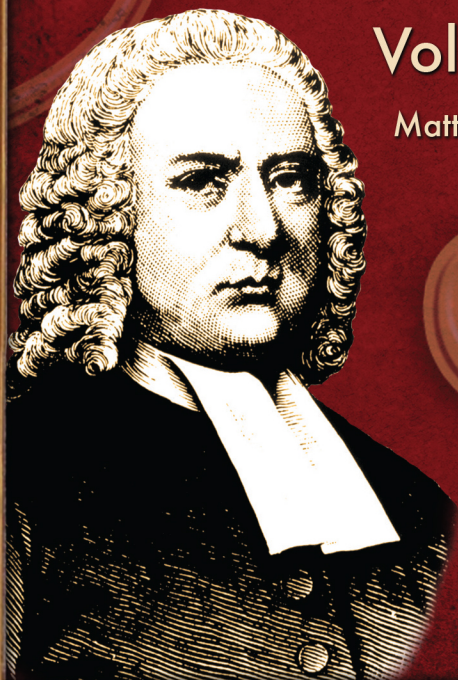


# EXPOSITION OF THE OLD & NEW TESTAMENTS

John Gill, D.D.

Volume 7 of 9

Matthew through John 8





**EXPOSITION OF  
THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS**

**By John Gill, D.D.**

**Complete & Unabridged**

**VOL. 7 of 9**





*Chamberlin print*

*Freeman Sculp!*

## **JOHN GILL, D. D.**

*-London- Published by Mathews & Leigh, 1809*





EXPOSITION

OF THE

New Testament

BY

John Gill D. D.

IN THREE VOLUMES

Vol. 1.

LONDON

Printed for Mathews & Leigh, Strand.

1809.

Hewitt & Co. Printers St. Dunstons



*Reprinted in 2016  
by*

**THE BAPTIST STANDARD BEARER, INC.**

No. 1 Iron Oaks Drive  
Paris, Arkansas 72855  
(479) 963-3831



**THE WALDENSIAN EMBLEM**

*lux lucet in tenebris*

“The Light Shineth in the Darkness”

ISBN # 978-1-57978-482-9



AN  
EXPOSITION  
OF  
**The New Testament :**

IN WHICH

THE SENSE OF THE SACRED TEXT IS GIVEN ;

*DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL TRUTHS ARE SET IN A PLAIN AND EASY LIGHT ;*

DIFFICULT PASSAGES EXPLAINED ; SEEMING CONTRADICTIONS RECONCILED ;

AND WHATEVER IS MATERIAL IN

*The various Readings and several Oriental Versions is observed.*

---

THE WHOLE ILLUSTRATED WITH NOTES, TAKEN FROM  
*THE MOST ANCIENT JEWISH WRITINGS.*

---

BY JOHN GILL, D. D.

---

IN THREE VOLUMES.

---

VOL. I.

---

London :

PRINTED FOR MATHEWS AND LEIGH, 18, STRAND,

BY W. CLOWES, NORTHUMBERLAND-COURT.

---

1809.





## THE PREFACE.

---

THE sacred books, of which the following work is an exposition, are of equal authority with the oracles of God, the writings of the Old Testament; being, as they, divinely inspired; and are profitable to the same ends and purposes, of doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness: they contain things of the greatest moment and importance to the spiritual and eternal welfare of men, to the honour and interest of the great Redeemer, and to the glory of God; and therefore should be most carefully perused, most diligently searched into, and, as much as in us lies, should be studiously, distinctly, and rightly explained, and which is attempted in this performance.

The *four evangelists* have recorded every thing material, relating to the great author and institutor of the Christian religion, the sum and substance of the Gospel, our Lord Jesus Christ: they give us an account of his harbinger and forerunner, John the Baptist; of his parents, his wonderful conception and birth, with several amazing circumstances belonging thereunto; they describe his qualifications for his important office, his mien and deportment, his dress and diet, his conduct and conversation, his preaching and baptism, his success and his followers, his imprisonment and death; and point at several prophecies as fulfilled in him: but above all, they are chiefly concerned with Christ himself; they declare him to be the son of God, and the son of man; they shew his descent as man, to be from the kings of Judah, and from the ancient patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; yea, they trace it to the first man Adam; they tell us who his real mother, and supposed father were; of what family they were, and where they lived; what their characters, worldly circumstances, and business of life; they speak of his miraculous conception, through the power of the Holy Ghost, and of the time and place of his birth; and of what went before, or followed after, necessary to be known; they record some things done in his infancy, and childhood; they give us an account of his baptism, and of his entrance on his public ministry; they have written down his sermons to his disciples, and the multitude; his several discourses with the Jews, chief priests, Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees; his parables, proverbial sayings, and pithy sentences; they make mention of various surprising miracles wrought by him, which were proofs of his deity, divine mission, and Messiahship; they inform us of the names and number of his apostles, whom he sent forth to preach in his name; and they relate his fatiguing journeys which he took, to do good to the bodies and souls of men, by healing diseases, and preaching the Gospel; as also the temptations of Satan he was exercised with, in the wilderness; the reproaches and insults of men, he endured; his sufferings and death, with all the circumstances attending it; and likewise his resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven: and the whole is a complete history of the life of Christ, for what one evangelist omits, another relates; and all is done with the utmost impartiality, simplicity, and truth; and there is an entire harmony and agreement between the sacred historians; for though there are some things, in which at first sight they may seem to contradict each other, these will admit of a fair reconciliation, and which is observed in the following exposition.

That divine history, called *the Acts of the Apostles*, is a narrative of what was done by them, after our Lord's ascension to heaven, in pursuance of the commission and instructions which he had given them. This book informs us, how that the apostles, by the orders of Christ, waited at Jerusalem until the day of Pentecost, when they were filled with the extraordinary gifts of the spirit; particularly with the gift of speaking with divers tongues, whereby they were qualified to preach the Gospel to people of all languages, for which they had received a commission from Christ: here we are told what success they met with at Jerusalem, where, according to the express command of Christ, they began to preach; what numbers of converts were made, and what a famous church was there raised; and how, that after the death of Stephen a persecution arose, by which havoc was made of the church, and many that had ministerial gifts, were scattered

abroad, and went every where preaching the word ; but at first to the Jews only, by which means churches were also raised in other parts of Judea, and in Samaria, and Galilee, and likewise in Syria and Phœnicia, and in other places. Particularly this book gives an account of the travels of the Apostle Paul in the Gentile world ; of his ministry, and the success of it among them ; of the miracles wrought by him ; of his sermons, discourses, and disputations ; of the speeches he made before kings and councils, before the Jewish sanhedrim, and the Roman governors ; of the many hardships he endured, and the many dangers he was exposed unto ; and of his great service and usefulness, in promoting the Gospel and interest of Christ : in short, this book acquaints us with the progress of the Gospel, both in Judea, and among the Gentiles ; with the first planting of Gospel churches, and the establishment of Christianity in the world ; with the time when, the manner in which, the means whereby, all this was done ; and is a wonderful display of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God ; and must be read with pleasure and profit, by all those that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.

The *Epistles*, written by several Apostles to the churches, which were planted by them, or to particular persons they were concerned with, are of the utmost consequence : these contain all things in them, relating to faith and practice ; here the doctrines of the Gospel are set in a clear and distinct light ; the several duties of religion to be performed, whether personal or relative, whether to be done in public or in private, in the world or in the church, in the closet or in the family, are exhorted to, and pressed upon the best of motives, with the strongest arguments, from right principles, and to right ends and purposes ; every thing belonging to the nature and constitution of a Gospel church, to the rule and government of it, to its officers, its order and discipline, is to be collected from hence : for whatever is written in them, was written, not only for the use of the then churches, and the ministers and members of them, but for the use of the churches of Christ, in all ages of time ; in them are milk for babes, and meat for strong men ; and rules are laid down, instructive to societies, and particular persons ; and which are useful in moral and civil, as well as in Christian life ; or which serve to regulate and influence the outward life and conversation, as well as direct and encourage to the exercise of spiritual graces, and to an observance of evangelical ordinances.

The book of the *Revelation* of the Apostle John, with which the canon of Scripture is closed, is a prophetic history of what should befall the churches of Christ ; and of the most remarkable things that should come to pass in the world, especially in the Roman empire, from the resurrection of Christ, unto the end of the world ; so that these sacred books, put them all together, are an account of things from the first, to the second coming of Christ ; and shew, what has been, and will be done in the world ; and what the followers of Christ are to believe and do, and what they must expect will be accomplished in the world, in the churches, and in them ; until he shall appear, who is the author of their religion, the object of their faith, hope, and love ; and whose coming they sincerely desire, and heartily wish and pray for.

Now to have a true knowledge, and right understanding of books of so much concern as these are, must be desirable to all, who have a just value for them, and esteem of them ; but who is sufficient for these things ? It is certain, that the Holy Spirit, who has dictated the sacred Scriptures, and inspired holy men of God to write them, is the best interpreter of them ; and he does lead and guide his people, more or less, into the truths contained in them ; his assistance is therefore in the first place to be implored, and without it, nothing of this kind is to be attempted : to compare spiritual things with spiritual, or in other words, to compare Scripture with itself ; the more obscure and difficult parts of it, with those that are more plain and clear, must be of considerable service, for the better understanding them : and to observe the analogy of faith, the agreement of truth with itself, and of one truth with another ; the form of sound words, the summary of Gospel truths, to be collected out of the sacred writings, with which the sense of every passage must agree, is of exceeding great use in this affair ; to which may be added, the gracious experience that the man of God has in himself, of the truth, power, influence, and weight of the word of God upon his own soul ; for next to the Scriptures themselves, in general, it should be considered, whether such an interpretation of a particular passage, is agreeable to the common experience of the saints, and to a man's own : a competent knowledge of the languages, in which the Scriptures are written, cannot fail of being very helpful in the study of them, in many instances ; and indeed, all arts and sciences, liberal or mechanical, yea, every thing within the compass of knowledge,

natural, moral, and civil, contribute more or less unto, and assist in the understanding of the books of the New Testament; and among the many helps, and several means which should be, and are made use of for such a purpose, knowledge of the affairs of the Jews, of their rites and ceremonies, of their laws, usages, customs, and traditions, as they were in and about the times of Christ and his apostles, is not the most inconsiderable; which will appear, if it be observed,

That our Lord Jesus Christ, whose life is written by the four evangelists, was a Jew himself; he was born of Jewish parents, in the land of Judea; he was brought up in the Jewish religion; he conformed to their laws, rites, and customs, throughout the whole of his life, which were lawful to conform unto; he was sent to the people of the Jews, as a prophet, and to them only; to them he delivered his sermons, with them he frequently discoursed, and among them he wrought his miracles; in short, among them he lived and died: now it can't be thought, but that he should speak in the dialect of that nation, should express himself in words and phrases, which were in common use; and refer to various things, and allude to rites and customs in practice among them; wherefore the knowledge of their phraseology, or way of speaking, of their usages and customs, must be of singular use, for the understanding of many things said by Christ, which are recorded in the four Evangelists: let it also be further observed,

That all the apostles of Christ, and all the writers of the New Testament, were Jews; they were educated in the Jewish religion; they preached to the Jews only, in the times of Christ; and first to them, after their commission was enlarged, to preach to the Gentiles; and the first churches even among the Gentiles, greatly consisted of Jews, to whom the Epistles were written, as the Epistles themselves shew: now can it be imagined, but that notwithstanding divine inspiration, and though they wrote in the Greek language, they would retain the idioms and forms of speech, to which they had been used; and that they would allude to rites and customs, they had been observant of, and the people also to whom they wrote? Had the books of the New Testament been written by Englishmen, though inspired by the Holy Ghost, doubtless there would have appeared many Anglicisms in them, as it is notorious enough there are in them abundance of Hebraisms; and that they would have referred to the rites and customs of their own nation, as these have done: wherefore the knowledge of the Jewish language and customs, must be of service for the better understanding of various things, to be met with in the writings of these men: to which may be added,

That Judaism properly so called, as it was a peculiar religion, and distinct from Christianity, though not contrary to it, was in being, and in full force, in Christ's time, though near its end, and was abolished in the times of the apostles, and Christianity was established by them: now it is not reasonable to believe, that an affair of this nature should be transacted, that there should be an abrogation of Jewish rites and ceremonies, and a setting up of Gospel ordinances, which were to continue to the end of time, that in the disputes with the Jews upon this subject, and the account that is given of this matter, there should be no references and expressions, which the knowledge of Jewish affairs can give us light into.

Being convinced by these considerations many years ago, I set about the reading of the most ancient writings of the Jews, I could come at, in order to satisfy myself of the truth of these things, and the better to understand the New Testament; and though this has been attended with great difficulty, fatigue, and labour, and may have hindered the pursuit of other useful studies, I cannot say I repent of it. The method I took at first, and which I all along followed, was to write down in an *Adversaria*, or note-book, what occurred in reading, which I thought might be of any service, to give light to any passage in the New Testament, and which I put against that passage: in a course of time this book began to swell, which put me on thoughts of making these notes public; which I sometimes inclined to do in one way, and sometimes in another; but at length determined to do with them as I have done, in the following work: the writings I have chiefly read with this view, are the Targums, or Chaldee paraphrases of the Old Testament; the Misnah, or the Jews' oral law; the two Talmuds, Jerusalem and Babylonian; the Rabbot, or mystical expositions of the ancient doctors of the Jewish synagogue; the book of Zohar, with others of a later date, and less note; and since I have made so much use of these writings in the following exposition, especially in the first volume, I think myself obliged to give my readers some account of them, shewing their antiquity and usefulness, and shall begin with

The TARGUMS, or Chaldee paraphrases, these being the most ancient writings the Jews have:

it is certain there were Targums, before the composition of the Talmud, and even of the Misnah, since there is express mention made of them in both <sup>a</sup>; and it is no less certain, that they were in being and use, in the times of Christ and his apostles. The text in Isa. lxi. 1. as read by our Lord in the synagogue of Nazareth, Luke iv. 18. better agrees with the Chaldee paraphrase of it, than with the Hebrew text, or the Septuagint version; and it is a clear case, and which was doing great honour to the Targum on Psal. xxii. 1. that Christ expressed himself when he hung upon the cross, not in the Hebrew words of the text, but in the Chaldee paraphrase of it; saying, Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani; not Azabthani, as in the Hebrew text, but Sabachthani, which is the word used in the Targum we now have; and it is very likely the Apostle Paul had the names of the Egyptian magicians Jannes and Jambres, out of the ancient paraphrases; since these are mentioned in the Targum of Jonathan, on Exod. i. 15, and vii. 11, and on Numb. xxii. 21. The word Targum signifies an interpretation, or exposition of any book, or the translation of one language into another; and the Targums are translations of the Hebrew text, into the Chaldee language, with an explanation of it: for they are not bare literal versions, though that of Onkelos is pretty much so; but they also expound the text, and explain the sense: the rise and original of these paraphrases, is generally thought to have been the corruption of the Hebrew language, in the Babylonish captivity; where the Jews having disused, greatly forgot their mother tongue; wherefore upon their return to their own land, it became necessary, that men skilful both in the Hebrew and Chaldee languages, should explain to the common people in the Chaldee tongue, the Scriptures, which were read to them every sabbath-day in Hebrew, in order to their understanding them with profit; and this practice, both of reading the Scriptures every sabbath-day, and which James says was of old time, Acts xv. 21. and of interpreting them in the Chaldee language, is said by Maimonides <sup>b</sup>, to be from the times of Ezra: and so the Jews in the Talmuds <sup>c</sup>, explain those words in Neh. viii. 8. *So they read in the book, in the law of God, this is the Scripture; distinctly, this is the Targum; and gave the sense, these are the verses; in the Jerusalem Talmud, it is, these are the accents; and caused them to understand the reading, this is the distinction of the accents; in the above Talmud it is, this is the Masoreth; though it may be this practice might not obtain quite so soon, but rather some time before the coming of Christ; for the Syrians being mixed with the Jews after the times of Antiochus Epiphanes, their language began to be corrupted, and the Syriac dialect prevailed; and still more so, when Judea came to be reduced into the form of a Roman province, and was reckoned to Syria, and was subject to the governors of Syria; by which means the Syro-chaldee language became the common dialect of the Jews, and was so in Christ's time; which made those Targums, or Chaldee paraphrases necessary: and by all accounts it appears, to have been the custom in the synagogue, for the reader to read a verse in the Hebrew tongue, and then for the interpreter to render it in Chaldee; and this he did from his own judgment, *viva voce*, and without book <sup>d</sup>: for though he might write for his own use, and for the private use of others, which might be the original of written paraphrases; yet it does not appear that there were any committed to writing for public use, until those of Jonathan ben Uzziel, and Onkelos were composed, of which it will be necessary to give a particular account.*

JONATHAN BEN UZZIEL was a scholar of Hillel the elder; Hillel, 'tis said <sup>e</sup>, had fourscore scholars, and the greatest of them was Jonathan ben Uzziel: this Hillel was prince, or president of the Sanhedrim, a hundred years before the destruction of Jerusalem <sup>f</sup>, and so thirty years before the birth of Christ; it was at the beginning of the reign of Herod <sup>g</sup>, about three years after he began to reign, that he entered upon his presidentship <sup>h</sup>, and he governed Israel forty years <sup>i</sup>. This his scholar wrote a paraphrase upon the prophets, as is agreed on all hands. The Jews extol it as a divine work, and say that the substance and doctrine of it were handed down to him from the inspired prophets Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi; they speak even of miraculous operations performed, whilst it was composing <sup>k</sup>, and that even angels themselves pay a regard to it: now

<sup>a</sup> Misn. Megilla, c. 4. sect. 10. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 115. 1. Megilla, fol. 3. 1. & Kiddushin, fol. 13. 1. & 49. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 2.

<sup>b</sup> Hitchot Tephilla, c. 12. sect. 16.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 37. 2. Megilla, fol. 3. 1. & T. Hieros. Megilla, fol. 74. 4.

<sup>d</sup> Maimon. Hitchot Tephilla, c. 12. sect. 10, 11.

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Succa, fol. 28. 1. & Bava Batha, fol. 134. 1.

<sup>f</sup> Juchasin, fol. 19. 2. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 24. 2.

<sup>g</sup> Juchasin ib.

<sup>h</sup> Shalshet Hakabala, fol. 18. 1.

<sup>i</sup> Juchasin, fol. 19. 1.

<sup>k</sup> T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 3. 1. Bava Bathra, fol. 134. 1.

though these are extravagant flights of their's, yet by how much the greater is the authority of this work with them, by so much the greater is its use to refute them, when it can be made use of for that purpose; and in favour of Christianity, as it often may.

This is the only paraphrase which is generally allowed to be written by him. The Jews say<sup>1</sup>, that he attempted to write one upon the Hagiographa, but was forbidden by a voice from heaven, because therein was the end of the Messiah, or the time of his coming. There is a paraphrase upon the law which bears his name, but it is generally thought to be falsely ascribed to him, because of its style, the traditional senses of Scripture which are in it, and other things which it is observed, shew it to be of a later date than the true *Jonathan*. Yet there are some, both Jewish<sup>m</sup> and Christian<sup>a</sup> writers, that do affirm that he did write a *Targum* upon the law: and indeed it seems strange, as Elias Levita<sup>b</sup> observes, might be objected, that he should write a paraphrase upon the prophets, and not begin with the law; and it is certain, that the traditional sense of Scripture obtained in his time; and the Talmudists may as well be thought to borrow from him, as that paraphrast from them; and as to the main thing objected to, that there is mention made in it of the six orders of the *Misnah*, and therefore must be of a later date than that, it may be observed, that Hillell, the master of Jonathan, first reduced the substance of the traditions of the elders into such an order, as will be seen hereafter; and as for exotic words, and names of places of a more modern date, they may be interpolations since: the style, I confess, is with me the greatest objection; however, seeing it is not agreed upon; I shall not insist upon it being his. I go on to consider the paraphrase of

ONKELOS, its antiquity and authority. This writer seems to be cotemporary with Jonathan ben Uzziel: it is affirmed, that they saw each other<sup>c</sup>. Onkelos, according to what is said of him, was a disciple of Hillell, as well as Jonathan; for it is asserted<sup>d</sup>, that Hillell and Shammai would not teach him one word of the law until he was circumcised; and he has frequently called Onkelos the proselyte, and is said to be proselyted in their days; and, by what is reported of him, he lived to the times of R. Gamaliel, the master of the Apostle Paul, who died about eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem: for it is said<sup>e</sup>, that when R. Gamaliel died, Onkelos the proselyte burned as much goods at his funeral, for the honour of him, as amounted to seventy Lyrian pounds of silver. His paraphrase, which is only upon the five books of Moses, is, for the most part, a strict version of the Pentateuch into Chaldee, and is rather a mere translation than a paraphrase. It is written in a very clean style, and nearest to the Bible, which have made some think, that it is the oldest paraphrase extant: and even Dr. Owen<sup>f</sup>, who expresses himself with a great deal of warmth against some other paraphrases, yet says of this, that "it keeps close to the text, for the most part, rendering the words in the sense of the Holy Ghost; nor does he purposely wander into old wives' fables, as is usual with all the rest: led by which reason alone, (adds he,) I conjecture, that this paraphrast lived before the destruction of the city." His Targum is in great esteem with the Jews, as appears from its being inserted after the text of Moses, verse for verse, in the ancient manuscripts of the Pentateuch, and is in continual use with them. Elias Levita says<sup>g</sup>, we are obliged, every week, to read a section (of the law) twice, once in the Scripture, and once in the Targum of Onkelos. Indeed, they too much magnify this version, and make it equal with the sacred Scripture; the sense of it they represent as traditionally handed down from Mount Sinai, which being delivered from one to another, he received it from the mouth of R. Eliezer and R. Joshua<sup>h</sup>; and they say, that when he added any thing, it was not from his own judgment, but was given him from Sinai<sup>i</sup>; and, as before observed concerning Jonathan's paraphrase, the greater the authority of this version is with them, the more pressing it is upon them, when it is used with advantage against them.

There are other paraphrases of less authority, and of an uncertain age, which notwithstanding

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. ib.

<sup>m</sup> R. Menachem apud Eliam Levitam in Prefat. Methurgeman. & Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 20. 1. Asarias in Meor Enaim, c. 9. fol. 50. 2.

<sup>a</sup> Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. ver. 1. 1. c. 3. Helvicus de Paraphr. Chald. c. 2. Shickard. Jus Regium, c. 1. p. 20.

<sup>b</sup> Prefat. Methurgeman.

<sup>c</sup> Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 19. 2. Tzemaoh David. par. 1. fol. 28. 2.

<sup>d</sup> Zohar in Lev. fol. 30. 2.

<sup>e</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 28. 4. Tzemaoh David ib.

<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 11. 1.

<sup>g</sup> Theologoumena, p. 425.

<sup>h</sup> Prefat. Methurg.

<sup>i</sup> T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 3. 1.

