered^u, “How can I (how is it likely I should understand it) except I had some man to guide me, by opening the sense thereof to my understanding?”

And since Philip had used such friendly freedom towards him, as, unasked, to concern himself in a matter of that importance to him; he now with great courtesy intreats Philip that he would come up into his chariot, and sit with him, to instruct him.

A devout man, no doubt he was, and a profelyte to the Jewish religion; but he had need of a farther enlightening, and a more particular account of the Messiah, as he was now come; which Philip was thus sent to give him.

The place of the scripture which he read, was in Isaiah liii. 7, 8. and the words as he read them were, “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before the shearer, so opened he not his mouth; in his humiliation his judgment was taken away; and who can declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.”

Between this and the text in Isaiah there is some difference, which Erasmus thinks was occasioned by the eunuch's reading it in the Septuagint's Greek, which varies from the Hebrew text. But Grotius seems to be of opinion that the eunuch read the Hebrew, and that Luke in relating it followed the Septuagint.

When the eunuch had read the place, he asked Philip, “Of whom, I pray thee, speaketh the prophet this? Of himself? or of some other man?”

Whereupon Philip began to speak, and taking the rise of his discourse from that scripture, preached unto him Jesus, declaring to him that it was he, the Messiah, whom the prophet there spake of; and

^u Acts viii. 31, 32. 34.

manifesting to him that he was indeed come, and had in his life and death answered and fulfilled, both in doing and suffering, what had been before prophesied of him.

This sermon of Philip's gave so good satisfaction to the eunuch, whose heart, no doubt, was prepared by God to receive it; that finding in himself a strong desire and full purpose to embrace, and henceforth to profess, the Christian religion, when, in their way, they came to a certain water, he said to Philip^w, "See, here is water: What doth hinder me to be baptized?"

We may suppose he had been baptized, or washed in water, when he was profelyted to the Jewish religion; that being the way of initiating profelytes into the Jewish church. And perhaps he might think, that upon every such change, he must undergo the like ceremony. Nor is it unlikely, that coming sometimes, as he did now, to worship at Jerusalem, he might have there heard of John's ministration of water-baptism, so famous and so recent among the Jews, and concluded it needful for him to pass under that also.

Philip, we may observe, as he did not propose it; so when the eunuch had proposed it, he did not press it, or tell him, "Ay, by all means, that thou must;" but, as a matter indifferent, and not essentially necessary to his salvation, answered, "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou *mayest*," not thou *must*.

"I believe, replied the eunuch, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God:" and concluding that that was enough, he commanded that the chariot should stand still.

And thereupon Philip, without catechizing him any farther, or examining him about hypostatical union, the manner of subsisting of distinct persons in Trinity, or other such-like nice and puzzling ques-

^w Acts viii. 36, 37, 38.

tions, went down with him into the water, and (upon that short and single confession, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God) baptized him*.

Which was no sooner done, and they come up out of the water again, but the spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, so that the eunuch saw him no more. But he might see by his so hasty departure, that he was not a mercenary or greedy preacher, seeing he neither asked, nor staid to receive, a reward, if offered.

They being thus parted on a sudden, as on a sudden they came together, the eunuch went on his way rejoicing; but Philip was found at Azotus, whither the spirit of the Lord had conveyed him; and passing through it, he went on, preaching in all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea.

But while Philip, and other of the disciples of our Lord, were thus employed in preaching the gospel of Christ in all places where they came, for the gathering still more and more to the Christian faith; Saul was as busy, and bestirred himself as eagerly at Jerusalem, to destroy (if he could) or at least to scatter, those that were already gathered there.

But because he proved so active and eminent an instrument, both of evil first, and of good afterwards, that much of the remaining part of this history is spent in relating what he did, said, and suffered; it may not be amiss here, before we enter upon the particularities of his life, to give the reader some account who and what he was, and how qualified.

This young man, though ill employed, was well descended of Jewish parents on both sides; so that he was not only an Hebrew (which any one was, whose either father or mother was an Hebrew), but an Hebrew of the Hebrews, Phil. iii. 5. (which none was, but whose both father and mother were

* Acts viii. 38, 39, 40.

Hebrews). For tribe he was a Benjamite; for sect a Pharisee, as his father also had been before him, Acts xxiii. 6. By birth-place, of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia; which, for taking part with Augustus the Roman emperor, in his wars against Brutus and Cassius, and by that means suffering much for his sake, received from him, amongst other privileges, the freedom of the city of Rome; whence he could afterwards tell the Roman captain, that he was a free-born Roman, Acts xxii. 28.

By trade he was a tent-maker, Acts xviii. 3. For men of note and learning, among the Jews, chose to have some employment to follow, both for diversion and subsistence, if need should drive them to it. And indeed, the Jews generally bred their sons to trades; whence arose that proverbial speech among them, he "that doth not teach his son a trade, teaches him to be a thief."

As Saul was born at Tarsus, so in his younger years he was bred up in the schools there; which at that time were in good repute, for the study of philosophy, and the liberal sciences, so called.

There, also, it is supposed, he learned the Greek tongue, and read the Greek poets, in whose writings he seems to have been pretty conversant, by his readiness in citing passages out of them, viz. Aratus (Acts xvii. 28), Menander (1 Cor. xv. 23), Epimenides (Tit. i. 12), as interpreters with one consent agree, though he names them not.

Having furnished himself with Greek learning, he removed from his native city Tarsus to Jerusalem, that he might there study the law, and entered himself in the school of Gamaliel, a famous doctor of the Pharisaical sect at that time; which himself intimates, when he says, Acts xxii. 3. he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; by whom as he was taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, so he stuck not afterwards to say of himself, that he profited in the Jews religion above many of his equals in his own nation; being more exceedingly

exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his fathers, Gal. i. 14. than many others. And indeed his zeal then being over hot and violent, and not tempered with true knowledge, was his worst part.

For being of a clean life, and strict conversation (which he expresses by saying he was, as touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless, Phil. iii. 6). that probably made him think too well of himself, and whetted his zeal, too sharp of itself, against all such as he apprehended did, in word or practice, derogate from the law. So that he thought with himself (as he afterwards acknowledged, Acts xxvi. 9). that he ought to do many things contrary to the name (the religion) of Jesus of Nazareth; whose disciples, he supposed, were not enough observant of the law, or of the traditions of the elders.

And accordingly he did so in Jerusalem, persecuting the church of God beyond measure, and wasting it, Gal. i. 13. For many, says he, of the saints did I (having received authority from the chief priests) shut up in prison, Acts xxvi. 9, 10. nay, and went farther too; for when they were put to death (which would lead one to think that more had been put to death besides Stephen, though we read of no more) I gave my voice against them (which yet cannot well be understood to be more than his manifesting his consent of mind thereto, as he did in the case of Stephen). And, adds he, I punished them oft in every synagogue (perhaps by scourging, or beating with rods, as himself words it, Acts xxii. 19). whereby I compelled some weak ones among them to blaspheme (renounce and speak evil of Christ). And being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities, Acts xxvi. 11. Which how he did, and how he sped in doing it, is the next thing we are to enter upon.

After he had made havock of the church at Jerusalem, and done what mischief he could there, his fiery zeal not being cooled, but breathing out yet threatenings

threatnings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, he went to the high-priest^y (as the head of the council) and desired of him letters to Damascus, to the synagogues there; that if he found any of this way (professing faith in Christ Jesus) he might, with the assistance of the synagogues there, bring them bound to Jerusalem, whether they were men or women.

This city Damascus was the metropolis, or chief city, of the antient kingdom of Syria; whither, it seems, some numbers of the Jews fled (as others of them did to other places, upon their being subjected by the Romans) and had their synagogues there; yet kept up a due correspondence with the Jews of Palestine, and voluntarily submitted themselves to the Sanhedrin, or great council at Jerusalem, in matters relating to religion.

And as those Jews had been scattered thither, so some of these disciples of Christ, who, upon the persecution which arose after Stephen's martyrdom, were scattered abroad, coming to this city, it pleased God, by their ministry, to gather some out from the Jews, and plant a gospel church there; whereof it is probable Saul had notice, which made him bend his course thither.

The city of Damascus is computed to be about five or six days journey from Jerusalem. And when Saul had got his commission, with his credentials, and all other things in readiness for his purpose, he set forth, well accompanied or attended; for uncertain it is, in what capacity the men that travelled with him went.

And when he had travelled so many days, that he was now come near to Damascus, on a sudden, at mid-day, there shone from heaven a great light round about him, and them that travelled with him, above the brightness of the sun, Acts xxii. 6. and xxvi. 13.

^y Acts ix. 2.

Whereupon they all fell to the earth, and he heard a voice speaking to him in the Hebrew tongue, and saying, "Saul, Saul, Why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." And when he answered, "Who art thou, Lord?" The Lord replying, said unto him, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest," verse 14, 15. (For in persecuting my members, my disciples, thou persecutest me).

It is observable that Saul, as bold and hardy as he was, did not contend, did not dispute, did not justify himself, and say, "Ah! It is no matter. It is good enough for them. They are a stubborn and obstinate people. Let them conform then; let them observe the law, and keep to the temple-worship."

But he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, What wilt thou have me to do?" Whereupon the Lord was pleased to say unto him, "Arise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister, and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I will appear unto thee. But go thou into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee what thou shalt do."

All this while the men that were with Saul (who by this time were got upon their feet) seeing the light, were afraid, and stood speechless; hearing a voice (which was the voice of Saul, say some; others, the noise or sound of thunder, in which the voice of him that spake to Saul was conveyed) but not seeing any man, nor hearing the voice of him that spake to Saul; that is, say they, not hearing the distinct and articulate words that were spoken to Saul, as he himself did; see Dr. Hammond on the place.

Saul then arose from the earth, as the Lord had bidden him: but when he was up, and his eyes were opened, he could not see^z; not only for the glory of that light which had so dazzled his sight, but

^z Acts ix. 8.

because his eyes were judicially over-spread with certain films or skins that restrained his sight; but they that were with him led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus; where he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink; being swallowed up of sorrow for the evil he had done, and intended yet farther to have done, against so gracious a God.

There was at this time in Damascus^a, a certain man named Ananias, who though he was a disciple of Jesus, yet being a devout man according to the law, he had a good report even of all the Jews that dwelled there.

Unto him the Lord appearing in a vision, bid him go into the street which is called *straight*, and inquire in the house of one Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus; for, said he, "Behold he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision (for with his eyes he could not yet see) a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

This so startled Ananias, that (not considering the import of that word [*he prayeth*] which implied a thorough change of mind in him) he said, "Lord, I have heard of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusaleme. And now he is come hither, with authority from the chief priests, to bind (that is, to imprison) all that call upon thy name; for the end of his coming had, it seems, taken air, and was come to Ananias's ear."

Though this might have been thought a reasonable plea, yet it would not excuse Ananias; "But go thy way, said the Lord unto him, for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the people of Israel (that is, to preach my gospel, and to proclaim in my name, or from me, the day and the way of salvation to

^a Acts ix. 10, 13, 14, 15.

them). "For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

This took away all Ananias's fears and doubts^b: he demurs no longer; but without delay went his way, and entering into the house where blind Saul was, put his hands on him, and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord (even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest) hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost."

This appearance of the Lord unto Saul, was not, says Dr. Lightfoot on the place, so much in his person, as in his glory; nor was what he saw of him (besides the light which struck him blind) with the eyes of his body, but of his spirit.

Now when Ananias had thus far delivered his errand, immediately there fell from Saul's eyes as it had been scales; whereupon he received sight forthwith, and looked up upon him.

Then went on Ananias with his message, saying, "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that just one (Christ) and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth, Acts xxii. 14. for thou shalt be his witness unto all men (unto whom he shall send thee) of what thou hast seen and heard. And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins (this was beyond washing away the filth of the flesh, 1 Peter iii. 21). calling on the name of the Lord." Acts xxii. ver. 16.

Accordingly Saul arose, and when he had received meat, he was strengthened, and he abode certain days with the disciples that were at Damascus.

In which time, being thoroughly persuaded (as well he might) of the coming of the Messiah, and divinely instructed in the doctrines of Christianity, and having also received the Holy Ghost (which Ana-

^b Acts ix. 17, 18, 19.

niaſ told him he ſhould be filled with, verſe 17. and by which the true believers are both waſhed and ſanctified, 1 Cor. vi. 11). he ſtraitway preached Chriſt in the ſynagogues^c, that he is the Son of God.

This ſtartled the Jews there; ſo that all that heard him were amazed, and ſaid, “Is not this he that deſtroyed them who called on this name in Jeruſalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound (whom he ſhould find here) unto the chief-prieſts?” But he, increaſing the more in ſtrength, confounded the Jews that dwelt at Damafcus, proving that this is the very Chriſt.

Here ariſes another queſtion, concerning the time of his going again to Jeruſalem. Luke here delivers it, ver. 22. as if it were now, at his firſt remove from Damafcus; and the ſhynefs of the apoſtles to him when he came thither would almoſt perſuade it. For that ſo remarkable a thing as his converſion ſhould not reach the apoſtles ears at Jeruſalem in three years time, and much more that he ſhould ſpend three years in publick travelling, in the labour and ſervice of preaching the goſpel, and they, in all that time, never to hear of it, is a thing next to incredible.

But he tells the Galatians expreſsly, that he went not up to Jeruſalem, till he had been in Arabia, and come back to Damafcus again, Gal. i. 17. This hath turned the ſcale with moſt of the modern interpreters; and ſo into Arabia let us follow him.

Arabia was an heathen country; but whether there might not be a ſprinkling of the Jews there (who were ſcattered into almoſt all countries throughout Greece, and the neighbouring parts of Aſia) which might draw him into thoſe parts, is not altogether certain, though very probable. The Lord indeed had ſaid, he ſhould bear his name among the Gentiles; and he himſelf told the Galatians, that the

^c Acts ix. 20.

gospel of the uncircumcision (that is, the commission for preaching the gospel to the Gentiles) was committed to him, Gal. ii. 7. But he told the contradicting and blaspheming Jews at Antioch, that it was necessary the word of God should first have been spoken unto them, Acts xiii. 46. And we may observe, that it was after Saul had travelled in Arabia and Damascus, and was come to Jerusalem again, that the Lord said unto him, "Get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles," Acts xxii. 18. 21. And accordingly, as he told king Agrippa, Acts xxvi. 20. he preached repentance first to them (the Jews) of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and through all Judea, and then to the Gentiles.

The country of Arabia was large, divided into three parts, distinguished by the names of the *stony*, the *desart*, and the *happy*; so that here might likely be room enough for Saul to spend his almost three years travel in; but with what success we have no account.

But from himself, as well as from Luke, we have account, that when he returned from Arabia to Damascus^d, and preached the gospel there again to the Jews, they were so enraged at him, that they sought his life. And having made to themselves an interest in the governor (who at that time kept the city, with a garrison, for Aretas the then king of Arabia) they watched the gates day and night, that they might take him and kill him. But their lying in wait being known of Saul, the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket, and by that means he escaped their hand.

Thus was he brought in danger of his life, in that very place whither he at first came, on purpose to have brought others in danger of theirs.

Upon this deliverance Saul left Damascus, and took his way for Jerusalem again. But when he

^d 2 Cor. xi. 33. Acts ix. 23.

came thither, he met at first with but cold entertainment. For attempting to join himself to the disciples there^e, that he might comfort himself with them, they, not believing that he was a disciple, were all afraid of him.

But Barnabas (who, it seems, had better knowledge of him, and of the manner of his conversion) was a son of consolation to him; for he took him, and brought him to the apostles (which, for aught appears, were only Peter and James, the rest of them being, probably, at that time abroad preaching the gospel); and he both declared to them how Saul (when he went so fiery-hot to Damascus) had seen the Lord in the way, and that the Lord had spoken to him, and gave them also an account how boldly Saul had thereupon preached at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

Upon this good character and recommendation, given by so good a man, Saul was received by the apostles and disciples, as a friend and brother; and had kind and free converse with them while he tarried at Jerusalem.

But that was not long; for as he came thither at this time^f chiefly out of a desire to see Peter, and to have some acquaintance and conversation with him (whose foul fall, in denying his master, and fair rising again to the apostleship, he might in likelihood by this time have had some intimation of); so, making it but a kind of visit, he abode not long, but about fifteen days with him.

Yet in that little time he was not idle^g, but preached boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians, or Jews who were born and lived in Greece, and spake the Greek tongue.

But they, like weak disputants, when they could not make good their cause by force of arguments, betook themselves to force of weapons, and went about to slay him; which when the brethren under-

^e Acts ix. 26.

^f Gal. i. 18.

^g Acts ix. 29.

stood, they contrived a way for his safety; but did not put it in execution, until the Lord also appeared for his deliverance, which was not long first.

For being one day at prayer in the temple, he fell into a trance, and saw the Lord, who said unto him^h, “Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.”

But Saul, apprehending that his so violent opposition to the gospel, manifested formerly in that city, might render him the fitter instrument to preach it successfully now (people being apt to take the more notice of such sudden and extraordinary changes, and to enquire the reasons of them) urged; as a reason for his longer stay in that service there, that the people there generally knew that he had imprisoned, and beaten in every synagogue, them that believed on Jesus; and that, when the blood of his martyr Stephen was shed, he also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and shewed it, by keeping the raiment of them that slew him.

But for all this, the Lord bid Saul depart out of Jerusalem; letting him know, he would send him a farther journey unto the Gentiles.

Whereupon determining to leave Jerusalem, the brethren brought him down to Cæsarea, and from thence sent him forth to Tarsusⁱ; from whence afterwards he went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; but was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea, which were in Christ; only they had heard, that he who persecuted them in times past, now preached the faith which once he destroyed, and thereupon they glorified God in him.

As Saul had been the most forward and active in carrying on the persecution begun upon Stephen; so the severe check he met with therein, and his wonderful conversion thereupon, might probably

^h Acts xxii. 17.

ⁱ Gal. i. 21. Acts ix. 30.

discourage others from rushing on in so dangerous an undertaking, and be a means to put a stop to that violent storm. For the next account we have is ^k, that the churches had rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria; and were edified (or built up), and that, walking in the fear of the Lord, they had the comfort of the Holy Ghost, and were multiplied.

This time of peace and calmness gave opportunity to the apostles, and others of the disciples, to travel abroad more freely in the work of the ministry. And Peter, among the rest, passing through all quarters, came down also to the fairs that dwell at Lydda (a town or city of Palestine), where he found a certain man named Æneas, who being sick of the palsy, had kept his bed eight years.

What discourse had passed between this bed-ridden man and Peter, or whether any or no, the text is silent; but we read that Peter said unto him, “Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; arise, and make thy bed;” not only get up out of thy bed, but exercise thy limbs, and shew thy strength in making thy bed.

The sick man did accordingly; which had so good an effect upon his neighbours, the people of Lydda and Saron, who well knew how long he had been bed-ridden, and now saw him up, lusty and well, that being convinced by this miracle, they generally turned to the Lord.

Though this was a great miracle, a greater quickly followed it. This was a restoring a sick man to health; that, a restoring a dead woman to life; and thus it was:

There was at Joppa a certain disciple, named (in the Syriac tongue) Tabitha; which, by interpretation, is (in the Greek tongue) called Dorcas, and signifies *a doe*.

^k Acts ix. 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36,

A very pious and charitable woman was this, full of good works, and alms-deeds, which she did. But falling sick about this time, she died; and when they had washed her body (according to the custom used in those times by both Jews and Gentiles), they laid her out in an upper-chamber. And the disciples at Joppa understanding that Peter was then at Lydda (which was not far from Joppa), sent two men to him, to request him to come to them without delay; probably that they might have the assistance of his presence and counsel in the ordering of her funeral; and that he might have the advantage of preaching the gospel among the people at that time.

Peter, accepting the invitation, arose and went with the messengers¹; and being come to the house, was conducted into the chamber where the corpse lay, and where the widows (who had partaken of the good works and charity of deceased Dorcas) stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas had made for them while she was living with them.

Peter had another work to do than to preach a funeral sermon at that time. Wherefore having put the company all forth, he kneeled down and prayed, and then turning himself to the body, he said, "Tabitha, Arise;" whereupon she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. He thereupon giving her his hand, did lift her up, and calling in the saints (the disciples) and the weeping widows, presented her to them alive.

This was a resurrection-sermon, instead of a funeral, and was attended with good success. For the thing being known throughout all Joppa, many thereupon believed in the Lord; and this probably opening the way to a farther service there, might be the reason that Peter tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner; in which time he had

¹ Acts ix. 39, 40s

more work cut out for him, and such as he least expected.

There lived at that time in Cæsarea a certain man called Cornelius, a centurion, or captain of the band^m called the Italian band; a devout man he was, and one that not only feared God himself, but ordered and governed his family with so much care and good instruction, that all his household feared God also. Exemplary he was for his charity and devotion; for he gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God very frequently.

This centurion was not a Jew, but a Roman; but living among the Jews, and probably conversing with them (as far as their austerity would permit) he might have had opportunity by conference, and reading the Holy Scriptures then extant, at least the Pentateuch (or five books of Moses) to have gained so right a notion of the Deity, as to address his devotions to the true God, which procured him the more favourable acceptance with God.

This good Gentile, about the ninth hour one day (which answers three in the afternoon with us, and was the appointed hour among the Jews for the offering of their evening sacrifices and prayers daily to God) did evidently see in a vision an angel of God coming to him (in the room where he is supposed to be then devoutly offering up his prayers to God) and calling him by his name, Cornelius.

And when he, looking on him, though afraid, said, "What is it?" The angel said unto him, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. Wherefore now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter (he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side), he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do."

This said, the angel disappeared; and Cornelius, observing the angel's counsel, called two of his

^m Acts x. 1. 3.

ⁿ Acts x. 4. 7.

household servants to him, and with them joining a devout soldier, of those that waited continually on him; when he had declared all these things unto them, and given them directions what they should do and say, he sent them away to Joppa.

Mean time, while they were on their journey, and on the morning drew nigh unto the city^o, Peter went up about the sixth hour upon the house (which was flat-roofed) to pray; choosing that as a place of most privacy, and out of the noise and business of the family. And when he had ended his prayer, it being by that time high-noon, or rather past, he became very hungry, and would have eaten; but there being nothing then just ready for him, while they made ready he fell into a trance.

In this trance he saw (in a vision) heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth. In this were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And with these there came a voice to him, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat."

This very much startled Peter, and made him say, "Not so, Lord, for I have never hitherto eaten any thing that is common or unclean."

The voice thereupon, speaking unto him again the second time, said, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

This was thrice repeated, and then was the vessel received up again into heaven; and thereupon, we may suppose, Peter recovered himself out of the trance he had been in, and was doubting and deliberating in himself what this vision, which he had seen, should mean.

But while his thoughts were exercised thereon, the men that were sent from Cornelius to him, having enquired out Simon's house, were come and stood

• Acts x. 9. 11. 14, 15.

before the gate, calling and asking, "Whether Simon, who was surnamed Peter, was lodged there."

Mean while the Holy Spirit said to Peter, "Behold, Three men seek thee^p; arise therefore, and get thee down to them, and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have caused them to be sent to thee."

Then went Peter down to the men, and having told them that he was the man they enquired for, asked them what was the cause wherefore they were come; whereupon they thus delivered their message.

"Cornelius the centurion (said they) a just man, and one that feareth God, and is of good report among all the nations of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee unto his house, and hear words from thee."

Peter then taking them in, took care that they should be furnished with lodging, and other necessary accommodations for that night, and next morning went along with them; certain brethren (to the number of six, Acts xi. 12). accompanying him from Joppa.

On the morrow they entered into Cæsarea, where Cornelius waited for them; having called together his kinsmen and near friends to his house, that they also might partake of the hoped benefit. And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius meeting him, fell down at his feet, to have worshipped him: but Peter taking him up, said, "Stand up, for I myself also am a man."

Then talking with him, he went in and found many there, that were come together on that occasion; unto whom he said, "Ye know that it is (accounted at least) an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company with, or come unto, one of another nation; but God hath shewed me, that I should not call (or account) any man (though a Gentile) common or unclean; therefore came I

^p Acts x. 19. 22. 25. 28.

unto you without gain-saying, as soon as I was sent for. And being now come, I desire you to tell me for what intent you have sent for me?