<sup>j</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 49. 1.

have their usefulness. The Jerusalem Targum contains only fragments upon the Pentateuch, upon here and there a verse, written in a very coarse and different style. The paraphrases of the five books, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Solomon's Song, Ruth, and the Lamentations, and of the Hagiographa, the books of Psalms, Job, and Proverbs, commonly ascribed to R. Jose the Blind, it is not known by the Jews, Elias Levita says<sup>1</sup>, who are the authors of them. Until of late years there were no Targums upon the two books of Chronicles made public: these were first published by Beckius in the years 1680, 1683, with notes upon them; and in the year 1715, David Wilkins published another edition of them from a Cambridge manuscript. Some have thought that the author of these was Jonathan ben Uzziel<sup>2</sup>. The general use of these paraphrases is to assist in the explication of words of difficult interpretation, and especially such as are but once used in the Bible; and for the confirming the sense of many passages respecting the Messiah, and are useful in many controversies, especially with the Jews, Papists, and Socinians. That worthy and learned prelate, Bishop Kidder<sup>3</sup>, expresses his sense and judgment of them in the following manner: "I must own, that I have from my youth had a mighty veneration for the Chaldee paraphrasts, and think them, next to the sacred text, one of the choicest treasures the learned Christians do enjoy: they are of marvellous use to us in our disputes against the Jews, not to say Socinians also. It is no hard matter to shew the various and vast usefulness and advantages, which we may receive by them; but this would require a treatise by itself. I have always thought that we were obliged to bless God for such a treasure." I proceed

To give an account of the Talmuds, both Jerusalem and Babylonian. The word Talmud signifies doctrine; and the work, so called, contains in it the sum and substance of the doctrine of the law, according to the Jews: it consists of two parts, the Misnah and Gemara; the former is the text, the latter is made up of the disputations and decisions of the doctors upon it. I begin with

The MISNAH, which may be rendered Deuterosis, or Deuteronomy, a secondary or repeated law; for the Jews suppose, that the law was repeated to Moses, and an explanation of it given, which they call the oral law. The book that bears this name was composed by R. Judah, called the saint, who lived in the times of Antoninus the Roman emperor: he flourished, according to Buxtorf<sup>b</sup> Anno Christi 150. It is said, by the Jews<sup>c</sup>, to be compiled one hundred and twenty years after the destruction of the temple; the occasion of it was this; R. Judah observing that the Jews were in a state of exile, and were scattered among the nations, and fearing lest the traditional law, which had been handed down from their fathers, should be entirely lost in process of time, collected together as much of it as he could himself; and wrote to the Jews, in all parts, to send to him what they could recollect they had received from their ancestors; or had by them in papers and schedules; which being communicated to him, he put together, and being finished, it was at once received by the Jews, as the pandect, or body of their civil and canon law. But now, though this body of laws was compiled, and put together in this form and order, it must not be thought that this was the rise and date of the traditions, or laws themselves, any more than the body of laws collected in Justinian's time, out of writers that were three hundred years before, can be imagined to be of no earlier date than his times. It is a clear case, that the materials of the Misnah were in being before the compilation of it by this Rabbin; yea, that many of the traditions were written before for private use, and which was allowed. Maimonides<sup>d</sup> says, that "from the days of Moses our master, unto R. Judah, there was nothing composed which was taught publicly, concerning the oral law; but in every age the head of the sanhedrim, or a prophet that was in that generation, might write for himself a memorial of the things he heard from his master; and he taught them publicly by word of mouth, and so every one wrote for himself." To which agrees what another writer says<sup>e</sup>, "before R. Judah, no book was written concerning the oral law; but this before was the law and custom in Israel, the wise men received one from another, and taught the Misnah by word

<sup>1</sup> Prefat. Methurgeman.

<sup>2</sup> S. Clark apud Castell. Lex. Polyglott. col. 2613. V d. Beckii Not. in Targ. 1 Chron. ii. 54.

<sup>3</sup> Preface to the 3d Part of his Demonstration of the Messiah, p. 12. Ed. fol.

<sup>b</sup> Recensio Oper. Talmud, p. 229

<sup>c</sup> Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 30. 2. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 23. 2.

<sup>d</sup> Prefat. ad Yad Chazaka.

<sup>e</sup> R. Joshua Hallevi Halichot Olam, c. 1. p. 12, 13.

“ of mouth, as it was delivered ; but the scholars made marks to their traditions, and wrote them, lest they should forget them ; but they hid them, and called them the Misnah consists, from the times of the compiler of it, up to the times of Christ and his apostles, and beyond them. Egesippus, a writer of the second century, and who was a converted Jew, is said, by Eusebius<sup>f</sup>, to make mention of several things which he had from the unwritten traditions of the Jews : and the same<sup>g</sup> writer observes of Josephus, who lived in the first century, before and after the destruction of Jerusalem, that being an Hebrew of the Hebrews, he very accurately related some things out of the Jewish Deuterosis, or Misnah, or rather their Misnic Baraita, or exotic doctrine. And some learned men<sup>h</sup>, as Bochartus, Van Dale, and Hudson, have been of opinion, that the Hebrew books Josephus speaks of, not only design the sacred Scriptures, but Rabbinical writings extant in his time. At the time that Vespasian destroyed Jerusalem, and burnt the houses of it, there were in it, 'tis said, four hundred and eighty synagogues, and in every one were a library and a school ; the library was for reading, or for the Scripture, and the school for the Misnah<sup>i</sup> ; and in one of these schools the Apostle Paul was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel ; where he was taught the Misnah, the law of the fathers, and became exceedingly zealous of their traditions, Acts xxii. 3. Gal. i. 14. and some have thought, that the parchments he left at Troas, 2 Tim. iv. 13. were of the same kind with the schedules, or volumes of secrets, in which the scholars of the wise men wrote the traditions they received from their masters : and certain it is, that the traditions of the elders were in being in the times of Christ, which were risen to a considerable bulk, which he takes notice of, and of which the Scribes and Pharisees were very tenacious, Matt. xv. 2—6. Mark vii. 3—13. Before the times of Christ lived Hillell and Shammai, the heads of the Misnic schools, and who opposed each other in the sense of the traditions, and added new ones. Jerom<sup>k</sup> says of them, “ Shammai and Hillell arose in Judea not long before the Lord was born ; the first of which may be interpreted a *destroyer*, and the other *profane* ; because by their traditions, and διδασκαλιαι, Misnic doctrines, they destroyed and defiled the precepts of the law.” And though these traditions were not committed to writing, so as to be publicly read, yet they were reduced into a compendium, and ranged into an order under certain heads, *viva voce*. Before the days of Hillell, 'tis said<sup>l</sup> “ they read six hundred orders of the Misnah, from the times of Moses, on whom be peace, unto the sons of Bethira ; but Hillell put them into six orders by word of mouth, which comprehended the law henceforwards, that so it might not be forgotten ; and this was done at the beginning of the reign of Herod.” And in such a division, and order, is the written Misnah compiled. Long before these men were the sects of the Pharisees and Sadducees in being ; the latter had their name from Sadock, a disciple of Antigonus, a man of Socho ; which Antigonus was the successor of Simeon the Just, the last of Ezra's great synagogue, who lived in the times of Alexander the Great : these, among other things, denied the oral law, or Misnah, rejected the traditions, and professed to adhere to the scripture only, and therefore were called Karaites, or Scripturarians<sup>m</sup>. This division was made in the times of the Maccabees, or Hasmoneans ; so that it seems manifest, that before this sect arose, the traditionary sense of scripture, and the law, generally obtained. And it may well be concluded, that the foundation of traditions was laid quickly after the times of Ezra, and the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, which by degrees came to a considerable bulk before the times of Christ. The Jews indeed date their oral law from Mount Sinai, and even prefer it to the written law, and say very extravagant things in favour of it ; and even a very grave writer<sup>n</sup> of their's observes, concerning the Misnah, that “ the brevity of its words, the elegance of its composition, its beautiful order, the manner of handling things, with the division of it, if a man looks upon them in a true light, must own, that flesh and blood could never compose any thing like it, but by divine assistance.” However, this must be said, that it is a work of singular advantage and usefulness ; by which we learn what where the ancient usages and customs of that people, what the

<sup>f</sup> Hist. Eccles. l. 4. c. 22.

<sup>g</sup> Demonstrat. Evang. l. 6. p. 291.

<sup>h</sup> Vid. Hudsoni Notas in Joseph. Antiq. l. 9. c. 10. sect. 2.

<sup>i</sup> T. Hieros. Megilla, fol. 73. 4. & Cetubot, fol. 35. 3r.

<sup>k</sup> Comment. in Isaiam, l. 3. Tom. V. fol. 17. I.

<sup>l</sup> Juchasin, fol. 19. 2. Shalshet Hakabala, fol. 18. 1.

<sup>m</sup> Maimon in Misn. Abot, c. 1. sect. 3. Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 20. 2.

<sup>n</sup> R. Sangari, Sepher Cosri. par. 3. sect. 67. p. 247, 248. Ed. Buxtorf.



traditions of the elders the Scriptures speak of, what are agreeable to the word of God, and what not: and as the learned Wagenseil<sup>o</sup> observes, "in the whole of it no blasphemy is to be found, nothing in opposition to Christians, even no fable, yea, nor any thing that is very foreign from reason: it contains only the mere traditions of the fathers, and is the body of the Jewish law, which formerly was not written:" and, for my own part, I am obliged to say, that no one book in the world, excepting the Holy Scriptures, has been of that use and service to me, as this has been, together with the following.

The TALMUD, or *Gemara*, is the commentary on the Misnic text, and consists of the disputations and decrees of the doctors concerning the sense of the traditions, and is twofold; the one is called the Jerusalem Talmud, and the other the Babylonian Talmud.

The *Jerusalem Talmud* is so called, either from the place where, or from the dialect in which it was written, or from the Jews in the land of Israel, for the sake of whom it was composed. The author of it was R. Jochanan, president of a school in the land of Israel, with the help of two of the disciples of R. Judah, Raf and Samuel; and it was finished about the year 230<sup>p</sup>: but being written in a coarse style, and nothing near so pure and clean as the Misnah, and abounding with exotic words, was not had in great esteem by the Jews. Jerom<sup>a</sup> seems to have respect to this when he says, "how many are the traditions of the Pharisees, which to this day they call Deuteroseis, or Misnic laws? and how many dotting fables I cannot turn over? neither will the bulk of the book admit of it;" since there is nothing of the fabulous kind, in the Misnah, nor is the bulk of that book large: not so large as a Bible, and is sometimes published in almost as small a compass as one of our Testaments; though indeed there is not much that can be called fable in the *Jerusalem Talmud*.

The *Babylonian Talmud* was written for the sake of the Jews in Babylon, and other parts, the former not meeting with general acceptance; this was not the work of a single man, but of many successively, who were employed for the space of two or three hundred years in collecting the disputations, decisions, and sense of the ancient doctors, about the civil and canon laws of the Jews: this was begun by R. Ase, pursued by Maremar, and at length finished by R. Avina, about the year of Christ 500<sup>l</sup>. There were 311 years between the Misnah, and this, according to the computation of some.<sup>4</sup> This work does not contain the sense of the compilers of it, or of the Rabbins in their age, but the decisions of the ancient doctors, even of Hillel and Shammai, and others who were before the times of Christ. For, as the learned Buxtorf<sup>l</sup> well observes, though the Talmudic work was collected into one body some hundreds of years after Christ; yet the matter of it was disputed in the famous schools of Babylon, Sora, Nahardeca, and Pompedita, and written down in books, partly before Christ, and partly in the time of Christ, and a little after. It is generally received by the Jews, and is of wonderful use in various respects. Says the learned Braunius<sup>4</sup>, "though it is a work merely human, and not delivered by God, as the Jews rashly imagine; yet nevertheless, if ever any book was written besides the sacred Scriptures, of great use, not only for the better understanding of tongues, especially the Hebrew and Chaldee, by which God has manifested salvation to us in his word, but in order to search out the antiquity, and the more hidden learning of the Chaldeans, Syrians, Egyptians, and other people, their manners, rites, and customs, and all the mysteries both of the Jewish religion and polity, and especially those things which make for a clearer exposition of the *Old and New Testament*, that, beyond all doubt, is the Talmudic work." And a little after he adds, "what slothfulness is that? what perverseness? what ignorance? to neglect, and even send to hell the Talmudic work; a work most ancient, which is composed for this end only, that posterity might have an exposition of the law and prophets? What is the Misnah else but a continued exposition of the law of Moses, digested into certain books? what is the whole Talmudic work, but a most rich treasure of Jewish antiquities, rites, manners, and all mysteries, both of polity and religion, from the times of Alexander the Great, at least, to the sixth century, after the birth of

<sup>o</sup> Prefat. ad Tela Ignes, p. 57.

<sup>p</sup> Ganz Trzemach David, par. 1 fol. 31. 2.

<sup>q</sup> Epist. Algasie, qu. 10. fol. 55. l. tom. III.

<sup>r</sup> Ganz Trzemach David, par. 1. fol. 33. 1, 2. & 34. 1. 612.

Buxtorf. Rab. Biblioth. p. 425.

<sup>l</sup> Kaba R. Abraham ben David apud Ganz. ib. fol. 34. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Gram. Chald. & Syr. p. 402, 403.

<sup>4</sup> Selecta Sacra, l. 5. Exercit. 2. sect. 26, 27. p. 611,

“ Christ ?” Of the same opinion was the learned Wagenseil<sup>w</sup> ; “ we are not afraid (says he) likewise to defend this, that in the Gemara, as well as in the Misnah, are many profitable things ; nor can any kind of learning be mentioned, which out of that may not be helped and adorned.—Especially the Talmud serves to illustrate the Holy Scriptures, and is of so great use truly to understand the words, laws, manners, and institutions of the Jews mentioned in them, that there is no book in the world which can be of more service that way.”

MAIMONIDES, as he is commonly called, or R. Moses ben Maimon, has abridged the whole Talmud, Misnah, and Gemara, in a work of his which is called *Yad Chazaka* ; which is written in pure Hebrew, in a clean, neat, and easy language, clear of that crabbed and rugged style, in which the Gemara especially is written ; and free of all the knotty questions, and objections, and intricate disputes of the doctors, and of every thing which has the appearance of fable ; the whole contains nothing but the traditions of the Jews, their rites, customs, and usages, civil and religious, digested in the best order and manner ; and is the best system of their civil and canon law that is extant : it is justly an admired work, and of excellent use. The Jews have a common saying concerning him, “ from Moses to Moses there is none like this Moses.” Of what service this performance of his is for the better understanding the laws of Moses, may be seen in those extracts which our learned countryman, Mr. Ainsworth, has made out of it in, his excellent Commentaries upon the Pentateuch. And now, though this work was compiled about the beginning of the *thirteenth century*, yet inasmuch as it is only a compendium of the Misnah and Talmud, and a collection of the various traditions of the elders, and of the civil and canon law of the Jews in ages past, it is to be considered, as to the matter and substance of it, as of equal antiquity with the Misnic and Talmudic writings ; and he is as good a voucher for the ancient rites and usages of the Jews, as can well be desired, and whose fidelity is to be depended upon, as well as his judgment. In the last edition of the Talmud, his work is referred to in almost every page.

The RABBOT, are ancient commentaries on the five books of *Moses*, and upon five others, viz. *Solomon's Song*, *Ruth*, *Lamentations*, *Ecclesiastes*, and *Esther* ; and are written, partly in an historical, and partly in an allegorical and mystical way. The author of them was Rabba bar Nachmoni, who lived about the year of Christ 300<sup>x</sup> ; or rather he may be said to be a compiler of them, for he does not give his own sense and interpretation of Scripture, but collects together the explanations of the doctors, that had lived in preceding ages : for as a Jewish<sup>y</sup> chronologer observes, “ though he was the head of the university at Pumbeditha in Babylon, yet he gathered “ and collected together all the mystical explications of the land of Israel, (*i. e.* of the doctors “ that had lived there,) and wrote them in order.” And so Jarchi<sup>z</sup> calls the first part of this work, an historical and mystical interpretation of the land of Israel, *i. e.* of the Rabbins in it ; so that this work, as to the antiquity of it, answers at least to the three first ages of Christianity.

The book of ZOHAR, is a *Cabalistic* commentary upon the *Pentateuch* ; it is generally ascribed to R. Simeon ben Jochai, as the author of it, who was a disciple of R. Akiba, who died about fifty years after the destruction of the temple, and about the year of Christ 120<sup>a</sup> ; though some say he only began it, and his disciples finished it<sup>b</sup>, which will make no very considerable difference in the antiquity of it ; others affirm<sup>c</sup>, that he wrote nothing of it, nor his son, but their disciples wrote it, about sixty years after his death ; but then, as another writer who observes the same says<sup>d</sup>, they composed it as they received it from him ; so that the substance of it was his, being communicated by him, or his son, unto them ; but by the style of it, which is even and uniform, it does not seem to be the work of different persons ; and be it wrote by whomsoever, it is a collection, not only of the discourses of R. Simeon, and his son Eleazar, and of their cotemporaries, but of the Jewish doctors, that lived in Palestine, both before and after the destruction of Jerusalem ; it is of great fame and authority with the Jews, and is agreed on by them, that whatever in it does not disagree with the Talmud, and what is

<sup>w</sup> Prefat. ad Tela Ignea, p. 63, 64, 65, 68. Vid. Con-  
stat. Carmin. Lipman. p. 581.

<sup>x</sup> Buxtorf. Rab. Biblioth. p. 326.

<sup>y</sup> Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 32. 2.

<sup>z</sup> Comment. in Gen. xlvii. 2.

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>a</sup> Buxtorf. de Abbreviat. p. 190.

<sup>b</sup> Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 30. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Shalshet Hakabala, fol. 23. 1.

<sup>d</sup> Juchasin, fol. 42. 1.

not explained in the Talmud, and is explained there, should be received as authentic\*: and it is worthy of notice what the Jews remark, that there is no mention made of the Talmud throughout the book; from whence they conclude, that it must be written before it; and certain it is, that the style of it does not at all savour of novelty, but seems to be as near to the style used in the time of Christ, as any thing extant; but whether it is so ancient as they suppose, I will not say; yet evident it is, that in abundance of instances, there is a very great likeness in it, with the phraseology of the New Testament. The editors of the Sultzbach edition of it, gave their readers reason to expect, there would be published by them in a short time, *Zoharistic Parallels*, on the New Testament; whether ever such a work was published, I know not; if it has been, I have not had the happiness to have seen it, which might have been helpful to me in this work; to which may be added, that there are interspersed in it several ancient treatises, or extracts out of them, or fragments of them; particularly the ancient book of Bahir, said to be the most ancient of all the Rabbinical books; the author of it was R. Nechunia ben Kanah, who lived under the second temple, before the destruction of it, 30 or 40 years before Christ, and was cotemporary with Jonathan the paraphrast<sup>f</sup>: this same Rabbi, whom Grotius<sup>e</sup> calls Nehumias, is said by him to be fifty years before Christ; and who reports that he should say, that the time of the Messiah signified by Daniel, could not be deferred longer than those fifty years. There are other writers of a later date, which are made use of by me, though sparingly; as Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, R. Abraham Seba, and others; some learned men affect to smile, when such are referred to, with respect to the use of a phrase or a custom, for the illustration of any part of Scripture; but there will be no reason to indulge the sneer, when it is considered, that there is very little difference in the customs and usages of the Jews, in one age from another; they are a people tenacious of their rites and ceremonies; and besides, the same book of traditions is the rule of their conduct now, which was in ages past; and it may be observed, that such of their writers who are most conversant with their ancient books, frequently use words and phrases peculiar to them.

The general objection to Talmudic and Rabbinical writings is, that they are stuffed with fables, idle tales, impertinences, and fooleries; and nothing is more common, than to represent the Rabbins as a set of romantic and fabulous writers, as foolish, stupid, and dotards; and this is plentifully done for the most part, by such who have never read them. That there are no fables in the Talmud, and other Jewish writings, I will not say; there were Jewish fables in the apostles' time, Tit. i. 14. and if they can be thought to be the same as in the Talmud, it is a proof of the antiquity of it, as to that part of the things contained in it: however, I will venture to say, that many, if not most of the things that are reckoned fables, are not strictly such; but have something significantly solid and instructive in them. Mythology, or delivering things divine, moral, philosophical, and historical, by way of fable, was much in use in the eastern nations, and very early obtained, and particularly among the Jews; Jotham's fable of the trees, of the olive-tree, fig-tree, vine, and bramble, discoursing together, is a very known one, and a flagrant instance of what is suggested; and from them, the Greeks and Romans received their mythic way of speaking and writing; Pythagoras, and other philosophers, learnt from them, or the Egyptians, or both, the way of communicating their secrets by symbols, and enigmas. The fables of Æsop, which introduce birds and beasts speaking, are notorious to every one, and whom I greatly suspect to be a Jew<sup>h</sup>, and his fables Jewish ones; or if not, his way of writing seems to be taken from them: these, if considered only in their literal sense, must be ridiculous and absurd; and some have been so simple and foolish, as to understand them in no other way; and have fancied there was a time, when beasts and birds could speak; and have been confirmed in it, by the Scriptural instance of Balaam's ass: but when a man is master of the morals of them, he perceives there's something solid and instructive in them, and that they are the fruit and produce of a fine invention, and an ingenious mind. Many things, historical, moral, and civil, and others in natural philosophy, and even as some think in chymistry, are delivered in fables by Ovid, in his *Metamorphoses*; and why should not the Jewish writers be thought to take such a method; partly by these pleasant and artificial stories, to allure the more simple to reading, and partly to

\* Juchasin, fol. 42. 1.

<sup>f</sup> Buxtorf. Rab. Biblioth. p. 319, 320, Juchasin, fol. 63. 2.

<sup>e</sup> De Veritat. Relig. Christ. l. 5. sect. 14.