Cornelius thereupon, addressing his speech to Peter, thus expressed himself^a; “ Four days ago I was fasting until this hour (suppose the sixth; our twelfth); and at the ninth hour (three in the afternoon) I prayed in my house, and behold, a man (in appearance, an angel in reality) stood before me in bright clothing, and said, “ Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God; send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter (he is lodged in the house of one Simon, a tanner, by the sea-side) who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. Immediately therefore I sent to thee, and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. This shews he now looked beyond Peter, the messenger, and had his eye to God, whose messenger Peter was.

Then Peter opening his mouth (a phrase not used but when some weighty matter is to be brought forth) said, “ Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but that in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness (whether he be Jew or Gentile) is accepted with him.” Then going on.

“ The word, said he, which God spake unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all; that word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began at Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit, and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses not only of all things which he did (as well in the

^a Acts x. 30. 34.

city of Jerufalem, as out of it, in the land of Judea) before he fuffered; but alfo, that after they had crucified him, God raifed him up again the third day, and fhewed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witneffes, chofen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him (or in his prefence, that is, converfed familiarly with him) after he was rifen from the dead; and this he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that ~~it~~ is he who was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead; to whom all the prophets have borne witnefs, that, through his name, whofoever believeth in him fhall receive remiffion of fins."

Thus far had Peter gone, in opening to the company the way of life and falvation; and much farther probably might have gone (for he calls this but the entrance, or beginning of his fpeech, Acts xi. 15). had he not been ftopped by the fudden defcent of the Holy Ghofl upon the affembly (without fo much as ftaying for the ceremony of laying on the apoflle's hands; which, being a Jewish right, was not perhaps held fo needful to be ufed to thefe Gentile converts); for while he yet fpake thefe words, the text fays', "The Holy Ghofl fell on all them that heard the Word."

Here it may be worth the noting, that the words which Peter fpake to the outward ear, directed the minds of the hearers to the inward Word, Chrift in the heart. Cornelius faid well, We are all here prefent before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God; which fhews they had their ear to God, as well as to Peter; and heard not only the words which Peter fpake, but the Word alfo, Chrift himfelf, who fpake in and through Peter. Nor doth this diftinction between [*words*] and [*the word*] ftand barely in numbers, the one plural, the other fingular; but in the nature of the things treated of; for [*words*] in the former part

^r Acts x. 44, 45.

of the sentence [while Peter yet spake these words] are expressed by *ῥήματα*, which signifies words composed of letters; but [*the word*] in the latter end of the sentence [on all them that heard the word] is expressed by *λόγος*, a word most frequently applied to Christ.

When they of the circumcision, the believing Jews, that came with Peter, saw that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost (for they heard them speak with tongues, and glorify God, as the Jewish converts had done); they were astonished at it, being a thing so contrary to their expectation. For as the Jews dreamed that none should be saved but themselves, so the Jewish Christians, at the first, and for a while, thought none should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, but such as should come from Judaism to Christianity.

Peter therefore, though he had his own understanding opened in this case, by the late vision of the sheet, and the heavenly voice accompanying it, whereby he was taught that the old partition wall of legal and ceremonial rites, which had so long kept Jew and Gentile asunder, was now, by Christ's death for both, broken down, and the way laid open for both to come in, and grow up together into one body, in and through evangelical faith and obedience; yet had he a narrow path to walk in between these new converted Gentiles, and those older converted Jews, that came from Joppa with him; and need enough he had to tread warily therein, that he might not, on the one hand, disappoint the expectation of the one; nor, on the other hand, give offence to the other.

For as it cannot well be thought, that so devout a man as Cornelius (who had lived long amongst the Jews, conversed much with them, and conformed himself so far to some of their rites, as his observing their set hours of prayer bespeaks, whereby he had obtained a good report among all the nation of the Jews) could be ignorant of the mini-
stration

stration of John the Baptist; so it may reasonably be supposed, that both he and his fellow-converts would be willing to partake of John's baptism; which he could not but know that both the generality of the Jews at first (to whom it properly appertained) and the Jewish converts to Christianity since, had, in reverence to him, come under.

But how this would go down with the Joppean brethren, who were of the circumcision (which had appropriated all divine ministrations to itself) was the question; which to know, Peter put the question to them; for to them it may well be supposed he addressed his speech, when he said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" As if he had said, "Come, what say ye? Can ye object any thing, why these men, though Gentiles, should not be admitted to John's baptism, as well as we Jews have been? seeing they (as ye yourselves do now see and are satisfied) have received the Holy Ghost as well as we."

When therefore Peter had put the question, and they had, either in words expressed, or by silence, given their consent, he commanded that these Gentile converts should be baptized in the name of the Lord.

For this being not the baptism of Christ, but of John, Peter was not under any obligation to administer it unto them himself; whereas had the baptism which Christ commanded been into water, and this had been it, there would have been an indispensable necessity upon Peter to have administered it himself; for he could no more have deputed another to baptize for him, than to preach for him; preaching and baptizing being inseparably joined together, and depending the one upon the other. "Go teach, baptizing," are the very terms of the text, Mat. xxviii. 19. Nor were these now bap-

^s Acts x. 47, 48.

tized in the words of that commission given in Mat. xxviii. viz. "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"; but only in the name of *the Lord*; in which form of words it is very probable John himself did baptize; and the rather, because the end of his coming, and baptizing in water, was (as himself declares) that Jesus might be made manifest to Israel, John i. 31.

When these religious acts on Cornelius and his friends were over, they, sensible of the great benefit they had received by the apostle's ministry, and not willing to part with him suddenly, intreated him to tarry certain days with them; probably, both that they might express their gratitude to him, in a free and kind entertainment of him; and more especially, that they might reap yet farther advantage, by his grave and Christian conversation, for their farther instruction and confirmation in the principles of the Christian faith, wherein it seems he gratified their desires; for he was afterwards taxed with not only going in unto them, but with eating also with them, which imports a tarrying with them, and it cost him a chiding afterwards.

For when he came to Jerusalem again, the apostles and brethren that were in Judea, having heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God; they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, "Thou wentest in unto men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them."

This both they and he knew was contrary to the decree of the elders^a, and was therefore accounted unlawful by the Jews, and until now by the Jewish Christians; and for this they now demanded satisfaction of him.

Which he (not pleading any privilege of a since pretended primacy) applied himself to give them; and that he might the better do it, he rehearsed

^a Acts x. 48.

^c Acts xi. 3.

the matter from the beginning, and expounded it in order to them, thus:

“ I was, said he^w, in the city of Joppa, praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, viz. A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet let down from heaven by the four corners, and it came even to me; upon the which, when I had fastened mine eyes, and considered it, I saw in it four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air; and I heard a voice, saying unto me, Arise, Peter, slay and eat; but I said, not so Lord; for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. Whereupon the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common; this was done three times, and then all were drawn up again into heaven. And behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Cæsarea unto me, with whom the spirit did bid me go, nothing doubting; whereupon I went, having these brethren (as witnesses of what passed) to accompany me. And when we were entered into the man’s house, he told us that he had seen an angel in his house, who bid him send to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter, who should tell him words (direct him to the way of life in Christ Jesus) whereby he and all his household might be saved. And as I began to speak (continued he) the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning; which brought to my remembrance the word of the Lord, how that he said, “ John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.”

Having thus given them the account of the fact, he closes his defence with an appeal to themselves thus:

“ Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift, as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord

^w Acts xi. 5. 9. 15. 17.

Jefus Chrift; what was I, that I could withftand God?"

That plain account of the matter (tranfacted before fo many brethren, who were of the circumcifion, as well as thefe that contended with Peter about it) gave fuch fatisfaction to them, that having heard this his defence, they ceafed to contend any farther with him about it, and glorifying God, faid^x, "Then hath God alfo to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

A door being thus opened (by Peter's vifion, and the conversion of Cornelius and his family thereupon) for carrying the gofpel, the glad tidings of falvation, to the Gentiles; fome of them, who having been fcattered abroad (upon the perfecution that arofe about Stephen) had travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only, now took the liberty to preach the Lord Jefus to the Greeks (who were Gentiles) at Antioch; and the hand (that is, the power) of the Lord was with them, whereby a great number were brought to the faith, and turned to the Lord.

Whereupon, when the tidings thereof came to the ears of the church which was in Jerufalem, they fent forth Barnabas, that he fhould go as far as Antioch, to affift in that fervice, and help to carry on the work of the Lord, fo well begun there.

He, when he was come thither, and had feen how graciously the Lord had dealt with them there, in gathering fo many of the Gentiles to the faith of Chrift, being himfelf a good man, and full of the Holy Ghofit, and of faith, exhorted them all, that with full purpofe of heart they fhould cleave unto the Lord; and, through the bleffing of God upon his honeft endeavours and Chriftian labours among them, much people was added unto the Lord.

^x Acts xi. 18. 21. 23.

But finding still an open door for farther service there^y, Barnabas left them for a little time, and went to Tarsus to seek Saul; whom when he had found he brought with him to Antioch, that they might labour there in the work of the gospel together.

And so good encouragement they met with, that they continued there together a whole year, assembling themselves with the church, and taught (that is, discipled, or brought over to the faith) much people. And here it was, in this city Antioch (which, as Grotius observes, had been the seat of that kingdom which the prophet Ezekiel calls Magog, Ezek. xxxviii. 2. and xxxix. 6.) that the disciples (who before were by their enemies called Nazarites and Galileans, but by and among themselves, disciples, believers, saints, the brethren, and those of the church (as Cradock in his *Apost. Hist.* page 66. observes) were first called Christians.

At this time, while Barnabas and Saul were at Antioch, came certain prophets from Jerusalem thither; of these, one, whose name was Agabus, standing up among them, signified by the spirit, that there should be a great dearth throughout the world (which interpreters refer to Judea chiefly); which, it seems, came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar.

This sorrowful news raising compassion in the disciples at Antioch towards their poor brethren in Judea, they determined every man, according to his ability, to send relief unto them. Wherefore having brought their charitable contributions together, they sent them to the elders of Judea by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

But this dearth, or scarcity of provisions, though great, was not the only or greatest exercise the disciples at Jerusalem had then to encounter with.

^y Acts xi. 25, 26, 27, 28. 30.

For Luke informs us^z, that about that time, Herod the king stretched forth his hands (that is, exerted or put forth his power) to vex some of the church.

This Herod was Agrippa, grandson of Herod, surnamed the Great, by his son Aristobulus; whom he, upon an ill-grounded suspicion, had put to death.

Four Herods are named, and noted in the Holy Scriptures; whereof the first is that Herod the Great, in whose time our Saviour Christ was born, and by whose command the Bethlehem infants were barbarously murdered.

The second was named Antipas, and was the son of Herod the Great; he was but tetrarch of Galilee; and he it was that both put John the Baptist to death, and derided Christ when Pilate sent him to him.

The third was this Agrippa (called in history Agrippa Major, or the elder) who being in his youth bred up at Rome, under Tiberius Cæsar, was great with Caius (surnamed, from the short buskins he wore, Caligula) who succeeded Tiberius in the empire; and out of his love to Caius, this Agrippa wished that Tiberius might quickly die, that his friend Caius might come the sooner to wear the imperial crown; for which wish of his, when Tiberius heard of it, he clapped him up in prison, and left him there when he died. But when, upon the death of Tiberius, Caius came to be emperor, he not only released his friend Agrippa from his imprisonment, which for his sake he had sustained; but gave him also the government of all Judea, which before had been divided into four parts, and therewithal the stile or title of King of Judea.

The fourth Herod was the son of this Agrippa, called by his father's name (to whom he succeeded in the government of that kingdom) Agrippa also,

^z Acts xii. 1.

and by historians, Minor, or the younger, before whom Paul pleaded his cause, Acts xxvi.

It was the former of these two Agrippas (the third of these four Herods; for in honour of Herod the Great, his successors for a while assumed to themselves the name of Herod; as from Julius Cæsar, the Roman emperors after him chose to be called Cæsars) that raised this storm upon the church at Jerusalem; for being but lately entered upon his new government, and desirous to gain the Jews to his interest, observing how mortally they hated the Christians, he, to gratify those, fell foul upon these.

And taking notice, or being informed, that the apostle James was an active, bold, and thundering preacher (called by our Lord *a son of thunder*, Mark iii. 17.) he laid hold on him^a, and, without more ado, slew him with the sword.

This James (for there were two of that name in the catalogue of the apostles) was the brother of John, and one of the sons of Zebedee, whose mother for them (as Matthew relates, Mat. xx. 20.) or they for themselves (as Mark has it, Mark x. 35.) made that inconsiderate request to Jesus, that they might sit, one on his right hand, and the other on his left, in his kingdom, and were answered by him accordingly. But now this James came indeed to drink of that cup, and was baptized with that baptism, which his master then told them they should drink of, and be baptized with, being the first of the apostles (as Stephen had been the first of the disciples of Christ) who suffered death for his name's sake.

This bloody act had the effect which king Herod expected, and hoped it would have, for it pleased the Jews well; and that pleased him so well, that he proceeded farther, and took Peter also.

And because the Jewish passover was near at hand, he did not presently kill Peter (as he had

^a Acts xii. 2, 3.

done James), but intending to bring him forth after the feast to the people, he put him in the mean time in prison, under the guard of four quaternions of soldiers, each quaternion consisting of four; and that they might make sure of him now they had him, that he might not escape (as he had once before done, Acts v. 19.) they kept him bound with two chains between two soldiers (one on each side of him) the other soldiers keeping watch day and night before the prison-doors.

Thus was Peter kept in close and strong custody; but prayer (that prayer which reaches to and pierces heaven) was made without ceasing by the church unto God for him^b.

And so prevalent was that fervent prayer with God, that though he let Peter lie there till the very night before that day which Herod had pitched upon, to have brought him forth to his execution; yet then did he send his angel with a *liberate* for Peter; "and the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison."

All this while was Peter fast asleep between the two soldiers, having his hands fast bound with chains to their hands; so little was his spirit concerned, or his mind disturbed, through fear of what they would or could do to him; so that the angel of the Lord was fain to smite (or touch) him on the side, to wake him; and when he had awakened him, and helped him up, his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel then bidding him gird himself, bind on his sandals (put on his shoes) cast his upper garments about him, and follow him; he did so, and went out after the angel, not knowing that all this was a real action, but thinking he had seen a vision.

Thus on they went together till they were past the first and second ward, and were come to the iron gate which led into the city (for the prison,

^b Acts xii. 5. 7. 10.

it seems, stood not within the city, but in the suburbs); and that gate opening to them of its own accord (that is, without any human help) they went in by it; and when they had passed through one street, the angel forthwith departed from him.

Peter thus left alone by himself, and being by this time more fully awakened, said^c (in himself) “Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me both out of the hand (or power) of Herod, and from the expectation of the people of the Jews;” which shews what hopes the Jews were in that they should have him delivered to them, for them to mock and abuse at their pleasure, before he was put to death.

When therefore Peter had well considered the thing, and bethought himself whither to go, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John (whose surname was Mark) where many of the disciples were gathered together, praying (for his deliverance, no doubt).

He knocking at the outer gate, a damsel, named Rhoda, went thither to listen; and when she knew Peter’s voice (who probably, hearing some-body coming, might bid open the gate), she, for mere gladness, opened it not, but ran in and told them that Peter was at the gate.

This seemed to them so strange, and altogether incredible, that they told her she was mad; but when they could not beat her out of it, but that she stood to it, constantly affirming that it was even so; they then (supposing she had heard Peter’s name only, not his voice) said, “It is his angel,” so the text has it; whence some infer, that each particular person has a particular guardian angel attending him. But most expositors now understand by angel here, his messenger, or a messenger sent by him from the prison; the word angel signifying a messenger, as in Luke vii. 24. and 27.

^c Acts xii. 11, 12, 13. 15.

But when, upon Peter's continual knocking, they went and opened the door^d, and saw him there indeed, they were astonished, and could not but discover their joy by their voices.

But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared to them the manner how the Lord had miraculously brought him out of the prison; and then bidding them go and acquaint James (who was the son of Alpheus, Mat. x. 3. and was called the brother of our Lord, Gal. i. 19. supposed to be the author of that general epistle which in its front bears his name, James i. 1.) and the rest of the brethren, with it (who probably were then assembled on the like occasion, in some other house, that they might not, by meeting in too great numbers, at that time of the night, and in that troublesome time, be brought under suspicion of some evil design), he departed, and went into another place, that he might not unnecessarily expose himself again to the like danger he had now been so wonderfully delivered from; and bring them into trouble also, if he should, upon search made after him, be found, and taken among them.

Nor was this caution of the apostle needless; for as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, hunting and seeking about to know, and find out, if they could, what was become of Peter.

And indeed, it behoved the keepers to bestir themselves for their own sakes and safety, to get Peter into their custody again; for so enraged was Herod, when he found himself, by the apostle's deliverance, disappointed of his purpose (which was to have sacrificed Peter to the rage of the Jews, thereby to engage them to himself) that when, having sought for him, he could not find him, he wreaked his displeasure upon the poor keepers, whom when he had

^d Acts xii. 16, 17, 18, 19.

examined, he commanded that they should be put to death.

But as this cruel severity upon the innocent keepers, in putting them to death for that which they neither knew of, nor could possibly have hindered, too plainly discovered Herod's bloody intention towards the apostle himself; so divine vengeance waited on him for it, and ere long took occasion to reward him accordingly.

For going down soon after from Jerusalem to Cæsarea, and making his abode for some time there, he took occasion to fall out with the Tyrians and Sidonians, with whom he was so highly offended, that he threatened to make war upon them.

But they, wisely considering that their small country could not supply them with necessary provisions for their subsistence of itself, but that they were fain to have dependance on the king's country (Galilee and Judea) for corn, cattle, wine, and other necessaries, thought it their wisest way to submit in time; and therefore having first made Blastus, the king's chamberlain, their friend and advocate, to get them the easier terms, they sent their ambassadors to king Herod's court to sue for peace.

He, an aspiring and haughty prince, not a little proud that he had frightened them into a submission, and resolving to shew them the greatness of both his political power and natural abilities, appointed a set day, for both him to receive their supplication, and them his answer.

And when that day was come, he being most gorgeously arrayed in his glittering royal robes^c, and sitting majestically upon his throne, that he might at once display his magnificence and eloquence, he made an oration to them; at which the people giving an acclamatory shout, most impiously said, "It is the voice of a God, and not of a man."

^c Acts xii. 21, 22.

This highly pleased his ambitious mind, and so tickled his haughty humour, that instead of giving the glory to God, he too greedily took it all to himself; whereupon the angel of the Lord immediately smote him with such an incurable and loathsome disease^f, that being eaten up by worms or lice, he most miserably ended his wretched life. But after his death, the doctrine of the gospel was more and more spread abroad, and the numbers of Christian converts did greatly increase.

When we entered upon the foregoing story of Herod's cruelty and suitable end, we left Barnabas and Saul on their way, carrying the alms of the disciples in Antioch to their poor brethren in Judea, for their better support in the time of the dearth. Acts xi. 30. Which service when they had performed, they returned from Jerusalem to Antioch again, taking with them that John, whose surname was Mark, the son of that Mary whose house the apostle Peter came to, when the angel had delivered him out of prison, ver. 12.

Being come back to Antioch, they found in the church there certain prophets and teachers, as particularly Simeon, who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod Antipas the tetrarch; for the gospel-net caught fishes of all sorts and sizes; great sometimes (though not often) as well as small.

Here therefore being at that time a competent number of preachers for that place^g, Barnabas and Saul might be the better spared there. And the Lord having service for them elsewhere, while they were all ministering to the Lord, and fasting, the Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul (that is, set them aside or apart) for the work whereunto I have called them."

When therefore they had fasted and prayed, and the rest had laid their hands on them (which was

^f Acts xii. 23. 25.

^g Acts xiii. 1, 2.

a Jewish ceremony, betokening that they were appointed to a particular service, and that they went thereupon in the unity and with the approbation of the brethren) they sent them away; that is (as Grotius paraphrases it) wished them good success in the service they were going upon.

They therefore being thus sent forth by the Holy Ghost^h, departed unto Seleucia (a port town in Syria), and from thence sailed unto Cyprus, which was the country where Barnabas was born.

When they were come to Salamis (a city seated at the east end of that island), though their errand was now chiefly to the Gentiles, yet finding some numbers of Jews there, they began with them, and preached the word of God in their synagogues, having John, surnamed Mark, to accompany them, and assist them in their work.

And when they had finished their service there, travelling on through the isle, they came unto Paphos, a noted city, situated at the west end of that island, and dedicated of old to wanton Venus.

Here dwelt the deputy-governor of the country, a prudent man, whose name was Sergius Paulus; he had with him a certain forcerer, who was a Jew and a false prophet, that had taken upon him the name of *Bar-Jesus* (that is, *a son of Jesus*) and pretended to have both great skill and power to heal diseases, and to restore health; but his right name was Elymas.

This prudent governor invited Barnabas and Saul to come to him, desiring that he might hear from them the word of God, and accordingly they went; but when they were come, Elymas, the forcerer (for that is the signification of his name) withstood and opposed them, endeavouring to turn away the deputy from receiving the faith.

Which when Saul observed, being filled with the Holy Ghost, he fixed his eyes intently on him, and

^h Acts xiii. 4, 5, 6, 7,

said, "O full of all subtilty and all mischief¹, thou child of the Devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right way of the Lord? Wherefore now behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee in judgment, and thou shalt, for a season, be so blind, that thou shalt not see the sun when it shines."

No sooner was this judgment denounced, but immediately there fell upon this opposer of the truth a mist, and a darkness so thick, that having no sight left, he went groping about, seeking somebody to lead him by the hand.

Which when the deputy saw, he believed, admiring the divine power which both attended and defended the doctrine of the Lord.

In this place it was, and at this time, that this great apostle of the Gentiles lost his old name, Saul (which, among other significations, has that of *inquietude*, or *restlessness*) and received a new name, Paul (which, with the Greeks, signifies *quiet* or *rest*; with the Latins, *little*, or *small*), and by this name we shall find him henceforth called.

Among the many suppositions that have been made for the reason or ground of changing his name, one is, that he received it from the converted governor, Sergius Paulus, who was the first, that we read of, gained by his ministry from Gentilism to Christianity, and so might be called the first fruit, as it were, of his apostleship among the Gentiles.

When Paul had finished his service in Cyprus, he with his company set sail from Paphos, and came to Perga, a city in Pamphylia (famous in old time for a temple there dedicated to Diana). And there John, surnamed Mark, took his leave of them, and returned to Jerusalem, for what reason is not expressed; but that this departure gave offence to Paul, may be gathered from Acts xv. 38.

¹ Acts xiii. 9, 11, 12.

What service they had, or stay they made at Perga, the text is wholly silent; but we read, that when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch (not that in Syria, from whence they set forth, when they entered upon this journey; but another city of the same name, in Pisidia, a province of Asia the Less), and finding here a synagogue of the Jews, they went into it on the sabbath-day, and sat down.

And after the reading of some part of the law, and some portion out of the prophets (as the usual manner was, Acts xv. 21.) the rulers of the synagogue observing them to be strangers^k, very courteously sent this inviting message to them; "Ye men and brethren, if ye have any words of exhortation to the people, speak."

Paul thereupon, willingly embracing so fair an offer, stood up, and bespeaking their attention by beckoning with his hand, said, "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience;" which they doing, he thus went on:

"The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm (a mighty power) brought he them out of it; and bore with their perverse manners in the wilderness for about the space of forty years; and when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot."

"After that he gave unto them judges, for about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet; in whose time they desiring a king, God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, who (including the time of Samuel's government) ruled over them by the space of forty years."

"And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, by saying, I have found David

^k Acts xiii. 15. 17.

the son of Jesse, a man (in the main) after my own heart, who (in point of government) shall fulfil all my will (that is, shall do whatever I command him, which Saul did not," 1 Sam. xv).

Hitherto he entertained them with an opening introduction, to prepare their minds to receive the grand message he had to deliver; which thus he briefly gave them:

"Of this man's¹ (David's) seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, even Jesus; who appeared at that time when John had, just before his coming, first preached up the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. For as John fulfilled his course (went on in the performance of his ministry) he asked the people, whom think ye that I am? Then plainly told them, I am not he (to wit, the Messiah whom ye look for). But behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to unloose; that is He."