<sup>h</sup> Vid. Wolf. Heb. Biblioth. Vol. I. p. 135.

exercise the ingenious, in the search of the hidden things of wisdom and knowledge, as well as to relieve and recreate their minds, in hard and difficult studies? And this is not my own private sense, but the sense, as of Jewish writers of the best note<sup>1</sup>, so of many Christian writers, as Galatinus<sup>2</sup>, Fagius<sup>3</sup>, Dilherrus<sup>4</sup>, Selden<sup>5</sup>, Wulferus<sup>6</sup>, Muhlius<sup>7</sup>, Vorstius<sup>8</sup>, Gaffarellus<sup>9</sup>, Buxtorf<sup>10</sup>, and others. I will not undertake to be an Oedipus, to unriddle the mythology of the Jews; but I'll single out one or two instances, which appear, at first sight, to be most monstrous and absurd, and attempt their explanation. They tell us<sup>11</sup> of the first man Adam, that when he was created, his stature was so high, that he reached from heaven to earth; that his body was so large, that it extended from one end of the earth to the other; or, as elsewhere said<sup>12</sup>, he looked from one end of the world to the other; and that when he rebelled against God,<sup>13</sup> he laid his hand upon him, and lessened him, and so reduced him to the bulk and size that men are generally of; but now, who are most to be laughed at, the authors of this fable, or those who take it in the literal sense, and laugh at them? Can any man in his senses think, that any man, or set of men, could devise and tell such a story as this, in hopes of meeting with credit among any rational creatures? The sense of the fable is, that the power of man at his first creation reached to all things under the heavens, and upon the earth; that he had dominion over the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, and the fishes in the sea; and that his knowledge was extended to all creatures and things in the universe; but that when he sinned against God, his authority over the creatures was weakened, and his knowledge lessened: and so, in a few words, it represents the state of man in innocence, his fall, and the sad effects of it. Again, it is a very common thing with them to speak of a feast that God will make for the righteous in the world to come; against which time the Leviathan is salted, and when a large ox, the Behemoth of Job will be served up, and a fowl of an incredible size will be a part of the entertainment, and a desert of the most delightful fruits of the garden of Eden will be set, and wine will be drunk, which has been kept in the grape from the six days of the creation<sup>14</sup>. Now, though there might be some persons who took all this in the gross and literal sense, as I have observed in the note on Luke xiv. 15. yet they sadly mistook the sense of the authors of it; for as Gaffarellus observes<sup>15</sup>, "what madness is it to imagine, that God should salt up this dragon, or whale, called Leviathan, and that it should afterwards be kept till the last day, to make a feast for those that shall then have no more need to eat? And what excellent entertainment should God bestow upon his children, when their cheer should only be the flesh of a powdered dragon? This were one of the grossest fooleries that could be, were there no other doctrine couched under this tradition, than what the bare letter affords; and who can possibly imagine the Jews to be a people so void of sense, as simply to believe this, without looking after any other meaning of the thing?" However, they must be very stupid that so did believe. Fagius<sup>16</sup> directs to another sense of this fable; "By the Feast, (says he,) understand, that chief and everlasting happiness, which the righteous shall enjoy in the world to come; then truly they shall eat and devour that Leviathan, that is, Satan, when they shall see him with all his ministers, thrust into hell." And to this agrees the sense which Menasseh ben Israel<sup>17</sup> gives of the same: "by these and the like, (says he,) are signified the spiritual delight, pleasure, and joy of souls, which they shall be possessed of in that state; for as here, wine usually delights and exhilarates the minds of men, so likewise that spiritual state shall fill the raised ones, with all joy everlasting; but of these allegories of the Rabbins, and of the Talmud, (adds he,) my purpose is to treat elsewhere and separately, in a singular tract;" but whether he ever published any thing of that kind, I do not know: and Mammonides<sup>18</sup> some hundred years before him declared, that he should compose a treatise to explain every thing of this kind in the Talmud, and other writings; shewing, what were to be taken literally, and what

<sup>1</sup> R. Isaac Sangari in Sopher Cosri, par. 3. p. 253, 254. Maimon. in Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1.

<sup>2</sup> De Arcan. Cath. ver. 1. 1. c. 7.

<sup>3</sup> In Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 16.

<sup>4</sup> In Atrio Ling. S. p. 89. apud Wagenseil. Prefat. ad Tela Ignea, p. 61.

<sup>5</sup> Prolegomena de Success. ad Leg. Ebr.

<sup>6</sup> Theriaca Judaica, p. 369, &c.

<sup>7</sup> Prefat. ad Coccei Sanhedrin.

<sup>8</sup> Prefat. ad Pirke Eliezer.

<sup>9</sup> Unheard-of Curiosities, par. 1. c. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Epist. Dedicat. ad Lex. Talmud.

<sup>11</sup> T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 12. 1. & Sanhedrin, fol. 38. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 28. 3.

<sup>13</sup> See my Notes on the Targum on Cant. viii. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Curiosities, ib. p. 41, 42.

<sup>15</sup> In loco supra citato.

<sup>16</sup> De Resurrectione Mortuorum, l. 2. c. 19. p. 225.

<sup>17</sup> In Misn. Sanhedrin ut supra. Vid. Pocock. Porta. Mosis, p. 162.

parabolically ; but this work, I suppose, was never finished ; or however, never saw the light : and who also observes , that the readers of such writings may be divided into three classes ; the one sort consists of such, who understand all things in a literal sense, and believe them, though ever so absurd, irrational, and impossible ; which sect he represents as miserable and foolish, and to be pitied ; the other is, of such who also take things in the literal sense, but reproach the wise men, and laugh at them for them ; this class he makes to be more stupid than the former ; and the third sort is of them, and who are few, that consider the internal sense of things, and understand them in an enigmatical and parabolical way : and since therefore the Jews themselves, affirm, that these things which have the appearance of fable, are not to be understood in a literal but in an allegorical sense, it is an abuse of them, and doing them a real injury, to interpret them otherwise : and as it would not be advisable for any man to repeat one of Æsop's fables, unless he is master of the moral of it, that so he may instruct by it ; and especially to do it for sake of diversion and laughter, unless he has a child upon his knee to amuse ; so neither is it advisable to relate a Jewish fable, merely to laugh at it ; let such consider, at whose expense the laugh is ; it would be much more becoming them, to endeavour to search out the history, divinity, morality, or philosophy of them, if they can, of themselves ; or read those books directed to in the margin <sup>c</sup>, with others which are written for that purpose ; out of the last of which, the learned David Millius has produced an explication of two or three very remarkable fables in the Talmud <sup>d</sup>.

The Jewish writers are commonly set in a very odious light, as a parcel of ignorant and senseless men, as devoid of common judgment and understanding : it is certain ; their ancestors were not such ; they excelled all other people in wisdom and knowledge, as it is reasonable to conclude they should ; since they had a peculiar revelation from God, and were directed by him in things natural, civil, and religious ; and as they had the advantage above all mankind in the knowledge and worship of God, so in polity, morality, and natural philosophy ; all the wisdom of the Heathens was derived from them ; letters, history, arts and sciences, literal and mechanic, owe their rise or improvement to them. Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle, borrowed their best things from them ; of which learned men may be convinced, by what Josephus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Justin Martyr, Eusebius Cæsariensis, and others, who were masters both of Hebrew and Heathen philosophy, have observed : and the English reader may be satisfied of the truth of this, by reading Gale's Court of the Gentiles : what men were there ever in any nation under the sun, to be compared with Abraham, Moses, Solomon, and Daniel ? And even after the Babylonish captivity, and when they were greatly sunk and degenerated, between that and the time of Christ, there were writers of considerable note among them, in divinity, morality, and history ; as the books of the Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, the Maccabees shew ; which though *apocryphal*, and not of divine inspiration, have many things very valuable and useful in them, and are thought proper to be bound up with our Bibles, and read by the common people. Josephus and Philo the Jew, who wrote about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, are in great credit with learned men ; though the former has his mistakes, and many things of the mythic or fabulous kind ; and the other is a writer in the allegorical way ; it may be the reason why these are had in esteem, and not the Misnic and Talmudic writers is, because they wrote in Greek, and are more easily understood than the latter, whose language is difficult, and their style crabbed and rugged : and since I have mentioned these two writers, I cannot but declare my opinion, that such who make it their study to illustrate the New Testament with Greek authors, would do well to compare the Greek of these two writers, and also that of the Septuagint, with the New Testament ; since their writings were nearest the times of the New Testament writers, and they were Jews, as they were : but to proceed, though since the rejection of the Messiah and his Gospel, the Jews are given up to a judicial blindness, and hardness, yet it is only in those things which relate thereunto ; they are not deprived of their common sense and reason ; and many of them since, have been famous for their knowledge and learning, particularly in *physic* and *astronomy* ; and some of them have made a very great figure in the courts of princes, and have

<sup>b</sup> Vid. Pocock Porta Mosis, p. 144—147.

<sup>d</sup> Prefat. ad Catalecta Rabbinica.

<sup>c</sup> Caphtor Uperah, Beer Haggolah, Derash Moseh, Leb haarjeh, Ammudeah Shibgnah, Ollelot Ephraim.

been made use of in forming and executing political schemes. Menasseh ben Israel, who lived in the last century, was a man of considerable reading and learning, and held a correspondence with many learned men among the Christians of his day; and by his writings appears to be well versed in divinity, and in ancient and modern philosophy: and though learning in all its parts, and even Talmudic learning itself, is now much neglected by that people, as one of their Rabbins here in London complained to me some years ago, yet do we find that they want capacity? that they are men void of common sense and understanding? Do we not find them acute enough in their trade and commerce among us? What reason is there for this general calumny? Are not they able to give an account of their own nation, their rites, customs, and usages?

But be they as fabulous and as foolish, as unfaithful and wicked, as they can be said, or thought to be, do they exceed the Heathen writers, poets, historians, and philosophers in such a character? who were not only all of them idolaters, but many of them very profane persons; whose writings are stuffed with lies, lewdness, and all manner of wickedness; yet many learned men have employed their time in the study of them, and have taken many things from them, for the illustration of the sacred text; and how have they rejoiced, as if they had found a great spoil, when they have lighted upon any thing, that has served to explain a word or phrase in the New Testament, or settle and establish the sense of one; or could observe any usage, rite, or ceremony among the Heathens, to which it has been thought there might be an allusion in it; though it has been, as Braunius observes\*, in a Gentile Aristotle or Epicurus; in an impure Aristophanes, Martial, Lucian, Catullus, Petronius, those ministers of wickedness; or in a lying Homer, Hesiod, and Ovid, those makers of fables, and others of the same stamp: for my part, I do not object to such a method of illustrating Scripture; I am of opinion, that all kind of learning contributes to the knowledge of the Scripture, and all should be employed that way, and be subservient to it: Erasmus and Beza formerly, and of late Elsner, Bos, Wolfius, and Raphelius, have done much this way, to great profit and advantage. I don't dislike the illustration of the passage in Rev. ii. 17, concerning the white stone, and new name in it, by those lines of Ovid,

*Mos erat antiquis niveis atrisque lapillis  
His damnare reos, illis absolvere culpa;*

Though they are taken out of the Fables of his Metamorphoses: all that I insist upon is, that Jewish writers should stand at least upon an equal foot with Heathen ones, in things relating to their own language, rites, and customs; and this is no unreasonable demand; and in it I have a very learned ancient writer on my side: "The things of the Hebrews are to be taken from themselves, and not elsewhere; as we learn the things of the Phœnicians from the Phœnicians; and the things of the Egyptians from the Egyptians; as also the things of the Grecians from those that are most famous among them; and the things of Philosophers from the Philosophers, and not from those who are unskilful in philosophy; so I reckon it must follow, (says he,) that the things of the Hebrews must be taken from their writings, and not elsewhere." And indeed it should seem as if these ought to have the preference to Heathen writers: since they profess the worship of the one true, and living God, believe a divine revelation, receive the books of the Old Testament, which many of their commentators have wrote, in many things, well upon: who when they write well, as it is confessed, none do better. And especially, they ought surely to be regarded and credited, when what they say agrees with the New Testament, and serves to illustrate and confirm it; of which kind are the things produced in the following Exposition.

These men are indeed enemies to the Gospel of Christ, but *fas est & ab hoste doceri*; and the concessions of an enemy may be made use of to great advantage against him, and for the confirmation of truth: besides, the people of the Jews are to be converted in the latter day, and it is worth our while to be at pains to convince them of their errors, to urge their ancient writings against them, and in favour of Christianity, to retort their own arguments upon them, to recommend the reading of the New Testament unto them, by shewing the agreement of its style with their writings, and by proving facts in it out of them, and so remove their prejudices against it; but if nothing of this kind can be hoped for from such a method of proceeding, surely it must be

\* Selecta Sacra, l. 5. Exerc. 2. sect. 27. p. 611, 612.

† Euseb. Evangel. prepar. l. 7. c. 8. p. 306.

of use to us Christians. Is it of no moment and importance to the cause of Christianity, that the Jews themselves allow that there was such a person as Jesus of Nazareth, about the time he is said to live; that the names of his parents were Joseph and Mary; that he was born in Bethlehem of Judah; that he was for some time in Egypt; that he preached very much in Galilee; that he wrought miracles, cleansed lepers, &c. that he rode to Jerusalem on an ass, and was put to death by the Jews at the time of the passover? All which, with other things related by them, agree with the evangelic history, and confirm it: they own there was such a person as John the Baptist, who administered baptism in those times; they give us the names of several of the disciples of Christ, whom they allow to have had the gift of healing diseases. Is it of no use to us, nor any satisfaction to our minds, to observe from the Jews themselves, that there were such traditions among them the New Testament speaks of, and condemns? and that we are able, not only to shew in the gross that there were such things as the traditions of the elders, but that we can produce the particular ones our Lord mentions, and such customs and usages as are referred to by him and his apostles? Besides, are there not many, not only words and phrases, but things, which would have been morally impossible to understand in an ordinary way, without the assistance of Jewish learning? What could we have known of their synagogues, and synagogue-worship? of the several sects of religion among them? of their sanhedrim, and other courts of judicature? of their scourging with forty stripes, save one? of their phylacteries? of being uncircumcised after circumcision? of a sabbath-day's journey, with a multitude of other things, as will appear by the following exposition? Upon such considerations as these many great men have declared their sense of the great usefulness of Jewish writings for the understanding of the New Testament: and that it may appear I am not alone in my sentiments on this head, I shall produce the testimonies of several of them.

Our countryman Mr. Hugh Broughton, a man of great knowledge in the languages, and especially in the eastern languages, thus expresses himself: "The speech of the New Testament in every part, doth shew clearly that God is the author of it, insomuch that the Jews might know by the style that it came from heaven: in it we shall find the phrase, first, of the common Greek writers; secondly, of the *seventy-two* interpreters; thirdly, of the Talmudics; and fourthly, words made by the Apostles.—There is no other way to make Christians ready in the Bible, but by handling the Gospel by Talmudics, to whose tenour of study all the New Testament's style is bent.—The New Testament, speaking to Jews, is applied to their manner of speech, and plain, to a Talmudic, where it is hardest to us. The holy spirit useth the unlearned Jews—in Scribes learning, in writing for Scribes, to pass them in their Talmudical science; every part of the New Testament sheweth this to Talmudics; and Saint Paul, in school education, heard Gamaliel their doctor, and frameth all that Epistle which he wrote to them to meet with their Talmudics." And the Evangelist Matthew, he calls the Talmudic of Talmudists.

The learned Buxtorf<sup>b</sup> says of the Talmud, that there are in it many things of great moment, to illustrate, in a very remarkable manner, an infinite number of places in the New Testament, as to words, phrases, and history.

Cocceius<sup>a</sup>, speaking of the traditions of the Jews, has these words: "these are of use either to the fuller understanding of the law of Moses, as ritual, judicial, and moral; or for the illustration of foreign laws; or to give light into the histories of Jewish affairs; or which is greatest of all, for the confirmation of the evangelic history; where much mention is made of Jewish customs, laws, and traditions—the knowledge of the Talmud, and of Talmudic writings, affords very remarkable light for the illustration of the New Testament.—Seeing that language was in use in the age of Christ, and his apostles, which is with the Talmudists; and they spoke in no other, as is evident by clear arguments and testimonies of learned men: the comparing of that language with the phraseology of the New Testament, must needs contribute much for the illustration of it. Verily, if any one would but try to translate places into Hebrew, he will find that in many, Talmudic words and phrases are nearer than Bible ones."

<sup>a</sup> Works, Tom. II. p. 416, 422, 693, 707.

<sup>b</sup> Epist. Dedicat. ad Lex. Talmud.

<sup>1</sup> Prefat. ad. Sanhedrin & Maccot.



Rhenferdius\* begins a very learned dissertation of his after this manner: "Seeing all they deserve praise among Christians, who being furnished with various sorts of learning, employ their thoughts and cares for the illustration of the sacred Scripture, I know none that better deserve it than those, who being skilled in the Hebrew language and laws, from thence, as from its proper seat, borrow and hold forth light to the history and phraseology of the New Testament. Greece has much, Rome also, formerly mistress of the nations, has much; which being neglected, or not rightly enough understood, in vain you labour to understand the New Testament; yet as much as that is, which indeed is great, it is but as a drop from the ocean, in comparison of those things which the monuments of the Hebrews pour in for the same use, not by bushels, and measures of three bushels, but by whole barns full."

Muhlius<sup>1</sup>, in an apology of his for the study of the *Talmud*, delivers himself in the following manner: "The Talmudic writings are of great moment for the understanding of the sacred Scripture; for in the versions of the holy Bible, how many faults and errors are there arising from ignorance of things in the Talmud? Such an ignorant interpreter easily slips, and also leads others by the same precipices. What will he do in the Old Testament, where all things are full of Talmudic argument? What in the New? where indeed the context is Greek, the words, I confess, are Greek, and the types are Greek, but the style is plainly Jewish, and full of Talmudic savour; so that the Talmudic volumes may seem like a verbal commentary upon the New Testament, which no one will deny but he that is determined to maintain an hypothesis." And after giving many instances in the New Testament, shewing and proving what he had asserted, he further adds; without the resolution and solid explanation of the Talmudists, these things would remain entirely inexplicable, and be only known to such who have learned them from the Misnic and Talmudic fountains: and hence it is, that the most learned men who know this full well have employed their chief studies this way, that from Talmudic and Rabbinical writings they might most happily illustrate the books of the New Testament; and then particularly mentions Drusius, Grotius, Capellus, Cartwright, and Lightfoot.

Surehusius<sup>m</sup> relates, what by experience he had found to be true, how that in his younger days he applied himself to the reading of Greek authors for the better understanding of the New Testament; but did not receive that advantage from them he expected, the style and language not agreeing, by reason of the distance between the writers of the New Testament, and them: and he goes on to inform his readers, how when he came to engage in Hebrew studies, they not only led him in a right way to the understanding of the Old Testament, but beyond his expectation gave him no small light into the more difficult passages of the New Testament; and for which, when he rightly considered the thing, he found there was good reason, since the writers of it were Hebrews, who had had an Hebrew master, whose doctrine they had heard both in the ancient Hebrew language used in Bible exercitations among the doctors, and in the Syriac dialect, then common in conversation, and in sermons to the unlearned.

Wagenseil<sup>n</sup>, I have before observed, affirms, that there is no book in the world, that can be of that service for the illustration of the holy Scriptures, as the *Talmud*; and adds, "that the institutions (or traditions) which are mentioned in the Talmud, did certainly of old obtain among the Jews, the authority of the New Testament openly convinces us; in which many of them are found, in the most express words; wherefore John Lightfoot, an Englishman, a man well versed in Hebrew literature, performed a laudable work, in explaining the four Evangelists; when out of the Talmud chiefly, he studied to bring light to the sacred writers, and to illustrate some of the more obscure sayings in them: that laborious work I highly value, for the whole is filled with deep learning, and furnishes out many things, of which no interpreter ever thought, nor could think of, without skill in the Talmud: would to God he had lived, to handle all the sacred books in the same manner; but seeing death has prevented it, it would be a desirable thing, if another, by the way shewed him, would endea-

\* Dissert. 1. de decem otiosis Synagog. Thes. 1. p. 1, 2.

<sup>1</sup> Prefat. Apologet. pro studio Thalmudico ad Coccei Titul. Sanhedrin & Maccot.

<sup>m</sup> Prefat. ad Misnam.

<sup>n</sup> Prefat. ad Tela Ignea, p. 65, 66.

“vour to go on with it to the end; who would certainly gain great favour and thanks, among all those who have a just value for such things.” More testimonies of this kind might have been produced, but these may suffice; nor should I have mentioned these, but to shew that I am not singular in my opinion and sentiments, concerning the manner of explaining passages in the New Testament, out of Jewish writings; and that this is not a rash start and sally of mine, which some, who are utter strangers to these things, might have imagined, but is what has been thought of, well weighed, considered, and approved of by men of the greatest figure, and with whom I am not to be named.

What some learned men on the other side of the question have affirmed, is monstrous and shocking, that whatever the Jews have delivered in their Misnah and Gemara, all the wisdom of the ancient Hebrews, the traditions of the elders, whatever they have in them concerning their antiquities, rites, and customs, especially those which give any light to the New Testament, are taken from the New Testament itself, from the sayings of Christ, and his apostles, from the fathers, and from Christian apostates; and that Christ, and his apostles, have no respect to the rites and customs of the Jews, in use before their time; and therefore nothing can be learned out of the Talmud to expound places in the New Testament. Braunius<sup>p</sup> has given a full answer to all this with a great deal of spirit and just reasoning. I fret at my heart, says he, to see men, meaning particularly Vossius and Owen, otherwise well versed in Greek and Latin authors, teach things so absurd and manifestly false, with so much boldness; and they must pardon me, if I say with so much ignorance, for I say the truth: whoever has but just dipped into the Misnah and Gemara, and other ancient books, will at once observe, that they that assert such things, are most ignorant of Jewish antiquity, and have never read the above writings; and have only took some things, and these often both bad and false, out of the observations of others. He rightly takes notice of the Jews’ implacable hatred of Christ, his apostles, and the fathers of the Christian church, who had their writings in the utmost abhorrence and detestation, and would never borrow any thing from them. He observes, that this is as ridiculous as to suggest, that the Greek and Roman writers took out of the New Testament what they say concerning Cæsar Augustus, Cyrenius, Pontius Pilate, and other things which relate to the Roman history; that it is equally as great a piece of madness to imagine that the Jews took what they have written concerning the rites and customs of their own nation, out of the New Testament, as it would be to suppose that the Heathen writers have taken from thence what they say concerning the Olympic games, and other customs alluded to by the apostles. He exposes, in a very just manner, the folly of such an assertion, by observing that the Jews, according to it, would have known nothing of synagogues in Judea; nor ever thought of phylacteries, and the enlarging the borders of their garments; of paying tithes of mint, anise, cummin, and other herbs; of a sabbath-day’s journey; of drawing on the fore-skin after circumcision; and of the law of scourging with forty stripes, save one; nor perhaps would they have sworn by heaven and earth, by Jerusalem, by the temple, and by their head, or have made use of pipers and mourners at funerals, or forbid the plucking ears of corn on the sabbath-day, except they had met with these things in our New Testament; all which would be monstrously ridiculous to suppose; and yet no more so than what these writers suggest.

Some may think I have made too much use of Jewish authorities in the following Exposition; my concern is, that I have made no more use of them; and that my reading and observations have not furnished me with more materials of this kind, which I am very well satisfied might be obtained from them; for which reason I should have chosen to have deferred the publication of it, hoping I might be able, by such means, to give further light to some passages of Scripture; and only the importunity of my friends, and the consideration of the uncertainty of life, have prevailed upon me to let it go into the world as it is. I have used all diligence, both from my own reading, and from the observations of others, to make it as perfect in this way as I could; and from none have I had so much help and assistance as from the great Dr. Lightfoot, who has broke the ice for me, and pointed out the way in which I should proceed, as Wagenseil observes. On consulting my *Adversaria*, and comparing my notes with what the

<sup>p</sup> Selecta sacra, l. 5. Exercitat. 2. p. 617. 621—629.

doctor has observed, I found some things taken notice of which he has published; and indeed, it can hardly be thought it should be otherwise in reading the same writings, and with the same view; but I have not thought proper to drop them on that account, but have rather chose to make use of others produced by him, unobserved by me, in order to make this work as complete as I could, and which lovers of Hebrew learning will thank me for; though the reader will not be able to observe scarce any thing but what is either corrected, improved, or confirmed. And as for those who may not have a taste for these things, I hope they will find without them a satisfactory exposition of the sacred text; and I may further observe, that citations of this sort will not appear so frequently and largely in the other parts of the work, as in the first volume. It is very possible, that my fondness for this kind of literature may have betrayed me into some weaknesses, which I hope will be overlooked. And no doubt but there are mistakes made by me in this sort of learning itself, which men of candour and ingenuity, especially such who know the difficulty and intricacy of such studies, will not bear hard upon me for, but gently correct. Some of my readers may be offended with some things they may meet within the citations out of Jewish writings, not being used to such reading; and this is an infelicity that attends testimonies produced out of both Heathenish and Jewish authors, that there is often something not pleasing and grateful to Christian ears; I have, as much as I could, pared off what might not be so agreeable; but sometimes it has been necessary to recite more than is eligible, in order to finish the sentence, and complete the sense; and the reader should observe, that he is no further to regard the citation, than as it concerns that for which it is made, the phraseology, history, rite, or custom referred unto.

As for the Oriental versions I have chiefly made use of in this work, they are those that are published in the London Polyglott Bible; and I have, for the most part, followed the translations of them in it, choosing rather that my readers should trust to the labours of those learned men concerned in that work, than to that little knowledge and skill I have in those languages. The various readings of the text I have not entered into a critical examination of; I have only selected some of the most material ones, which differ most from the commonly received reading, or agree with the Vulgate Latin and eastern versions, or furnish out an useful observation. Nor need the reader be uneasy, lest the authority of the Scripture should be weakened, and become doubtful by these different readings: for as a learned man of our own nation has observed<sup>1</sup>, “it is an invincible reason for the Scriptures’ part, that other escapes should be so purposely and infinitely let pass, and yet no saving or substantial part at all scarce moved out of its place. To say the truth, these varieties of readings in a few bye-places do the same office to the main Scripture, as the variations of the compass to the whole magnet of the earth; the mariner knows so much the better for these how to steer his course.”

I have nothing more to observe, only that I have here and there taken notice of the more material objections of the Jews to the writings of the New Testament, and have given a short answer to them; and the rather, as they may partly serve to remove their prejudices against them, and partly to confirm Christians in them; so likewise to obviate the exceptions of deists, who join with them in them, and make use of the same, and improve them to the same purpose.

As to my religious principles from which I am denominated by men, they are pretty much known in the world by the writings I have already published, and my notes on the several parts of scripture will be found to correspond with them. I have studied consistency with truth, and with myself; and I hope nothing will appear contradictory to the form of sound words, and the analogy of faith, or be yea and nay, but harmonious, uniform, and all of a piece.

And now I do, in the most sincere and grateful manner, give thanks to God for that measure of health and strength of body; and for all the gifts and graces of his spirit afforded me, by which I have been enabled to go through this arduous work thus far, and would be depending upon him for fresh supplies of grace and strength for the publication of the whole. I most freely acknowledge, that all I have of nature, literature, and grace, I have from him, from whom every good and perfect gift comes; I have nothing but what I have received: nor would I glory as though

<sup>1</sup> J. Gregory’s Preface to his Works.

## THE PREFACE.

I had received it not: and if I have wrote any thing contrary to the divine perfections, or what may reflect any dishonour on the dear name of Jesus, or be any way injurious to the truth, as it is in him, or be detrimental to the interest of pure and undefiled religion, I do most humbly entreat forgiveness at the hands of God; I am sure I have not wrote any thing of this kind knowingly, and on purpose. To conclude, I do most earnestly desire and implore the blessing of God upon these labours of mine, that they might be useful to many in reading them, that their minds may be enlightened, their faith may be established, their knowledge of divine things may be increased, and God may be glorified.

---

# AN EXPOSITION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

## THE GOSPEL, ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.

THE subject of this book, and indeed of all the writings of the New Testament, is the Gospel. The Greek word *Εὐαγγέλιον* signifies a joyful message, good news, glad tidings of good things; such as Christ was anointed to preach, the Angels brought to the shepherds, and the Evangelists, Apostles, and Ministers of Christ published to the world. Isa. lxi. 1. and lii. 7. Luke ii. 10. And such is the account given by this inspired writer, of the incarnation, life, actions, ministry, miracles, sufferings, and death of Jesus Christ; whereby peace and reconciliation, pardon and righteousness, atonement and redemption, life and salvation, are obtained for lost, perishing sinners. The Jews, to whom the message of grace was first sent, and among whom the Gospel was first preached, having despised and rejected it; they and their posterity, in allusion to the word *Evangelion*, most wickedly and blasphemously call the whole New Testament, *און גליון* or *עון גליון* *Aven Gilion*<sup>a</sup>, a revelation, or volume of iniquity and vanity; but blessed are the people that know the joyful sound, Psal. lxxxix. 15.

The writer of this Gospel, Matthew, who also was called Levi in Luke v. 27. was by occupation a publican, or tax-gatherer, and was in his employ when Christ called him by his grace. He was one of the twelve Apostles sent forth by Christ to preach the Gospel of the kingdom, Matth. x. 3. and was honoured to be the first of the writers of the New Testament, and to be the first publisher therein of the good news of the incarnate Saviour; and was a wonderful instance

of the rich and sovereign grace of God. Though he was employed in collecting the Roman tax, yet he was of Jewish extract; as appears from his being called the son of Alphaeus, Mark ii. 14. and from his name Matthew Levi; for as the latter, so the former is an Hebrew name. The Jews say<sup>b</sup> one of the disciples of Jesus was called *מתתאי*, Matthai or Matthew: his name signifies a gift or given; he was one of those the Father had given to Christ, and was kept by him, when the son of perdition was lost, John xvii. 6, 9, 11, 12.

It may not be improper to inquire in what language this Gospel was written. The ancient Christian writers were generally of opinion, that Matthew wrote it in Hebrew; Papias and<sup>c</sup> Pantænus were of this mind, as also Irenæus<sup>d</sup>, Origen<sup>e</sup>, Eusebius<sup>f</sup>, Athanasius<sup>g</sup>, Epiphanius<sup>h</sup>, and Jerom<sup>i</sup>; and it is asserted in the titles of the Arabic and Persic versions, and at the end of the Syriac version of this Gospel, that it was written in that language; and this opinion is espoused by Grotius and Hammond, though justly exploded by others; for what has been published by Munster, Mercer, Hutter, and Robertson, are translations, made by themselves or others, and of no antiquity: and since Hebrew and Syriac words are interpreted in this Gospel, see chap. i. 23. and xxvii. 33, 46. which would not have been done, had it been written in either language; and since Matthew generally follows the Septuagint version in the passages cited by him out of the Old Testament; and since the Hebrew language was

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Sabbath. fol. 116. 1. Vet. Nizzachou. p. 15, 39, 87, 94, 137, 186. Ed. Wagenseil.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Saubhedrim, fol. 43. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 39. p. 113. Vid. ib. l. 5. c. 8. p. 172. c. 10. p. 175. & l. 6. c. 25. p. 226.

<sup>d</sup> Adv. Hæres. l. 3. c. 1.

<sup>e</sup> In Matt. Tom. 1. p. 203. Ed. Huet

<sup>f</sup> Eccl. Hist. l. 3. cap. 24. p. 95.

<sup>g</sup> Synops. sacr. Script. p. 134. Vol. 2.

<sup>h</sup> Contra Hæres. l. 1. Her. 29. & 30.

<sup>i</sup> Catalog. Script. Eccles. fol. 90. Tom. 1. ad Hedib. fol. 46. Tom. 3.

not generally known at that time to the common people, only to the learned; for the law and the prophets, when read in the synagogues in that language, required an interpreter; and since the Greek tongue was the language more commonly spoken, and the rest of the Evangelists wrote in Greek, and the Gospel was designed for the Gentiles as well as the Jews; it is most reasonable to conclude that this Gospel also was written in Greek; whereby that ancient prophecy was fulfilled, at least in part, *God shall enlarge or persuade Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem*, Gen. ix. 27. the Gospel being published in the language of Japheth, the Greek language, which the Jews, the posterity of Shem, now understood; agreeably to which the Talmudic writers interpret the prophecy; says <sup>a</sup> Bar Kaphra, mentioning the above words, "They shall speak בלשון של יפת in the language of Japheth, in

"the tents of Shem;" or, "the words of the law shall be spoken in the language of Japheth, in the midst of the tents of Shem." R. Jochanan <sup>m</sup> explains them thus: "רבריו של יפת the words of Japheth shall be in the tents of Shem; and says R. Chiya ben Aba, the sense of it is, The beauty of Japheth shall be in the tents of Shem." Which the gloss interprets thus: "The beauty of Japheth is the language of Javan, or the Greek language, which language is more beautiful than that of any other of the sons of Japheth." The time when this Gospel was written is said <sup>n</sup> by some to be in the eighth or ninth, by others, in the fifteenth year after the ascension of Christ, when the Evangelist had received the extraordinary gifts of the spirit, among which was the gift of tongues; and when the promise of Christ had been made good to him, John xiv. 26.

### CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1. *THE book of the generation of Jesus Christ*, &c.] This is the genuine title of the book, which was put to it by the Evangelist himself; for the former seems to be done by another hand. This book is an account, not of the divine, but human generation of Christ; and not merely of his birth, which lies in a very little compass; nor of his genealogy, which is contained in this chapter; but also of his whole life and actions, of what was said, done, and suffered by him. It is an Hebrew way of speaking, much like that in Gen. v. 1. and which the Septuagint render by the same phrase as here; and as that was the book of the generation of the first Adam; this is the book of the generation of the second Adam. The Jews call their blasphemous history of the life of Jesus, ספר תולדות ישו, *The book of the generations of Jesus*.

This account of Christ begins with the name of the Messiah, well known to the Jews, *the son of David*; not only to the Scribes and Pharisees, the more learned part of the nation, but to the common people, even to persons of the meanest rank and figure among them. See Matt. ix. 27. and xii. 23. and xxii. 42. Nothing is more common in the Jewish writings, than for בן דוד *the son of David* to stand alone for the Messiah; it would be endless to cite or refer to all the testimonies of this kind; only take the following <sup>p</sup>, R. Jochanan says, in the generation in which בן דוד *the son of David* comes, the disciples of the wise men shall be lessened, and the rest, their eyes shall fail with grief and sorrow, and many calamities and severe decrees shall be renewed; when the first visitation is gone, a second will hasten to come. It is a tradition of the Rabbins (about) the week (of years) in which בן דוד *the son of David* comes, that in the first year this scripture will be fulfilled, Amos iv. 7. *I will rain upon one city*, &c. in the second, arrows of famine will be sent forth; in the third there will be a great famine, and men, women and

children, holy men and men of business will die, and the law will be forgotten by those who learn it; in the fourth there will be plenty and not plenty; in the fifth there will be great plenty, and they shall eat and drink and rejoice, and the law shall return to them that learn it; in the sixth there will be voices (or thunders;) in the seventh there will be wars; and in the going out of the seventh בן דוד *the son of David* comes. The tradition of R. Judah says, In the generation in which בן דוד *the son of David* comes, the house of the congregation (the school or synagogue) shall become a brothel-house, Galilee shall be destroyed, and Gabalene shall become desolate; and the men of Gabul (or the border) shall go about from city to city, and shall find no mercy; and the wisdom of the scribes shall stink; and they that are afraid to sin shall be despised; and the face of that generation shall be as the face of a dog, and truth shall fail, as it is said, Isa. lix. 15.—The tradition of R. Nehorai says, In the generation in which בן דוד *the son of David* comes, young men shall make ashamed the faces of old men, and old men shall stand before young men, the daughter shall rise up against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; nor will a son reverence his father. The tradition of R. Nehemiah says, In the generation in which בן דוד *the son of David* comes, impudence will increase, and the honourable will deal wickedly, and the whole kingdom will return to the opinion of the Sadducees, and there will be no reproof.—'Tis a tradition of the Rabbins, that בן דוד *the son of David* will not come, until traitorous practices are increased, or the disciples are lessened, or until the smallest piece of money fails from the purse, or until redemption is despaired of." In which passage, besides the proof for which it is cited, may be observed, how exactly the description of the age of the Messiah,

<sup>a</sup> T. Hieros. Megilla, fol. 71. 2.

<sup>1</sup> Bereshit. Rabba, sect. 36. fol. 32. 1.

<sup>m</sup> T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 9. 2.

<sup>n</sup> Vid. Fabricii Biblioth. Græc. l. 4. c. 5. sect. 2. p. 127. & Vales. not. in Euseb. Eccl. Hist. p. 52.

<sup>o</sup> Apud Wagenseil. Tela Ignea.

<sup>p</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 97. 1. Shir Hashirim Rabba, fol. 11. 4.

as given by the Jews themselves, agrees with the generation in which Jesus the true Messiah came; who as he was promised to David, and it was expected he should descend from him, so he did according to the flesh; God raised him up of his seed, Rom. i. 3. Acts xiii. 23. it follows, *The son of Abraham*. Abraham was the first to whom a particular promise was made, that the Messiah should spring from, Gen. xxii. 18. The first promise in Gen. iii. 15. only signified that he should be the seed of the woman; and it would have been sufficient for the fulfilment of it, if he had been born of any woman, in whatsoever nation, tribe, or family; but by the promise made to Abraham he was to descend from him, as Jesus did; who took upon him the seed of Abraham, Heb. ii. 16. or assumed a human nature which sprung from him, and is therefore truly the son of Abraham. The reason why Christ is first called the son of David, and then the son of Abraham, is partly because the former was a more known name of the Messiah; and partly that the transition to the genealogy of Christ might be more easy and natural, beginning with Abraham, whom the Jews call ראש הדין the *head of the genealogy*, and the root and foundation of it, as Matthew here makes him to be; wherefore a Jew can't be displeas'd with the Evangelist for beginning the genealogy of our Lord at Abraham.

Ver. 2. *Abraham begat Isaac, &c.*] The descent of Christ from Abraham is in the line of Isaac; Abraham begat Ishmael before Isaac, and others after him, but they are not mentioned; because the Messiah was not to spring from any of them, but from Isaac, of whom it is said, *in Isaac shall thy seed be called*, Gen. xxi. 12. and who, as he was a progenitor, so an eminent type of Christ; being Abraham's only beloved son; and particularly in the binding, sacrifice and deliverance of him. *Isaac begat Jacob*. The genealogy of Christ proceeds from Isaac, in the line of Jacob. Isaac begat Esau, as well as Jacob, and they two were twins, but one was loved, and the other hated; wherefore no mention is made of Esau, he had no concern in the Messiah, nor was he to spring from him, but from Jacob, or Israel, by whose name he is sometimes called, Is. xlix. 3. *Jacob begat Judas and his brethren*. The lineage of Christ is carried on from Jacob in the line of Judah; the reason of which is, because it was particularly prophesied that the Messiah, Shiloh, the prince and chief ruler, should be of him, Gen. xlix. 10. 1 Chron. v. 2. And it is evident beyond all contradiction, that our Lord sprung from his tribe, Heb. vii. 14. The reason why the brethren of Judah, who were eleven in number, are mentioned, when the brethren of Isaac and Jacob are not, is, because though the Messiah did not spring from them, yet the promise of him was made to the twelve tribes, who all expected him, and to whom he was sent, and came. These made but one body of men, and therefore, though the Messiah came from the tribe of Judah, yet he is said to be of them all, Rom. ix. 4, 5.

Ver. 3. *And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar, &c.*] The genealogical account of Christ goes on from Judah in the line of Phares, with whom Zara is mentioned; not because they were twins, for so were Jacob and Esau, and yet the latter is taken no notice of; but it may be because of what happened at their birth, see Gen. xxxviii. 28, 29, 30. But the line of the Messiah was in Phares, and very rightly is he put in the genealogy of Christ, the Jews themselves being witnesses; who expressly say, that "the Messiah comes from him." These two are said to be begotten of Thamar, daughter-in-law to Judah; who, though she was a Canaanitish woman, has the honour to be named in the genealogy of Christ, who came to save Gentiles as well as Jews: nor can the Jews reproach our Evangelist for putting her into the account; since they themselves frequently acknowledge that the Messiah was to spring from her: they say, "there are two women from whom come David the king, and Solomon, and the king Messiah; and these two are Thamar and Ruth." Jonathan Ben Uzziel on Gen. xxxviii. 6. says, that Thamar was the daughter of Shem the great. *And Phares begat Esrom*; called Hezron, Ruth iv. 18. where the same phrase is used as here. He had another son called Hamul, 1 Chron. ii. 5. but the account proceeds from Phares, in the line of Esrom. *And Esrom begat Aram*; called Ram in Ruth iv. 18. where the same way of speaking is used as here. Esrom also besides him begat Jerahmeel, Chelubai, or Caleb, and Segub, 1 Chron. ii. 9, 21. but these are not in the line. Elihu, who conversed with Job, is said to be of the kindred of Ram, Job xxxii. 2. whether the same with Ram or Aram, may be inquired.

Ver. 4. *And Aram begat Aminadab, &c.*] Which, with what follows in this verse, exactly agrees with the genealogical account in Ruth iv. 19, 20.

Ver. 5. *And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab, &c.*] That Salmon begat Booz, is affirmed in Ruth iv. 21. but it is not there said, nor any where else in the Old Testament, as here, that he begat him of Rahab, that is, of Rahab the harlot. This the Evangelist had from tradition, or from the Jewish records. That the Messiah was to spring from Boaz is asserted by the Jewish writers; and they also own that Rahab was married to a prince in Israel, which some say was Joshua: they pretend that she was ten years of age when the Israelites came out of Egypt; that she played the harlot all the forty years they were in the wilderness, and was married to Joshua upon the destruction of Jericho. To excuse this marriage with a Canaanitish woman, they tell us, she was not of the seven nations with whom marriage was forbid; and moreover, that she became a proselyte when the spies were received by her: they own that some very great persons of their nation sprung from her, as Jeremiah, Maaseiah, Hanameel, Shallum, Baruch, Ezekiel, Ne-riah, Seraiah, and Huldah the prophetess. The truth of the matter is, she became the wife of Salmon, or Salma, as he is called, 1 Chron. ii. 11. And in the

<sup>4</sup> Juchasin, fol. 8. 1. Tzeror Hammor. fol. 99. 3. and 154. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Schemot Rabba, sect. 30. fol. 131. 4. Caphtor, fol. 122. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 105. 4. Gloss in T. Bab. Maccot. fol. 23. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 49. 2. Zohar in Gen. fol. 63. 3.

<sup>7</sup> T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 14. 2. Juchasin, fol. 10. 1. Shalshet Hakhala, fol. 7. 2. Aurb. Kinchi & Laniado in Josh. 6. 25. & Meas Kotensnis Mitzvot Torah. pr. neg. 119.



Targum on Ruth iv. 20. is said to be of Bethlehem; he was the son of Nahshon or Naasson, a famous prince in Judah, and the head and captain of the tribe, Numb. i. 7. and ii. 3. and vii. 12, 17. and x. 14. And from Rahab sprung the Messiah, another instance of a Gentile in the genealogy of Christ; and a third follows. *And Booz begat Obed of Ruth*; who was a Moabitess. It is a notion that generally obtains among the Jews<sup>a</sup>, that she was the daughter of Eglon, grandson of Balak, king of Moab; and it is often taken notice of by them<sup>b</sup>, that the king Messiah should descend from her; and also other persons of note, as David, Hezekiah, Josiah, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, and Daniel; wherefore the mentioning of her in this genealogy, can't be said by them to be impertinent. *And Obed begat Jesse*. Jesse is thought to be, not the immediate son of Obed, but to be of the fourth generation from him; though no others are mentioned between them in Ruth, any more than here. A Jewish writer observes<sup>c</sup>, that "the wise men of the Gentiles say, that there were other generations between them; perhaps, says he, they have taken this from the wise men of Israel, and so it is thought." Now notwithstanding this, Jesse may be said to be begotten by Obed, as Hezekiah's posterity, who were carried captive into Babylon, are said to be begotten by him, Is. xxxix. 7. though they were a remove of several generations from him. However, Jesse is rightly put among the progenitors of Christ, since the Messiah was to be a rod of his stem, and the branch of his roots, and is called the root of Jesse, Is. xi. 1, 10. which words are interpreted of the Messiah, by many of the Jewish writers<sup>d</sup>; and to this day the Jews pray for him in their synagogues under the name of *ישׁוּב, the son of Jesse*<sup>e</sup>.

Ver. 6. *And Jesse begat David the king, &c.*] The descent of the Messiah runs in the line of David, the youngest of Jesse's sons, who was despised by his brethren, and overlooked and neglected by his father; but God chose him, and anointed him to be king, and set him on the throne of Israel; hence he is called *David the king*; as also because he was the first king that was of the tribe of Judah, and in the genealogy of Christ, and was an eminent type of the king Messiah, who is sometimes called by the same name, Ezek. xxxiv. 24. and xxxvii. 24, 25. Hos. iii. 5. and who was to be his son, as Jesus is, and also right heir to his throne and kingdom. *And David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias*; which was Bathsheba, though not named; either because she was well known, or because of the sin she had been guilty of, which would easily be revived by mentioning her name: our translators have rightly supplied, *that had been*, and not as the Vulgate Latin, which supplies it, *that was the wife of Urias*; for Solomon was begotten of her, not while she was the wife of Uriah, but when she was the wife of David.

Ver. 7. *And Solomon begat Roboam, &c.*] Called

Rehoboam, 1 Kings xi. 43. of Naamah an Ammonitess, 1 Kings xiv. 21, 31. *And Roboam begat Abia*, sometimes called Abijam, 1 Kings xiv. 31. sometimes Abijah, 2 Chron. xii. 16. and sometimes, as here, Abia, 1 Chron. iii. 10. Him Rehoboam begat of Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom, 1 Kings xv. 2. called Michaiah, the daughter of Uriel, 2 Chron. xiii. 2. Maachah and Michaiah being the same name; or else she went by two names, as her father did. *And Abia begat Asa*, who was a good king; his mother's name is the same with the name of his father's mother; and perhaps it is not his proper mother, but his grandmother who is meant in 1 Kings xv. 10. He is wrongly called Asaph in the Persic and Ethiopic versions, and in one copy.

Ver. 8. *And Asa begat Josaphat, &c.*] Called Jehoshaphat, 1 Kings xv. 24. whom Asa begat of Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi, 1 Kings xxii. 42. He also was a very good prince. *And Josaphat begat Joram*; called Jehoram, 1 Kings xxii. 50. to whom his father gave the kingdom, because he was the first-born, 2 Chron. xxi. 3. *And Joram begat Ozias*; called Uzziah, 2 Chron. xxvi. 1. and Azariah, 2 Kings xv. 1. He was not the immediate son of Joram; there were three kings between them, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, which are here omitted; either because of the curse denounced on Ahab's family, into which Joram married, whose idolatry was punished to the third or fourth generation; or because these were princes of no good character; or because their names were not in the Jewish registers. Nor does this omission at all affect the design of the Evangelist, which is to shew that Jesus, the true Messiah, is of the house of David; nor ought the Jews to complain of it, as they do<sup>a</sup>; since such omissions are to be met with in the Old Testament, particularly in Ezra vii. 2. where six generations are omitted at once; and which is taken notice of by one of their own genealogical writers, whose words are these<sup>b</sup>; "we see in the genealogy of Ezra that he hath skipped over seven generations (perhaps it should be *six* and not *seven*, since six are only omitted) from Ahitub to Ahitub." Nor is it any objection that Joram is said to beget Ozias, which he may be said to do in the like sense, as has been before observed of Hezekiah, Is. xxxix. 7.