Then, that he might bring the matter nearer home to themselves; "Men and brethren, said he, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you fear God, to you is the word (message or doctrine) of this salvation sent."

For as for them that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers (not the common people only, but the high-priest and the Sanhedrin), because they knew him not (to be the Messiah), nor yet understood the meaning of the prophets (though their prophecies were publicly read every sabbath-day), they have fulfilled the predictions of the prophets, in condemning him. And though they found in him no cause for which he should be put to death; yet they petitioned Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree (or cross on which they had hanged him), and laid him in a sepulchre."

¹ Acts xiii. 23, 26, 27.

“ But God raised him^m (his Godhead raised his manhood) from the dead; and he was seen many days of them who came up with him from Galilee to Jerufalem, who are his witneffes thereof unto the people.”

And thefe glad tidings (this gofpel) we declare unto you, how that the promife, which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jefus again; as it is alfo written in the fecond pfalm (ver. 7.) “ Thou art my fon, this day have I begotten thee.”

And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he faid on this wife; “ I will give you the fure mercies of David (that is, I will fulfil unto you the merciful promifes, which with the utmoft affurance were made to David);” which words the apoftle took from the prophet Ifaiah (chap. lv. ver. 3.) and urged them in proof of the refurrection of Chrift; adding, in confirmation thereof, thofe words of David, in Pfalm xvi. 10. “ Thou wilt not fuffer thine holy one to fee corruption;” which words he fhews could not be intended or verified of David himfelf, in his own perfon; inasmuch as David, after he had ferved his own generation, by (or according to) the will of God, fell afleep, and was laid unto (buried with or by) his fathers, and faw corruption (that is, his body putrified and corrup’ed, as other mens bodies do); but he, this Jefus, whom God raised again, faw no corruption. Nor, indeed, had his body been corruptible, like other mens, could it probably have corrupted in that fhort fpace of time wherein it was in the fepulchre (which was but part of three days) although it had not been (as it was) embalmed.

Having thus eftablifhed the doctrine of the refurrection of Chrift, and thereby proved that he was the Mefiah, fo long and fo earneftly expected by the Jews; he fhewed them the benefit, which through-

^m Acts xiii. 30. 31. 34. 36. 38.

him would accrue unto them, and to all men, if they reject him not.

“Be it known therefore, said he, unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the remission of sins; and by him all that believe in him are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

Then, to warn them that they should not neglect, much less slight, this so high favour, and thereby lose the benefit of it, he closes his discourse with this necessary caution; “Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in one of the prophets: Behold ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no-wise believe, although a man declare it unto you.”

These words (taken in sense, though not in syllables, from the prophet Habakkuk, chap. i. 5.) were a denunciation and warning given by God, through that prophet of his, to the Jews, a little before the Babylonish captivity, when that great work was then upon the wheel, and near to be brought to pass; namely, the destruction of the city and temple, and captivity of the people by the Chaldeans.

Very aptly therefore did the apostle urge this, as a suitable and needful warning to these Jews not to despise the tenders of divine grace to them by the gospel now, lest they also should perish (as their fore-fathers had done) in the winding up of that work which God had now on the wheel; whereby not only the city and the temple were, in a while after, utterly destroyed, but the whole body of the Jews led into captivity by the Romans.

When Paul had ended his exhortation, and the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious profelytes followed him and Barnabas.

These seem to be such as had received into their hearts the good seed which had now been sown;

* Acts xiii. 39, 40.

for the apostle, with his companion Barnabas, speaking to them, exhorted them to continue and stand fast in the grace of God^o, the faith of Christ Jesus, and the doctrine of the gospel.

But the Gentiles, who, it seems, had heard (or heard of) this sermon which Paul had now preached to the Jews, took the opportunity, when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, to beseech the apostle, that this discourse, which he had then made to the Jews, might be preached to them the next sabbath.

In expectation whereof, on the next sabbath-day, the whole city (almost) came together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews, who believed not, saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were delivered by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

Upon this Paul and Barnabas growing more bold, told them, "It was necessary that the word of God (the doctrine of the gospel) should first have been spoken unto them; but seeing, said he (ye put it from you, and thereby manifest yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles; for so hath the Lord commanded us, and so also hath the Lord foretold by his prophet (Isaiah xlix. 6.) concerning Christ, whom we preach, when he said, "I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."

When the Gentiles heard this they were glad, and glorified the Lord for this word; and as many as were desirous of, and prepared for, eternal life, believed; and the word of the Lord (the gospel of Christ Jesus) was published throughout all the region.

But the contradicting and blaspheming Jews, that they might the more covertly, and yet effectually, wreak their revenge upon the apostles, stirred up first

^o Acts xiii. 42, 43, 44, 45, 46. 48. 50.

the devout and honourable women, and then (probably by them) the chief men of the city; and having raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, expelled them out of their coasts.

Whereupon they shook off the dust of their feet against them^p (which is the first instance we have of the execution of that part of their master's direction, Mat. x. 14.), and went up unto Iconium, a city of Lycaonia; and the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

Being come to Iconium^q, they went, both Paul and Barnabas, together into the synagogue of the Jews, and preached so powerfully and convincingly, that a great multitude, both of Jews, and also of the Greeks, believed.

Whereupon the unbelieving Jews, stirring up the Gentiles, made their minds evil-effected towards the brethren.

This engaged the apostles to tarry the longer there, and to preach the more boldly in the (power of the) Lord, who gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

But the multitude of the city being divided, part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles; so that when there was an assault made, both by the Gentiles, and also by the Jews, with their rulers, to have used the apostles despitefully, and to have stoned them, they, being aware of it, fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about, and there preached the gospel.

This shews that they fled not from Iconium for fear of suffering; for then they would not have gone on in the same work elsewhere, and so near, which was likely to stir up the like storm every-where. But probably, either the apprehension that they should have been detained by imprisonment from

^p Acts xiii. 51. ^q Acts xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4.

going on in the service they were sent upon, of preaching the gospel in other places and countries; or the danger of being thought to be the occasion of a seditious tumult in that city, in case that part of the people, which stood with and for them, should rise up in their defence against the other, gave them liberty to depart at that time from thence.

Being come to Lystra, they found a certain man there[†], who was impotent in his feet, and had never walked, having been a cripple from his mother's womb.

This poor man, though he could not walk, yet he could hear, and did hear Paul preach, and that with such attention, that it drew the apostle's eye more intently upon him. Wherefore looking stedfastly on him, and perceiving that he had strength enough of faith to co-operate with the divine power towards his healing, he said unto him, with a loud voice, "Stand upright on thy feet; whereupon he leaped up, and walked."

The sight of this miracle so affected those heathenish people, that lifting up their voices, they said, in the speech of Lycaonia, "The gods are come down unto us, in the likeness of men."

And calling Barnabas Jupiter, and Paul (because he was the chief speaker) Mercurius, the priest of Jupiter (whose image or statue stood before their city), brought oxen, dressed up with garlands, unto the gates, and would with the people have offered sacrifice unto them.

Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and running in among the people, cried out to them, saying, "Why, O men, do ye these things? For we also are men of like passions with you; and we preach unto you, to the end that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God; even unto him that made heaven and earth, the sea, and all things that are therein; who in times past suffered all nations to walk in

[†] Acts xiv. 8. 11, 12. 14, 15.

their own ways, without any law or prophets given or sent to restrain them; yet nevertheless he left not himself even then without witness, in that he did good, giving them rain from heaven's, and fruitful seasons, whereby he nourished their bodies with food, and filled their hearts with gladness.

Thus, in an holy zeal for God, they laboured to stop those ignorant people from rushing headlong into idolatry; and yet, with all they said, could scarce restrain them from doing sacrifice unto them.

But the tide soon turned with them. For (O the inconstancy of man's nature!) while these Lystrians were in the height of their admiration, even to the adoration of the apostles, some of those envious Jews who had contradicted and blasphemed the doctrine of the gospel at Antioch, Acts xiii. 45. with those others of Iconium, who had raised persecution against the apostles there, chap. xiv. 5. (like the dog in the fable, which, lying in the ox's crib, would neither eat the hay himself, nor suffer the ox to eat it) came to Lystra, and, by their subtil persuasions, wrought so strongly on those fickle-headed people against the apostles, that they, who but the other day would have worshipped them as gods, now could not forbear throwing stones at them as dogs; and their greatest spite being at Paul, they in a tumultuary manner fell on him with stones, until they thought they had killed him; and then, supposing him to be dead, they drew him out of the city, and there left him.

But as the disciples stood round about him (lamenting their loss, and probably conferring together about his funeral) he rose up, and came into the city again, but staid no longer there than until the next day, and then he, with Barnabas, departed to Derbe.

Being come thither, they preached the gospel to that city, and taught (that is discipled) many, or

* Acts. xiv. 17. 19. 20, 21.

made many disciples; for so the word *μαθητεύσαντες*, here used, signifies. And among those then converted by Paul's ministry, a certain young man, named Timothy, was one, who with his mother Eunice, and his grand-mother Lois, received the truth in the love of it. And this young man being brought in amongst them (as is generally held) at this time, had the better opportunity to know, and to take notice of, the sufferings of the apostles in this journey; which might make Paul remind him of them afterwards (in his second epistle to him, chap. iii. ver. 11.) as he also recounted to the church at Corinth, that stoning which he underwent at Lystra, among the rest of his many and sore sufferings, 2 Cor. xi. 25.

And now these apostles, having fulfilled their ministry in this place, and travelled as far as the Holy Spirit, their guide (who sent them forth on this journey, Acts xiii. 4.) did at this time lead them; they returned the same way by which they came; going back first to Lystra, then to Iconium, and thence to Antioch of Pisidia.

This plainly shews, that it was not fear of suffering made them slip from Lystra to Derbe; nor hasten so fast from one place to another; for if it had, they would not surely have returned so quickly, and so directly, to the same places again, wherein they had been in so great danger.

In all these places, their work was now to confirm the souls of the disciples^t, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and preparing them to undergo all trials and sufferings which the Lord should permit to come upon them, by declaring to them plainly, that it is through much tribulation that we must enter into the kingdom of God.

And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had fasted and prayed with them, they

^t Acts xiv. 22, 23.

commended them to the Lord on whom they believed, and so took their leave of them.

Passing then from this Antioch, they travelled throughout Pisidia, and came to Pamphylia^u; and having preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia, a maritime city in that province; and from thence they sailed to Antioch in Syria; from whence (when they first set forth on this journey) they had been recommended, by the church there, to the grace of God, for the work which they had now fulfilled.

As soon as they were arrived at this Antioch, and had gathered the church together, they related to them all that God had done with them, and by them; and declared how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles; and here they abode a good while with the disciples, but not long without a troublesome exercise.

For while they were here at Antioch, certain Jews^w (who had been of the sect of the Pharisees, but had received the Christian faith) came down from Judea thither, and took upon them to teach the brethren there, that except they were circumcised after the manner of Moses, they could not be saved.

This was a very dangerous doctrine, tending to subvert the faith of Christ; and by blending the law and gospel together, rendered the dispensation of the Son imperfect, and insufficient to salvation, without the addition and help of the dispensation of the servant; and by this means they troubled the minds, and disquieted the consciences, of their Gentile-Christian brethren.

To this pernicious doctrine Paul and Barnabas stoutly opposed themselves; and after high disputation, and warm disputation with them about it, wherein neither side would yield to the other; it was at length, by agreement, determined, that Paul

^u Acts xiv. 24. 26, 27. ^w Acts xv. 1.

and Barnabas, on the one part, and certain other of them, on the other part, should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question, and leave the matter to the decision of the church there.

Whereupon Paul and Barnabas setting forth on their journey, and being brought on their way by some of the members of the church at Antioch, took occasion, as they passed through Phenice and Samaria, to declare the conversion of the Gentiles, which caused great joy unto all the brethren.

Being come to Jerusalem*, they were well received by the church in general, and more particularly by the apostles and elders; unto whom they declared the gracious dealings of God with them, in blessing their labours, and making their ministry successful, to the bringing in the Gentiles to the obedience of the faith.

But when they came more directly to open the case upon which they had been sent by the church of Antioch, they quickly met with opposition; for there rose up, even there, some of the sect of the Pharisees that believed; who yet maintained, that it was needful to circumcise the Gentile converts, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

This gave occasion for the apostles and elders to come together, to consider more closely and deliberately of this matter. And when there had been much disputing on it, and the case had been thoroughly canvassed, Peter stood up, and thus delivered his sense among them:

“Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knoweth the hearts, bare them witness (that they did believe), giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them,

* Acts xv. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

purifying their hearts (as he had done ours) by faith. Now, therefore, why tempt ye God, by endeavouring to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they (our fathers) were.”

When Peter had thus expressed himself, all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, while they gave an account what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. And after they had held their peace, James, bespeaking their attention, said, “Men and brethren, hearken unto me; Simon hath declared, how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them (mark, not to take them by the lump, as he had before taken the Jews, but to take out of them) a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophet, as it is written (Amos ix. 11.), “After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up, that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, faith the Lord, who doth all these things.”

When James had thus far recited the sense, rather than the words, of the prophet, he thus went on:

“Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world. Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, who, from among the Gentiles, are turned to God; but that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him (that is, the law given from God by him); it being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day.”

To this sentence of James^z, the assembly (which consisted of the apostles and elders, with the whole church at Jerusalem) agreed; and concluding to send chosen men out of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas, namely Judas, surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren; they wrote letters by them after this manner:

The Apostles, and Elders, and Brethren, send greeting unto the Brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia.

FOrasmuch as we have heard, that certain, who went out from us, have troubled you with words tending to the subversion of your souls, by telling you, that ye must be circumcised and keep the law, to whom we gave no such commandment; it seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul; men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you more at large, by word of mouth, the same things, which in this epistle we do but briefly touch upon.

“For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost (who presides among us) and to us (who are herein directed and guided by him, to ease you of that unreasonable yoke which those troublesome men would have imposed upon you, of being circumcised, and keeping the Mosaick law, and) to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things, viz. “that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.”

^z Acts xv. 22, 23, 24. 28.

These four things are said to be necessary; and so indeed they were, but in different respects. Some, with respect to the nature of the thing itself, as that of fornication (in too common use among the Gentiles, and by them scarce reputed an evil). Others, with respect to the then present time, and circumstances of things, that when Jews and Gentiles, receiving the faith of Christ Jesus, were to grow up together into one religious body, and to be united and bound up together in one and the same Christian society; the lawful liberty of the one might not give offence to the tenacious scrupulosity of the other.

The Jewish converts, having before been nurtured under the pædagoꝑy of Moses, were stiff in the observation of some parts of the ceremonial law; which being appropriated to them only, who were under that dispensation, did not affect the Gentiles, nor the converts from Gentilism. Yet necessary it was that these should, for a while, and in some cases, for peace and union sake, comply, by a sort of friendly condescension, with those, until such time as they also could see, and rightly understand, the true liberty which our blessed Lord had, by his death and resurrection, purchased for all those that should faithfully follow him, from the bondage of that law.

Necessary therefore it was, that they should abstain from meats offered to idols; more especially, from eating of them in the idols temples where they were offered, or in the common feasts of the Heathen-Gentiles; and that not only to avoid the danger of their being drawn back to idolatry, but also to shun the scandal of being partakers with those idolaters, in those their idolatrous feasts, which must needs have administered occasion of great offence unto their Jewish Christian brethren; of which the apostle treateth largely, in 1 Cor. viii.

But in 1 Cor. x. treating again on the same subject, he says, ver. 25. "Whatsoever is sold in

the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake;" though it was then customary with the priests (when they had more plenty of flesh from the sacrifices than they could well spend in their families) to employ some to sell it for them in the shambles.

Nay, if they were invited to eat at an unbeliever's table (and were disposed so to do), they were advised by the apostles to eat without scruple what was set before them; provided they were not then told, that this or that had been offered to idols, for then they were to forbear eating of it; yet not for the sake of their own conscience, but of his that told them so; that they might not, by then eating it, lay a stumbling-block before that other; or give occasion, by their liberty, that the truth they professed should be evil spoken of.

Necessary also it was, that they should abstain from eating blood (and, for the same reason partly, from eating things strangled, as having the blood in them); that they might not, by eating it, give offence to their Jewish brethren, or to the Jewish nation, to whom the eating of blood had been forbidden by the law; but (which is worth observing) not by the decalogue, or ten commandments (which contain the moral law), but by the ceremonial law, Levit. iii. 17. and chap. xvii. 11. In both which places the reason of the prohibition is given.

In the former, where the fat is joined with the blood, and alike forbidden to be eaten, the reason given is, because they were appropriated to divine uses, in the prescribed sacrifices to God; the blood to be sprinkled, and the fat to be burned upon the altar of the Lord, Levit. iii. 13. 17.

In the latter text, the reason given of the prohibition is, because the blood was typically an atonement for their souls (as the blood of the Messiah, of which it was a type, was, and is, substantially an atonement for the souls of men); which set it above common use, while that legal dispensation lasted;

lasted; under which it had a religious (though but figurative) use and service; but of this enough. Return we now to the council at Jerusalem.

The assembly there at this time, and on this occasion holden, is called the first Christian council; and the constitution of it (taking in all, apostles, elders, and brethren, or the whole church) shews the true nature of a council rightly gathered, whether general or provincial; which excludes no true member of the church from being present, either in person, or by proxy.

When they had finished their decretal epistle (so I call it, because it is called the decrees of the apostles and elders^a, Acts xvi. 4.) they committed it to their chosen agents, or messengers, and dismissed them. And they departing to Antioch with it, in company of Paul and Barnabas, when they were come thither, gathered the multitude (of the disciples) together, and delivered the epistle to them; who, when they had read it, rejoiced for the consolation they received from it; finding themselves thereby freed from the yoke of circumcision, and ritual observances, which their judaizing teachers would have imposed upon them. Which when Judas and Silas, who brought them the epistle, had observed, they, being themselves also prophets (or preachers) fell in with them, and exhorting them with many words, confirmed them in the faith of the gospel, and in their Christian liberty therein.

Then after they had tarried there a space, having performed the service they came thither upon, they were kindly dismissed by the brethren there, to return (if they pleased) to the apostles at Jerusalem, which Judas is supposed to have done.

But Silas, not willing to go back as yet, chose to abide there still with Paul and Barnabas; who, with many others, continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of God, that is, publish-

^a Acts xv. 30. 32, 33, 34.

ing the gospel, or glad tidings of salvation by Christ.

It is generally held, that this journey which Paul and Barnabas took, on this occasion, to Jerusalem, was the same he afterwards mentioned in his epistle to the Galatians, chap. ii. ver. 1. Only two or three things may make it doubtful whether it was the same or no. One, that that journey mentioned, Gal. ii. is there said to be fourteen years after; which (whether it be referred to his former going thither, three years after his conversion, Gal. i. 18. or to the time of his conversion itself) is thought by some to be too late to be the same with his going to the council, Acts xv. And therefore Grotius (who would have it to be the same) suspects an error in the account of time; and that fourteen, in Gal. ii. is, by mistake of the Greek numeral, put for four; but that, perhaps, would be as much too early.

Another is, that he tells the Galatians he took Titus with him, Gal. ii. 1. But in this journey from Antioch, Acts xv. there is no mention of Titus, first or last.

A third is, that in that journey which he mentions to the Galatians, he says he went up by revelation, Gal. ii. 2. whereas in this other, Acts xv. he went up by deputation, as sent by the church at Antioch.

And lastly, at that time when he went up by revelation, it was to communicate to the church at Jerusalem the doctrine which he preached among the Gentiles, Gal. ii. 2. But when he came up to the council, Acts xv. it was upon a sort of appeal, for the ending of a difference, then newly risen in the church at Antioch; and the matter was opened, debated, and concluded publicly in the council.

But whether these were two distinct journeys, or but one and the same, probable it is that what Paul mentions of his reproving Peter, happened about

about this time, while Paul and Barnabas, after their return from Jerufalem, continued at Antioch.

For Peter coming thither^b, did for a while use his Christian liberty, in eating and converfing freely and familiarly with the Gentile believers there; which he, of all men, might beft do, having been divinely taught by the heavenly vifion, Acts x. that the partition-wall between Jew and Gentile was now broken down, and taken away, and himfelf made the firft publifher thereof to others.

But when fome of the Jewish brethren came thither on fome occafion from the apoftle James, Peter (fearing to difpleafe them who were of the circumcifion) withdrew, and feparating himfelf from the Gentile brethren, forbore to converfe or eat with them as before.

This would almoft make one think, that the rencounter which hereupon happened between thofe two apoftles, Peter and Paul, was before the council was holden at Jerufalem; for there James was the man that turned the fcale, and fixed the judgment in favour of the believing Gentiles. So that had this fallen after that, Peter needed not have changed his courfe, for fear of offending James in eating with the Gentiles.

But whenever it was, plain it is, that Peter's example drew the other Jewish converts alfo to diffeemble likewife with him, infomuch that Barnabas was carried away with their diffimulation; which when Paul faw, and took notice that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gofpel, he (the younger man, the younger Christian, the younger apoftle) withftood Peter (no fign of Peter's primacy)! to the face (or openly) becaufe he was to be blamed. And he faid unto Peter before them all, "If thou, being a Jew, liveft after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews; why wouldeft thou compel the Gentiles to live as the Jews do?"

^b Acts xv. 11, 12, 13, 14.

Of this difference, Luke, in his history of the Apostles Acts, gives no account; nor have we any other mention of it but in this short hint, which Paul himself occasionally gave to the church at Galatia; so that what the issue or event of it was is uncertain. But however it ended between the apostles themselves, certain it is, that it hath occasioned no small bickerings between commentators since upon it. But none have managed the contest with more warmth, than two of those who are by some called the antient fathers, Hierom and Augustine, in their epistles one to the other about it; Hierom standing up for Peter, and Augustine for Paul; of which Erasmus hath given a large touch, in his commentary on Gal. ii.

When that little difference between Paul and Peter was over, Paul (who well understood how needful it was to water, as well as to plant) gave a friendly invitation to his old companion Barnabas^c to take another journey with him, and go visit their brethren again in every city where they had preached the gospel, and see how it fared with them.

Barnabas readily consented to the journey; but they could not so well agree in the choice of a third person to travel with them; for Barnabas pitched upon John, whose surname was Mark, but that did not please Paul; who, remembering how he forsook both the service and them, when they had him with them before, and went not with them to the planting part, Acts xiii. 13. did not think fit to take him with them now to the watering-work.

In the debating of this matter, the contention grew so sharp between them, that seeing they could not agree about their company, they agreed to break company, and parting asunder one from the other, to go in two companies. And so Barnabas took his nephew Mark (for so he was, Col. iv. 10.) and sailed unto Cyprus (his own country, Acts iv. 36.)

^c Acts xv. 16. 39.

and so we hear no more of him. But Paul chose Silas (instead of Mark); and taking also Titus with him (as may be gathered from some passages in his second epistle to the Corinthians, as in chap. viii. 6. and xii. 18. and from Titus i. 5.) set forward through Syria, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace (the favour and protection) of God,

As they went through the cities (in Syria and Cilicia) confirming the churches^d, they delivered them the decrees to keep and observe, which were ordained of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem; and so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

Being at Tarsus, an haven in Cilicia, it is supposed Paul sailed at this time to Crete, an island near the mouth of the Ægean sea, and now called Candia; where having spent some time in preaching the gospel, and gathered a people to the Christian faith, but not having time to stay long enough with them, to settle them in a due order, he left Titus among them to do that, as he intimates in his epistle to him, Titus i. 5.

Sailing back then to Cilicia, he went to Derbe and Lystra; where, among other disciples, he found his son Timothy (so he afterwards called him, 1 Tim. i. 2. and 2 Tim. i. 2. as having been converted to the faith by his ministry, when he was at Derbe the time before, and Barnabas was his companion).

This Timothy was the son of a believing Jewess, whose name was Eunice, but his father was a Gentile Greek; and both his mother, and his grandmother Lois, had taken great care of his education, to instruct him well in his childhood, and to bring him up in the fear of God, and in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15. And he being now (more especially since he had received the Christian faith) well reported of by the bre-

^d Acts xvi. 4. 1.

thren at Lystra and Iconium, the apostle was desirous to have him go forth with him in the ministry.

But that he might not lay a stumbling-block before the Jews in those parts^c (who generally knew, that though Timothy's mother was a Jewess, yet, his father being a Greek, he had not been circumcised, and that would make them shy of him, and not admit him to speak in their synagogue) he took him and circumcised him, and then took him along with him in his travels.

Now when they had gone through Phrygia, and the region of Galatia (where Paul was received by the churches of Christ with the utmost demonstration of affectionate kindness and regard, Gal. iv. 14, 15). they were forbidden by the Holy Ghost to preach the word at that time, in (that part of) Asia.

Wherefore after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; but the spirit, which they had received from God, to be their guide, director and leader, would not let them. Whereupon, passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.

Here, in the night, a vision appeared to Paul in this manner; there stood before him (as it seemed) a man of Macedonia, who, requesting him, said, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us."

From this vision the apostle assuredly gathering that the Lord had called him to preach the gospel in Macedonia, he, with his companions, immediately endeavoured to go thither.

And here, at Troas, it may very well be supposed that Luke the evangelist, who wrote this book of the Acts of the Apostles, fell in with Paul, and accompanied him in this, and most of his future travels. For here he changes his stile from the third, which he had used before, to the first person plural [*we*]; saying, *immediately we endeavoured,*

^c Acts xvi. 3. 6, 7. 9, 10.

Ec. assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us.

Paul therefore and Silas, with Luke and Timothy^f, loosing now from Troas, came with a strait course to Samothracia (an island in the Ægean sea, not far from Thracia), and thence to Neapolis (a city on the borders of Thracia and Macedonia), from whence they passed to Philippi, the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a Roman colony, where they abode some considerable time.

And when the sabbath-day was come, they went to a place out of the city by a river's-side, where prayers were wont to be made; and sitting down there, spake to the women that resorted thither, who, it seems, had more zeal and devotion than the men.

Among these well-disposed women, there was one whose name was Lydia, and whose trade or employment was to sell purple.

This woman was originally of Thyatira; but being a profelyte to the Jewish religion, she resorted to this place for the worship of God, and there heard Paul preach; and the Lord, who saw her sincerity, was graciously pleased to open her heart; so that hearkening attentively to the things which were delivered by Paul, she was both convinced of, and converted to, the Christian religion, and was baptized with her household.

After which, in a grateful sense of the benefit she had received by the ministry of the apostle and his fellow-labourers, she invited them to go home with her, beseeching them, that if (or inasmuch as) they had judged her to be faithful to the Lord, they would come into her house, and take that for their lodging; and with such kind importunity she laid a sort of constraint upon them.

While they abode in this city, it came to pass that as they went to the place of prayer, a certain

^f Acts xvi. 11. 13, 14.

damsel^s, possessed with a spirit of divination, who brought much gain to her masters by sooth-saying, met them on the way, and following after them, cried out, "These are the servants of the most high God, who shew unto us the way of salvation." Unto *us*, said the Devil in the damsel; putting himself in among the rest, as if they had been sent to shew the way of salvation to *him*, as well as to the people; and this she did for many days; so that they seemed to be haunted by this evil spirit.

This was an uneasy exercise, no doubt, to them, and more especially to Paul, who was troubled that a testimony should be given by an evil spirit to them, and that good work which they were engaged in; as being sensible that the design of the Devil therein was to bring them, and the gospel they preached, into disgrace and obloquy with the undiscerning people; who would be but too apt to conclude, that that could not be *good*, which was cried up and commended by a spirit which they all knew to be *bad*.

Wherefore, when he had borne this heavy burthen as long as well he could, he at length one day, being sorely grieved at it, turned back upon the possessed damsel, as she followed him with her usual acclamation, and in the power and authority of the Holy Spirit in him, said unto the unholy spirit in her, "I command thee, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to come out of her." And so irresistibly powerful was that name, that immediately the evil spirit came out of her, and left her.

But when she returned to her masters, dispossessed of her divining spirit, they, finding themselves by that means deprived of all farther hopes of future gain in that way by her; and understanding from her by what means this had befallen her, fell foul upon Paul and Silas (whom, it seems, they took to be the most eminent and active men of the com-

pany) and laying hold on them, drew them into the market-place, unto the rulers of the city, and the chief commanders of the colony. Before whom they accused them^h (not of having dispossessed their servant of her divining spirit, and thereby disappointed them of their unjust gain, which, though it was the only ground of their offence, they cunningly concealed, and instead thereof charged them) that they, being Jews, did exceedingly trouble their city, and did teach customs, which were not lawful for them, being Romans, to receive or observe.

Having by this means stirred up the multitude, they rose together against them, and prevailed so far with the magistrates, that to pacify the people, they gave command that Paul and Silas should have their clothes rent off, and be beaten with rods.

Accordingly they laid many stripes on them, and then cast them into prison, charging the goaler to keep them safely. And he having received so strict a charge, not only thrust them into the inner prison, or dungeon, but put them into the stocks too there.

Here now lay good Paul and Silas, fast shut up in a close prison, their bodies torn and mangled with rods, without any human care, or regard had of their condition.

But what was wanting of compassion from men, was abundantly made up to them by their heavenly Father, who filled their hearts with gladness; so that at midnight, when their cruel goaler was fast asleep in his warm bed, and all was still and quiet, they (instead of complaining, or bemoaning themselves) prayed and sung praises to God, for joy that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ; and so high they strained their cheerful notes, that the other prisoners also heard them.

^h Acts xvi. 19, 22, 23, 25.

Upon this an earthquake suddenly followedⁱ, and that so great, that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and all the doors were immediately opened, and every one's bonds loosed.

This roused (as well it might) the keeper of the prison; who awaking suddenly out of his sleep, and seeing the prison-doors open, drew out his sword; and, supposing the prisoners had made their escape, would have killed himself, that he might not be killed by the magistrates.

But Paul observing the fright and danger he was in, cried out with a loud voice, and said unto him, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here."

That word, striking his ear, stopped his hand. Wherefore calling presently for a light, he sprang in among them, and, trembling came and fell down before Paul and Silas, and forthwith bringing them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thine house," or family (if they also believe).

Then spake they unto him, and to all that were in his house, the word of the Lord, opening more particularly the fundamental doctrine of the gospel to them. And he, being now, from a rugged hard-hearted goaler, become a tender-hearted Christian and brother, bethought himself quickly of the sore condition they were in, and forthwith took them, and washed their stripes; after which, he was washed also, being baptized, and all his, straitway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, that they might refresh themselves; and he, for this unlooked-for blessing, rejoiced, believing in God, with all his household.

Next morning the magistrates sent their sergeants to him, to bid him let them go. Of which the goaler being glad, came joyfully to Paul, with the good news (as he thought) telling him, "The

ⁱ Acts xvi. 26, 27, 28. 30. 33. 35.

magistrates have sent to bid me let you go; now therefore depart, and go in peace."

But Paul, consulting more the honour of God, and reputation of his Christian profession, than his own ease or liberty, said unto them (the sergeants, who brought the message for their release)", they (the magistrates) have beaten us openly uncondemned (without any legal trial^k, or proof of evil done by us), and have also cast us, who are Romans, into prison; and do they think now to thrust us out privately? Nay, verily, but let them come themselves, and fetch us out." (Left when we be gone, we be slanderously reported to have broken prison, and run away).

Away went the sergeants, and told these words of Paul to the magistrates; who when they understood that the men they had thus rudely, and cruelly as well as unjustly, treated, were Romans (that is, enfranchised, or made free of the city of Rome, and the privileges thereof; which Paul at least was, whatever Silas was) they were sadly frightened, as well they might; for by the Roman laws (as well the Porcian, as the Sempronian) it was forbidden, under the severest penalties, for any magistrate to beat with rods a Roman citizen; and an injury done to any citizen of Rome, was, in construction of law, taken as done to the whole people of Rome, and punished accordingly.

The magistrates therefore, by this time sensible of the danger they had too unadvisedly run themselves into, came themselves to the prison, and having besought the apostles (to pass by and pardon the injury done unto them), brought them fairly out of the prison, and then desired them to depart out of the city.

To the first the apostles were easily persuaded to yield (as knowing that forgiveness of injuries was more agreeable to the doctrine of their master, and

^k Acts xvi. 37, 38, 39.

to their Christian profession, than revenge). But to the latter (of going presently out of the city) they, mindful of their Christian liberty, would not consent.

Wherefore when they were come out of the prison, as freemen, they went not directly out of town, but to Lydia's house, their old lodging, where they spent some time in visiting the brethren (or rather, being visited by them); and when they had comforted them (who no doubt were in sorrow for the evil usage the apostles had met with among them), they took leave both of them and of the place, and went on their journey towards Theffalonica (the chief city of Macedonia), passing thorough, in their way, Amphipolis and Apollonia.

Here (in Theffalonica) was a synagogue of the Jews¹ (which, it is supposed, there was not at Philippi); and Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath-days one after another reasoned with them, opening and alledging, out of the scriptures, "That Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom he preached unto them, is Christ."

Hereupon some of them, the Jews, believed, and comforted with Paul and Silas, as did also a great multitude of the devout Greeks; and of the chief women not a few.

But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, taking unto them certain lewd fellows, of the baser sort, gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar. And assaulting the house of Jason (where the apostles lodged), they designed to bring them out, and expose them to the rage and violence of the rude and ungoverned people.

And when they did not find them there, they laid hold on Jason himself, and drew him, and certain other brethren, to the rulers of the city, and with a great out-cry against them, complained to the

¹ Acts xvii. 1. 4, 5.

rulers^m, that those men (Paul and his companions) who had turned the world upside down, were come thither also, and that Jason had received them; for which reason they had brought him before them.

This was the common cry; but when they came to make out their charge against them, they alledged, first, more generally, that all these acted contrary to the decrees of Cæsar; then more particularly, that they went about to proclaim another king, one Jesus; which was contrary to the decrees of both the emperors, and senate also, of Rome; who would by no means allow, that in any of their conquered countries or provinces, the title of king should be given to, or used by, any, without their especial licence.

This so high and dangerous charge troubled not the people only, but the rulers also of the city, when they heard it; and because they thought they could not do less for their own safety, they took security of Jason, and of the other brethren that were brought before them (to appear again, to answer this charge, when they should be sent for); and so for the present dismissed them.

But the brethren, not willing to hazard Paul and Silas to so rough a storm as this seemed like to prove, sent them immediately away by night unto Beræa (another city of Macedonia, not far from Pella); and they no sooner got thither, but into the synagogue of the Jews they went, and preached the word of life unto them.

These Beræan Jews are said to be more noble (that is, more ingenuous and nobly-minded) than those in Thessalonica; in that they not only received the word with all readiness of mind, but searched the scriptures daily, to see whether those things, which were preached unto them, were so or not. And having received satisfaction therein, many of them believed: and of the Greeks also, both ho-

^m Acts xvii. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

nourable women and men, not a few. Which title of [*honourable*] here given to these women, belongs (says Erasmus) to their honest habit, their dress, and manner of going.

But when the Jews of Thessalonicaⁿ (who had designed so much mischief to the apostles there) understood that the word of God was preached by Paul at Beræa, they (envying their neighbours the good which they themselves would not receive) went thither also, and stirred up the people against him.

Wherefore the brethren there immediately sent away Paul towards the sea, as if he intended to take shipping for some other country; but Silas and Timotheus (who were either not so well known, or not so much envied, as Paul) abode there still for a while, to confirm and build up in the Christian faith the young converts there.

Mean time, they that had the care of conducting Paul, having brought him safe to Athens, returned to Beræa; bringing with them a kind invitation from Paul to Silas and Timotheus (which with them, for the great respect they bore him, had the force of a command) to come to him at Athens as soon as they could; which accordingly they did.

But while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Wherefore he could not forbear till his companions came, but disputed in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and daily in the market-place, with them that met with him there.

Among those that thus encountered him, some were philosophers, of the sect called Epicureans, and others of the Stoicks; two the most opposite to the Christian religion of all the philosophical sects.

The Stoicks took their name from a porch in Athens, called *Stoa*, where they were wont to meet,

ⁿ Acts xvii. 13, 14, 15, 16. 18.

dispute, and teach. And these placed their chief happiness in an apathy, or freedom from all passions and perturbations of the mind.

The Epicureans were called so from Epicurus, the founder of that sect. A man bad enough in all reason, if he has not been misunderstood, and thereupon misrepresented, both as to his dogmata and his morals.

But if we may believe Seneca's testimony of him, he was a man of great temperance and continency. But his placing the *summum bonum*, or chief felicity, in pleasure, to wit, in the pleasure of a virtuous mind, his meaning therein, being not rightly taken by those that followed him, was perverted to a wrong sense, as if he had placed happiness in a voluptuous and dissolute life, which they who were afterwards called by his name really did.

Besides, there were divers others of the same name, who were indeed wholly devoted to worldly pleasures, and sensual delights; whose excesses that way have been too injuriously imputed to this philosopher; and from thence have voluptuous livers gained to themselves the nick-name of Epicures.

Those philosophers, who here set upon Paul, little thought that he was a philosopher also, of a better school than any of theirs, the school of Christ. But being puffed up with a vain conceit of their own learning and knowledge, they very much despised him, calling him in contempt a babler, and in derision asking, "What will this babler say?" Others of them said, "He seemeth to be a setter-forth of strange gods," because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

Wherefore they took him^o, and brought him unto Areopagus (a place in Athens), called so from the temple of Mars, which stood there; in which the judges, thence called Areopagites, did sit to hear criminal causes, and give judgment thereon, by the

^o Acts xvii. 19.

instituition of their great lawgiver, Solon. Yet they did not bring him thither to accuse him to the judges (says Grotius), but because that was a place which many men of learning (senators, orators, and others of best note) did use to frequent.

Having brought him thither, they floutingly said to him, "May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears; we would know therefore what these things mean" (for the Athenians, generally speaking, as well as the strangers resorting thither, were great newsmongers, and spent their time in nothing more, than either to tell or to hear some new thing).

Paul then, having so fair an opportunity offered him to preach the gospel to them, stood up in the midst of Mars-hill (a place raised somewhat higher than the rest of the ground), and thus began with them :

"Ye men of Athens^p, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious; for as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, *To the unknown God.*"

By this unknown God, they are thought to have meant the God of the Jews; whose great name, Jehovah, the Jews, in those latter times, concealed, from the Gentiles more especially, that it might not be blasphemed by their execrations, nor prophaned by their impure invocations.

This Paul well knowing, tells them, "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." And thus he did it:

"God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is he worshipped with mens hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all na-

tions of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth; and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation. That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might find him, by feeling after him (as they do that are blind, or go in the dark; an apt expression to set forth the blindness of man's mind before he find God), though he be not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said; for we also are his offspring."

So said Aratus, an antient poet of theirs. And indeed the antients, both Greeks and Latins, Gentiles as well as Christians, were sensible of the Divine Presence of the Deity with man. Seneca (one for all) in Epist. 41. says, "God is near unto thee, he is with thee, yea, he is in thee." And in Epist. 73. "Dost thou wonder, says he, that man goes to God? God comes to men; yea, which is nearer, he comes into men." "All things are full of God, said Virgil." But to proceed.

The apostle having advanced this proposition, that we are the offspring of God, and established it by the (with them undoubted) credit of a celebrated poet of their own, raises from thence a fair inference, sufficient to overturn all their idols and altars.

"Forasmuch then, said he, as we are the offspring of God^a, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device; for such a thought must needs proceed from great ignorance. And though, added he, the times of this ignorance God winked at, yet now he commands all men every where to repent; because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given

^a Acts xvii. 29.

assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

Hitherto this learned auditory heard the apostle with good attention, though he had struck at many of their chief dogmata, or tenets; first, in asserting that the world was made; and being made, was ruled and governed by a Deity; both which the Epicurean philosophers denied, attributing all to chance, or fortune, as blind as (in that case) they themselves were. And next, in asserting that this God, who made the world, and all things therein (and therefore must consequently have made man also), could not be the workmanship of men's hands; which at once threw down all their idol-gods of gold, silver, stone, or any other artful device of man; yea, and their temples too, since, as he is not worshipped with mens hands, so he dwells not in temples made with hands. All this (I say, and more) though it struck directly and forcibly at the very root and foundation of their temples, idols, altars, idolatry, and all superstition, they quietly heard, and contained themselves.

But when he spake of a man that was raised from the dead, and then made judge of the whole world, they could hold no longer; this doctrine, of the resurrection of the dead, and of a general judgment, was too sublime, abstruse, and high, for these academics to receive or understand.

Therefore some (it is said) mocked^r. These were probably of the Epicurean sect, who are said to have denied any future state; which made them take their swing in sensual pleasures here. But others of them (probably of the Stoicks, who owned a future state, and rewards and punishments hereafter), considering better of it, desired to have another opportunity to hear this matter further opened.

Thus, at that time, they parted; and whether they ever came together again, is altogether uncertain.

^r Acts xvii. 32.

But as Paul is thought to have taken more pains for the reforming of that city (Athens) than any other; so it is observed that the effect was less, and the fruits he gathered there were fewer than elsewhere. For we read not of any church gathered there, as at Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, and elsewhere.

Yet for his comfort, and as a seal to his ministry^s, some few converts the Lord here gave him. For certain men (the text says) clave unto him, and believed; among whom were Dionysius, the Areopagite (one of the judges of that high court of justice, which was held in the place called Areopagus), and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Athens was at that time accounted the eye of Greece, as Greece the eye of the world. Learning, and all the liberal arts and sciences, were then (or then-about) at their top and height there. A populous city it was; a famous university, well stored with men of the choicest wits, and clearest heads, that the world was then thought to have. So that it might well raise wonder, that in a place of so great learning, among so many wise and knowing men, so few should receive the true knowledge, so few embrace the truth, did we not call to mind, that as the Jews looked for miracles (asked a sign, Mat. xii. 38). so the Greeks sought after wisdom, 1 Cor. i. 21. not the divine, but the human wisdom, the wisdom of this world; which as it was foolishness with God, chap. iii. 19. so the wisdom of God was accounted no better than foolishness by it, chap. i. 23.; whence, in the wisdom of God, it was so ordered that the world by that wisdom should not know God, ver. 21. And that, doubtless, has been the reason why, in all ages since, fewer of that rank of men have yielded their necks to the yoke of Christ, than of others, who have less abound-

^s Acts xvii. 34.

ed in that speculative knowledge. For knowledge is too apt to puff up, and make men haughty, conceited, and proud of their parts; too high to stoop to take up and bear the cross of Christ, and follow him in the way of self-denial.

Before Paul left Athens, having a tender and fatherly regard upon his mind for the prosperity of the churches he had not long since planted in Macedonia, and particularly at Theffalonica; and fearing lest, either by force or fraud (force of persecution, or fraud of those deceiving preachers who had troubled the churches in Syria, Acts xv). they might be shaken in mind, or any way disquieted, he sent his son Timothy, 1 Theff. iii. 1, 2. and (as it seems, Acts xviii. 5). Silas with him, into Macedonia, to visit and confirm the churches there, especially in Theffalonica; and bring him an account at Corinth (whither he was then going) how it fared with them.

When Paul had now finished his service at Athens^t, having sent Silas and Timothy into Macedonia, he himself went to Corinth, a principal city in Achaia.

There he found a certain Jew (of the Christian religion) named Aquila, who was born in Pontus; but having lived some time at Rome, was lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius Cæsar (the then Roman emperor) had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome.

The cause of this edict for banishing the Jews is not certainly delivered. Some think the warm debates that were between the Christian Jews, and the Jews not Christians, at Rome, about the Messiah, made Claudius jealous of some danger to himself and his, from the misapprehended kingdom of Christ, and brought this decree for banishment upon them all, as well Christians as Jews; for both sorts left Italy upon it; and Aquila, being both Chris-

^t Acts xviii. 1, 2.

tian and Jew, came with his wife and settled at Corinth.

To these Paul betook himself^a; and being of the same trade that they were of (tent-makers all), he abode with them, and wrought at his trade for his living; thereby setting an example, which too few, alas! of them that pretend to be his successors, are willing to follow.

Yet did not his working at his trade hinder him at all from performing the service of his apostolical ministry; but there being at Corinth (at most places of note) a synagogue of the Jews, he went every sabbath into it, and there reasoned with both Jews and profelyted Greeks, labouring by persuasion to bring them to Christ, but with little or no success; which gave him but small ground of hope that they would come to any good, or that any good would come out of them.

Yet when Silas and Timothy, whom from Athens he had sent into Macedonia, were returned from thence to him, bringing with them a good account of the growth and prosperous estate of the churches of Christ there; he, being earnestly pressed in spirit, under a sorrowful sense that his native countrymen and brethren, the Jews, should be so backward to receive the gospel, which the Gentiles so readily embraced, set upon them again, testifying more directly and closely to the Jews, that Jesus (even he whom their rulers had cruelly put to death) was the Christ, the very Messiah they had so long and so earnestly looked for.

This testimony they would by no means receive, but opposed themselves to it, even unto blasphemy. Which when Paul perceived, he shook his raiment, or upper garment, as shaking off the dust thereof against them; and withal said unto them, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clear" (as if he had said, "If you perish, ye may thank your-

^a Acts xviii. 3, 4, 5, 6.

felves; I have done my duty towards you, and am clear of you); and from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.”

Having thus declared, he departed thence, and entered into the house of one Justus, a man that worshipped God, and whose house joined hard to the synagogue.

But though the Jews there in general were so obstinately bent against the apostle, and his Christian doctrine; yet, for his comfort, the chief ruler of the synagogue, whose name was Crispus*, believed on the Lord, with his house; and many also of the Corinthians (who were Gentiles) hearing, believed, and were baptized.

And lest any apprehension of danger, from the provoked and revengeful Jews, might affect and trouble the apostle's mind, the Lord was now graciously pleased, by a vision in the night, to encourage and embolden him; bidding him not to be afraid, but to speak, and not hold his peace. “For I am with thee, said he, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee;” adding, “For I have much people in this city.”

With this divine promise encouraged and strengthened, the apostle went cheerfully on there for the space of a year and six months, labouring in the work of the gospel, both to gather into and build up in the faith of Christ Jesus; and (as may be fairly gathered from 2 Cor. xii. 12). wrought many miracles amongst them, for the confirmation of his doctrine and ministry.

In this time also it is supposed he wrote his first epistle to the Thessalonians; though the subscription of it says it was written from Athens; where yet it is not probable he could have so much time to write as he had here.

To analyse this, and the rest of the apostolical epistles, as it would too far swell the bulk of this

* Acts xviii. 7, 8, 9.

book (like to be bulky enough of itself); so it would be beside the nature of an history, and the purpose of this undertaking. I shall therefore take notice only of such passages in them (as they occur) which I apprehend may give any light to the history; and refer the reader to the epistles themselves, for divine instructions, doctrines, rules and precepts, as are therein plentifully to be found.

As it was the manner of this apostle (in his general epistles) to take in some of the brethren with him, in the inscriptions of his epistles to the churches he wrote unto, that he might not seem to arrogate all to himself, but impart to his fellow-labourers the honour that might redound even from his peculiar gifts; so in these epistles of his to the Thessalonians, he takes in Silvanus and Timothy.

Who Timothy was, is well known to almost every reader; but Silvanus not so well; and some perhaps may wonder to find a person joining with the apostle in directing his epistles, whom they find no mention of, as being with him in any of his travels. For the satisfaction therefore of such, I here acquaint them, that this Silvanus was indeed no other than Silas (the constant companion of Paul, since Barnabas left him, Acts xv. 40). the same person under two different names, or rather, as some think, one name differently pronounced.

The zealous diligence of Paul^{*}, in the discharge of his apostolical ministry, while he continued at Corinth, and the good success his labour was blessed with, in the great numbers of converts to the Christian faith, did so enrage the unbelieving Jews, that giving the rein to their fury, they made an insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment-seat; Gallio (who was brother to Seneca, Nero's tutor) being then governor, or deputy of Achaia, and residing then at Corinth, as the metropolis of that province.

* Acts xviii. 12.

Their charge against him was, that he was a non-conformist preacher, and preached up non-conformity to the law. "This fellow, said they, persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

This shewed their folly, as well as their madnefs; for though the Romans gave toleration to the Jews to exercise their own religion in the other provinces, as well as in Judea; yet it was idle to expect that, for their sakes, the Romans should prohibit any, either of themselves, or any other, to teach contrary to the Jews law.