Ver. 9. *And Ozias begat Joatham, &c.*] Called Jotham, 2 Kings xv. 7. him Ozias begat of Jerushah, the daughter of Zadok, 2 Kings xv. 33. *And Joatham begat Achaz*, or Ahaz, 2 Kings xv. 38. to him the sign was given, and the famous prophecy of the Messiah, Is. vii. 14. *And Achaz begat Ezeckias*, or Hezekiah, 2 Kings xvi. 20. him Ahaz begat of Abi, the daughter of Zachariah, 2 Kings xviii. 2. He was a very religious king, and had that singular favour from God to have fifteen years added to his days, Is. xxxviii. 5.

Ver. 10. *And Ezeckias begat Manasses, &c.*] Or Manasseh, 2 Kings xx. 21. him Hezekiah begat of Hephzibah, 2 Kings xxi. 1. He was very remarkable

<sup>a</sup> Targ. in Ruth. i. 4. T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 105. 2. Horayot, fol. 10. 2. Nazir, fol. 23. 2. Sota, fol. 47. 1. Zohar in Deut. fol. 109. 2. Shalshelet Hakubala, fol. 8. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Targ. in Ruth iii. 15. T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 93. 7. Midrash Ruth, fol. 34. 4. Zohar in Gen. fol. 72. 1. Tzezor Haunmor, fol. 20. 4. & 123. 4. & 132. 4.

<sup>x</sup> Juchasin, fol. 10. 2.

<sup>y</sup> Targum, Aben Ezra & Kimchi in loc. & Zohar in Exod. fol. 71. 1. 2. Seder Tephillot, fol. 273. 1. & 285. 2. Ed. Basil. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 29. 1.

<sup>z</sup> R. Isaac Chizzuk Emunah, par. 2. p. 390.

<sup>d</sup> Juchasin, fol. 10. 2.

both for his sins, and for his humiliation on account of them. *And Manasses begat Amon*, of Meshullameth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah, 2 Kings xxi. 19. He was a very wicked prince. *And Amon begat Josias*, or Josiah of Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath, 2 Kings xxii. 1. He was a very pious king, and was prophesied of by name some hundreds of years before he was born, 1 Kings xiii. 2.

Ver. 11. *And Josias begat Jechonias, &c.*] This Jechonias is the same with Jehoiakim, the son of Josias, called so by Pharaoh-necho, when he made him king, whose name before was Eliakim, 2 Kings xxiii. 34. *him Josias begat of Zebudah*, the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah, ver. 36. *and his brethren.* These were Johanan, Zedekiah, and Shallum. Two of them were kings, one reigned before him, *viz.* Shailum, who is called Jehoahaz, 2 Kings xxiii. 30. compared with Jer. xxii. 11, 12, the other, *viz.* Zedekiah, called before Mattaniah, reigned after his son Jehoiakim: these being both kings, is the reason why his brethren are mentioned; as well as to distinguish him from Jechonias in the next verse; who does not appear to have had any brethren: these were about the time they were carried away to Babylon, which is not to be connected with the word *begat*: for Josiah did not beget Jechoniah and his brethren at that time, for he had been dead some years before; nor with Jechonias, for he never was carried away into Babylon, but died in Judea, and slept with his fathers, 2 Kings xxiv. 6. but with the phrase *his brethren*: and may be rendered thus, supposing *רש*; understood, *which were at, or about the carrying away to Babylon*, or the Babylonish captivity.

Ver. 12. *And after they were brought to Babylon, &c.*] Not Jechonias, but the father of Jechonias, and the Jews. *Jechonias begat Salathiel.* Not Jechonias mentioned in the former verse, but his son, called Jehoachim, 2 Kings xxiv. 6. 8. and Coniah, Jer. xxii. 24, 28. both which are rendered Jechonias by the Septuagint in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 8. Jer. xxii. 24. and he is so called, 1 Chron. iii. 16. Abulpharagius<sup>c</sup> calls him Junachir, and says he is the same who in Matthew is called Juchonia; and he asserts him to be the father of Daniel the Prophet. But here a considerable difficulty arises, how he can be said to beget Salathiel, called Shealtiel, Hagg. i. 1. when he was pronounced *childless*, Jer. xxii. 30. To remove which, it may be observed, that the sentence pronounced may be considered with this tacit condition or proviso, if he repented not. Now the Jews have a tradition<sup>d</sup>, that he did repent in prison, upon which the sentence was revoked; but there is no need to suppose this, though it is not an unreasonable supposition; for the sentence does not imply that he should have no children, but rather that he should, as will appear upon reading the whole; *thus saith the Lord, write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.* Besides, the Hebrew word יריי, rendered *childless*, comes

from ערר, which signifies to *make naked or bare*, and so denotes not only such as have no children, or are bereft of them, but such as are by any providence stripped of the blessings of life, and are left bare, destitute, and unhappy, as Jechonias and his posterity were: however, the Jews have no reason to find fault with our Evangelist, since Salathiel is expressly called Jechonias's son, 1 Chron. iii. 17. either he was his proper natural son, or, to use their way of speaking, בן מלכות, *the son of the kingdom*<sup>e</sup>; that is, his heir and successor in the kingdom, as some have thought; since it looks as if he was the son of Neri, Luke iii. 37. though the chronicle of Jedidæus of Alexandria<sup>f</sup>, or Phio the Jew, says, that Jechonias was called Neri, because Ner, or the lamp of David, shined in him, which had been almost extinguished. *And Salathiel begat Zorobabel.* This account perfectly agrees with many passages in the Old Testament, where Zorobabel is called the son of Shealtiel or Salathiel, Ezra iii. 2. and v. 2. Neh. xii. 1. Hagg. i. 1, 12, 14. and ii. 2, 23. which is sufficient to justify the Evangelist in this assertion. There is indeed a difficulty which as much presses the Jews as the Christians, and that is, that Zorobabel is reckoned as the son of Pedaiah, 1 Chron. iii. 19. for the solution of which a noted Jewish commentator<sup>g</sup> observes, that “in Haggai, Zachariah and Ezra, Zorobabel is called the son of Shealtiel, because he was his son’s son; for Pedaiah was the son of Shealtiel, and Zorobabel the son of Pedaiah; and don’t you observe (adds he) that in many places children’s children are mentioned as children?” No doubt there are many instances of this; but to me it seems that Pedaiah was not the son of Shealtiel, but his brother, 1 Chron. iii. 17, 18. And I greatly suspect that Shealtiel had no children of his own, since none are mentioned; and that he adopted his brother Pedaiah’s son Zorobabel, and made him his heir and successor in the government of Judah. However, it is certain, as a genealogical writer<sup>h</sup> among the Jews observes, that he was of the son’s sons of Jechonias, king of Judah, from whom our Evangelist makes him to descend.

Ver. 13. *And Zorobabel begat Abiud, &c.*] The children of Zorobabel are said in 1 Chron. iii. 19, 20. to be Meshullam, and Hananiah, and Shelomith their sister, but no mention is made of Abiud: he seems to be the same with Meshullam the eldest son, who might have two names; nor is this unlikely, since it was usual, especially about the time of the Babylonish captivity, for men to have more names than one, as may be observed in Daniel and others, Dan. i. 7. where they went by one, and in Judea by another. *And Abiud begat Eliakim, &c.* From hence to the 16th verse the genealogy is carried down to Joseph, the husband of Mary; which account must be taken from the genealogical tables of the Jews, to which recourse might be had, and with which it agrees; or otherwise the Jews would have cavilled at it; but I don’t find any objections made by them to it. That there were genealogical books or tables

<sup>c</sup> Hist. Dynast. p. 45. Vid. Hieron. Comment. in Dan. i. fol. 264. B.

<sup>d</sup> Kimchi in 1 Chron. iii. 17. & in Jer. xxii. 30.

<sup>e</sup> Ib. in 1 Chron. iii. 15.

<sup>f</sup> Apud Vorst. Observ. in Ganz. Chronolog. p. 310.

<sup>g</sup> Kimchi in 1 Chron. iii. 19. & in Hagg. i. 1.

<sup>h</sup> Juchasin, fol. 13. i.

kept by the Jews is certain, from the following instances<sup>1</sup>; "Simeon ben Azzai says, I found in "Jerusalem, *בגלת יחזק*, a volume of genealogies, "and there was written in it, &c." Again<sup>2</sup>, says R. Levi, "they found a volume of genealogies in "Jerusalem, and there was written in it that Hillel "came from David; Ben Jatzaph from Asaph; "Ben Tzitzith Hacceseth from Abner; Ben Cobesin "from Ahab; Ben Calba Shebuah from Caleb; "R. Jannai from Eli; R. Chayah Rabba from the "children of Shephathiah, the son of Abital; R. Jose "be Rabbi Chelphetha from the children of Jonadab, "the son of Rechab; and R. Nehemiah from Nehe- "miah the Tirshathite." Once more<sup>3</sup>, says R. Chana bar Chanina, "when the holy blessed God causes his "Shechinah to dwell, he does not cause it to dwell "but upon families, *במשפחות*, which are genealogized "in Israel." Now if Matthew's account had not been true, it might easily have been refuted by these records. The author of the old <sup>m</sup> Nizzachon takes notice of the close of this genealogy, but finds no fault with it; only that it is carried down to Joseph, and not to Mary; which may be accounted for by a rule of their own<sup>4</sup>, *משפחת אם אינה קרויה משפחת*, the mother's family is not called a family, whereas the father's is. It is very remarkable that the Jewish Targum<sup>5</sup> traces the descent of the Messiah from the family of David in the line of Zorobabel, as Matthew does; and reckons the same number of generations, wanting one, from Zorobabel to the Messiah, as the Evangelist does, from Zorobabel to Jesus; according to Matthew, the genealogy stands thus, Zorobabel, Abiud, Eliakim, Azor, Sadoc, Achim, Eliud, Eleazar, Matthan, Jacob, Joseph, Jesus; and according to the Targum the order is this, "Zorobabel, Hananiah, Jesaiah, Rephaiah, Arnon, "Obadiah, Shecaniah, Shemaiah, Neariah, Elioenai, "Anani; this is the king Messiah, who is to be revealed." The difference of names may be accounted for by their having two names, as before observed. This is a full proof, that, according to the Jews own account, and expectation, the Messiah must be come many years and ages ago.

Ver. 16. *And Jacob begat Joseph, &c.*] According to an old tradition mentioned by <sup>p</sup> Epiphanius, this Jacob, the father of Joseph, was named Panther, and which name perhaps is originally Jewish; and it may be observed, that Joseph is sometimes called by the Jewish writers *Pandira*<sup>6</sup>, and Jesus *בן פנדרת*, the son of *Pandira*<sup>7</sup>. It has created some difficulty with interpreters, that Jacob should be here said to beget Joseph, when Joseph in Luke is said to be the son of Eli. Some have thought Joseph's father had two names, one was Jacob, and the other Eli; others take them to be two different persons, and suppose that Joseph was the natural son of the one, and the legal son of the other, either by marriage, or by adoption, or by the law of the brother's wife, Deut.

xxv. 5, 6. But the truth of the matter is, that not Joseph, but Jesus, is by Luke called the son of Eli, as will be made to appear in its proper place. Joseph, who is here called the husband of Mary, because he not only espoused her, but, upon the advice and encouragement of the Angel, took her to be his wife, was, as is evident by this genealogy, of the house and lineage of David; though a mean and obscure person, and by trade a carpenter. Mary, which is the same name with Miriam in Hebrew, was a poor virgin that dwelt at Nazareth, a city of Galilee; yet also of the family of David, and belonged to the city of Bethlehem; of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ, or Messiah; being that illustrious person, who was spoken of by the Prophets of the Old Testament under that name, and whom the Jews expected. We may learn from hence, what a low condition the family of David was in, when the true Messiah came; according to ancient prophecy, it was like a stump of a tree, or like to a tree cut down to the root, Isa. xi. 1. and Christ who sprung from it was like a root out of a dry ground, Isa. liii. 2. From the whole of this genealogy it appears, that Jesus was of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, and of the family of David; whereby several ancient prophecies have their accomplishment, and therefore he ought to be acknowledged as the true Messiah: and also that he was of the blood royal, and had his descent from the kings of Judah, and was heir apparent to the throne and kingdom of his father David. The Talmudic Jews own that Jesus, or Jesu, as they call him, was put to death because he <sup>8</sup> *קרוי למלכות דודי* was nigh to the kingdom, or nearly related to it. Yea, even in that malicious book<sup>9</sup> they have written of his life, they represent him as akin to queen Heleria, who they say, on that account, would have saved his life. And this was so clear a point, and their forefathers were so thoroughly convinced of this matter, that they would have took him by force and made him a king, John vi. 15. but his kingdom was to be of another kind, a spiritual, and not a temporal one.<sup>10</sup>

Ver. 17. *So all the generations from Abraham, &c.*] The Evangelist having traced the genealogy of Christ from Abraham, which he divides into three parts, because of the threefold state of the Jews, first under Patriarchs, Prophets, and Judges, next under Kings, and then under Princes and Priests, gives the sum of each part under its distinct head; so all the generations, that is, the degrees of generation, or the persons generated from Abraham to David, both being included, are fourteen generations; as there were, and no more, and are as follow, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Phares, Esrom, Aram, Amminadab, Naasson, Salmon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David. And from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations. Here David who closed the first division must be excluded this, and it must be observed, that the Evangelist does not say as before, that all the

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 49. 2.

<sup>2</sup> T. Hieros. Taasith, fol. 68. 1. B. Rabba, sect. 98. fol. 85. 3.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 70. 2.

<sup>4</sup> P. 186.

<sup>5</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 54. 2. Bava Bathra, fol. 109. 2. & 110. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Bereshit Rabba, fol. 6. 1. Juchasin, fol. 55. 2.

<sup>7</sup> In 1 Chron. iii. 24. Vid. Beckii Not. ub. p. 56. 57.

<sup>8</sup> Contra Hæres. l. 3. Hæres. 78.

<sup>9</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> T. Hieros. Avoda Zara, fol. 40. 4. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 14. 2. & Midrash Kohelet, fol. 81. 1.

<sup>11</sup> T. Bab. Sanhed. fol. 43. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 10.

generations from David to the captivity were *fourteen*, for there were *seventeen*, three kings being omitted by him at once; but, the generations he thought fit to mention, in order to reduce them to a like number as before, and which were sufficient for his purpose, were fourteen; and may be reckoned in this order, Solomon, Roboam, Abia, Asa, Josaphat, Joram, Ozias, Joatham, Achaz, Ezekias, Manasses, Amon, Josias, Jechonias, or Jehoiachim. *And from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.* This must be understood as before; for there might be more generations in this interval, but these were enough to answer the design of the Evangelist; and which he thought proper to mention, and may be numbered in this manner; Jechonias, or Jehoiachim, Salathiel, Zorobabel, Abiud, Eliakim, Azor, Sadoc, Achim, Eliud, Eleazar, Matthan, Jacob, Joseph, Christ. This way of reckoning by generations was used by other nations as well as the Jews, particularly the Grecians; so Pausanias says, "From Tharypus to Pyrrhus the son of Achilles, *ἑνδεκάτῃ καὶ δέκα ἑξήκοντα γενεαῖς, were fifteen generations of men.*" And Herodotus speaking of those who had reigned in Babylon, says, among them were two women, one whose name was Semiramis, who reigned before the other *πενήκοντα ἑνὴν, five generations*; many other instances of the like kind might be given.

Ver. 18. *Now the birth of Jesus Christ, &c.*] The Evangelist having finished the genealogy of Christ, proceeds to give an account of his birth, which includes both his conception and bringing forth; and which he says *was on this wise, ἴδι, so, after this manner*, and which was very wonderful and astonishing; *when as, γὰρ, for his mother Mary was found with child, not of man, no, not of Joseph her husband*; for Christ had no real father as man, Joseph was only, as was supposed, his father; but *of the Holy Ghost*, according to Luke i. 35. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, &c.* and this was done that the human nature of Christ might be clear of original pollution; that so being the immediate produce of the Holy Ghost and without sin, it might be fit for union with the Son of God, and for the office of Mediator he had undertaken. When Mary is said to be *found with child*, the meaning is, it appeared by evident signs, it was observed by Joseph particularly, who might know not only that she was with child, but with child of the Holy Ghost; by conversation with her, who might relate to him what passed between the Angel and her, Luke i. 28, 36. though it looks as if as yet he did not know this, or at least was not fully satisfied about it; since he had a mind to have put her away, before he was assured of the truth of it, by the appearance of an angel to him. Now Mary's being with child, and its being known, were facts, at the time when she was *espoused to Joseph*, and thereby the outward credit both of Mary and Jesus were secured; for had this appeared before the espousals, the Jews would have fixed a brand of infamy on them both; and both the espousals and her being found with child, were *before they came together*; that is, before they cohabited

together as man and wife, before he brought her home to his own house and bed. The espousals were before they thus came together. It was usual with the Jews first to espouse or betroth, and then to marry, or rather consummate the marriage, by bringing the woman home to her husband's house, between which there was some space of time. The account and manner of betrothing is given by Maimonides in the following words. "Before the giving of the law, if a man met a woman in the street, if he would, he might take her, and bring her into his house and marry her between him and herself, and she became his wife; but when the law was given, the Israelites were commanded, that if a man would take a woman he should obtain her before witnesses, and after that she should be his wife, according to Deut. xxii. 13. and these takings are an affirmative command of the law, and are called *קידושין או אירוסין espousals or betrothings* in every place; and a woman who is obtained in such a way is called *מקודשת או מאורסת espoused or betrothed*; and when a woman is obtained, and becomes *מקודשת espoused*, although she is not yet *נבעלה married, nor has entered into her husband's house, yet she is a man's wife.*" And such a distinction between a married woman and a betrothed virgin, which was Mary's case, may be observed in Deut. xxii. 22, 23. moreover, her being found or appearing to be with child, was *before they came together*; which 'tis likely, as Dr. Lightfoot<sup>2</sup> observes, was about three months from her conception, when she was returned from her cousin Elizabeth. 'Tis probable that as soon as she was espoused to Joseph, or quickly after, she went and paid her visit to Elizabeth, with whom she staid about three months, and then returned home, Luke i. 56. Upon her return home, she appears to be with child, with which she had gone three months, a proper time for the discovery of such a matter, Gen. xxxviii. 24. and which is assigned by the Jewish doctors for this purpose. In the Misna<sup>3</sup> such a case as this is put, "If two men should espouse two women, and at the time of their entrance into the bride-chamber, the one should be taken for the other—they separate them for three months, because they may prove with child;" that is, as Bartenora observes upon it, "they separate them that they may not return to their husbands; and that if they should be with child, they may distinguish between a legitimate and an illegitimate offspring; and that the children which they may bring forth may not be ascribed to the wrong persons." Now Mary being gone three months from the time of her espousals to Joseph, and he and she not being yet come together, it was a clear case, that the child she was gone three months with, was none of his; hence it follows,

Ver. 19. *Then Joseph her husband, &c.*] To whom she had been betrothed, and who was her husband, and she his wife according to the Jewish law, Deut. xxii. 23, 24. though not yet come together, *being a just man*, observant of the law of God, particularly that which respected adultery, being wholly good and

<sup>1</sup> Vid, Pirke Abot. c. 5. sect. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Attica sive l. 1. c. 10. p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Chio. l. 1. c. 184. p. 74.

<sup>4</sup> Hilchot. Ishot. c. 1. sect. 1, 2, 3.

<sup>5</sup> In loc.

<sup>6</sup> Yebamot, c. 3. sect. 10.

chaste, like the Patriarch of the same name; a character just the reverse of that which the Jews give him, in their scandalous <sup>b</sup> book of the life of Jesus; where, in the most malicious manner, they represent him as an unchaste and an unrighteous person: *and not willing to make her a public example, or to deliver her, i. e. to the civil magistrate, according to Munster's Hebrew edition.* The Greek word signifies to punish by way of example to others, to deter them from sinning; and with the ancients it <sup>c</sup> denoted the greatest and severest punishment. Here it means either bringing her before the civil magistrate, in order to her being punished according to the law in Deut. xxii. 23; 24. which requires the person to be brought out to the gate of the city and stoned with stones, which was making a public example indeed; or divorcing her in a very public manner, and thereby expose her to open shame and disgrace. To prevent which, he being tender and compassionate, though strictly just and good, *was minded to put her away privately*: he deliberately consulted and determined within himself to dismiss her, or put her away by giving her a bill of divorce, in a very private manner; which was sometimes done by putting it into the woman's hand or bosom, see Deut. xxiv. 1. In Munster's Hebrew Gospel it is rendered, *it was in his heart to forsake her privately.*

Ver. 20. *But while he thought on these things, &c.*] While he was revolving them in his mind, considering what was most fit and proper to be done, whether to dismiss her publicly or privately; while he was consulting within himself the glory of God, the peace of his own conscience, and the credit of Mary, *behold the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream*; probably the same Angel which appeared to Zacharias, and brought him tidings that his wife should have a son, and who also appeared to Mary, and acquainted her that she should conceive, and bring forth the Messiah, whose name was Gabriel, Luke i. 11, 19, 36. If we'll believe the Jews, this Angel must be Gabriel, since he is the Angel who they say <sup>d</sup> דַּמְכַנָּה עַל הַלְמָא *is appointed over dreams*; for he appeared to *Joseph in a dream*, which is one of the ways and methods in which the Lord, or an Angel of his, has appeared to the saints formerly, and has answered them, see Gen. xxxi. 11. 1 Kings iii. 5. 1 Sam. xxviii. 6, 15. and is reckoned by the Jews <sup>e</sup> one of the degrees or kinds of prophecy: and so the Angel here not only encourages Joseph to take to him his wife, *saying Joseph, thou son of David*; which is said partly to attest his being of the house and lineage of David, and partly to raise his expectations and confirm his faith, that his wife should bring forth the promised son of David; and chiefly to engage his attention to what he was about to say, *fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife*; don't be afraid either that thou shalt offend the Lord, or bring any reproach or scandal upon thyself, as if thou didst connive at an adulteress; but as she is thine espoused wife, solemnly betrothed to thee, take her home to thyself, live with her as thy wife, and openly avow her as such. To which he is encouraged by the following reason or argument, *for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost*; she

has not been guilty of any criminal conversation with men; this conception of her's is of the Holy Ghost, and entirely owing to his coming upon her, and overshadowing her in a wonderful and miraculous manner. I say, the Angel not only encourages Joseph after this manner, but delivers something to him by way of prophecy, in the following verse.