When Paul had heard what they charged him with, he prepared himself to make his defence. But Gallio prevented him, by saying to the Jews, "If that which ye complain of, O ye Jews, were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness (any thing that did properly come under the cognizance of the civil magistrates), it were reasonable that I should bear with you; but if it be only a controverted question about words and names, and the ceremonies of your law, look ye to it (even make an end of it among yourselves); for I will be no judge of such matters."

Thus he would have shaken them off. But the Jews, as it seems, not taking this for an answer, but too indecently pressing still upon him, with more importunity than civility, he was fain, by his officers, to drive them from his judgment-seat.

Nor was that all; but because they had behaved themselves somewhat rudely and insolently towards the governor^r, the Greeks (the Corinthians who were present) took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of one of their synagogues (who probably was their leader in this tumultuary action), and beat him before the judgment-seat. And truly so they might, for all Gallio; for seeing they had by their own unruly carriage brought it upon themselves, he took no no-

^r Acts xviii. 17.

tice of it; but left them to shift for themselves, as they could.

Paul, having come off so well before the proconsul Gallio, continued yet some time longer at Corinth, and is supposed at this time to have written from thence his second epistle to the Theffalonians (though that also, in the subscription of it, is said to have been written from Athens). For having (as he expressed in his first epistle to them, chap. iii. 10, 11. if that be his first that stands first, which that it is Grotius denies, and says that which is set last was written first) an earnest desire of seeing them, and finding himself still put by, through other services coming on him, he, being greatly solicitous for their welfare, wrote two epistles to them, before he wrote any thing to any other church, as is commonly supposed.

After he had tarried yet a good while at Corinth², he at length took his leave of the brethren there, and sailed thence into Syria, having with him Priscilla and Aquila, with whom he had sojourned long at Corinth.

Either Paul or Aquila had, it seems, been under a vow, which being now accomplished, he sheared (or cut the hair off) his head at Cenchrea, an haven belonging to Corinth, where they were to take shipping. But which of them it was that had the vow, and shored his head, is not easy to be ascertained from the text. Castalio thinks it was Aquila; and that therefore his wife was named before him, that his name might be more immediately connected to the shearing of the head; which it would not have been, if his wife's name had come after his (as in a right order it should have done); of the same opinion is Grotius; and before them both Chrysofom. But the current of interpreters run, I think, the other way; concluding that it was Paul that had the vow, and shored his head.

² Acts xviii. 18.

When they were come to Ephesus, Paul went himself into the synagogue there, and reasoned with the Jews, who, it seems, were more courteous to him than in some other places they had been; for they desired him to tarry longer with them; which he at that time could not consent to, having an engagement on his mind to go up to the approaching feast at Jerusalem. Wherefore assuring them, that if God gave him liberty, he would return again unto them, he bade them farewell; and leaving Aquila and Priscilla there, he sailed from Ephesus, and landed at Cæsarea; from whence he went up to Jerusalem, and having saluted the church there (and probably tarried there with the apostles and brethren, until the feast was over) he left Jerusalem, and went down to Antioch, of Syria.

After the apostle had spent some time at Antioch^a, he departed thence, and travelled over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia, from place to place, strengthening all the disciples where he came.

But in no place was he received with higher regard, and more affectionate embraces, than by the Galatians; as himself afterwards (in his epistle to them) reminded them, chap. iv. 14, 15. Where he tells them, "They received him as an angel of God, and could not well have expressed their affections higher, in that they received him even as Christ Jesus. Nay, so great were the endearments they shewed him, that he thought they would not have stuck (if it had been a practicable thing, and would have been serviceable and acceptable to him) to have plucked out their own eyes, and have given them to him."

This so great openness of heart in them to him, might probably make him the more free and open to them, in advising them to make weekly collections for the charitable relief of the poor amongst them; which hitherto doth not appear to have been

^a Acts xviii. 23.

done in any other of the Gentile churches; but after, this was proposed as a pattern to the church at Corinth, 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.

While thus the apostle was travelling the countries, visiting and confirming the Christian churches, which he had been an instrument to help to gather in Galatia and Phrygia, there came to Ephesus a certain Jew^b, by name Apollos, by birth of Alexandria in Egypt; a man, not only of great eloquence, but learning and prudence, and withal mighty in the scriptures; having read them throughly and frequently with diligent attention.

This man, having been a little instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in spirit, spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, so far as his understanding was opened, which was not far; for as yet he knew only the baptism of John, viz. the baptism with water (which was John's); but was not yet come to the baptism of Christ, the spiritual baptism.

Yet he began to speak boldly in the synagogue also. Wherefore when Aquila and Priscilla had heard him, and observed wherein he was short, they took him home with them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

And when afterwards he was inclined to go into Achaia, the brethren that were at Ephesus gave him letters recommendatory to the church at Corinth, desiring them to receive him; which they doing, he was very helpful to them there, who through grace had believed; for he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

While thus Apollos was well employed at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper coasts^c, came to Ephesus again; where finding certain disciples (to the number of about twelve), he asked them, "If they had received the Holy Ghost since they be-

^b Acts xviii. 24, 25, 26.

^c Acts xix. 1, 2.

lieved? They tell him, they had not so much as heard whether there be an Holy Ghost."

No! said he. Into what then were ye baptized? Into John's baptism, replied they. Where the baptism of John (says Vatablus on the place) is put simply for the baptism of water. Then said Paul to them, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance; exhorting the people that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

What more Paul said to them is not expressed; yet very likely it is that he instructed them further. However, when they heard this, they were baptized, says the text, (*εἰς τὸ ὄνομα*) into the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them (in the visible gifts), and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. Upon which place the same Vatablus notes, '*Baptismo Christi baptizati sunt; hoc est, baptismo spiritus, non aquæ. i. e. They were baptized with the baptism of Christ; that is, the baptism of the spirit, not of water. Quasi dixerat, adds he, Illis tantum, in nomine Christi, manum imposuit, ut spiritum sanctum acciperent, quem illi precibus ejus acceperunt.*' i. e. As if he had said, he only laid his hand on them, in the name of Christ, that they might receive the Holy Ghost, which by his prayers they did receive.

The apostle made amends for the short stay he made at Ephesus before, by the long stay he made there now. For during the space of three months he went into the synagogue there, disputing with the Jews, and opening to them the doctrines which concern the kingdom of God, that he might by persuasion have prevailed on them to receive the gospel.

But when, after so long a time, and much labour, he found they would not be wrought upon, but that divers of them became hardened, and were so far from believing, that they stuck not to blaspheme the way of truth before the people, he departed from them; and

^d Acts xix. 3. 9. 12.

withdrawing the disciples from them also, he disputed, and taught daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

And continuing thus to do by the space of two years, it gave a fair opportunity for the spreading of the gospel far and near: for both Jews and Greeks, who dwelt in those parts of Asia, did generally by this means come to hear the word of the Lord Jesus, the doctrine concerning the Messiah, and were greatly confirmed by special miracles, which God was pleased to work by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick, linen clothes (handkerchiefs or aprons); upon application of which to the patients, or parties affected, the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went of them.

But as the Devil would imitate the works of God, so he has his apostles and messengers, whom he sends out, and employs in his work, as God hath his.

Of this sort were certain vagabond Jews, who pretended to be exorcists; of which there were no less than seven, the sons of one man named Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests; that is, one of the four and twenty heads of the families of priests, according to the division which David made of them into ranks or courses, 1 Chron. xxiv.

These Jewish exorcists, in imitation of Paul, took upon them to call on the name of the Lord Jesus over them that had evil spirits in them, saying, "We adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth." But they were well met with for their pains; for the evil spirit answered, Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye? And thereupon the man in whom the evil spirit was, acted and strengthened by the evil spirit in him, leaped on them, and being too strong for them, prevailed over them; so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

And when this came to be publickly known, as it generally was, to the Jews and Greeks also that dwelt at Ephesus, fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was hereby magnified, when the people saw the Devils were subject to his power, in those who came in

his name; yet they would not be subject to those impostors, who came not in his name, although they used and abused it^e.

Ephesus was noted of old (as both Casaubon and Grotius observe) for magical arts and studies; and many, it seems, who had followed such studies and arts, coming now to receive the Christian faith, did openly declare and acknowledge what their former practices had been. Nay, they went further than so; for many also of those cunning artists brought their conjuring books together, and burnt them openly; the price of which being computed, amounted to fifty thousand pieces of silver; which the annotators on the old English Bible reckon to be about two thousand marks of our money. But if those pieces of silver were (as Godwyn thinks, Moses and Aaron, l. 6. c. 10.) attick drachms, to the value of our money but three halfpence a piece, they will doubtless fall short of that sum, arising no higher (if I miscount not) than three hundred and twelve pounds and ten shillings.

But whatever sum the price of those magical books amounted to, remarkable it is (and the learned Grotius hath well observed it) that those faithful Christians did not sell those books (that they might bring the money to the apostles, or put it to some good use or other), but they burnt the books, as judging them not fit to be sold, or given to any others, any more than to be used or kept by themselves. And this is attributed to the prevalency the gospel had upon them: so mightily (says the text) grew the word of God, and prevailed^f.

While the apostle found work here at Ephesus, he had more work cut out for him at Galatia; from whence he received, about this time, a very sorrowful account of the condition of that church. For since he left it, some of those false and corrupt teachers, who came down from Judea, pretending to have been sent forth by the apostles, Peter, James, and John, had crept in amongst the believers there, and had preached

^e Acts xix. 17.

^f Acts 20.

up amongst them (as they, or the like, had formerly done at Antioch, Acts xv.) a necessity of observing circumcision, and the rest of the ceremonial law of Moses, together with the law of Christ. And there not being then in Galatia any of the apostles, or other eminent ministers of Christ, to oppose and stop them, they had greatly over-run the churches there, and thereabouts, with the infection of this their pestilential doctrine. And because they knew Paul had a great place in the esteem of the churches there, these deceitful workers highly cried up those ancient apostles at Jerusalem, as those who were called and chosen by Christ himself, while he was personally on earth; but run down and despised Paul, and laid him as low, and made him of as little account as they could, as one that had never seen Christ in the flesh, and therefore was not worthy of the name of an apostle, nor was (as they pretended) regarded as one by the other apostles. And though these Galatians had but lately expressed such high respects and affectionate kindness to Paul, yet as no extreme is permanent, this four leaven had wrought so untowardly upon them, that they were already grown somewhat cool, and but indifferent towards him.

Their personal contempt of him (though too ungrateful in them) the apostle probably could have over-looked; but the danger they were in of being wholly turned aside from the simplicity of the gospel, begat in him an earnest desire of their recovery out of the snare they were but too far already entangled in.

Wherefore the spirit of the Lord co-operating with his desire, and dictating to him suitable matter, he wrote (from thence as is supposed) his epistle to the churches of Galatia, though in the close thereof it be said to be written from Rome.

In this epistle, for the sakes of them to whom he wrote, that they might have the more regard to what he wrote, he (more amply than elsewhere) sets forth his heavenly call to the gospel-ministry,

magnifies his apostleship, and vindicates it from the calumnious cavils of his detracting adversaries.

In order whereunto, he not only assumes to himself the title of an apostle^f (which in the epistles he had written before to the Thessalonians he had not done); but declares he received not his commission of man, or by man, but was made an apostle by Jesus Christ, and God the Father; so far was he from being, in that respect, inferior to any of the other apostles.

Then, that he might not be thought to stand alone, and so to have written this epistle to them privately, and of himself only, he takes in all the brethren that were then with him, to join with him in his prefatory salutation to the Galatian churches.

Which having done, and briefly (but sharply) expostulated with them their instability, in being so soon turned aside from the gospel they received through his ministry, he takes occasion to set before them the manner how he at first received his ministry, and how from the first he had exercised himself in it.

He tells them, "That God, who had separated him from his mother's womb, had called him by his grace, and that thereupon it had pleased God to reveal his Son in him, that he might preach him amongst the heathen (which they were).

That when God had been pleased so to reveal his Son in him, and send him forth to preach the gospel, he went forth upon that commission; not consulting with flesh and blood, nor having recourse to them that were apostles before him, as if he wanted confirmation, or farther authority from them, but went forth from Damascus (where he had his call) into Arabia, and so returned to Damascus again, and spent no less than three years in his ministerial office, before he went up at all to Jerusalem; and then went only on a short visit to Peter, and

^f Gal. i. i. 15.

saw none of the apostles then neither, but him and James.

That it was fourteen years after, before he went to Jerufalem again; when taking Barnabas and Titus with him^z, he went up by revelation, and was so far from being disliked by any of the apostles or brethren there, that they who seemed to be pillars amongst them, to wit, James, Cephas (or Peter) and John, when they perceived the grace which God had been pleased to bestow upon him, did give unto him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship. And that after all this, when Peter came to Antioch (where he was) and walked not evenly among the brethren, he was so far from standing in awe of him, or having any dependance on him, that finding him faulty, he openly withstood him to his face.

Having in the two first chapters cleared his way, by removing the slanders, and false surmises, by which his and their adversaries (those false teachers that had crept in among them) had endeavoured to bring his ministry, and himself, into contempt with them; he fell roundly on them for their great folly, in suffering themselves to be so bewitched by such gross seducers, as evidently strove to bring them into bondage (such of them as were Gentiles, to that they were never subject to; such of them as were Jews, to that which Christ by his death had freed them from).

Then opening to them the nature of both the law and the gospel, with the righteousness of each, he laboured to convince them of, and recover them from, the errors they had been drawn into, and so to bring them back into the right way again.

Having dispatched this epistle to the Galatians (a people originally of Gallia, Gaul, or France; who removing from thence, and settling in a colony in Grecia, were thence at first called Gallo-Græcians;

^z Gal. ii. 1.

afterwards, by contraction, Galatians), he had a purpose to have gone himself through Macedonia and Achaia^b, and so to have gone to Jerusalem; saying, after I have been there, I must also see Rome. But fresh occasions stopping him, he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timothy and Erastus; but he himself stayed yet a while longer in Asia.

In which time (as it is supposed, for certainty is hard to be obtained in these cases) he wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians upon this occasion.

There arose in that church an unhappy schism, by the affectionate and partial fondness which some of the members of it had, and expressed, for such particular teachers among them as they had been convinced by, or whose ministry they conceived had been most advantageous, or was at least most acceptable to them. And so far by degrees they carried it, as to distinguish themselves into several parties or factions, under the names of such teachers as each party best approved of. So that, as now-a-days (in London and elsewhere) religious professors of the same communion, denominate themselves of such an one's, or such an one's church; so they crying up the teachers they severally best affected, one said, "I am of Paulⁱ; another, I am of Apollos; a third, I am of Cephas (or Peter); and a fourth, (wiser, and of sounder judgment than the rest) said, I am of Christ. And well truly it was that he got any among them.

Nor was this all the mischief that this dissension amongst them made; but, having by this means broken the bond of unity amongst themselves, they ran into many great disorders and gross practices, for want of a due exercise of Christian discipline, which the divisions and breaches that were amongst them would not suffer them to put in use; so that there was not only fornication, but even incest com-

^b Acts xix. 21. ⁱ 1 Cor. i. 12.

mitted among them, and that with impunity; besides many other evils, though less immoral, yet very hurtful, both to themselves, and to the honour of the Christian profession.

This so troubled the better sort among them; that first some of the family of Chloe (supposed to be a godly matron of the Corinthian church) gave the apostle Paul a general intimation of the dangerous contentions which were got up amongst them; and afterwards Apollos, with some others of that church, came to him at Ephesus, and brought him a letter from them, wherein they desired his advice and judgment upon several cases therein contained, which were then controverted amongst them. In answer to this the apostle wrote his epistle, which is called his first epistle to the Corinthians; though in this he mentions another, that he had written to them before, 1 Cor. v. 9. which Drusus, Grotius, Calvin, and others, conclude is not now extant, having been lost long since, with many others.

This epistle, full fraught with great variety of excellent matter, adapted to the state of that church (and generally useful to all) he sent unto them from Ephesus, 1 Cor. xvi. 8. (though in the subscription thereunto, it is said to be written from Philippi) and that by Stephanus, Fortunatus, Achaicus, and Timotheus; whereas it is evident from chap. xvi. ver. 10, 11. that Timotheus was then at Corinth, and was expected by the apostle to come from thence to him. But likely it is that he might send it by the other three, who came from them to him, chap. xvi. 17. and probably brought him their letter.

As for Apollos, he was so sensible of the danger of being made, or set up, by some of those contentious Corinthians for an head of a party among them, that he would not be prevailed with, by the apostle's importunity, to go to them again at that time; but chose rather by his absence to wean them
from

from him, and defer his return to a more convenient season, when he should hear what effects the apostle's letter should have had upon them.

About this time also, and from this city (Ephesus) it is supposed the apostle wrote his epistle to Titus, and sent it by Zenas (a doctor of the law) and Apollos, who instead of returning at that time to Corinth, had a mind to visit Crete; the care of whom the apostle commits in an especial manner to Titus, chap. iii. 13.

In which epistle the apostle sets down the right qualifications of a true elder or bishop (that is, an overseer) in the Christian church, Tit. i. 6, 7, 8, 9. Then gives the character of a right Cretan, from Epimenides, a prophetick poet of their own; and directs Titus how to deal with them. He advises him also what admonitions to give to old and young, to men and women, to husbands and wives, to servants and subjects, for their behaviour one towards another, in their respective relations, and towards all^k. Then in the close lets him know, that he intended to spend the winter at Nicopolis; and desires him not to fail of coming to him thither, when he should send either Artemas or Tychicus to him, to acquaint him of his being there.

Although the apostle did thus employ some of his time in writing to the churches in other parts; yet did he not cease to propagate the gospel by preaching Christ in the place where he then was.

Ephesus was the metropolis of Asia the less, a city of great concourse, not only on account of the trade and merchandize, but of the temple of Diana, which stood there; a building so magnificently great and sumptuous, and of such rare and curious workmanship, that it was accounted one of the wonders of the world; the same whereof drew great confluences of people from all parts to see it, and to pay their devotions to the goddess Diana,

^k Tit. iii. 12.

for whom it was built, to whom it was dedicated, and who was supposed to dwell in it.

This very much advanced the trade of the place; which being observed by one of the citizens, by name Demetrius¹, and by trade a silver-smith; he, that he might improve it to his own, and the rest of the company's advantage, contrived to make little silver shrines for Diana, in imitation of the temple, with her image placed in it. And these being generally bought up by those travellers of all countries, whom curiosity or devotion led thither (every one being willing to carry home with him the model of that so much celebrated temple), brought no small gain to the craftsmen of that trade.

But Demetrius, either finding that Paul's preaching against the idolatry and superstition of the place, did, or fearing it would, discourage the people from buying his shrines, and so diminish his profit, raised a seditious tumult against Paul.

For, calling together as many as he could of his fellow silver-smiths, and all the workmen who wrought unto them, he, to incense them against the apostle, thus bespake them :

“Ye know, Sirs, that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover ye both see and hear, that not at Ephesus only, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, by telling them, that they be no gods which are made with hands. By which means not only our trade is in danger to be set at nought, but there is danger also, that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence destroyed, whom not all Asia only, but the world worshippeth.”

This was enough to heat the heads of those blind idolaters, whose zeal for their idol was increased by their interest. Wherefore, when they had heard Demetrius out, they cried up their goddess to the

¹ Acts ix. 24, 25.

skies^m; saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." And being themselves full of wrath, they filled the whole city with confusion; and seeing they could not come at Paul (at whom their greatest spight was), they caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, who were Paul's companions in his travels, and dragging them along with them, rushed with one accord into the theatre; which was a large and open place, where, on their festivals, the people were wont to be entertained with publick sights and plays; and wherein also, at other times, their courts of judicature were held, and the publick affairs of the city were usually transacted.

This Gaius, who is here called a Macedonian, is probably the same whom the apostle Paul names for one of the few he baptized, or dipped in water, 1 Cor. i. 14. and whom, in his epistle to the Romans, which he wrote from Corinth, he calls his host, Rom. xvi. 23. which speaks him to have been a Corinthian, though at this time at Ephesus with the apostle, as one of his companions in his travels. The other, Aristarchus, was Paul's fellow-prisoner at Rome, when he wrote his epistle from thence to the Colossians, chap. iv. 10.

The sense the apostle had of the danger these his friends and fellow-travellers were in, and his uneasiness that they should suffer for his sake, was so great, that he would have thrust himself in among the people, to have rescued his friends, and defended his doctrine, with whatsoever hazard to himself, if the disciples would have suffered it; but they, by persuasion and intreaty, diverted him from it; and some of the chief of Asia, who wished him well, sent unto him, desiring him that he would by no means adventure himself into the theatre.

For the people there were in such confusion, some crying one thing, and some another, that the greater part of them knew not wherefore they were

^m Acts xix. 28. 30. 32.

come together, but as their ring-leaders managed them, and fet them on.

Among those that were engaged in this untoward work, there was one Alexanderⁿ (whom Grotius takes to be that copper-smith, whom Paul complained of to Timothy, 1 Tim. i. 20. and 2 Tim. iv. 14). whom the Jews put forward as their advocate, both to excuse themselves to the rabble, and lay as much blame on Paul as he could.

He therefore, beckoning with his hand to bespeak their attention, would have made a defence for himself and his people, the Jews. But when the rabble understood that he was a Jew, and on that account as hateful to them as the Christians, they would not hear him; but stretching their throats for about two hours space, they did all with one voice cry out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

At length, when they had pretty well wearied themselves, the recorder of the city, doubting yet whither this tumult might tend, or where it would end, if timely care were not taken to stop it, adventured to thrust himself among them; yet thought it better policy to quiet them, if he could, by gentle persuasion, than to attempt to quell them by the authority of his place, or office in the city.

Wherefore after he had so far appeased the people, as to bring them into a fit condition to hearken unto reason, that he might work the better on them, he thus humoured them. "Ye men of Ephesus; What man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image that fell down from Jupiter?"

For that was the notion these people had concerning the image of their goddess; infused into them by their priests, to beget in them the greater reverence to her, and liberality to themselves. The like policy was used, and prevailed, amongst

ⁿ Acts xix. 33, 34, 35.

both the Trojans and the Romans; for the Trojans were taught to believe that their palladium, which was the image of Pallas (the feigned goddess of war) dropped down out of heaven unto them; and the Romans had the like persuasion concerning their ancile, or brazen target, which was feigned to have fallen from heaven, into the hand of Numa Pompilius their king.

The recorder having somewhat pacified the people, by speaking so honourably of their goddess, and her image, added, "Seeing then that these things are so universally known, and acknowledged to be true, that they cannot be contradicted; what need you trouble yourselves what any body says? Ye ought rather to be quiet, and not rashly to attempt any thing, as ye have now done; for ye have brought hither these men, who are neither robbers of churches, nor blasphemers of your goddesses. For if they, or any else, have said, as Demetrius reports, That they are not gods which are made with hands, what is that to your goddess Diana, or her image? Since ye know well enough that your goddess herself is in heaven, with her father Jupiter, and that her image was not made with hands, but came down from Jupiter to you; so that those words before-mentioned do not affect your goddess, nor her image, and therefore ye need not be troubled at them."

"And as to Demetrius, if he, and the craftsmen that were with him, have any action against any man (on account of trade, or the shrines they make for their own private profit only), the law is open, and there are persons deputed to hear and determine such matters, before whom they may implead one another. But if, added he, ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly; which this, to be sure, is not; and therefore we are in danger to be cal-

led in question for this day's uproar; for we can alledge no just ground or reason for this unusual concourse."

When by this gentle way of reasoning he had somewhat pacified the people, he persuaded them to part, and depart peaceably home.

And when the uproar was ceased, and the city brought into a quiet and peaceable condition again, Paul called the disciples to him^p, in order to take his leave of them; and having embraced them, and desired Timothy (who was then with them) to tarry still at Ephesus with them, that he might watch over them, and be helpful to them in his absence, 1 Tim. i. 34. he departed to go into Macedonia.

From thence, and at this time probably, remembering that he had left Timothy at Ephesus, to watch over the flock of Christ there, he wrote his first epistle to him, to encourage him to be faithful and diligent in the work of the Lord; and to be very watchful that false teachers crept not in, to sow the evil seeds of their dissention, and scatter corrupt doctrines among the believers there; and furnishes him with counsel and directions how to behave himself in the church of Christ towards all of all sorts, degrees, and ranks.

After he had dispatched this epistle to his beloved Timothy at Ephesus, and had travelled through most parts of Macedonia, giving many exhortations to the believers there, he went into Greece, and abode there three months.

Now when he was about to sail into Syria, understanding that the Jews laid wait for him, he altered his intention, and took up a purpose to return through Macedonia.

He had for his companions in this journey into Asia, Sopater of Berea, and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus (who, it seems, was by this time come

^p Acts xx. 1. 4.

to him from Ephesus); and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus; besides the beloved physician Luke, who, being the compiler of this history of the Acts of the Apostles, includes himself (by *us*, and *we*) without naming himself.

These above-named going before, tarried, says Luke, for us at Troas. And we, adds he, after the days of unleavened bread, sailing away from Philippi, came in five days unto them to Troas; where we abode seven days.

But when Paul was come to Troas, though he found an openness there for preaching the gospel; yet not finding Titus there (whom he had sent to visit the Corinthian church, and by whom he expected an account concerning them) he was very uneasy and restless in his spirit⁹, as he afterwards told the Corinthians; wherefore staying not long (but seven days) at Troas, he went from thence into Macedonia again (perhaps to Philippi), where with much uneasiness of mind he waited, in great fear, lest some new disorder should have broken out amongst the Corinthians, which had detained Titus there.

But when Titus at length came to him in Macedonia, and gave him an account of the good effect his former epistle had had upon the Corinthians, and how much the state of that church was mended, he was greatly comforted thereby; and that he might testify to them the satisfaction he had received by the good account Titus had given him of them, and might encourage them to go on with the reformation they had begun, he now wrote his second epistle (as it is called) to them, and sent it by Titus, with whom he joined in the same service two others; one of whom he calls the brother^r, whose praises is in the gospel throughout all the churches; who not being named, nor otherwise described, save that he was chosen of the churches

⁹ 2 Cor. ii. 12, 13.

^r 2 Cor. viii. 6. 17, 18.

to travel with the apostle, leaves it uncertain, and arbitrary to conjecture^s who he was, though for the most part interpreters cast it between two, Barnabas or Luke.

Had Barnabas been named among those who we read went this journey into Asia with Paul, Acts xx. 4. or had we any ground to suppose that he was at this time with the apostle, I should pitch upon him to be the man, before Luke, or any other; because I find he was sent forth by the church, Acts xiii. 3. to accompany Paul in his travels in the gospel, which I do not remember Luke was. And besides, Luke continued with Paul all the rest of this journey; bearing him company from place to place, till they came to Jerusalem, as the account of their travels shews, in these 20th and 21st chapters of the Acts; so that he could not be likely to go with this epistle to Corinth, if it was written at this time, and in this journey.

The third of the messengers who went with this epistle, and whom the apostle calls our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent, &c. 2 Cor. viii. 22. is thought by many to be Apollos; by Grotius to be Epenetus; whom the apostle, in the epistle to the Romans, salutes, calling him his well-beloved, and acknowledging him to be the first fruits of Achaia to Christ, Rom. xvi. 5.

The epistle itself is large, as containing great variety of excellent matter, worthy to be read and regarded by all; to which therefore I refer the reader.

To ascertain the order of the apostolical epistles, and the exact times wherein, and places from whence, they were written, is a matter of no small difficulty. The historian Luke (though it is probable he was in company with the apostle Paul, when he wrote most of his) gives not, that I observe, the least hint of it.

As for those short notes (as written from such or such a place) which are added at the end of some of the epistles; Grotius (in his prolegomena (or prologue) to the epistle to the Romans) says, "they are neither antient, nor are found in all books; nor yet are the same in those books in which they are found. And in the close of his annotations on that epistle, Rom. xvi. 27. he plainly says they are of no authority.

Yet all, I think, agree that the epistle to the Romans was written from Corinth, as the note thereon added says it was. Which if it was, it is probable it might be about this time, while the apostle was labouring in Macedonia and in Greece; in which time he is thought by some to have visited both Athens and Corinth again; Athens, perhaps, but transiently, and in a cursory manner; there being no church that we read of gathered there. But Corinth, on more pressing and urgent occasions; not only to reap the fruits of his epistles to them (the last of which was but lately sent by Titus), but to be (amongst others) their almoner, to carry and distribute their charitable benevolence (as well as that of the Macedonian churches, 2 Cor. viii. 4). unto and amongst the poor saints in Judea, chap. ix. 4, 5.

This epistle to the Romans is said to be sent by Phœbe, a deaconess or servant of the churches at Cenchrea (which was the port of Corinth); whom with an honourable character he recommends to the care and assistance of the church at Rome.

The matter of this epistle is of the highest importance, as discussing the great point of justification; the ground thereof occasioned by that unhappy and very hurtful difference, which had fallen out in this, as well as in most other of the Christian churches then gathered, between the converts of Christianity from Judaism, and those that came from Gentilism; the Jewish believers retaining, and maintaining too high a respect to, the abrogated ceremonies

ceremonies of the law, in which they had been bred up. So true is that of the poet,

*Quo semel est imbuta recens, servabit odorem
Testa diu.*————

The vessel long retains the taste
Of that which first therein was plac'd.

These Judaizing Christians would fain have put the yoke of the law upon the necks of the Gentile Christians; earnestly contending that circumcision, and other legal rites, were essentially necessary to salvation. This begat heats between them, tending to break the bond of peace and brotherly love. To prevent which, and set the matter right between them, is supposed to be the chief design of this epistle.

When Paul had dispatched this epistle to Rome, he left Corinth^t, intending to sail directly to Syria. But understanding that the Jews (who hated his person for his doctrine sake) laid wait for him, he changed his mind, and bending his course thorough Macedonia again, came (as is touched before) to Troas, and tarried there the whole week. And when the disciples were come together, on the first day of the week (so our English bibles have it; but in the Greek it is, one of the sabbaths) to break bread (in their *agapæ*, or love-feasts) Paul preached unto them; and because he was not likely to have any farther opportunity among them, inasmuch as he intended to leave them next day, he continued his speech until midnight.

The meeting was in an upper chamber, where there were many lights set up; but Paul preaching long, a young man of the company, named Euty-chus, who sat in a window, being fallen into a

^t Acts xx. 8, 9,

deep sleep, fell down from the third loft (three stories high) and was taken up dead.

This accident put an end to Paul's sermon for the present; who thereupon going down to the place where the young man lay, fell on him, and embraced him, till he felt his life return, and then said to the rest of the company, "Trouble not yourselves, for his life is in him." Whereupon they brought the young man up alive, and were not a little comforted. And when Paul himself was also come up again, and had broken bread^u, and eaten, and talked a long while, even until break of day, he departed from Troas, and went himself on foot to Assos (a port-town belonging to Troas), directing his company to go thither by sea, and meet him there; which they did. And then taking him on board, went on to Mitylene (the chief city of the island Lesbos); from whence setting sail again, they came the next day over-against Chios (an island lying between Lesbos and Samos); and the day following arrived at Samos (an island of Ionia); and having touched at Trogyllium (a promontory of Ionia, not far from Samos), came the next day to Miletus (a city of Ionia, not far from Ephesus); from whence sending to Ephesus, he invited the elders of the church there to come to him at Miletus; for he was unwilling to go to Ephesus, lest he should by that means be detained too long in Asia; for he made what haste he could, that, if it were possible for him, he might be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Not out of any religious regard to the time, we may suppose; but that in so great a confluence of people of all sorts, ranks, and conditions, as usually resorted thither at that time, he might have the fairer opportunity to preach the gospel, and thereby spread the glad tidings of salvation by Christ, the promised Messiah, through all the neighbouring countries.

^u Acts xx. 11. 13, 14, 15. 17.

When the Ephesian elders were come to him at Miletus^w, he thus delivered his mind unto them:

“Ye know, from the first time that I came into Asia, how I have behaved myself among you at all seasons, when I have been with you, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, through the trials which have befallen me by the lying in wait of the Jews. Ye know also, that I have kept back nothing that was profitable unto you; but have shewed you, and taught you, both publickly and privately, from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, the necessity of repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there; save that in every city where I come, the Holy Ghost witnesseth, that bonds and afflictions attend me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the glad tidings of the grace of God.”

“And now, behold, I know that none of you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face any more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am clear of the blood of all men; for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God relating to your salvation.”

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departure, not only grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; but that also of yourselves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after

^w Acts xx. 18. 25. 28.

them. Therefore watch, and remember that by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one, both night and day, and that with tears."

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace^x, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

Then appealing to themselves, somewhat like Samuel of old, 1 Sam. xii. concerning the uprightness of his conversation among them, he added :

"I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel; yea, you yourselves know, that these hands of mine have ministered unto my necessities, and to the necessities of them that were with me. In doing which I have shewed you an example, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Which sentence, not being expressly, or directly, found amongst the sayings of Christ recorded in the New Testament, may be supposed to have been some known apophthegm of his, which had been delivered to Paul by some other of the apostles, who, conversing familiarly with their master, had observed and registered in their memories some such remarkable and sententious speeches, as occasionally dropped from his divine mouth.

When the apostle had now ended his hortatory discourse to the Ephesian elders, he kneeled down and prayed with them. Which done, they all weeping sorely, and sorrowing most of all for the words of his [that they should see his face no more] fell on his neck, embracing and kissing him, and then accompanied him unto the ship.

The apostle and his companions being thus got on board again, launched forth, and came with a straight course unto Choos^y (a noted island among the Cyclades), and the day following unto Rhodes (famous

^x Acts xx. 32, 33. 35, 36. ^y Acts xxi. 1.

for the coloffus which stood there), and from thence unto Patara (a maritime city of Lycia), and finding there a ship bound unto Phœnicia, they went on board, and fet forth. And when they had discovered Cyprus, they left it on the left hand, and sailing into Syria, landed at Tyre, for there the ship was to unlade her burthen.

Here finding some disciples, Paul and his company tarried with them seven days^z; and these disciples (or some of them) foreseeing by the spirit the imminent dangers Paul would undergo, endeavoured to dissuade him from going to Jerufalem, but in vain; for after he had stayed seven days with them, he and his company departed thence, in order to pursue their journey. But those Tyrian disciples would not part with them so; but with their wives and children brought them on their way, till they were out of the city; and then kneeling down on the shore, they prayed together; after which, taking leave one of another, the Tyrian disciples returned home again, and Paul with his companions taking ship, made their course from Tyre to Ptolemais (a port town of Palestine, supposed to be the same that was antiently called Accho, Judg. i. 31. but), afterwards taking this name from some of the Ptolomies, kings of Egypt.

Here they staid but one day; and having saluted the brethren, they came next day to Cæsarea, and went directly to the house of Philip, who had been one of the seven deacons (heretofore chosen at Jerufalem to take care of the poor, Acts vi. 5. but in this place is called the evangelist).

The word signifies a bringer or publisher of good news, or glad tidings; and in that sense is applicable to every preacher of the gospel, which is the best news, the most joyful tidings that can be brought or published to men. For this reason it is, that the four (viz. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, who

^z Acts xxi. 4. 8.

wrote, and thereby published, the Sacred History of the conception, birth, life, doctrine, miracles, sayings, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of our blessed Lord, whereby he became the Redeemer and Saviour of mankind, and remains their intercessor with his Father) are called by way of excellency, the Four Evangelists. And yet Timothy also was by Paul exhorted to discharge the office of an evangelist, 2 Tim. iv. 5.

This deaconary evangelist^a Philip had four daughters, virgins all, who did prophesy; which being a word of a large extent and signification, denotes not only fore-telling things to come, but opening and expounding the Holy Scriptures, and preaching the gospel. So Wilson, in his Christian Dictionary on the word [*preaching*] explains prophesying, in 1 Cor. xiv. 3. by preaching; "he that prophesieth, (that is, says he, preacheth) speaketh to men, to edifying, to exhortation and comfort." Grotius, on this place of Philip's daughters prophesying, says, '*Vide hic impletum id quod habuimus supra.*' i. e. 'See that fulfilled here which we had above,' in Acts ii. 18. which relates to the prophecy of Joel, and to the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit, according thereunto, on (not only the apostles, but) all the believers then assembled at Jerusalem, and waiting for it; the effect of which then was (not predicting future, but predicating present; not fore-telling things to come, but) speaking or preaching the wonderful works of God, ver. 11. And Thomas Becon (who in the year 1566 published a little book called "the Governace of Virtue," which he dedicated to the lady Jane Seymour, in his epistle dedicatory mentioning this place of Philip's daughters prophesying, explains it thus, "that is, says he, they were so godly brought up in the knowledge of God's most blessed law, that they were able to declare and expound the Holy Scriptures, and

^a Acts xxi. 9.

mysteries of God, according to this prophecy," "I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy," Joel ii. 28.

But in the other sense of the word, prophesying by fore-telling things to come, we have no account in the text, that any of those four daughters of Philip did foretell unto Paul any of those things which should befall him, though others did; so that there was no occasion, on that account, for Luke to insert that they did prophesy. But as Philip, their father, was an evangelist, so most probable it is, that they, his daughters, were endued by God with wisdom and power to declare unto others the way of life and salvation.

With this good evangelist, and his godly daughters^b, the apostle and his companions tarried certain days. In which time there came down from Judea thither a certain prophet, named Agabus; the same, in all likelihood, who had some time before fore-told a great and general dearth, Acts xi. 28. He being come to them, took Paul's girdle, and having therewith bound his own hands and feet, said, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost; so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle; and not only so, but shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles."

This so affected all them who were present, that when they had heard it, they unanimously (as well those of his own company, as the disciples that were of Cæsarea) besought him with tears that he would not go up to Jerusalem.

This so affectionate importunity of his friends brought a greater exercise upon the apostle, who was on the one hand immoveably fixed to obey the inward motion of the Holy Spirit calling him thither; and yet, on the other hand, was humanely

^b Acts xxi. 10, 11, 12.

affected with the deep sorrows and earnest intreaties of his dearest friends and brethren.

Wherefore he said unto them^c, "What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus."

When therefore they perceived that he would not be persuaded, they ceased from importuning him farther, and said, "The will of the Lord be done."

Then after some days longer stay, leaving Cæsarea, they took up their carriages (or luggage) and went up to Jerusalem; some of the disciples of Cæsarea bearing them company, and bringing with them one Mnason (otherwise called Jason, an old disciple, originally of Cyprus, but then an inhabitant in Jerusalem), with whom they should lodge when they came thither.

Being come to Jerusalem, the brethren received him gladly; and next day Paul, having those with him who had accompanied him in his travels, went and made a visit unto James, where all the elders were present; unto whom, when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry; which when they had heard, they glorified the Lord.

But they, being mostly of the circumcision, and somewhat over-zealous yet for the abrogated ceremonies of the Mosaick law (willing to draw Paul in with them, partly to countenance their own practice, but principally to satisfy the weaker sort amongst the many Jewish converts to Christianity) thus bespake him:

"Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are that believe. A good sight sure it was, that so many thousands (nay, so many tens of thousands; for myriads is the word in the Greek, and that signifies ten thousand) should be gathered to

^c Acts xxi. 33. 14. 16. 19, 20.

the Christian faith, of Jews only; in the space of about five-and-twenty years.

But added they (or perhaps James as their mouth) "These are all zealous of the law; and they have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest all the Jews, who are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses; telling them they ought not to circumcise their children, nor yet to walk after the Jewish customs."

Then letting him know that the multitude of the believers (the whole body of the Jewish Christians there), when they heard he was come^d, would undoubtedly gather together to observe how he would behave himself in that respect, they wished him to consider what was fit for him to do in that case; and having thus prepared him to receive it, they offered this as an expedient.

"Do therefore, said they, this that we say unto thee; we have four men that have a vow on them; take them, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them (to provide for them the offerings by the law required, seeing they are poor), that they may shave their heads (that it may appear that the days of their vow are ended, see Numb. vi. 18). And hereby all will know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing (but idle rumours); but that thou thyself walkest orderly, and keepest the law."

And the better to bring him to a compliance with them in this, they urged to him that this would not affect the Gentile believers at all. For, added they, as touching them, we have already (as thou well knowest) concluded, and written, that they observe no such thing; save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication."

^d Acts xxi. 22, 23. 25.

By this artifice they drew Paul to condescend to that which afterwards cost him dear. For hereupon he took those men, and the next day purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification^e, until an offering should be offered for every one of them; as if he had been under a vow as well as they, when indeed he was not.

And when the seven days (which he had set for the term of his pretended vow) were almost ended, his old enemies, the Jews of Asia, who had so opposed him there, being now come up to the feast, and seeing him in the temple, stirred up all the people against him, and laying violent hands on him, cried out, "Men of Israel, help; for this (said they) is the man that teacheth all men every-where against the (Jewish) people, and the law, and this place; nay, farther, hath brought Greeks also (or Gentiles) into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

This latter part of their charge against him they grounded only upon a supposition; for having seen Trophimus, an Ephesian (whom they well knew to be a Gentile Christian) with Paul before in the city, they thought he would take him along with him into the temple; and thereupon concluded (though untruly) that he had done so.

This put the whole city in a commotion, the people flocking tumultuously together. And when they had seized on Paul, they drew him out of the temple, and forthwith the doors were shut; for fear, perhaps, lest he should slip in again, and claim the privilege of sanctuary, or protection from the place.

As soon then as they had gotten him out, they fell with great fury on him, intending to have killed him. But before they could accomplish their design, notice being given to the chief captain of the Roman band that all Jerusalem was in an up-

^e Acts xxi. 26. 28. 30, 31, 32.

roar, he immediately with his centurions (or under-captains) and their soldiers, ran down upon them; at sight of whom they left off beating Paul.

The chief captain then coming near, took Paul from them, and commanding that he should be bound with two chains (one perhaps on his hands, the other on his feet, as Agabus had predicted, ver. 11). demanded who he was, and what he had done. But while some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude, so that, by reason of the tumult, he could not know the certainty, he commanded that he should be carried up into the castle (called *Arx Antonia*, or Anthony's tower) where their garrison was held. And so outrageous was the multitude, that when Paul was upon the stairs, the soldiers were fain to bear him up in their arms, to secure him from the violence of the people, who with great insolence followed after, crying out, "Away with him."

When now Paul, being carried up the stairs, was ready to be led into the castle^f, he asked the chief captain if he would give him leave to speak unto him. Who wondering to hear him speak Greek, asked him, "If he was not that Egyptian, who a while before, heading a party, led into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers."

"Nay, said Paul, but I am a Jew, born at Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, and so am a citizen of no mean city. Wherefore I beseech thee to suffer me to speak unto the people."

And when the captain had given him licence, Paul, standing on the stairs, beckoned with his hand unto the people; and when there was made a great silence, he speaking in the Hebrew tongue (such as was then used among the Jews of Jerusalem, being a compound or mixture of Hebrew and Syriack words, wherewith the pure Hebrew had been cor-

^f Acts xxi. 37. 39, 40.

rupted ever since the Babylonish captivity) thus addressed them:

“Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I now make unto you^s :” they, hearing him speak in the Hebrew tongue, kept the more silence, and he went on thus: “I am verily a man who am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia; yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers; and was zealous towards God (in that way) as ye all are this day; insomuch that I persecuted this way (the way of the Christian religion) unto the death; binding and delivering into prison both men and women that professed it.”

“Of this the high-priest can bear me witness, and also the whole Sanhedrin (or all the estate of the elders); from whom also I received commissiary letters unto their brethren at Damascus, and was going thither on purpose to bring those Christians which were there bound unto Jerusalem, that they might be punished.”

“But as I went on my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus, it came to pass that about noon there suddenly shone from heaven a great light round about me. At sight whereof I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice, saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? To which surprizing question I answering, Who art thou, Lord? he replied, I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest.”

“Of the truth of this in point of fact I have many witnesses; for they that were with me, my companions in that journey, saw the light (and fell to the ground, chap. xxvi. 14. as well as I); and heard a voice too (chap. ix. 7.) though not the voice of him that spake to me.”

“Hereupon I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus,

^s Acts xxii. 1. 5, 6. 10.

and there thou shalt be told what is appointed for thee to do."

"And when I was come into Damascus (being led thither by them that were with me, because I could not see, for the glory of that light), there came unto me one Ananias, a devout man according to the law^b (having a good report of all the Jews that dwelt there); and he, standing by me, said unto me, "Brother Saul, receive thy sight; whereupon my sight being restored me, I forthwith looked up upon him."

"Then said he, the God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that just one, and hear the voice of his mouth; for thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now, added he, why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins in calling on the name of the Lord."

"Some time after this, when I was come again to Jerusalem, it came to pass, that even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance, and saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me."

"Why, Lord? said I; they have reason to hear me; for they know that I imprisoned, and beat in every synagogue, them that believed on thee; and when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also stood by and consented unto his death; and, in token thereof, took care of the raiment of them that slew him. But the Lord said unto me, Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles."

Till that word came out, they heard him attentively; but then, lifting up their voices, they cried, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live."

As thus they cried out, and cast off their clothes (as if they prepared to stone him), and, to express

^b Acts xxii. 12. 14. 17. 19. 21, 22. 24.

their rage, threw up dust in the airⁱ; the chief captain (apprehensive probably of greater danger, if Paul were not taken out of their fight, as well as out of their reach) commanded that he should be brought into the castle. And since, by reason of the tumult, he could not learn from them the ground for their exclaiming so fiercely against him, he gave order that Paul should be examined by scourging, that by torture they might extort from him a confession of his crime.

Pursuant to which command, they began to bind Paul with thongs of leather; which while they were doing, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by to see him scourged, and to take his examination, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a Roman, and that too uncondemned?"

As soon as the centurion heard this, he hastened to the chief captain, and wished him to take heed what he did: for this man, said he, is a Romanⁱ.

The chief captain thereupon came himself, and said to Paul, Tell me, art thou a Roman? Yea, said Paul, I am. With a great sum, answered he, obtained I this freedom: but I, replied Paul, was born free.

Hereupon they who should have examined him, forthwith departing, left him; and the chief captain himself was also afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, because he had gone so far as to bind him; which was a breach of Roman freedom, and highly punishable.

On the morrow the chief captain, having a great desire to know certainly what it was that the Jews had to accuse Paul of, gave notice to the chief priests, and all their council (the whole Sanhedrin) to meet together; and then brought Paul down, and set him before them.

Paul then, earnestly beholding the council, said unto them, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God, until this day." Which, if it be extended to the whole course of his life, while he

ⁱ Acts xxii. 25. 28.

was a persecutor of Christ, he must be supposed to intend no more thereby, than that when he was a persecuting Pharisee, he was not an hypocrite, nor acted upon a principle of base and self-interest; but acted conscientiously, though ignorantly, with zeal, though blind.

But since such a conscience, so mis-informed and misled, cannot properly be called a good conscience, it may be more proper to understand the apostle to mean, that he had walked in all good conscience before God, from the time that it had pleased the Lord to call him out of his pharisaical profession, and persecuting principle, to follow him in a new life, unto that very day; thereby asserting his innocency and integrity in that part of his life, which they both hated, and persecuted him for^k.

However he meant it, Ananias the high-priest, taking it in the worst sense, was so offended at it, that without inquiring how he intended it, or asking him the reason of his so saying, he commanded some of them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth

This so high a piece of injustice in a judge, stirred up a warm zeal in Paul to reprove him sharply for it; so that he said unto him, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me according to the law? and dost thou command me to be smitten, contrary to the law?"

They that stood by, taking advantage of this, retorted upon Paul, Revilest thou God's high-priest? Paul thereupon, to excuse the sharpness of his expression, answered, "I wist not, brethren, that he was the high-priest; for I acknowledge it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people;" wherein he had reference to Exod. xxii. 28.

Then observing that the court, or council, was so constituted, that one part of them were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out among them, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, and of the hope and resurrection of the dead am called in question."

^k Acts xxiii. 2, 3, 4, 6.

He needed not to say a word more ; this was enough to split the whole court ; for as soon as he had so said, there arose a dissention between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the multitude was divided : for the Sadducees deny that there is any resurrection, neither angel nor spirit ; but the Pharisees confess both ¹.

Hereupon arose a great cry among them ; and the Scribes that were of the Pharisees part stood up, and strove, saying, “ We find no evil in this man ; but if a spirit, or an angel, hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.”