Ver. 21. *And she shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Jesus.*] For though she was with child, it could not be known any otherwise than by prediction or divine revelation, that she should have a son, whose name should be called Jesus; a name of the same signification with Joshua and Hosea, and may be interpreted a *Saviour*, Acts xiii. 23. for the word יֵשׁוּעַ *Jesus*, comes from יָשַׁע which signifies *to save*. And to this agrees the reason of the name given by the Angel, *for he shall save his people from their sins*. The salvation here ascribed to him, and for which he is every way fit, being God as well as man, and which he is the sole author of, is to be understood, not of a temporal, but of a spiritual and everlasting salvation; such as was prophesied of, Isa. xlv. 17. and which old Jacob had in his view, when he said, *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord*, Gen. xlix. 18. which by the Jewish <sup>f</sup> Targumist is paraphrased thus: "Jacob said "when he saw Gideon the son of Joash, and Sampson the son of Manoah, that they would rise up to be "saviours, not for the salvation of Gideon do I wait, "nor for the salvation of Sampson do I look, for their "salvation is פְּרִיקוֹן דְּשַׁעְתָּא *a temporary salvation*; but "for thy salvation, O Lord, do I wait and look, for "thy salvation is פְּרִיקוֹן עֲלֵמִין *an everlasting salvation*: "or (according to another copy) but for the salvation "of Messiah the son of David, who shall save the "children of Israel, and bring them out of captivity, "for thy salvation my soul waiteth." By *his people* whom he is said to save are meant, not all mankind, though they are his by creation and preservation, yet they are not, nor will they be all saved by him spiritually and eternally; nor also the people of the Jews, for though they were his nation, his kinsmen, and so his own people according to the flesh, yet they were not all saved by him; many of them died in their sins, and in the disbelief of him as the Messiah: but by them are meant all the elect of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, who were given to him by his Father, as a peculiar people, and who are made willing in the day of his power upon them, to be saved by him in his own way. And these he saves *from their sins*, from all their sins, original and actual; from secret and open sins; from sins of heart, lip and life; from sins of omission and commission; from all that is in sin, and follows upon it; from the guilt, punishment, and damning power of it, by his sufferings and death; and from the tyrannical government of it by his spirit and grace; and will at last save them from the being of it, though not in this life, yet hereafter, in the other world, when they shall be without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Ver. 22. *Now all this was done, &c.*] These are not the words of the Angel, but of the Evangelist; observ-

<sup>b</sup> Tolkos Jesu, p. 3.

<sup>c</sup> A Gellii Noct. Attic. l. 6. c. 14.

<sup>d</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 103. 3.

<sup>e</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 103. 3. & Maimon. Yesode Hatto'rah. c. 7. l. 13

<sup>f</sup> Targum Jon. Ben Uzziel in loc.

ing that Mary's being with child of the Holy Ghost, and her conception in such an extraordinary manner, whilst a pure virgin, before she and Joseph came together, who though espoused to him, was untouched by him, were all brought about in this way, and with such circumstances, *that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet*; that is, the Prophet Isaiah, and so some copies read. The passage referred to is in Isa. vii. 14. what is there spoken was by divine inspiration; it was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet; the Spirit of the Lord spake by him. Prophets and holy men formerly, spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; so that what they said is to be looked upon as the word of God. Now between the prophecy of Isaiah referred to, and the fact here recorded by the Evangelist, is an entire agreement: the prophecy shews the will, counsel, and determination of God about this matter; the accomplishment of it, the faithfulness and veracity of God in his word; the prediction declares that the thing would be, and the thing itself was done, that what was spoken might be fulfilled; not merely by way of accommodation, or in a typical and mystical, but in a strict, proper and literal sense.

Ver. 23. *Behold, a virgin shall be with child, &c.*] These words are rightly applied to the virgin Mary and her son Jesus, for of no other can they be understood; not of Ahaz's wife and his son Hezekiah, who was already born, and must be eleven or twelve years of age when these words were spoken; nor of any other son of Ahaz by her or any other person, since no other was Lord of Judea; nor of the wife of Isaiah, and any son of his, who never had any that was king of Judah. The prophecy is introduced here as in Isaiah, with a *behold!* not only to raise and fix the attention, but to denote that it was something wonderful and extraordinary which was about to be related; and is therefore called *אֵימָה* a *sign*, wonder, or miracle; which lay not, as some Jewish writers affirm, in this, that the person spoken of was unfit for conception at the time of the prophecy, since no such thing is intimated; or in this, that it should be a son and not a daughter<sup>1</sup>, which is foretold; for the wonder lies not in the truth of the prediction, but in the extraordinariness of the thing predicted; much less in this<sup>1</sup>, that the child should eat butter and honey as soon as born; since nothing is more natural and common with new-born infants, than to take in any sort of liquids which are sweet and pleasant. But the sign or wonder lay in this, that a *virgin* should *conceive* or *be with child*; for the Evangelist is to be justified in rendering *עַלְמוֹת* by *παρθένοι*, a *virgin*; by the Septuagint having so rendered it some hundreds of years before him, by the sense of the word, which comes from *עָלַם*, and which signifies to *hide* or *cover*; virgins being such who are unknown to, and not uncovered by men, and in the Eastern countries were kept recluse from the company and conversation of men; and by the use of the word in all other places, Gen. xxiv. 43. Exod. ii. 8. Psal. lxxviii. 25. Cant. i. 3. and vi. 8. Prov. xxx. 19. The last of these texts the Jews triumph in, as making for them, and

against us, but without any reason; since it does not appear that the *maid* and the *adulterous woman* are one and the same person; and if they were, the vitiated woman might be called a maid or virgin, according to her own account of herself, or in the esteem of others who knew her not, or as antecedent to her defilement; see Deut. xxii. 28. Besides, could this be understood of any young woman married or unmarried, that had known a man, it would be no wonder, no surprising thing that she should *conceive* or *be with child*, and *bring forth a son*. 'Tis added, *and they shall call his name Emmanuel*. The difference between Isaiah and Matthew is very inconsiderable, it being in the one *thou shalt call*, that is, thou virgin shalt call him by this name; and in the other *they shall call*, that is, Joseph, Mary, and others; for, besides that some copies read the text in Matthew *καλεσεις*, *thou shalt call*, the words both in the one and the other may be rendered impersonally, *and shall be called*; and the meaning is, not that he should be commonly known and called by such a name, any more than by any, or all of those mentioned in Isa. ix. 6. but only that he should be so, which is a frequent use of the word; or he should be that, and so accounted by others, which answers to the signification of this name, which the Evangelist says, *being interpreted is God with us*: for it is a compound word of *אֱלֹהִים* God and *עִמָּנוּ* with us, and well agrees with Jesus, who is God in our nature, the word that was *made flesh* and *dwelt among us*, John i. 14. and is the one and only *Mediator between God and us*, 1 Tim. ii. 5<sup>k</sup>. So the Septuagint interpret the word in Isa. viii. 8.

Ver. 24. *Then Joseph being raised from sleep, &c.*] That is, being awaked out of sleep, *τὸ ύπνῳ*, *that sleep*, into which he either naturally fell, whilst he was meditating on the affair of Mary's being with child; or rather into which he was cast by the Lord, on purpose that he might have a revelation of the will of God to him in a dream; and rising up from his bed or place where he was, immediately and without any delay, *did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him*: firmly believing that it was a messenger of God that was sent to him, and that this matter was of the Lord. Wherefore he *took unto him his wife*, that is, he publicly married her, whom he had before espoused, took her to his house, or continued her there, lived with her as his wife, and owned her to be such, and henceforwards had no more thoughts of putting her away.

Ver. 25. *And knew her not, &c.*] Or *but he knew her not*, *καὶ* answering to the Hebrew *ו*; that is, had no carnal knowledge of her, or copulation with her, though his wife. The words are an *euphemism*, or a modest way of expressing the conjugal act, and is a very ancient one, see Gen. iv. 1. and what has been used in all nations and languages. And this conduct of his was necessary, *till she had brought forth her first-born*; that it might be manifest not only that she conceived, being a virgin, but also that she brought forth, being a virgin: for both are signified in the prophecy before related, *a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son*: which is all one as if it had been said, a *virgin* shall conceive,

<sup>1</sup> Jarchi. in Isa. vii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Gaon. in Aben Ezra, in ib

<sup>3</sup> Kimchi & Aben Ezra in ib. R. Isaac Chizuk. Emon. p. 1. c. 21.

<sup>k</sup> See more of this in a book of mine, called *The Prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah, literally fulfilled in Jesus*, ch. 5. p. 92, 93 &c.

and a virgin shall bring forth a son. The *first-born* is that which first opens the womb of its mother, whether any follows after or no, Exod. xiii. 12, 13. Numb. iii. 12. Christ is called Mary's first-born, because she had none before him, whether she had any after him or not; for her perpetual virginity seems to be no necessary article of faith: for when 'tis said, *Joseph knew her not till she had brought forth*, the meaning is certain that he knew her not before. But whether he afterwards did or not, is not so manifest, nor is it a matter of any great importance; the word *until* may be so understood as re-

fering to the time preceding, that the contrary cannot be affirmed of the time following, 2 Sam. vi. 23. Matt. xxiii. 20. and which may be the case here, and is indeed generally understood so; and it also may be considered as only expressive of the intermediate time, as in Matt. v. 26. Acts xxvii. 33. as Beza observes. Christ was her *first-born* as he was man, and the first-born of God, or his first and only begotten, as the son of God. 'Tis further observed, that she called *his name Jesus*, as was foretold to her, or ordered her by the Angel, Luke i. 31. and to Joseph, Matt. i. 21.

## C H A P. II.

Ver. 1. *NOW when Jesus was born, &c.*] Several things are here related respecting the birth of Christ, as the place where he was born, in *Bethlehem of Judea*; so called to distinguish it from another Bethlehem in the tribe of Zabulon, Josh. xix. 15. Here Christ was to be born according to a prophecy hereafter mentioned, and accordingly the Jews expected he would be born here, Matt. ii. 4, 5, 6. John vii. 41, 42. and so Jesus was born here, Luke ii. 4, 5, 6, 7. and this the Jews themselves acknowledge; "Such a year," says a noted<sup>1</sup> chronologer of theirs, Jesus of Nazareth was born in Bethlehem Juda, which is a *parsa* and a half, *i. e.* six miles, from Jerusalem." Benjamin<sup>2</sup> Tudelensis says it is two *parsas*, *i. e.* eight miles, from it; and according to Justin Martyr<sup>3</sup> it was thirty-five furlongs distant from it. Yea even they own this, that Jesus was born there, in that vile and blasphemous book<sup>4</sup> of theirs, written on purpose to defame him; nay, even the ancient Jews have owned that the Messiah is already born, and that he was born at Bethlehem; as appears from their Talmud<sup>5</sup>, where we meet with such a passage. "It happened to a certain Jew, that as he was ploughing, one of his oxen bellowed; a certain Arabian passed by and heard it, who said, O Jew, Jew, loose thy oxen, and loose thy ploughshare, for lo, the house of the sanctuary is destroyed: it bellowed a second time; he said unto him, O Jew, Jew, bind thy oxen, and bind thy ploughshare, for lo מלכא משיחא יליד the king Messiah is born. He said to him, what is his name? Menachem (the comforter); he asked again, what is his father's name? Hezekiah; once more he says, from whence is he? He replies בית לחם בית לחם יהודה מן the palace of the king of Bethlehem Judah; he went and sold his oxen and his ploughshares, and became a seller of swaddling-clothes for infants; and he went from city to city till he came to that city, (Bethlehem,) and all the women bought of him, but the mother of Menachem bought nothing." Afterwards they tell you, he was snatched away by winds and tempests. This story is told in much the same manner in another<sup>6</sup> of their writings. Bethlehem signifies the house of bread, and in it was born, as

an ancient writer<sup>7</sup> observes, the bread which comes down from heaven: and it may also signify the house of flesh, and to it the allusion may be in 2 Tim. iii. 16. *God manifest in the flesh*. The time of Christ's birth is here expressed, in the days of Herod the king. This was Herod the great, the first of that name: the Jewish chronologer<sup>8</sup> gives an account of him in the following manner. "Herod the first, called Herod the Ascalonite, was the son of Antipater, a friend of king Hyrcanus and his deputy; him the senate of Rome made king in the room of Hyrcanus his master. This Herod whilst he was a servant of king Hyrcanus (so in the Talmud Herod is said to be עבדא דבית דשמונא a servant of the family of the Asmonaeans) king Hyrcanus saved from death, to which he was sentenced by the sanhedrim of Shammai; that they might not slay him for the murder of one Hezekiah, as is related by Josephus, l. 6. c. 44. and Herod took to him for wife Miriam, the daughter of Alexander the son of Aristobulus, who was the daughter's daughter of king Hyrcanus." This writer tacitly owns afterwards, that Jesus was born in the days of this king; for he says, that in the days of Hillel and Shammai (who lived in those times) there was one of their disciples, who was called R. Joshua Ben Perachiah, and he was, adds he, רבו הנוצרי the master of the Nazarene, or of Jesus of Nazareth. Herod reigned, as this same author observes, thirty-seven years; and according to Dr. Lightfoot's calculation, Christ was born in the thirty-fifth year of his reign, and in the thirty-first of Augustus Cæsar, and in the year of the world three thousand nine hundred and twenty-eight, and the month Tisri, which answers to part of our September, about the feast of tabernacles; which indeed was typical of Christ's incarnation, and then it may reasonably be thought that the word was made flesh, and מתגוררנו tabernacled among us, John i. 14. Another circumstance relating to the birth of Christ is, that when Jesus was born—בחול, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem; these wise men in the Greek text are called Μαγοι, Magi, a word which is always used in a bad sense in the sacred

<sup>1</sup> R. David Ganz. Zemach David, pars 2. fol. 14. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Itinerarium, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> Apolog. 2. p. 75.

<sup>4</sup> Toldos, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Hieros. Beracot. fol. 5. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Echa Rabbati, f. l. 50. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Hieron. Epitaph. Paulæ. fol. 59. E. Tom. 1.

<sup>8</sup> R. David Ganz. Zemach David, pars 1. fol. 24. 1.

<sup>9</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 3. 2. Juchasin. fol. 17. 1. & 18. 1. & Seder Olam Zuta, p. 111.

<sup>10</sup> Ib. col. 2.



writings; hence they are thought by some to be magicians, sorcerers, wizards, such as Simon Magus, Acts viii. 9. and Elymas, ch. xiii. 8. and so the Jewish writers<sup>w</sup> interpret the word מַגִּישׁ a wizard, an enchanter, a blasphemer of God, and one that entices others to idolatry; and in the Hebrew Gospel of Munster these men are called מַגִּישִׁים *wizards*. Some have thought this to be their national name. Epiphanius<sup>x</sup> supposes that these men were of the posterity of Abraham by Keturah, who inhabited a country in some part of Arabia, called Magodia: but could this be thought to be the name of their country, one might rather be induced to suppose that they were of the *Magi*, a nation of the Medes mentioned by Herodotus<sup>y</sup>; since both the name and country better agree with these persons; but the word seems to be rather a name of character and office, and to design the wise men, and priests of the Persians. An Eastern<sup>z</sup> writer says the word is of Persic original, and is compounded of two words, *Mije Gush*, which signifies a *man with short ears*; for such was the first founder of the sect, and from whom they were so called. But in the Arabic Persic Nomenclator<sup>a</sup> it is rendered a *worshipper of fire*, and such the Persian priests were; and to this agrees what Apuleius<sup>b</sup> says, that *Magus*, in the Persian language, is the same as *priest* with us: and Xenophon<sup>c</sup> says, that the *Magi* were first appointed by Cyrus, to sing hymns to the gods, as soon as it was day, and to sacrifice to them. The account given of them by Porphyry<sup>d</sup> is, that "among the Persians they that were wise concerning God, and worshipped him, were called *Μαγοί*, *Magi*, for so *Magus* signifies in their country dialect; and so august and venerable were this sort of men accounted with the Persians, that Darius, the son of Hystaspis, ordered this, among other things, to be inscribed on his monument, that he was the master of the *Magi*." From whence we may learn in some measure who these men were, and why the word is by our translators rendered *wise men*; since the *Magi*, as Cicero<sup>e</sup> says, were reckoned a sort of wise men, and doctors among the Persians; who further observes, that no man could be a king of the Persians before he understood the discipline and knowledge of the *Magi*: and the wisdom of the Persian *Magi*, as *Ælianus*<sup>f</sup> writes, among other things, lay in foretelling things to come. These came from the east, not from Chaldea, as some have thought, led hereunto by the multitude of astrologers, magicians, and soothsayers, which were among that people; see Dan. ii. 2, 10, 27. and iv. 7. for Chaldea was not east, but north of Judea, as appears from Gen. i. 14, 15. and iv. 6. and vi. 22. and x. 21. and xxv. 9. Others have thought they came from Arabia, and particularly Sheba, induced hereunto by Psal. lxxii. 10, 15. But though some part of Arabia lay east, yet Sheba was south of the land of Israel, as is evident from the queen of that place being called

the *queen of the south*, Matt. xii. 42. The more generally received opinion seems to be rightest, that they came from Persia, which as it lies east of Judea, so was famous for this sort of men, and besides the name, as has been seen, is of Persic original. The place whither they came was Jerusalem, the *metropolis* of Judea, where they might suppose the king of the Jews was born, or where, at least, they might persuade themselves they should hear of him; since here Herod the king lived, to whom it seems they applied themselves in the first place. The time of their coming was, *when Jesus was born*; not as soon as he was born, or on the *thirteenth* day after his birth, the sixth of January, as it stands in our Calendar; or within the forty days before Mary's Purification; since this space of time does not seem to be sufficient for so long a journey, and which must require a considerable preparation for it; nor is it probable if they came so soon as this, that after such a stir at Jerusalem, after Herod's diligent search and inquiry concerning this matter, and his wrath and anger at being disappointed and deluded by the wise men, that Joseph and Mary should so soon bring the child into the temple, where it was declared to be the Messiah by Simeon and Anna. Besides, immediately after the departure of the wise men, Joseph with his wife and child were ordered into Egypt, which could not be done before Mary's Purification. But rather this their coming was near upon two years after the birth of Christ; since it is afterwards observed, that *Herod sent and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men*, ver. 16. This was the opinion of Epiphanius<sup>g</sup> formerly, and is embraced by Dr. Lightfoot<sup>h</sup>, to whom I refer the reader for further proof of this matter.

Ver. 2. *Saying, where is he that is born king of the Jews? &c.*] These words were spoken to the Jews, or rather to Herod the king, or his ministers and courtiers, or to each of them, as the wise men had the opportunity of speaking to them; who make no scruple of his being born, of this they were fully assured; nor did they in the least hesitate about his being king of the Jews, who was born; but only inquire where he was, in what city, town, village, house, or family. The reason of their asking this question is, *for we have seen his star in the east*. By the *star* they saw, some understand an angel, which is not likely. The learned Lightfoot<sup>i</sup> is of opinion that it was the light or glory of the Lord, which shone about the shepherds, when the angel brought them the news of Christ's birth, and which at so great a distance appeared as a star to these wise men; others, that it was a comet, such as has been thought to portend the birth or death of some illustrious person: but it seems to be properly a star, a new and an unusual one, such

<sup>w</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 75. 1. Gloss. in ib. & Sota, fol. 22. 1. & Sanhedrim, fol. 39. 1.

<sup>x</sup> Contr. Hæres. l. 3. Hæres. 30.

<sup>y</sup> Clio sive l. 1. c. 101.

<sup>z</sup> Alfranzabadius in Pocock. Specim. Hist. Arab. p. 146.

<sup>a</sup> In Ibid.

<sup>b</sup> Apolog. p. 204.

<sup>c</sup> Cyropædia, l. 9. sect. 6.

<sup>d</sup> De Abstinencia, l. 4. sect. 16.

<sup>e</sup> De Divinatione, l. 1.

<sup>f</sup> Hist. Var. l. 2. c. 17.

<sup>g</sup> Contr. Hæres. l. j. Hæres. 30. and l. 2. Hæres. 51.

<sup>h</sup> Harmony, Vol. I. p. 205, 432, &c.

<sup>i</sup> Harmony, p. 205, 437, 438, Vol. I. Hor. Heb. p. 109. Vol. II.

as had never been seen, nor observed before; and is called *his star*, the star of the king born, because it appeared on his account, and was the sign of his birth, who is the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning-star, Rev. xxii. 16. This they saw in the east; not in the eastern part of the heavens, but they saw it when they were in the east, that is, in their own country; and according to the best observations they were able to make, it was in that part of the heavens right over the land of Judca; from whence they concluded that the king of the Jews was born; but the question is how they should hereby know and be assured that such a person was born? To this it may be replied, that there is a prophecy of Balaam's which is thus expressed, *there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel*, Numb. xxiv. 17. which is owned by some Jewish writers<sup>k</sup> to be a prophecy of the Messiah; though the *star* there mentioned is considered by them as one of the Messiah's titles; hence one who set up himself, and for a while was by some received as the Messiah, was called by them כוכבא בר the son of a star; but when he was discovered to be an impostor, they called him בר כוכבא בר the son of a lie: but I rather take it to be a sign of the Messiah's coming, and the meaning is, when a star shall walk or steer its course from Jacob, or above, or over the land of Israel, then a sceptre, or sceptre-bearer, that is, a king, shall rise out of Israel. Now this prophecy of Balaam, who lived in the east, might be traditionally handed down to this time, and be well known by these men; and who, observing such a star appear over the land of Judea, might conclude that now the sceptre-bearer or king was born<sup>l</sup>. Besides, Zerdusht or Zoroastres, the author of the sect of the Magi or wise men, and who appears to be a Jew by birth, and to be acquainted with the writings of the Old Testament, and with this prophecy, spoke of the birth of Christ to his followers; and told them when he should be born, a star would appear, and shine in the day, and ordered them to go where that directed, and offer gifts, and worship him. An Eastern writer, who affirms<sup>m</sup> what I have now mentioned, relates<sup>n</sup> the following speech as spoke by the wise men to Herod, when in conversation with him, about this matter: "A certain person, say they, of great note with us, in a book which he composed, warned us in it, mentioning these things; a child that shall descend from heaven, will be born in Palestine, whom the greatest part of the world shall serve, and the sign of his appearance shall be this; ye shall see a strange star, which shall direct you where he is; when ye shall see this, take gold, myrrh and frankincense, and go and offer them to him, and worship him, and then return, lest a great calamity befall you. Now the star has appeared unto us, and we are come to perform what was commanded us." If this be true, we are not at a loss how they come by their knowledge, nor for a reason of their conduct. That the Jews have expected that a

star should appear at the time of the Messiah's coming, is certain, from some passages in a book of theirs of great value and esteem among them, in which are the following things: in one place it is said<sup>o</sup> "The king Messiah shall be revealed in the land of Galilee; and lo a star in the east shall swallow up seven stars in the north, and a flame of red fire shall be in the firmament six days;" and in another place, <sup>p</sup> "When the Messiah shall be revealed, there shall rise up in the east a certain star, flaming with all sorts of colours—and all men shall see it:" once more 'tis affirmed as a tradition<sup>q</sup> that "The holy blessed God hath determined to build Jerusalem, and to make a certain (fixed) star appear sparkling with seven blazing tails shining from it in the midst of the firmament—and then shall the king Messiah be revealed in all the world." Now this expectation of the appearing of such a star at the coming of the Messiah takes its rise from and is founded upon the above-mentioned prophecy. It is said<sup>r</sup> that Seth the son of Adam gave out a prophecy, that a star should appear at the birth of the Messiah; and that a star did appear at the birth of Christ is certain from the testimony of the Evangelist, and seems to have some confirmation from the writings of the Heathens themselves. Some have thought that the star which Virgil speaks of, and calls *Caesaris Astrum, Caesar's star*, is this very star, which he in complaisance to that monarch ascribes to him. Pliny<sup>s</sup> makes mention "of a bright comet with a silver beard, which was so refulgent that it could scarce be look'd upon, shewing in itself the effigies of God in human form." If the testimony of Chalcidius, a Platonic philosopher, taken notice of by many learned men, is genuine, and he not a Christian, "it is much to the purpose, and is as follows: "There is also a more venerable and sacred history, which speaks of the rising of a certain unusual star; not foretelling diseases and deaths, but the descent of a venerable God, born for the sake of human conversation, and the affairs of mortals; which star truly, when the wise men of the Chaldeans saw in their journey by night, and being very expert in the consideration of celestial things, are said to inquire after the birth of the new Deity, and having found the infant majesty, to worship him, and pay their vows worthy of such a God." The end proposed by them in taking such a journey is expressed, *and are come to worship him*; that is, either to pay adoration to him as God, of which they might be convinced by the extraordinary appearance of the star, or be assured of by divine revelation; or rather to give him civil homage and respect, as an illustrious person, as being king of the Jews.