When therefore the dissention was risen so high, that the chief captain was in fear lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces by them ; he commanded the soldiers to go down and to take him by force from among them, and bring him into the castle.

This had been a rough bout with the apostle. Wherefore to comfort him after it, the Lord stood by him the night following, and said, “ Be of good cheer, Paul ; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusaleme, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.”

This was a seasonable cordial to Paul, to strengthen him against another and greater approaching danger.

For early next morning certain of the Jews, banding together, bound themselves by an execrable oath, that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. And so strong was this conspiracy, that there were more than forty of these ruffians that were engaged in it. And to open their way for the accomplishment of it, they went to the chief priests and elders (from whom they promised themselves assistance therein) and thus imparted the design to them.

We have, said they, bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul. Now therefore do ye, with the council, signify your desire to the chief captain, that he bring him down unto you to-morrow, as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him ; and we, be-

¹ Acts xxiii. 9, 10. 12. 14. 16.

fore he can come near you, will place ourselves in readiness to kill him.

Providence so disposed it, that a youth, who was son to Paul's sister, over-heard this contrivance of their lying in wait; whereupon he hasted into the castle, and told his uncle of it^m.

Paul thereupon, calling one of the centurions to him, desired him to bring that young man unto the chief captain, for that he had a secret to impart to him.

The centurion thereupon taking the young man along with him, brought him to the chief captain, and said, "Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee."

With that the chief captain, courteously taking the youth by the hand, prudently led him aside in private, and then asked him, "What is it that thou hast to tell me?" Whereupon the young man thus opened the matter to him:

The Jews, said he, have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldst bring down Paul to-morrow into the council, as though they would inquire something of him more perfectly. But do not thou yield unto them; for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, who have bound themselves with an oath that they will neither eat nor drink, till they have killed him. And now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.

When the chief captain had heard this, he charged the young man that he should not discover to any man that he had told these things to him; and so dismissed him.

Then calling unto him two centurions, he gave them a charge to make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Cæsarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, against the third hour of the night; and provide them beasts that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe to Felix the governor. And with them he sent a letter of this import:

^m Acts xxiii. 19. 20. 21. 23.

CLAUDIUS LYCIAS, unto the most excellent Governor FELIX, fendeth greeting :

‘ THIS man was taken of the Jews, and had like
 ‘ to have been killed by them, had not I come
 ‘ with an army and rescued him, having understood
 ‘ that he was a Roman. And when I would have
 ‘ known the cause wherefore they accused him, I
 ‘ brought him forth into their council ; whereby I per-
 ‘ ceived that they accused him of questions of their
 ‘ law, but laid nothing to his charge worthy of death,
 ‘ or of bonds. But when it was told me that the
 ‘ Jews laid wait for the man, I sent him forthwith to
 ‘ thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to
 ‘ say before thee what they had against him. Farewell.”

The soldiers, having received this letter, took Paul, as it was commanded them, and brought him by night to Antipatris ; and on the morrow, leaving the horse men to go with him, returned unto the castle^a.

Mean while the horse-guard that went on with Paul, when they were come to Cæsarea, delivered the chief captain’s letter to the governor, and with it presented their prisoner also before him.

The governor, when he had read the letter, asked of what province Paul was ; and when he understood that he was of Cilicia, I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers also are come. And in the mean time he gave order that he should be kept in Herod’s judgment-hall.

Five days after this, Ananias the high-priest, with the elders, set forward on their journey to Cæsarea, having with them a certain orator named Tertullus, who as their attorney-general was to arraign Paul before the Roman governor. Which, when the day was set, and Paul called forth, he began to do in this insinuating manner, that he might thereby ingratiate himself with the governor^o :

^a Acts xxiii. 31. 34.

^o Acts xxiv. 1.

“ Seeing

“ Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy things are done unto this nation by thy provident care, we accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldst hear us of thy clemency a few words^p. ”

Having thus smoothed his way by a politick applause of the governor, he proceeded to exhibit his charge against Paul, which consisted of divers particulars. .

“ For, said he, we have found this man a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout all the world, and a ring-leader of the sect of the Nazarenes; who also hath gone about to prophane the temple. ”

These were all but general charges, without particular instances in matters of fact, to which all criminal charges ought to be reduced.

Yet the orator, having only touched on these generals, insinuated a complaint against the chief captain; and thus concluded his impeachment against Paul :

“ Whom, added he, we took, and would have judged according to our law. But the chief captain Lyfias, coming upon us with great violence, took him out of our hands, and commanded his accusers to come and prosecute him before thee. By examining of whom (by the way of torture) thou thyself mayest have the full and certain knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him. ”

When Tertullus had finished his oration, the Jews that came with him, to confirm what he had said, did affirm that these things were so as he had delivered.

Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, in a free unaffected stile thus made his defence : ”

“ Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been for many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself; and do give thee to understand,

† Acts xxiv. 2. 4, 5, 6, 7. 10.

that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerufalem (and then too I went not to move fedition, but) to worfhip."

The ground of his mentioning twelve days, was to fhew how unlikely it was that he fhould commit fuch high mifdemeanors as they charged him with, in fo fhort a time as he was at liberty there. For he was taken by them in the temple, and refcued from them by the captain on the third day after he came thither, and had been in the cuftody of the Romans, there and here, ever fince.

Befides, added he, " They neither found me difputing with any body in the temple, nor ftirring up the people, in any fort, either in the fynagogues, or in the city. So that with refpect to fedition, or attempting to prophane the temple, they cannot make proof of what they accufe me of^a."

" But whereas they charge me with being of the feft, as they call it, of the Nazarenes ; this I freely confefs unto thee, that after the way which they call herefy (or a feft), fo worfhip I the God of my fathers ; believing all things that are written in the law and the prophets : and have hope towards God (which they themfelves in words alfo allow) that there fhall be a refurrection, both of the juft and of the unjuft. And becaufe of this hope, or confidence, which I have of a refurrection, do I make it my great care and concern fo to exercife or behave myfelf, that I may always have a confcience void of offence, not only towards God, but towards man alfo."

" But that thou mayeft the better guefs with what intention of mind I came at that time to Jerufalem, be pleafed to know, that after I had been many years abfent, I came then to bring alms to my nation (fo far was I from any purpofe of doing them any hurt), and to bring offerings to the temple (fo remote was it from my thoughts to prophane that place). So that, although I was indeed, on this account, in the temple ; yet I was

^a Acts xxiv. 12. 14. 17, 18.

there religiously exercis'd, and without either multitude or tumult: and it was those Jews of Asia, who found me purified there, that rais'd the tumult upon me. And therefore they ought to have been here before thee, and to have made their objections, if they had aught against me. But since they are not here, if these who are here (and who, when I stood before their council there, did openly declare they found no evil in me, Acts, xxiii. 9.) have found any in me since, let them not spare to speak; unless they will call this an evil, that when I stood there amongst them, I said, touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day *."

With these words the apostle closed his defence. And when Felix the governor had thus heard both sides, being willing to get yet a more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred giving judgment; saying, When Lyfias the chief captain (whom ye Jews seem to think yourselves somewhat injured by) shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.

Then committing Paul to the custody of a centurion, he (as bad as he was, both for a man, and for a governor) commanded the officer to let him have liberty; and that he should not forbid any of his acquaintance to administer to him, or deny them free access to visit him.

Felix (as Josephus relates, l. 20. c. 5. of his Antiquities) being captivated with the beauty of Drusilla, a Jewish woman (sister to that king Agrippa who slew James, and imprisoned Peter, Acts xii. and wife to Azizus, king of the Emiffenes, who, being a Gentile, that he might marry her, consented to be circumcised) by the means of one Simon, a Jew and a magician, seduced Drusilla from her husband, and persuaded her to marry Felix: which she consenting to, as Azizus had for her sake left his religion, she forsook both her husband and her religion for the sake of Felix, and married him; and now, it is supposed, Felix went to fetch her to him.

For some time after this publick hearing between the Jews and Paul, the text says, When Felix came with his

* Acts xxiv. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.

wife Drufilla, who was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him speak concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned concerning those great and eminent virtues, and sure effects of the Christian faith, righteousness (or justice) temperance (comprehending under it continency and chastity) and judgment to come (with vengeance on the unrighteous, unjust, intemperate, incontinent, unchaste) Felix (who, while Paul spoke of judgment to come, did probably feel judgment present) fell a trembling; and having quickly enough of that doctrine, said to Paul, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee*.

Such a season, after he had felt the terrifying stroke of Paul's preaching, he would never, perhaps, have thought convenient, had he not hoped that Paul would have given him money, or have obtained his liberty from him; the expectation of which made him send for him the oftener, and commune the more freely with him.

Thus he kept the apostle prisoner (though not close) for two years at least, if not more. After which, being for his many oppressions of the people, and great miscarriages in the government, displaced by the Roman emperor Nero, he, to pacify the Jews, and please them, that they might not add their complaint of him to the many who were gone to Rome before, left Paul a prisoner, when he might have set him at liberty.

To Felix succeeded, in the government of Judea, Portius Festus; who three days after he was come into the province, went up from Cæsarea to Jerusalem.

Whither being come, the high-priest, and the chief of the Jews, quickly informed him against Paul; and with great address and application besought him, that he would favour them so far against him, as to send for him to Jerusalem, that he might be tried there; they not intending he should come thither, but that he should be killed on the way, by those whom they would cause to lie in wait for him.

* Acts xxiv. 24, 25, 26.

But Festus then told them, Paul should be kept at Cæsarea; and that he himself would in a short time return thither; and therefore wished them to send down with him such of themselves whom they should think fit, to accuse him there, if they could convict him of any wickedness[†].

Accordingly, when he had tarried among them at Jerusalem more than ten days, Festus went down unto Cæsarea; and the next day sitting in the judgment-seat, he commanded Paul to be brought before him; and when he was come, the Jews who came down from Jerusalem, standing round about, laid many and grievous complaints against him, but such as they could not prove. Wherefore Paul easily threw them all off, by a general denial of the charge; saying, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended any thing at all."

Their want of proof, having had such full and timely notice to provide it, gave Festus fair ground (if he would have taken it) to have acquitted and released Paul. But he, like Felix, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, laid (unwittingly, perhaps) a train for Paul, by asking him, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there take thy trial upon these things before me?

Paul saw the snare, which, it may be, Festus did not; as not being yet so sensible of the malice and bloody designs of the Jews against Paul, as he himself was, and had good cause to be.

To avoid therefore this danger, Paul answered, "I stand at Cæsar's judgment-seat, where I ought to have my trial." As for the Jews, I have done no wrong to them (as thou mayst very well observe, from their not being able to prove any thing against me); and therefore I desire not to have any thing to do with them. Yet if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if none of these things, whereof they accuse me, be true, no man

[†] Acts xxv. 1. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

has any lawful power to deliver me unto them; and if thou wilt take that upon thee, I appeal unto Cæsar.”

This bold and free answer put Festus to a stand, and made him confer with his council; which having done, and finding he had a resolute Roman to deal with, he concluded to quit his hands of him, and remit the cause to Cæsar^u.

Wherefore he said no more to him, but, Hast thou appealed to Cæsar (or, seeing thou hast appealed to Cæsar)? unto Cæsar thou shalt go.

Thus at that time they parted, the Jews (as we may suppose) returning to Jerusalem, and Paul to his prison again. But long it was not, ere occasion offered to call him forth to a new hearing.

For some days after, king Agrippa (son of that Herod Agrippa who slew James, Acts xii. and who himself was not king of Judea, but of some neighbouring province, which the Roman emperor had given him) came to Cæsarea, with Bernice his sister, to salute Festus, and congratulate his accession to that government.

And when they had spent some days there, Festus, in discourse, thus opened Paul's case unto the king:

“There is a certain man, said he, left in bonds by Felix; about whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests, and the elders of the Jews, informed me, desiring to have judgment given against him.”

“But I told them, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he who is accused hath the accusers face to face, and hath liberty to answer for himself, concerning the crimes laid against him.”

“When therefore they were come hither, without any delay, on the very morrow, I sat on the judgment-seat, and commanded the man to be brought

^u Acts xxv. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.

forth; against whom, when the accusers stood up, they charged him not with any such things as I expected. For from their exclamations against him, and pressing to have sentence passed upon him, I supposed they would have laid some capital crimes to his charge; but when it came to, they had only some questions against him concerning their superstitious religion, and of one Jesus who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. And because I was not well skilled in such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of those matters. But when Paul had appealed to be reserved to the hearing of Cæsar himself, I commanded that he should be kept till I could send him unto him."

When Festus had given king Agrippa this account of Paul's case^w, it begat a curiosity in the king to hear Paul himself; which he having signified, "To-morrow, said Festus, thou shalt hear him."

Accordingly on the morrow, when Agrippa and Bernice were come with great pomp, and were entered, with the chief captains and principal men of the city, into the place of hearing, at Festus's commandment Paul was brought forth; and then Festus, to open the way to his examination, thus bespake the auditory:

"King Agrippa, and all ye who are here present with us; ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here; crying out, that he ought not to live any longer; whom yet I have not found to have committed any thing worthy of death. Yet inasmuch as he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him to him; but I have no certain thing to write unto my lord concerning him."

"For which cause I have brought him forth before you, and especially before thee, O king Agrippa,

^w Acts xxv. 22. 24. 27.

that after examination had, I may have something more particularly to write; for it seemeth to me an unreasonable thing to fend a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him*.”

When Festus had thus opened the matter, Agrippa said unto Paul, “Thou art permitted to speak for thyself.” Whereupon Paul, stretching forth his hand to bespeak attention from the assembly, and directing his speech more particularly to Agrippa, thus delivered himself:

“I think myself happy, king Agrippa†, in that I am to answer for myself this day before thee, touching those things whereof I am accused by the Jews; the rather, because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews; wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.”

“My manner of life, from my youth, which at the first I spent among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews, that knew me from the beginning; who (if they would) could testify, that after the strictest sect of the Jewish religion, I lived a Pharisee.”

“And now I stand, and am judged, for the hope of the promise made by God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come; and yet it is for the sake of this hope, king Agrippa, that I am accused by the Jews).”

Then rhetorically breaking forth into an interrogation (or rather, perhaps, an admiration, or exclamation), “Why, said he, should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? But (if in this auditory there be any who do so think, I have the less reason to wonder at it, inasmuch as) I myself also did once verily think that I ought to do many things contrary to the name (or religion) of Jesus of Nazareth. And I not only thought so, but I also did so, in Jerusalem; where,

* Acts xxv. 27. † Acts xxvi. 2. 4. 6. 8, 9.

having received authority from the chief-priests, I shut up many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them; and I not only punished them often in every synagogue, and did my utmost to have compelled them to blaspheme, but, being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities."

"But as I saw cause to change my mind, so would all of you also, if ye should meet with that which I met with."

"For as I went to Damascus² with authority and commission from the chief priests (to stir up the like persecution there), at mid-day, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them that travelled with me."

"And when we were all (through amazement and fear) fallen to the earth, I heard a voice, speaking in the Hebrew tongue, and saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I thereupon asking, who art thou, Lord? He answered, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest."

"But arise, added he, and stand up upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister, and a witness, both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people (of the Jews) and from the Gentiles, unto whom I now send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and so from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith which is in me."

"Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision; but shewed first unto them of (and about) Damascus, and Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and

² Acts xxvi. 12. 19.

then to the Gentiles, that (if they would be saved from the wrath to come) they should repent and turn to God, and manifest their repentance, by leading their lives agreeable thereunto."

"These are the causes for which the Jews^a, when they caught me in the temple, went about to kill me; notwithstanding which, having obtained help of God, I continue in the same testimony unto this day, bearing witness thereof both to small and great; yet declaring none other things than those which the prophets, and before them Moses, did say should come; namely, that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first (if not in order of time, yet in respect of dignity and intrinsic power) that should rise from the dead, and should shew light both unto the people (of the Jews) and to the Gentiles."

As thus Paul spake for himself, and was led into a discourse of greater depth, than Festus, the Roman governor, and an heathen, could fathom; Festus said to him with a loud voice, "Thou art beside thyself, Paul; much learning doth make thee mad."

But Paul, not moved with the governor's rough reflection, meekly answered, "I am not mad, most potent Festus (so the word *κεφάλισσος* properly signifies, and is rendered in Latin by *Optime* and *Præstantissime*; which Bishop Jewel, in the Defence of his Apology, page 26. renders, Most dear Festus; and page 80. O good Festus); but I speak forth the words of truth and soberness."

"For the king, added he, before whom also I speak freely, hath good knowledge of these things. And I am persuaded that none of these things (concerning the death and resurrection of Christ) are hidden from him (but that he must needs have heard of them); for this thing was not done in a corner."

Then turning his speech from Festus to Agrippa, "King Agrippa, said he, believest thou the prophets?" And, orator-like, not staying for the king's

^a Acts xxvi. 21. 24, 25, 26, 27.

answer, answered himself, by saying, "I know that thou believest."

"Why truly, said Agrippa, Thou almost persuadest me to be a Christian. I would to God, replied Paul, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day^b, were both almost, and altogether, such (a Christian) as I am; though not in the condition of a prisoner, as I am."

Thus ended the discourse. For when Paul had thus spoken, the king rose up, with the governor, and Bernice, and the rest that sat with them. And when they were gone aside into another room, they talked together between themselves concerning Paul, and concluded that he had done nothing worthy of death, or yet of bonds; and at length Agrippa told Festus, that Paul might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

For by the Roman laws, when any prisoner had appealed to be heard before the emperor himself, he could no more be released, than he could be condemned, by any but the emperor. So that Paul's appealing to Cæsar proved in appearance an injury to him; but God, who had foretold him that he must bear witness to him at Rome, chap. xxiii. 11. had no doubt directed the means, as well as he had appointed the end.

Now was Festus better furnished to give Nero an account of Paul's case and condition than he was before; and it may be thought he wrote favourably of him; because he had a favourable reception, and good usage (for a prisoner) when he came to Rome.

And now the time being come, which was appointed for his going thither^c; he (with divers others who were prisoners on other accounts) was delivered unto one named Julius, a centurion of the imperial band; a man of a courteous disposition, and well affected to Paul.

^b Acts xxvi. 29. 32. ^c Acts xxvii. 1.

When therefore all things were ready for the voyage^d, the centurion put his prisoners on board a ship that belonged to Adramytium (a port town of Myfia) which was bound to the coasts of Asia, on a trading voyage. And when all the passengers were on board (amongst whom were Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, with Paul's son Timothy, and the beloved physician Luke; who put themselves upon this long and hazardous voyage to accompany the apostle, and minister unto him what assistance and comfort they could, in this his suffering condition) they set sail, and the next day touched at Sidon.

Here Julius, the centurion, treated Paul with great courtesy, giving him liberty to go a-shore to visit his friends there, and refresh himself among them.

And when they launched again from thence, they failed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary; and having failed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, they came to Myra, a city of Lyfia.

Here the centurion finding a ship of Alexandria, bound directly for Italy, he discharged the other ship, and put his prisoners and soldiers aboard on this.

This vessel proving but a slow failer, they made but little way in many days. And when they were scarce come over-against Gnidus, the wind being against them, they failed under Crete, over-against Salmone; and hardly passing it, came unto a place which was then called the Fair-havens, nigh unto which was the city of Lafea.

Now when by these many hinderances they had spent much time, so that the summer season was over, the autumnal equinox (on which the great Jewish fast of expiation began) being past; after which, because of approaching winter, the antients, not much used to navigation, accounted failing dangerous; Paul, foreseeing what afterwards befell them,

^d Acts xxvii. 2, 3, 6, 8, 9.

gave them this premonition, or fore-warning of its saying unto them, “Sirs (the Greek word is ^{ἄνδρες,} *virī*, men) I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt, and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.”

This was surely a good caution to them to have put in there, and not venture on a winter voyage*. But the centurion, though he had a good esteem of Paul, yet not reckoning him so skilful in maritime affairs, gave more credit to the master, and the owner of the ship (speaking in a matter within their own element) than to Paul.

And besides, the haven where they then lay not being a commodious harbour to winter in, the major part (which often carries it, though sometimes, as now, for the worse) advised also to depart thence, and try if by any means they might reach Phenice (which is an haven of Crete, and lieth towards both the south-west and north-west), and there to winter.

Accordingly, the south-wind blowing softly, they loosed thence, and supposing they had gained their point, they failed close by Crete.

But not long after, this soft south-wind was encountered by a tempestuous wind, called (from its raising boisterous storms) *euroclydon* (or rather *euro-aquilon*), being a strong north-east wind.

And when the ship being caught (between these contrary winds) could not bear up against this wind, they were fain to let her drive; and running under a certain island called *Clauda*, they had much work to come by the boat; which when at length they had taken up, they used what helps they could, by under-girding the ship; and fearing lest they should fall into the quick-sands, they struck sail, and so were driven.

And being exceedingly tossed by the tempest, the next day they lightened the ship, by throwing over-

* Acts xxvii. 11, 12, 13, 14. 17.

board whatever wares or trading goods were in it; and on the third day they cast out the tackling of the ship also. And when, after all this, the tempest still lay strong upon them, and so dismal a time it was, that neither sun nor stars in many days appeared; all hope of being saved was taken from them.

But then (when all were hopeless), after long abstinence, Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said^f, “Sirs (or men) ye should have taken my counsel, and not have loosed from Crete, and then ye might have escaped this harm and loss. But notwithstanding that, I now exhort you to be of good cheer; for I can assure you that there shall be no loss of the life of any man amongst you, but of the ship.

“For the angel of God (whose I am, and whom I serve) stood by me this night, and said unto me, Fear not, Paul, for thou must be brought before Cæsar; and lo, God hath given thee the lives of all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, Sirs, be of good cheer; for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me by his angel; howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.”

Now when the fourteenth night (since this storm began) was come, as they were driven up and down in the Adriatick sea, about midnight, the sailors thought they drew near to some country; whereupon sounding, they found it twenty fathoms; and when they had gone a little farther, sounding again, they found it fifteen fathoms. Then fearing they should fall upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for day, that they might discover if any land were near.

Now were the sailors about to flee out of the ship; and in order thereunto, had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as if they would have cast anchors out of the fore-ship also.

^f Acts xxvii. 21. 23. 27. 30.

But Paul perceiving their intention, said to the centurion, and the soldiers, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved; whereupon the soldiers, to prevent the sailors getting away, cut off the ropes of the boats, and let her fall off.

Then, while day was coming on, Paul befought them all to take meat^s; putting them in mind, that that was the fourteenth day that they had been (in a manner) fasting. "Wherefore, said he, I pray you, take some food for your health sake, for not a man of you shall perish by this storm." Then himself, leading the way, took bread, and giving thanks to God in presence of them all, he brake it, and began to eat; by whose example, as well as words, being cheered up and encouraged, they also took some meat; and when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship yet more, by casting out the wheat that was left into the sea.

By this time, day being come on, they saw land, though they knew not what land it was; but discovering a certain creek which had a shore, they were minded, if possibly they could, to thrust the ship in there.

When therefore they had weighed the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea; and having loosed the rudder-bands (with which they had undergirt the ship) they hoisted the main sail unto the wind, and made to shore; but unhappily falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the fore-part sticking fast, and remaining immoveable, the hinder-part was broken with the violence of the waves.

Now may we well suppose them under a fresh consternation; for notwithstanding the confident and repeated assurance Paul had given them, that not a man of them should perish; nothing now seemed so likely as that every man of them should perish.

^s Acts xxvii. 33. 39, 40, 41.

No hopes could any have of saving his life, but by swimming for his life; and lest any of the prisoners, by swimming, should save his life, and escape, the soldiers counsel was to kill the prisoners^h.

But the centurion, out of a grateful desire to save Paul (for whose sake he himself and the rest had been saved), restrained his soldiers from their cruel purpose; and gave orders that all they (whether soldiers, sailors, or prisoners) that could swim, should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land if they could, that they might be afterwards helpful to others; and that the rest, who could not swim, should make to the shore as well as they could; some on planks, and others on broken pieces of the ship. By which means (providence favouring the attempt) the whole ship's company, being no fewer in number than two hundred threescore and sixteen persons, all escaped safe to land. And then they came to understand that the island was called Melitaⁱ, the same that is now called Malta.