Ver. 3. *When Herod the king had heard these things, &c.*] That is, the report made by the wise men of the appearance of an unusual star, and of the birth of the king of the Jews, which they affirmed with all certainty, without any hesitation, *he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Herod was troubled, his*

<sup>k</sup> Targum Onk. Jon. & Aben Ezra in loc. Zohar. in Exod. fol. 4. 1. Abarbanel Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 4. 3. Tzeror Hamor, fol. 126. 3.

<sup>l</sup> See my book of the Prophecies of the Messiah, c. 7. p. 119, &c.

<sup>m</sup> Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 54.

<sup>n</sup> Ib. p. 70.

<sup>o</sup> Zohar. in Gen. fol. 74. 3.

<sup>p</sup> Zohar. in Exod. fol. 3, 3, 4.

<sup>q</sup> Ib. in Numb. fol. 85. 4. and 86. 1.

<sup>r</sup> Vid. Wolf. Bibl. Heb. p. 1156.

<sup>s</sup> Eeolog. g. v. 47.

<sup>t</sup> Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 25.

<sup>u</sup> Vid. Fabricii Bibliothec. Latin. p. 142—146.

mind was disturbed and made uneasy, fearing he should be deposed, and lose his kingdom, to which he knew he had no just right and claim, being a foreigner; and *all Jerusalem*, i. e. all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who heard of this, were also troubled, and shewed a concern at it with him; either feignedly, as knowing his jealousy, suspicion and cruelty; or in reality, because of tumults, commotions and wars, they might fear would arise upon this, having lost the true notion of the Messiah, as a spiritual king, saviour and redeemer. And hereby was fulfilled, in part, the famous prophecy in Gen. xlix. 10. according to the sense of *one* of the Targumists on it, who paraphrases it after this manner; "Kings and governors shall not cease from the house of Judah, nor scribes, who teach the law, from his seed, until the time that the king Messiah, the least of his sons, comes, and because of him, רִימְסֹן עֲמִיָּא, *the people shall melt*." that is, they shall be distressed and troubled, their hearts shall melt like wax within them; which was their present case, though perhaps the paraprast may design the Gentiles.

Ver. 4. *And when he had gathered all the chief priests, &c.*] Here we have an account of Herod's conduct at this juncture; he calls a council, assembles the sanhedrim, gathers together the more learned persons in the city to consult with them upon this matter, *the chief priests*; all of which he gathered together, and which seem to be many; and were not only the then present high-priest and his substitutes, but all the principal persons of the priesthood, who were chosen from the rest, into the great sanhedrim, or council: and by the *scribes of the people* are meant a sort of letter-learned men, whose business it was to keep and write out copies of the law, and other things, for the people; they were the fathers of the traditions, and interpreters of the law to them; and therefore are called *the scribes of the people*: as well also, because they were chosen from among the people, from any other tribe, and not from the tribe of Levi, from whom the priests were; so that one seems to design the *clergy*, and the other the *laity*, in this assembly. The Septuagint render *שׂוֹטְרִים*, *the officers of the people*, by this same word *the scribes*, and scribes of the people, in Numb. xi. 16. Deut. xx. 5, 8, 9. Josh. i. 10. and iii. 2. and viii. 33. and xxiii. 2. and xxiv. 1. The learned Dr. Lightfoot\* conjectures, that the persons of note, who were present at this time, were Hillel the president of the council, Shammai the vice-president, the sons of Betira, Judah and Joshua, Bava ben Buta, Jonathan ben Uzziel, the Chaldee paraprast, and Simeon the son of Hillel. *He demanded of them*, or asked them with authority, as the chief captain did, Acts xxi. 33. *where Christ, ὁ Χριστός*, the Christ, the Messiah *should be born?* that is, where was the place of his birth as fixed in their prophecies, where, accordingly, they believed and expected he would be born. Herod's pretence, no doubt, in putting this question was, that he might be able to satisfy the wise men of the East about this matter; though the true reason within himself was, that he might know where this new-born king was, in order to destroy him.

\* Jonathan ben Uzziel in loc.

† Vol. II. p. 111.

‡ Targum Jon. Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi & Abendana in loc.

Ver. 5. *And they said unto him, &c.*] They answer without any hesitation, it being a generally received notion, and a thing well known among them, *in Bethlehem of Judea*; and give their reason for it; for *thus it is written by the prophet*, that is, the prophet Micah, in whose prophecy, ch. v. 2. it stands, and is as follows:

Ver. 6. *And thou Bethlehem in the land of Juda, &c.*] This prophecy, which the chief priests and scribes produced, as pointing at the place of Christ's birth, is owned by both ancient and later Jews to be a prophecy of the Messiah. The difference between Micah and Matthew is easily reconciled. Bethlehem is called by Micah, Bethlehem Ephrathah, and by Matthew, Bethlehem in the land of Judah, and both were one and the same place. Bethlehem Ephrathah was in the land of Juda, as appears from the prophecy of Micah itself, from Ruth i. 2. and the Septuagint version of Josh. xv. 60. and is described in this manner by Matthew, partly to distinguish it from another Bethlehem in the land of Zabulun, Josh. xix. 15. and partly because its other name Ephrathah was now disused, and so unknown to Herod, who was unacquainted with the books and prophecies of the Old Testament. Micah says this place was *little among the thousands of Judah*. Matthew says, *not the least*. But in this is no apparent contradiction, it might be *little* and yet *not the least*; besides, it might be *little* and *not little*, or *not the least* in different respects, and at different times; it might be little, mean, and contemptible as to worldly splendour, riches, number of inhabitants, pompous buildings, &c. and yet not be little or mean, when considered as the place of the birth of many great persons, such as Booz, Jesse, David, &c. and especially Christ. It might be little in Micah's time, and yet not in Matthew's; especially since it had received a considerable additional honour by Christ's being born there. Moreover, the words in Micah may be rendered, by way of interrogation, *art thou little, or the least?* To which the answer in Matthew is, *no, thou art not the least, &c.* or else the word *רַבֵּר* may be understood, and the text be translated thus; *it is a small thing that thou art among the thousands of Judah, for out of thee, &c.* a great honour shall be conferred on thee, the Messiah shall spring from thee. Again, what Micah calls *thousands*, are in Matthew called *princes*; the reason of this is, because the tribes of Israel were divided into thousands, and every thousand had its prince; so that though here is a difference in words, yet none in sense. What Micah styles *a ruler in Israel*, Matthew expresses by *a governor that shall rule or feed my people Israel*; but in this there is no contradiction. Add to all this, that it should be observed, that the Evangelist is not giving a version of his own, but of the chief priests and scribes; and therefore was it ever so faulty, they, and not he, must be chargeable with it; for he has acted the part of a faithful historian in giving it in the words in which they cited it.

Ver. 7. *Then Herod, when he had privately called the wise men, &c.*] As soon as he had got the intelligence of the place of the Messiah's birth, he called, or ordered

Abarbine] Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 62. s. R. Isaac Chizuk Emuna, p. 279.

‡ See my book of the Prophecies of the Messiah, &c. ch. 6. p. 104—116.

the wise men to be brought into his presence, and that in a very private manner; lest the Jews, who knew his hypocrisy and deceit, should perceive his views, and enter into his designs, and so give the wise men some instructions, which would be prejudicial to the scheme he was forming in his own mind to destroy the young king; and having called them to him, he *inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.* He took a good deal of pains in examining them, he sifted them, and inquired of them with much accuracy, and exactness, the precise time of the star's appearing to them, how long ago it was when it was first observed by them; that hereby he might exactly know the age of Christ, and the better execute the bloody design he had formed, should the wise men disappoint him; and the better detect an impostor, should another afterwards arise, and set up himself for the king of the Jews.

Ver. 8. *And he sent them to Bethlehem, &c.*] Having got out of them all that he could, and was for his purpose, he informs them of the place where they might find the person they came to inquire after, according to the account of it which the chief priests and scribes had given him; and then sends them away to Bethlehem, where Christ, according to prophecy, was to be born, and now was born. It may seem strange that neither any of the Jews, nor Herod, or any of his ministers and courtiers, should go along with these men to Bethlehem; since it was but a little way off, not above five or six miles from Jerusalem; and since the birth of such a person was no trivial thing, but an affair of great concern and importance. The Jews might not care to go, lest Herod should suspect that they were going to revolt from him, and set up this new-born king against him; and it might be a piece of policy in Herod and his courtiers not to accompany them, for they might imagine that the parents of the child would be jealous and afraid of them, and would therefore conceal it, when they would be in no fear of strangers: and no doubt but the wise providence of God over-ruled and directed this matter, that so the young child Jesus might be preserved from the bloody designs of this tyrant; who often takes the wise in their own craftiness, and carries the counsel of the froward headlong. When he dismissed them he gave them this charge and these orders, *go and search diligently for the young child: go to Bethlehem, the place of his birth I have told you of, and there inquire and search in every house and family, omit none till you have found him; and when ye have found him bring me word again:* give me a particular account of him, who are his parents, and where he dwells, *that I may come and worship him also:* for they had declared, that the reason of their coming was to worship him; this he said hypocritically, in order to hide and cover his bloody intentions.

Ver. 9. *When they had heard the king, &c.*] With great care and attention, what he had told them of the birth-place of the young child; the strict charge he had given them to search diligently for him, and then return to him with an account of the whole affair; and his expressions of respect to the new-born

prince, which they took to be said in great sincerity, *they departed;* took their leave of Herod and his court, and set forward on their journey from Jerusalem to Bethlehem: *and lo,* to their great surprise and joy, *the star, which they saw in the east,* then appeared; for, it seems, it had for some time disappeared: it looks as if it had been only seen at the time of Christ's birth, and when they were in their own country; for both here, and in ver. 2. they are only said to have seen it *in the east,* that is, when they were in the east country; so that it seems from that time they had had no sight of it, not while they were on their journey, nor at Jerusalem; nor was it necessary they should. When they saw it in their own country, according to their best observation, it was over the land of Judea, and they were persuaded of it, that it was a certain sign that the king of the Jews was born: they therefore determine upon and prepare for a journey to Jerusalem, the metropolis of the nation, and where the king kept his court, to inquire for him; nor needed they the guidance of the star to direct them to a place so well known; but being in quest of him in an obscure place, and without any guide, this star appears to them; and, which is something very extraordinary, *went before them, till it came, and stood over, where the young child was.* This star had a motion, kept pace with them, and was a guide unto them, till it and they came to the place where Christ was; and then it stood directly over the house, so that they had no need to inquire of any person for him. It is certain from hence, that this star was indeed a very unusual one; its being seen in the day-time, its motion and standing still, its situation, which must be very low, and its use to point out the very house where Christ was, shew it to be so; but though it was an unusual appearance, it should not be thought incredible. Varro relates, that "from the time Æneas went from Troy, he saw the star Venus in the day-time, day after day, till he came to the field of Laurentum, where he saw it no more, by which he knew that those lands were fatal." The appearing of this star, and then its disappearing for a time, agree, in some measure, with the account the Jews give of the star which they expect will be seen at the coming of the Messiah; for they say, "after seven days that star shall be hid, and the Messiah shall be hid for twelve months—when he shall descend, the pillar of fire shall be seen as before, in sight, and afterwards the Messiah shall be revealed, and many people shall be gathered to him."

Ver. 10. *When they saw the star, &c.*] Which by its appearance, size, brightness, &c. they knew to be the same with that which they had seen, when in their own country; they rejoiced with exceeding great joy; a pleonasm or a redundancy of expression frequently used by the Hebrews, see Jon. iv. 6. and the Septuagint there; setting forth the rapture, the excess of joy they were in upon the sight of the star. Very probably before this, their hearts were sad, their countenances dejected, and they greatly discouraged, having taken so great a journey, and as yet to so little purpose. They had been at Jerusalem, where they

\* Apud Servium in Virgil. Æneid. l. 1. p. 471. Ed. Basil. 1586.

† Zohar in Exod. fol. 3, 4. & 73. 1.

experted to have found him that was born king of the Jews; they had been at court, and conversed with men of the greatest figure and intelligence, and could get no tidings of him; people of all ranks and degrees seemed to be troubled at the account they brought; no body cared to go along with them to Bethlehem: all these circumstances no doubt were discouraging to them; but as soon as they saw the star their spirits revived, joy filled their hearts, cheerfulness appeared in their countenances; and they pursued their journey with inexpressible delight, till they came to the place where the illustrious person was they were seeking after.

Ver. 11. *And when they were come into the house, &c.*] Which they entered without making any inquiry, being fully assured by the star's standing right over it, that this was the house, and here was the king of the Jews, whom they were come to worship; and having entered in *they saw* some copies read *υπερ*, *they found the young child, with Mary his mother*; in her lap, or arms, or in the house with her, for by this time he might go alone. Joseph perhaps was not at home, but about his business; and which might be so ordered by the providence of God, that so these men might only see the mother of Christ, who had no real father as man; who had they seen Joseph, might have took him to be his proper father. Upon the sight of the young child, they *fell down* on their knees or faces to the ground, agreeably to the custom of their country, and *worshipped him* as a king; giving him the same civil honour and respect, as they were wont to do to their own kings and princes; which custom began with Cyrus: for so Xenophon <sup>c</sup> says, that "when the people saw him, *παυσι προσεκυνησαν*, they all *worshipped him*; either because some were ordered to begin this custom; or else being amazed at the apparatus; or because he seemed to appear so great and beautiful; for before that time none of the Persians worshipped Cyrus." *And when they had opened their treasures*, that is, their purses, bags or boxes, in which they put those things they brought with them necessary for their journey; *they presented*, or offered to him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh: such things as they had; it being usual, not only with the Persians, but other eastern nations, to make presents to kings and great persons, when they made any addresses to them; which generally, among other things, consisted of gold, spices, myrrh, and the like, see Gen. xliii. 11. 1 Kings x. 2. Psal. lxxii. 10—15. Which last passage referred to, being a prophecy of the Messiah, has been thought by some now to have had its accomplishment, together with Isa. lx. 6. where frankincense as well as gold is mentioned, *they shall bring gold and incense*, or frankincense; upon which a noted Jewish writer <sup>d</sup> observes, that gold and frankincense shall be brought privately as a present to the king Messiah. According to the Ethiopians, these wise men were three, whose names they give us; the name of him that offered the gold, was Annonso; he that offered the frankincense, was Allytar; and he that offered the myrrh, Kyssad <sup>e</sup>. The Papists call them

the three kings of Colen, and say they lie buried in that place.

Ver. 12. *Being warned of God in a dream, &c.*] It is likely they made a short stay at Bethlehem, might lodge there a night; at least laid themselves down a while to take some refreshment in sleep, after they had paid their respects to him that was born king of the Jews, and performed the whole business they came about; when in a dream they received a divine oracle, were admonished and counselled by God, *that they should not return to Herod*; which would have been going back again, and out of their way; there being a nearer one from Bethlehem to their own country, than to go by Jerusalem, though Herod had charged them to return to him. Whether they had promised him they would, is not certain; it is probable they might; however, they thought it most advisable to hearken to the divine oracle; wherefore, *they departed into their own country another way*. What became of these persons afterwards, and whether they were spiritually and savingly enlightened into the knowledge of Christ; what a report they made of him when they came into their own country, and the success thereof, we have no account of, either in sacred or profane history.

Ver. 13. *And when they were departed, &c.*] That is immediately, or as soon as they were gone, or in a very little time after, probably the same night, *behold, the Angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream*; it is very likely the same angel who appeared to him in such sort, ch. i. 20. *saying arise*, awake out of sleep, and rise from thy bed directly, *and take the young child and his mother*. The angel does not say take thy wife and son; for though Mary was properly his wife, yet Christ was not properly his son. The child is also mentioned before the mother, not only because of his divine nature and office, in respect to which he was her God and Saviour; but because it was the preservation of the child that was chiefly regarded, and for which the providence of God was particularly concerned; wherefore Joseph is ordered to take them in proper carriages, and *fly into Egypt*, which was near to Judea, and so a fit place to flee to; for a long and tedious journey would not have been suitable to the mother and her young child. Moreover, Egypt was out of Herod's jurisdiction; here he could not come at them, or have any power over them; besides, hereby a prophecy after mentioned was to have its accomplishment. Hence it appears to be lawful to flee from danger, from tyrants and persecutors, when the providence of God opens a way for escape. The angel goes on with his charge, *and be thou there until I bring thee word*: continue there, don't remove elsewhere, or return back, till I speak with thee, or order and command thee otherwise; and gives the reason for his appearing to him in such a manner, and giving such a charge; *for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him*: no less a person than Herod the king, a bloody-minded man, revengeful, desperate, and resolute in whatsoever he undertakes, *will seek*, diligently search and inquire for, not his parents, Joseph and Mary, who might have been safe,

<sup>c</sup> Cyropædia, l. 8. sect. 23.  
<sup>d</sup> R. David Kimchi.

<sup>e</sup> Ludolph. Lex. Ethiop. p. 539, 545, 543.

but the young child, who was born king of the Jews, and which gave him a great deal of uneasiness; and that not to worship him, as he told the wise men, but to destroy him, to take away his life; to prevent which the angel was sent with this charge to Joseph: for though he was born to die for the sins of his people, his time was not yet come; he was to grow up to years of maturity, he was to be a preacher of the Gospel, to do many miracles, and at last to lay down his life of himself, voluntarily, and not to be taken away from him without his knowledge and will.

Ver. 14. *When he arose, he took the young child and his mother, &c.*] That is, as soon as he awoke out of sleep, and rose from his bed, he did as he was commanded, he prepared for his journey; and very opportunely had the wise men presented their gifts; the gold they brought served to defray the expense of this journey, and which no doubt was so ordered by divine providence for this purpose. Joseph was very punctual and expeditious in obeying the command of God; he took the young child and his mother, by night, the very self-same night in which he had this notice; and which season was the most fitting to depart in for secrecy, and most commodious and agreeable to travel in, in those hot countries: hence it appears very manifest, that the coming of the wise men, and the departure of Joseph with Mary and Jesus into Egypt, could not be within a fortnight after the birth of Christ, nor any time before Mary's Purification; since such a journey must have been very improper and unsuitable, at any time within that period; but rather Jesus must be about two years of age, whether something under, or over, it matters not, when Joseph with him departed into Egypt: what part of Egypt he went into is not certain. The Jews say that Jesus went to Alexandria in Egypt, and which is probable enough; since this was a place greatly resorted to at this time by Jews, and where provision was made for their sustenance; though they greatly mistake the person with whom he went; for they say<sup>f</sup> that R. Joshua ben Perachiah, whom they pretend was his master, went to Alexandria in Egypt, and Jesus with him. However, this is an acknowledgment of the truth of this part of Christ's history, that he was in Egypt; as also when they blasphemously and maliciously say<sup>g</sup>, did not Ben Stada, by whom they mean Jesus, bring enchantments or magic, כַּשְׁפִּים בְּמִצְרַיִם, out of Egypt, in a cutting in the flesh? To which wicked accusation Arnobius seems to refer<sup>h</sup>, when he says, "perhaps we may meet with many other of these reproachful and childish sayings; as that he was a magician, that he performed all these things by secret arts, and that he stole strange sciences, and the names of mighty angels, out of the temples of the Egyptians."

Ver. 15. *And was there until the death of Herod, &c.*] Which was in a very short time; for Eusebius<sup>i</sup> says, that immediately, in a very little time after the slaughter of the children at Bethlehem, the divine

vengeance inflicted diseases on him, which quickly brought him to his end; so that, according to the learned Dr. Lightfoot<sup>k</sup>, Jesus was not above three or four months in Egypt. Now all this was brought about, that it might be fulfilled; not by way of accommodation of phrases to a like event; or by way of type, which has a fresh completion in the anti-type; or as a proverbial sentence which might be adapted to any remarkable deliverance out of hardship, misery and destruction; but literally, properly, and in the obvious sense thereof; which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, not Balaam, in Numb. xxiii. 22. or xxiv. 8. but Hosea, in ch. xi. 1. *when Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt*: the meaning of which passage is, either in connexion with the last clause of the foregoing chapter thus; *in a morning shall the king of Israel be cut off, כִּי יִנָּע, because Israel is a child*, a rebellious and disobedient one, acting a very weak and wicked part; yet I have loved him, or do love him, and have called, or will call, (the past tense for the future, frequent in the Hebrew language, especially in the prophetic writings,) *my son out of Egypt*; who will be obliged to retire there for some time; I'll make him king, set him upon the throne, who shall execute justice, and reign for ever and ever; or thus, *because Israel is a child*, helpless and imprudent, and I love him, though he is so, therefore I will call, or I have determined to call my son out of Egypt: who through a tyrant's rage and malice will be obliged to abide there a while; yet I'll bring him from thence into the land of Judea, where he shall live and help my servant, שָׂרְדוֹס, child Israel; shall instruct him in his duty, teach him the doctrines of the Gospel, and at last, by his sufferings and death, procure for him the pardon of all his transgressions; of which there is a particular enumeration in ver. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. This is the natural and unconstrained sense of these words, which justifies the Evangelist in his citation and application of them to Christ's going to Egypt, and his return from thence, as I have elsewhere<sup>m</sup> shewn.