That propitious Providence which brought them thither, gave them favour and a courteous reception with the inhabitants of that island; who, though they were a barbarous people, yet moved with compassion and common humanity towards this poor ship-wrecked company, shewed them no little kindness; for they kindled a fire for them (to dry, warm and cherish them, after they had been both wetted and toiled by their swimming in the sea); and received them every one (to their houses), because it was a wet and cold season.

The apostle Paul, being naturally an active man, and forward by his example to encourage others, had gathered together a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire.

But having, it seems, picked up a viper among them (which is a small, but most venomous fer-

^h Acts xxvii. 42. 37.

ⁱ Acts xxviii. 1, 2, 3.

pent); when the viper felt the heat, it came out of the wood, and fastened on Paul's hand.

This presently begat in those Barbarians a very ill opinion concerning Paul; for when they saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they forthwith concluded, and said among themselves, "No doubt this man is a murdherer^k, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live;" for they (well knowing the danger of a viper's bite) looked every moment that Paul would have swollen, or suddenly fallen down dead.

But after they had looked a great while, and saw that when he had shaken off the beast into the fire, no harm came to him, they changed their minds concerning him, and said he was a God. He in the mean while experienced the truth of those words, which Christ, at parting, said to his disciples concerning true believers, "They shall take up serpents," &c. Mark xvi. 18.

In that part of the island lay the possessions of Publius, the chief man of the island; which speaks him to be both a Roman, and the governor of the island for the Romans. And he being then upon the place, received Paul and his companions courteously, and lodged them in his house with great courtesy for three days.

By this means Paul came to understand that the father of Publius lay then sick there of both a fever and the bloody flux. He therefore, that he might improve all opportunities of doing good, and thereby bringing honour to God, went into the room where Publius's father lay; and having prayed for him, and laid hands on him, healed him.

This cure was quickly noised abroad; whereupon others in the island, who had diseases, came, and were healed also. And these, in a grateful acknowledgment of the benefits received, did not only honour the apostle and his friends with many ho-

^k Acts xxviii. 4, 6, 7, 8, 9,

nours, but also, when they left the island, did thoroughly furnish them with all such things as were necessary for their voyage to Rome¹.

Thus they spent good part of the winter amongst a barbarous, but to them made a courteous people; and after three months departed thence, in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in that isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux, the feigned sons of Jupiter by Leda, supposed by the antient heathen poets to have the care of sailors and navigation, and when seen together, to portend good luck; which yet they could not be, because they were two constellations in the heavens, so posited, that when one arose, the other of them set.

In this ship they sailed to Syracuse (in Sicily); where putting in, they landed, and tarried there three days. Then going on board again, they fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium (a town in Italy); and after one day, the south-wind blowing, brought them the next day to Puteoli.

Here they found some Christian brethren, at whose request they tarried with them seven days (such favour had Paul from his keeper, captain Julius); and after that they set forward towards Rome.

But when the brethren at Rome heard of their coming, they came forth to meet them, as far as Appii-Forum (which is supposed to be a country town or village, some miles distance; some reckon it a day's journey from Rome, and taking name from Appius, a Roman consul, who sat up a market there). Others, who could not reach so far, met them at the Three Taverns, a place of entertainment for travellers.

When these Christian brethren were come to Paul, he was greatly comforted at the sight of them; and giving thanks to God, took courage, and went on to Rome. Whither being come, Julius delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul

¹ Acts xxviii. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

was permitted to dwell by himself, having only a soldier with him for his keeper.

After Paul had been three days in Rome, he called the chief of the Jews together. And when they were assembled, he thus delivered himself unto them^m: “Men and brethren, although I have committed nothing against the people or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans; who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me; but when the Jews spake against it, I was necessitated to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I intended to accuse my nation of any thing.”

“For this cause therefore I have desired you to come together, that I might see you, and speak with you, and let you know, that it is for the hope of Israel (for bearing testimony that the true Messiah, whom all true Israelites have long hoped and looked for, is indeed come, and that Jesus Christ is he) that I am bound with this chain.”

The Jews hearing this, made him answer, We have neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, nor have any of the brethren that came from thence shewed or spake any harm of thee. But we shall be willing to hear from thyself what thy judgment is; for as for this sect (whereof thou seemest to be) we know that it is every-where spoken against.

Upon this occasion a day being appointed, there came many to him at his lodging. To whom he opened first the nature of the kingdom of the Messiah (called the kingdom of God, because the Messiah was God as well as man), shewing that it was to be a spiritual, not an earthly kingdom. And then proved that Jesus Christ (whom the Jews had crucified) was indeed the promised Messiah. Both which doctrines he evinced and confirmed by testimonies

^m Acts xxviii, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23.

taken out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets; discoursing to them on this subject from morning till evening.

But there was great diversity in his hearers; for some of them believed the things which he had delivered, and some believed not. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after Paul had spoken this one close word (or sentence) to wit:

“ Well spake the Holy Ghost ⁿ, by Esaias the prophet, unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive; for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, added he, that the gospel of Jesus Christ (which sets forth the salvation of God, and the way of it) is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.”

When he had thus spoken, the Jews departed, and had much reasoning among themselves.

But Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, where he received all that came in unto him; preaching unto them the kingdom of God, and opening the doctrines of the Christian religion, with all confidence, and (though in the imperial city, under the nose, as it were, of an heathen emperor, and him too, by that time, one of the worst) without any disturbance, or molestation; no man so much as forbidding him.

We are now come to the end of Luke's itinerary, or journal, of the acts and travels of the apostles. Nor have we any farther account of indubitable credit (for other histories, beside the sacred, whether called prophane or ecclesiastical, I account not

ⁿ Acts xxviii. 25. 28. 30.

altogether so) of either any of the other apostles, or of Paul himself; save what may be gathered from some hints and occasional passages, which are found in those epistles of his which were written during his imprisonment at Rome. Which as it was (probably) of some pretty long continuance (for Luke mentions two years that he lived there, in an house of his own hiring, Acts xxviii. 30), so it afforded opportunity, and gave occasion to many Christian brethren, from divers remote parts and countries, to visit the apostle under his confinement.

Among these, Onesiphorus, a citizen of Ephesus, was one; of whom, and of the many kindnesses he had received from him, the apostle makes a grateful mention, in his second to Timothy, chap. i. ver. 16. to the end; where, wishing all happiness to him and his, he says, "The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain. But when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. And in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus also, thou knowest very well. The Lord grant unto him, that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day."

Epaphroditus also of Philippi, the chief city of Macedonia, came now to Rome to visit and salute Paul, not in his own name only, but as sent by the whole church at Philippi.

For the saints there, in a grateful sense of the many and great benefits they had received by the apostle's labours and ministry among them (by which they had been at first gathered to the Christian faith, and afterwards often refreshed, comforted, strengthened, and built up therein) did now send (as they had formerly done, more than once, when he was at Thessalonica, Phil. iv. 16). a present to him (of monies probably, and such other things as might be necessary for him in his present condition), and made Epaphroditus their messenger to carry it.

But he, soon after he came there, falling ill, had a very fore fit of sickness, by which he was brought so low, that he was nigh unto death; having (as it seems) in his affectionate kindness to the apostle, as well as in his zeal for the work of the Lord, out-done his strength. But the Lord had mercy on him, and in due time raised him up again, and restored him to health; thereby enabling him both to perform the service he came thither upon, and to return at length safe back to Philippi again, with an epistle from Paul and Timothy to the saints there. In which epistle the apostle's affectionate kindness to them seems to be somewhat peculiar, as theirs to him had always been; they taking care of him in temporals, and he of them in spirituals; to wit, divine doctrine and heavenly counsel, exhortations and tender admonitions; to which I refer my reader.

But in the mean time, while Epaphroditus was recovering, the apostle Paul keeping (as his manner was, Acts xxviii. 30). open house for all comers, whom either devotion or curiosity drew to hear the gospel preached, increased the number of the disciples there; now one, now another, falling in and being caught.

Among those who were thus taken in the net of the kingdom*, a runnagate, whose name was Onesimus, was one. He being a servant to Philemon, an eminent Christian, and pastor of the church at Colosse, had (it seems) run away from his master, and that not empty-handed, having robbed his master before he went; and having rambled about from country to country, shifting his quarters, that he might not be retaken by his master, came at length to Rome; and there falling in among others at a meeting where the apostle Paul preached, was struck so home, that of a common auditor he became an hearty convert to the Christian faith. Of which he gave such convincing evidence, as drew

* Philem.

forth the apostle's affectionate regard to him; and he, in the sense of the benefit he had received by the apostle's ministry, was desirous to continue with the apostle, that he might not only enjoy the pleasure and advantage of his company, and instructive conversation, but might also be helpful and serviceable to him, in a personal attendance on him, under his present confinement.

Thus it is supposed they went on together for some time, until the apostle came to understand the circumstances of his condition; that he was servant to an intimate friend, and early disciple of his, Philemon; and had broke loose unfairly and dishonestly from him.

Which when the apostle had come to the knowledge of, having no satisfaction in keeping another man's servant from him, without his knowledge and leave, he made Onesimus sensible of his duty herein, and that his new master (Christ) required of him that he should return to his old master (Philemon); and, submitting himself to him, should both acknowledge his fault, and, by future diligence in his service, should endeavour to make him the best amends he could for his past negligence, and the injury he had done him.

He needed not to use many arguments to persuade this, to a mind so well informed and disposed as Onesimus's now was; who being thoroughly sensible of the evil he had done in leaving, and so leaving, his master, and of what the truth (which he had received in the love of it) required of him in that case, resolved to return speedily to his master, and at all adventures to submit himself to his mercy.

But the apostle, having brought Onesimus to this good resolution, would not let him (whom, for the sake of that good work which the Lord had wrought in him, he most tenderly loved) go back to his justly offended master without a commendatory and intercessory

intercessory letter from himself, to propitiate his master to him.

Wherefore associating his beloved Timothy with himself^p (as one who was also both well known to, and well beloved by, Philemon), he writes a very pathetick epistle to him; wherein, after salutation to himself, and to Apphia (supposed to be his wife) and to Archippus (whom he calls his fellow-foldier) and to the faithful in Philemon's family (whom he calls the church in his house), he in a most sweet and moving stile, full of suasive and persuasive oratory, besought him, for his sake, both to pardon, and receive again, not only into his service, but into his favour also, his heretofore unworthy servant, Onesimus; who, by submitting his neck to the yoke of Christ, was now worthy to be received by him, not merely in the condition of a servant as before, but above a servant, even that of a beloved brother in the spiritual relation, which stands in the one faith, the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

He lets him know how gladly he would have kept Onesimus with him (if it could have stood with truth and justice to have done so without his consent), that in his stead he might have been helpful to him, now that he was a prisoner for the gospel's sake; and intimates that it would be acceptable to him, if he would let him come to him again on that account.

He also engages himself to him, and gives it, as it were, under his hand, that (if he should insist on it) he would make good to him whatsoever Onesimus owed him, or had wronged him in.

And then, in hopes he should be released, bespeaks a lodging for himself at his house, and salutes him in the name of those brethren that were then with him; as Epaphras (who at that time was his fellow-prisoner), Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, whom he calls his fellow-labourers.

^p Philem. ver. 1, 2, 10, 11, 16, 13, 18, 22, 23, 24.

This epistle to Philemon he sent by Onesimus; by whom also, jointly with Tychicus, he sent an epistle to the Colossian church also (the faints and faithful brethren at Coloss in general). In which are handled, in a sublime stile, the deep mysteries and divine doctrines of the Christian faith concerning Christ, and the way of salvation by him. And needful cautions are therein given against mingling either the dogmatical tenets of the Gentile philosophy, or the ceremonial rites of the Jewish œconomy, with the Christian religion.

After which follow exhortations to particular duties, in the mutual relations of wives and husbands, children and parents, servants and masters^q; and salutations from divers brethren, who were then with him at Rome; with direction that when this epistle had been read among them, they should take care that it should be read also in the church (or assembly) of the Laodiceans^r, and that they also should read the epistle from Laodicea; which implies the apostle had written an epistle to that church also. In the close of this, he wishes the Colossians to remember his bonds.

During this time of his confinement at Rome, he wrote also his epistle to the Ephesians. Which, inasmuch as he sent it by Tychicus, by whom he sent that to the Colossians, was probably written about the same time with that. And his writing this epistle in his own name only, gives ground to suppose that Timothy (who, when with him, had usually his name also prefixed to his epistles) had before this taken his leave of him, and was returned into Asia.

The epistle itself is full of high and admirable matter, both doctrinal and hortatory. The doctrinal parts treat of the mysterious points of election, predestination, and the work of redemption by Christ, which are misunderstood by too many. The hor-

^q Col. iii. 18. ^r Col. iv. 10. 16. 18.

hortatory parts set forth the general duties of all Christians^s; and the reciprocal duties of wives and husbands, children and parents, servants and masters, much like, but more largely, as in the epistle to the Colossians. In both which it may be observed, that the apostle begins with those first whose place it is to be in subjection; as wives, and then husbands; children, and then parents; servants, and then masters.

As it is probable that these three foregoing epistles (that to Philemon, that to the Colossians, and that to the Ephesians) were written in the first year of Paul's imprisonment at Rome; so it is reasonable to think, that in the same year (but after that Timothy, who, it seems, had been a prisoner with him, but was discharged, Heb. xiii. 23. had left him, and was gone back to Asia) he had his first hearing and trial before Nero. At which (as in his second to Timothy, iv. 16. he complains) no man stood with him, but all forsook him; which he prays God may not be laid to their charge. Yet the Lord stood with him, and strengthened him; so that he was, at that time, delivered out of the mouth of the lion; so he calls the Roman emperor, Nero, ver. 17.

But, as the interest he had in Nero's court (where the gospel had made some entrance, and had begun to plant the Christian faith even in the emperor's own household, Phil. iv. 22). had put the apostle in some hopes of an enlargement (of which he dropped some intimation in divers of his epistles, as in Phil. i. 27. and Philem. v. 22), so, after this first appearance of his before Cæsar, coming off so well, his hope of liberty seems to have been increased. For in the epistle to the Hebrews (which is now generally taken to be his, and which seems most likely to be written after this) having acquainted them that his brother Timothy was set at liberty,

^s Ephes. iv. 5. 22. Chap. vi. 1. to 10.

Heb. xiii. 23. he adds, "with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you." And in ver. 18, 19. beseeches them to pray for him, that he might be restored to them the sooner.

But after his second appearance and hearing before Nero, finding the tide turned, he alters his stile; and in his second epistle to Timothy (which is supposed to be the last he wrote) he acquainted him that he was then ready to be offered^t, and that the time of his departure was at hand; and therefore he desired him to use his utmost diligence to come quickly to him; and by all means to come, if possibly he could, before winter.

Whether they ever came together again, or how long after this the apostle lived, or indeed when, where, or how he died, the holy text is wholly silent; nor is there, in ecclesiastical history, any certainty thereof, or such probable account as may with safety be relied on.

The learned are divided about it; some suppose that after this he was set at liberty, and travelled up and down in the work of the gospel, through Italy, and from thence into Spain, and the western parts of the world; nor want there some, who from thence are willing to fancy that he came into Britain also.

Others conjecture that he went into Greece and Asia, to confirm the then staggering churches, which he had before planted in those eastern countries; of whose declining state we have a too sad account, in the second and third chapters of John's Revelation. And these would have it, that after five or six years absence, he returned to Rome again; and on the twenty-ninth of the month called June, in the thirteenth year of Nero, suffered martyrdom there, his head being stricken off with a sword.

But besides the warning he himself gave to Timothy of his approaching death, 2 Tim. iv. 6. un-

^t 2 Tim. iv. 6. 9. 21.

accountable it is that a matter of so great account as his release from his so long and dangerous imprisonment, and travelling afterwards so many years in the service of Christ (especially if in the western world, and that part of it which by the ancients was then called another world, Britain) should be wholly passed over in silence, without the least memorial of it, by that industrious historian Luke; who, from the time of his first acquaintance with him, was almost an inseparable companion to him; travelling with him to Rome, continuing with him at Rome, and present with him there when he wrote the last of his epistles, the second to Timothy, chap. iv. 11. and who had taken upon him, as his peculiar province, to write the history of the life, acts, and travels of (more especially) this great apostle.

Of the rest of the apostles (after the dispersion at Jerusalem, upon the death of Stephen) we have little account in the holy text) with respect to their travels, services, or success therein. Some passages there are concerning Peter and John, which are touched before in the course of this history.

They of them who (beside Paul) wrote any epistles, either general or particular, now extant and received, were James, Peter Jude, and John.

Concerning James, great controversies have been amongst the learned, how many there were of that name, and which of them this was; whose time and pains spent thereon, might, perhaps, have been better employed upon some other profitable enquiry.

The epistle which he wrote is catholick, or general; as not being directed to any particular church, or person; but more generally to the twelve tribes scattered abroad; that is, to those Jews, who, upon the storm that arose at Stephen's death, were dispersed abroad both far and near, and had received the Christian faith.

And as the epistle itself is general, so the general contents of it are, to comfort and encourage the believers to bear the cross of Christ, and patiently

tiently to undergo the various afflictions, temptations, persecutions and trials which had befallen, or should befall them, for their faithful adherence to the Christian religion. To examine and try their faith by the fruits it brought forth; and not be satisfied with such a dead faith as was not operative, and productive of good works. To avoid all partiality, ambition and contention; to bridle the tongue, subdue and keep under the lustful desires, and unlawful affections; to have an eye to God's providence in all their undertakings; to live in love, without grudging at one another; and in no-wise to swear at all. To acknowledge one to another the offences they commit one against another. To pray one for another, and endeavour to recover him that hath erred, and is gone out of the right way, and bring him into the right way again.

The first epistle of Peter is superscribed or directed to the strangers scattered through Pontus, &c. which some would extend to the posterity of those Jews, who had in old times been transplanted by Tiglath Pileser, 2 Kings xv. 29. and by Shalmaneser, chap. xvii. 3. 6. and afterwards by Nebuchadnezzar, chap. xxiv. 14. and had not returned to Jerusalem, but had received the Christian faith in those countries. But with better reason, I think, it should be restrained to those Jewish Christians, who had been lately dispersed by the storm of persecution, which was raised against the Christians upon the death of Stephen.

The time when this epistle was wrote is very uncertain, but supposed to be in his latter time, and after the apostle Paul had written all his, except his second to Timothy.

It is generally held to have been written at Babylon, because he gives salutation in it from the church there (chap. v. 13.), which is reckoned to have been made up of the posterity of those Jews (who staid there after the expiration of the seventy years captivity) whom this apostle went to visit, having be-

fore, as is thought, planted a Christian church there. But what support or credit that will give to the opinion of Peter's being bishop of Rome, and possessing the pontifical chair there for five-and-twenty years together, even to the day of his death, is what the patrons of that opinion may do well to weigh and consider.

In the epistle itself is great variety of very useful matter, as well doctrinal as hortatory; containing œconomical rules for the respective relations of subjects to rulers, servants to masters, wives to husbands, and husbands to wives. With necessary cautions to the elders, to feed the flock of God; taking the oversight thereof, not for the sake of filthy lucre (that is, not to make a trade of it, and so raise advantages to themselves by it), but of a free and ready mind; and that they usurp not a dominion, or lordship, over the heritage of God, but be good examples to the flock.

The second epistle of Peter was written, in all likelihood, not long after the first (and not long before his death, chap. i. 14). and sent to the same people (the strangers, or scattered Jews, who had received the faith of Christ); as may be gathered from chap. iii. 1.

In this epistle he forewarns them of false teachers that should be among them, who would privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them; and through covetousness should, with feigned words, make merchandize of them. These he describes at large, and sharply declaims against throughout his second chapter, as he does against scoffers in his third.

The epistle of Jude is supposed to have been written before any of John's (though placed after them), and before the second of Paul to Timothy. It is a general epistle, directed to them that are called, and sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ. And the general scope of it is, to detect certain ungodly men, who were crept

in unawares amongst the believers, and by turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, did deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

These he describes by their going in the way of Cain (envy and murder); running greedily after the error of Balaam for reward; feeding themselves without fear, &c. And inveighs most sharply against them, as Peter had done before in his second epistle, chap. ii.

Of the three epistles which bear the name of John, the first only is general; and by all, I think, acknowledged to have been written by the beloved disciple and evangelist John.

The second and third are particular; and some have doubted whether they were written by the same John the evangelist who wrote the first, or by some other of the same name, who in either of them writes himself only the Elder.

The second is directed to the Elect Lady; but who she was, of what place, or country, doth not appear.

But the editors of the Bible, anno 1706, in the summary contents of this epistle, say, "He exhorteth a certain honourable matron, with her children, to persevere in christian love and belief, lest they lose the reward of their former profession."

The word here rendered *Lady*, is, in the Greek, *Κυρία*. And Dr. Hammond on the place says, ' *Κυρία* may fitly be said to signify no more than *τη δέσπονα*, an appellation fit to be used, when the name is either unknown or concealed. For in that case, and not only as a title of honour and dignity, it is ordinary to say *Κύριε* (which probably is grown to be in English *Cyr*, or *Syr*). So John xx. 15. the woman, taking Christ for the gardener, and addressing herself to him as one whose name was not known to her, begins with *Κύριε*, *Syr*. But besides this, it is observable, that both *Κυρία* among the Athenians, and *Curia* among the Romans, signifies the very same that *Ἐκκλησία* and *Ecclesia* doth; *i. e.* the assembly, both

‘ both as that signifies the persons congregated for
 ‘ civil or sacred uses, and the place where they thus
 ‘ met; and the words will be best rendered the
 ‘ elect church, or congregation; some which is not
 ‘ thought fit here to be mentioned by name.’ Thus
 he.

The third epistle is directed to one Gaius, a well-beloved and intimate friend of the author’s. Of his name there are divers mentioned in the Holy Scriptures; some reckon three. First, Gaius of Macedonia, one of Paul’s companions in some of his travels, Acts xix. 29. Second, Gaius of Derbe (if he be not the same with the former, which Grotius thinks he was) Acts xx. 1. Third, this Gaius of Corinth, at whose house Paul used to lodge when he was there; for which reason, in his epistle to the Romans (chap. xvi. 23.) he calls him his host, and (not only his, but the host) of the whole church there; which speaks him a man of great hospitality. This is supposed to be that Gaius, whom the apostle acknowledges he did baptize (to wit, into water); when he thanks God, that besides Crispus and him, he (so) baptized no more of them, 1 Cor. i. 14. And to this Gaius this third epistle from John is concluded to have been written.

There remains only the book called the Apocalypse, or Revelation of John the Divine; which closes the volume of the New Testament.

This (not here to trouble the reader with the divers opinions that have troubled the world concerning the penman of it) is now generally acknowledged to have been written by that most eminent Divine, the beloved disciple, apostle and evangelist John, about sixty-four years (as some compute) after the ascension of our Lord; while he was himself an exile for the testimony of Jesus, in the isle of Patmos, whither he had been banished by the Roman emperor Domitian.

A book it is, wherein (though it be called a revelation) divine mysteries are wrapped up so close,
 and

and in so thick a veil of ænigmatical terms, that some of the most learned have ingenuously acknowledged that they understood them not.

‘*Hujus libri vix millesimam partem intelligo,*’ *i. e.* ‘I scarce understand the thousandth part of this book,’ said the learned and honest Castalio.

‘*Eum esse me agnosco, cui hæc mysteria valde adhuc obscura videantur.*’ *i. e.* ‘I own that these mysteries are as yet very dark to me;’ says Beza, in his preface to the Apocalypse.

Revealed indeed they were to John; but it was by an angel of Jesus Christ, sent on purpose to open unto him the visions therein contained.

Nor will they otherwise be revealed to, or rightly understood by, any, but as they shall be opened by that divine messenger, the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, whom our blessed Saviour told his disciples the Father would send in his name; and who should both testify of him, take of his, and shew unto them; and guide them into all truth, and shew them things to come, John xiv. 26. and xv. 26. and xvi. 13.

To the Divine guidance and protection of which ever-blessed Spirit, one with the Father and the Son, most heartily recommending my reader, with myself, I here close up this SACRED HISTORY.

T H E E N D.

A
T A B L E
OF THE
PRINCIPAL MATTERS
CONTAINED IN THE
FOREGOING HISTORY
OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT,
DIGESTED ALPHABETICALLY.

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