Ver. 16. *Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked, &c.*] Herod, having waited a proper time for the return of the wise men, and they not coming, concluded he was tricked by them; though, no doubt, when they promised to return, and bring him word how things were, they seriously meant and designed a performance; but having met with a divine oracle, which ordered them another way, they thought it most advisable to obey God rather than man. Upon this, Herod was exceeding wroth; partly at the usage he met with from the wise men, who according to his apprehension had put a trick upon him; and chiefly because his scheme was broke, which was by them to come at the knowledge and sight of the young child, and privately dispatch him: and now he might fear, which increased his wrath, that the child would escape his hands, and in time be set up for king, to the prejudice of him and his family; wherefore, to prevent this, if possible, he sent forth his officers and soldiers,

<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 107. 2. Cabala R. Abraham. Juchasin, fol. 16. 2.

<sup>g</sup> T. Hieros. Sabbat. fol. 13. 1. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 104. 2.

<sup>h</sup> Adv. Gentes, l. 1. p. 36.

<sup>i</sup> Hist. Eccl. l. 1. c. 8. p. 25, 26.

<sup>k</sup> Harmony of the New Testament, p. 6.

<sup>l</sup> Luke i. 54.

<sup>m</sup> Prophecies of the Messiah, &c. p. 123, &c.

of his own will, without any shew of law or justice, acting herein as an absolute and tyrannical prince, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under. A most cruel and barbarous action, and agrees with the character given of him, that he was in the beginning of his reign, and it seems too in the latter end of it, *איש דמים וכרמה*, a bloody and deceitful man: he slew, or ordered to be slain, children, infants who had done him no injury, nor were capable of doing any, and whose parents also had not disoblged him; he slew the infants at Bethlehem, because this was the place of the Messiah's birth, the knowledge of which he had got from the chief priests and scribes; he slew all of them, that there might be no possibility of the young child's escaping: and lest it should by any means escape to a neighbouring town or village, he slew all the children in all the coasts thereof, in all the territories of Bethlehem, in all the towns and villages around it, as many as were from two years old and under: for of such an age he supposed the newborn king to be; he knew he must be near that age, but could not exceed it, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men; of the appearing of the star to them, and when they concluded this great and famous prince was born. This cruel murder of the infants seems to be hinted at by Josephus<sup>o</sup>, where he says, that many slaughters followed the prediction of a new king; and is more manifestly referred to by Macrobius, a Heathen author, though the story is mixed and confounded with other things; who reports<sup>p</sup>, that "when Augustus heard, that among the children under two years of age, whom Herod king of the Jews ordered to be slain in Syria, that his son was also killed, said, it was better to be Herod's hog than his son." Killing of infants as soon as born, or while in their cradles, is by the Jews ascribed to one Lilith, which, R. Elias<sup>q</sup> says, is the name of a devil, which kills children; and indeed such an action is truly a diabolical one.

Ver. 17, 18. *Then was fulfilled that which was spoken, &c.:*] By the slaughter of the infants at Bethlehem was literally accomplished what had been predicted by *Jeremy the prophet*, in ch. xxxi. 15. in Rama was there a voice heard, &c. That this prophecy belongs not to the Babylonish captivity, but the times of the Messiah, appears from the whole context; which manifestly speaks of the miraculous conception of Christ, of the blessings of his kingdom to be enjoyed by his people, and of the new covenant to be made with them, as I have shewn in another place<sup>r</sup>. Rama was not in Arabia, as Justin Martyr says<sup>s</sup>, but a town in the tribe of Benjamin, Josh. xviii. 25. and very near to Bethlehem in the tribe of Juda: between these two places, and near to both of them, was the grave of Rachel, Gen. xxxiv. 19. for which reason, and also because Rama belonged to Benjamin,

a son of hers, and where, no doubt, many children were destroyed in this massacre, as well as at Bethlehem, Rachel is introduced in the prophecy personating the sorrowful mothers of those parts, weeping for their children; whose distress and grief are signified by several words, lamentation, weeping and great mourning, to express the excessiveness thereof, for they would not be comforted; they refused to hear any thing that might be suggested to them for their relief, because their children were not, i. e. were dead, were not in the land of the living, and no more to be enjoyed by them in this world. I can't forbear transcribing a remark made by a noted Jew<sup>t</sup> upon that passage in Gen. xxxv. 20. *And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave;* to shew, says he, that Jacob saw that this thing was of the Lord, and that it would be an help to her children, as it is written, *a voice was heard in Rama,* &c. wherefore he set a pillar upon her; and to shew that the affair of her grave, that this *דלתה לעתיד* belonged to the time to come, he says, that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day; he means, *יום הגאולה*, the day of redemption. And Rachel, in the passage of *Jeremy*, the Jews<sup>u</sup> themselves own, means the congregation of Israel.

Ver. 19. *But when Herod was dead, &c.:*] Who died, as before observed, a few months after this tragedy was acted; and, according to the Jewish writers, on the seventh day of the month Cisleu, and which answers to the twenty-fifth of our November; and was afterwards observed as a day of rejoicing by the Jews. The account which Josephus<sup>v</sup>, and from him Eusebius<sup>w</sup>, gives of his miserable death, is as follows; a burning fever seized him, with an intolerable itching all over his body, and continual pains of the colic; his feet swelled with a dropsy; he had an inflammation in the lower part of his belly; a putrefaction in his privy parts, which bred worms; a frequency and difficulty of breathing, and convulsions in all his members; he had a voracious appetite, a stinking breath, and his intestines abounded with ulcers; when he found that all means made use of were ineffectual, and that he must die, he attempted to lay violent hands upon himself, but was prevented, and soon after expired in a very miserable manner. Now some time after his death, behold an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. It may be the same angel who appeared in the same manner, and ordered him to go into Egypt, with the young child and his mother; and who now brings him news of the death of Herod, and bids him return to the land of Israel; which shews the watchful providence of God, and the useful ministry of angels, concerned in the preservation of the infant Jesus.

Ver. 20. *Saying, arise, and take the young child and his mother, &c.:*] Joseph strictly observed and obeyed the divine command of the angel, who had ordered him to continue in Egypt, till he brought him word

<sup>o</sup> Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 1.

<sup>p</sup> Antiq. 1. 17. c. 3.

<sup>q</sup> Saturnal. 1. 2. c. 4.

<sup>r</sup> Methurgeman in voce לילית. Vid. Buxtorf. Lexicon Rab. in eadem voce & Synagog. Jud. c. 4. p. 80.

<sup>s</sup> Prophecies of the Messiah, &c. p. 126, &c.

<sup>t</sup> Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 304.

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>u</sup> R. Abraham Seba Tzeror Hammor, fol. 47. 1.

<sup>v</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 13. 1. & in Lev. fol. 8. 4.

<sup>w</sup> Megillah Taanith apud Van Till. de anno, &c. Christ. Nat. p. 122.

<sup>x</sup> De Bello Judaic. 1. 1. c. 33. sect. 5. 7. & Antiq. 1. 17. c. 9.

<sup>y</sup> Eccl. Hist. 1. 1. c. 8. p. 25, 26.

what he should do, and where he should go: here he was with Mary and Jesus, when the angel bid him arise, and take them with him, and go into the land of Israel. He does not bid him go to Bethlehem, or Nazareth, or any particular place, but the land of Israel, where he might go even into any part of it, without fear; and gives this reason for it, for they are dead which sought the young child's life; meaning either Herod only, the plural number being put for the singular; or including Antipater his son with him, who might be equally concerned in seeking the life of Christ; since he was next heir, and whom Herod<sup>2</sup> ordered to be slain about five days before his death; or else designing with him many of the executioners of the infants at Bethlehem, and thereabout; who might have been, as well as he, miserable instances of divine vengeance, for their concern in that barbarous tragedy.

Ver. 21. *And he arose and took the young child and his mother, &c.*] He exactly conformed in every circumstance to the orders given him, with respect to the persons he took, the place he went to, and the expeditiousness of doing it; and is an example of ready and cheerful obedience to the commands of God, worthy of imitation. We may learn from hence, as well as from some other instances already met with, a reason among others, why, though Mary was a virgin, and even if she was to continue so, yet she must be espoused to Joseph as her husband; that she might have one to take care of her and her young child, and be a means, under God, of preserving, protecting, and providing for them.

Ver. 22. *But when he heard that Archelaus, &c.*] This Archelaus was a son of Herod the great by Malthea a Samaritan, and was appointed by him for his successor a little before his death, and was upon it declared king by the populace, the soldiers, and those that were in power; all which is affirmed by Josephus<sup>3</sup>, and confirms the account given by the Evangelist; with whose account agrees what the Jewish chronologer says<sup>b</sup>, that "Archelaus, the second king of the family of Herod, reigned after his father's death: and a little after he says, Cæsar Augustus caused Archelaus to reign תחת אביו הורדוס in the room of Herod his father," which is the very phrase used by Matthew. Now this man was like his father, a very cruel wicked man; and, as the above chronologer says<sup>c</sup>, he ordered his troops, and slew at the feast of the passover, in the temple of the Lord, nine thousand persons: though perhaps Josephus's account is truest, who says<sup>d</sup>, that he sent in his whole army upon the people, who had raised a sedition, and slew, whilst they were sacrificing, about three thousand; and this happened at the beginning of his reign, and indeed before he had scarce mounted the throne. And now the news of this might have reached the ears

of Joseph, and be the reason why he was afraid to go thither, into Judea, where Archelaus reigned. Notwithstanding being warned of God in a dream, who never failed to advise him when in difficulty and distress, he did not go back again to Egypt, but turned aside into the parts of Galilee; where Herod Antipas, another of Herod's sons, was tetrarch or governor; who was a milder person, and not so cruel and tyrannical as Archelaus: besides, Galilee was an obscure place, where, Joseph might reasonably think, he should live with Mary and Jesus unobserved, and free from danger.

Ver. 23. *And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, &c.*] Which was a city of Galilee, and where Joseph and Mary had both dwelt before, Luke i. 26. and ii. 4. here they came and fixed their habitation, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet. This affair of going into Galilee, and settling at Nazareth, was brought about with this view, to accomplish what had been foretold by the prophets, or prophet, the plural number being used for the singular, as in John vi. 45. Acts xiii. 40. And indeed it is so rendered here in the Syriac, Persian, and Ethiopic versions; and designs the prophet Isaiah, and respects that prophecy of his in ch. xi. 1. *and there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots;* a prophecy owned by the Jews<sup>e</sup> themselves to belong to the Messiah, and which was now fulfilled in Jesus; who as he was descended from Jesse's family, so by dwelling at Nazareth, he would appear to be, and would be called a Nazarene, or Netzer, the branch; being an inhabitant of Natza-reth, or Netzer, so called from the multitude of plants and trees that grew there. "A Nazarene," as David de Pomis says<sup>f</sup>, "is one that is born in the city Netzer, which is said to be in the land of Galilee, three days journey distant from Jerusalem." Now though Christ was not born, yet because he dwelt at Nazareth, and was educated there; hence the Jews frequently call him ישוע הנוצרי, Jesus, the Nazarene<sup>g</sup>; and sometimes only הנוצרי, the Nazarene<sup>h</sup>. They also design him by בן נצר, Ben Netzer<sup>i</sup>, of whom they say a great many evil things: and that Christ is often called Jesus of Nazareth, or the Nazarene, and his followers Nazarenes, from the place of his habitation, is known to every one. One of Christ's disciples is called Netzer in the Talmud<sup>k</sup>, and made to plead for his life, because his name signified a branch, according to Isa. xi. 1. Surenhusius observes<sup>l</sup>, that the form לקיים מה שנאמר, to fulfil what is said, used by the Talmudists, and which he takes to be the same with this here, is used by them, when they allege not the very words of Moses, or the prophets, but their sense, which is deduced as a certain axiom from them; and thinks it is applicable to the present case.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. de Bello Judaico, l. 1. c. 33. sect. 8, 9.

<sup>3</sup> Ib. c. 28. sect. 7. &c. 33. sect. 1. & l. 2. c. 1. sect. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Ib.

<sup>6</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 1. sect. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Targum, Jarchi, Aben Ezra & Kimchi in loc.

<sup>8</sup> Lexic Heb. fol. 141. 2.

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 17. 1. Ganz. par. 2. fol. 14. 2. Abarbanel in Dan. fol. 44. 1.

<sup>f</sup> Ganz. par. 1. fol. 24. 2.

<sup>g</sup> T. Bab. Cetuboth, fol. 51. 2. & Gloss. in ib. Bereshith Rabba, fol. 67. 2. Abarbanel in Dan. fol. 44. 1.

<sup>h</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 43. 1.

<sup>i</sup> Biblos Katalagee, p. 2, 3, 4, 197, &c.



## C H A P. III.

Ver. 1. *IN those days came John the Baptist, &c.*] The Evangelist having given an account of the genealogy and birth of Christ; of the coming of the wise men from the east to him; of his preservation from Herod's bloody design against him, when all the infants at Bethlehem were slain; of the flight of Joseph with Mary and Jesus into Egypt, and of their return from thence, and settlement in Nazareth, where Christ continued till near the time of his baptism, and entrance on his public ministry; proceeds to give a brief relation of John, the harbinger and forerunner of Christ, and the administrator of baptism to him: and he describes him by his name John, in Hebrew יוחנן, *Jochanan*, which signifies *gracious*, or *the grace of the Lord*, or *the Lord has given grace*; which agrees with him, both as a good man, on whom the Lord had bestowed much grace, and as a preacher, whose business it was to publish the grace of God in Christ, Luke xvi. 16. This name was given him by an angel before his conception, and by his parents at his birth, contrary to the mind of their relations and neighbours, Luke i. 13—60, 63. He is called by some of the Jewish writers <sup>m</sup>, *John the high-priest*; his father Zacharias was a priest of the course of Abia, and he might succeed him therein, and be the head of that course, and for that reason be called a *high* or *chief priest*; as we find such were called, who were the principal among the priests, as were those who were chosen into the *sanhedrim*, or were the heads of these courses; and therefore we read of many chief priests, Matt. ii. 4. From his being the first administrator of the ordinance of baptism, he is called *John the Baptist*; and this was a well-known title and character of him. Josephus <sup>n</sup> calls him *John*, who is surnamed <sup>o</sup> *Baptistis*, *the Baptist*; and Ben Gorion having spoken of him, says <sup>p</sup>, this is that John who עשה טבילה, *made, instituted, or practised baptism*; and which, by the way, shews that this was not in use among the Jews before, but that John was the first practiser this way. He is described by his work and office as a preacher, he *came* or *was preaching* the doctrines of repentance and baptism; he published and declared that the kingdom of the Messiah was at hand, that he would quickly be revealed; and exhorted the people to believe on him, which should come after him. The place where he preached is mentioned, *in the wilderness of Judea*; not that he preached to trees and to the wild beasts of the desert; for the wilderness of Judea was an habitable place, and had in it many cities, towns, and villages, in which we must suppose John came preaching, at least to persons which came out from thence. There were in Joshua's time six cities in this wilderness, namely Betharabah, Middin, and Secacah, and Nibshan, and the city of Salt, and Engedi, Josh. xv. 61, 62. Mention is made in

the Talmud <sup>q</sup> of this wilderness of Judea, as distinct from the land of Israel, when the doctors say, that "they don't bring up small cattle in the land of Israel, but they bring them up במדבר שבירודה, *in the wilderness which is in Judea*." The Jews have an observation <sup>r</sup> of many things coming from the wilderness; "the law," they say, "came from the wilderness; the tabernacle from the wilderness; the *sanhedrim* from the wilderness; the priesthood from the wilderness; the office of the Levites from the wilderness; the kingdom from the wilderness; and "all the good gifts which God gave to Israel were from the wilderness." So John came preaching here, and Christ was tempted here. The time of his appearance and preaching was *in those days*; not when Christ was newly born; or when the wise men paid their adoration to him; or when Herod slew the infants; or when he was just dead, and Archelaus reigned in his room; or when Christ first went to Nazareth; though it was whilst he dwelt there as a private person; but when John was about *thirty* years of age, and Christ was near unto it, Luke iii. 23. an age in which ecclesiastical persons entered into service, Numb. iv. 3. It was indeed, as Luke says, ch. iii. 1. in the *fifteenth* year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar; Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea; and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee; and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea; and of the region of Trachonitis; and Lysanias, the tetrarch of Abilene; Annas and Caiaphas being the high-priests.

Ver. 2. *And saying, repent ye, &c.*] The doctrine which John preached was the doctrine of repentance; which may be understood either of amendment of life and manners; for the state of the Jews was then very corrupt, all sorts of men were grown very wicked; and though there was a generation among them, who were righteous in their own eyes, and needed no repentance; yet John calls upon them all, without any distinction, to repent; and hereby tacitly strikes at the doctrine of justification by works, which they had embraced, to which the doctrine of repentance is directly opposite: or rather, this is meant, as the word here used signifies, of a change of mind, and principles. The Jews had imbibed many bad notions. The Pharisees held the traditions of the elders, and the doctrine of justification by the works of the law; and the Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead; and it was a prevailing opinion among them all, and seems to be what is particularly struck at by John, that the Messiah would be a temporal king, and set up an earthly kingdom in this world. Wherefore he exhorts them to change their minds, to relinquish this notion; assuring them, that though he would be a king, and would have a kingdom, which was near at hand, yet it would be a heavenly, and not an earthly one. Hence the manner in which John enforces his

<sup>m</sup> Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 2. Chronicon Regum, fol. 54. 4.

<sup>n</sup> Antiq. l. 18. c. 7.

<sup>o</sup> L. 5. c. 45.

<sup>p</sup> T. Bah. Bava Kama, fol. 79. 2.

<sup>q</sup> Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 13. 3.

doctrine, or the reason and argument he uses to prevail upon them to regard it, is by saying, *for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*: by which is meant not the kingdom of glory to be expected in another world; or the kingdom of grace, that is internal grace, which only believers are partakers of in this; but the kingdom of the Messiah, which was *at hand*, just ready to appear, when he would be made manifest in Israel, and enter upon his work and office: 'tis the Gospel dispensation which was about to take place, and is so called; because of the wise and orderly management of it under Christ, the king and head of his church, by the ministration of the word, and administration of ordinances; whereby, as means, spiritual and internal grace would be communicated to many, in whose hearts it would reign and make them meet for the kingdom of glory; and because the whole oecomy of the Gospel, the doctrines and ordinances of it, are from heaven. This phrase, *the kingdom of heaven*, is often to be met with in Jewish writings; and sometimes it stands opposed to the *kingdom of the earth*<sup>1</sup>; by it is often meant the worship, service, fear, and love of God, and faith in him: thus in one of their books<sup>2</sup> having mentioned those words, *serve the Lord with fear*: it is asked, what means this phrase, *with fear*? 'Tis answered, the same as it is written, *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*; and this is מלכות שמים *the kingdom of heaven*. And elsewhere they<sup>3</sup> ask, *what is the kingdom of heaven*? To which is answered, *the Lord our God is one Lord*. Yea, the Lord God himself is so called<sup>4</sup>, and sometimes the sanctuary; and sometimes they intend by it the times of the Messiah, as the Baptist here does; for so they paraphrase<sup>5</sup> those words, *the time of the singing of birds*, or of pruning, *is come*; the time for Israel to be redeemed is come; the time for the uncircumcision to be cut off is come; the time that the kingdom of the Cuthites (Samaritans or Heathens) shall be consumed is come; and the time של מלכות שמים שתגלה *that the kingdom of heaven shall be revealed* is come, as it is written, *and the Lord shall be king over all the earth*.<sup>6</sup> Very pertinently does John make use of this argument to engage to repentance; since there can't be a greater motive to it, whether it regard sorrow for sin, and confession of it, or a change of principles and practice, than the grace of God through Christ, which is exhibited in the Gospel dispensation: and very appositely does he urge repentance previous to the kingdom of heaven; because without that there can be no true and cordial embracing or entering into the Gospel dispensation, or kingdom of heaven; that is, no real and hearty receiving the doctrines, and submitting to the ordinances of it. Nor ought the Jews above all people to object to John's method of preaching; since they make repentance absolutely necessary to the revelation of the Messiah and his kingdom, and redemption by him; for they say<sup>7</sup> in so many words, that "if Israel do not repent, they will

"never be redeemed; but as soon as they repent, they will be redeemed; yea, if they repent but one day, immediately the son of David will come."

Ver. 3. *For this is he that was spoken of, &c.*] These are not the words of the Baptist himself, as in John i. 23. but of the Evangelist, who cites and applies to John a passage in the Prophet Isaiah, in ch. xl. 3. and that very pertinently, since that *chapter* is a prophecy of the Messiah. The consolations spoken of in ver. 1, 2. were to be in the days of the king Messiah, as a writer of note<sup>8</sup> among the Jews observes. The Messiah is more expressly prophesied of in ver. 9, 10, 11. as one that should appear to the joy of his people, and *come with a strong hand*, vigorously prosecute his designs, faithfully perform his work, and then receive his reward; he is spoken of under the *character* of a *shepherd*, who would tenderly discharge the several parts of his office as such, which character is frequently given to the Messiah in the Old Testament: now the person spoken of in ver. 3. was to be his harbinger to go before him, proclaim and make ready for his coming; and what is said of him agrees entirely with John the Baptist, as the character given of him, *the voice of one crying*, βοωντος, *lowing like an ox*; which expresses the austerity of the man, the roughness of his voice, the severity of his language; that he called aloud and spoke out, openly, publicly, and freely; and that he delivered himself in preaching with a great deal of zeal and fervency. The place where he preached was *in the wilderness*, that is, of Judea, where he is said before, in ver. 1. to come preaching. The doctrine he preached was, *prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight*, which is best explained by what is said before, in ver. 2. *repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. The Lord whom ye have sought, the Messiah whom you have expected, is just coming, he will quickly appear; prepare to meet him by repentance, and receive him by faith, relinquish your former notions and principles, correct your errors, and amend your lives, remove all out of the way which may be offensive to him. The allusion is to a great personage being about to make his public appearance or entrance; when a harbinger goes before him, orders the way to be cleared, all impediments to be removed, and every thing got ready for the reception of him.

Ver. 4. *The same John had his raiment, &c.*] The Evangelist goes on to describe this excellent person, the forerunner of our Lord, by his raiment; *the same John* of whom Isaiah prophesied, and who came preaching the doctrine in the place and manner before expressed, *had his raiment of camel's hair*; not of camel's hair softened and dressed, which the Talmudists<sup>9</sup> call צמר גמלים *camel's wool*: of which wool of camels and of hares, the Jews say<sup>10</sup> the coats were made, with which God clothed Adam and Eve; and which being spun to a thread, and wove, and made a garment of, they call דמילה, and we *camlet*; for

<sup>1</sup> Bereshit Rabba, fol. 7. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 39. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Debarim Rabba, fol. 237. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 112. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Shichashirim Rabba, fol. 11. 4.

<sup>6</sup> 1. Hieros. Taanith, fol. 63. 4. & 64. 1. & Bab. Sanhed. fol. 97. 2.

<sup>7</sup> R. David Kimchi in Isa. xl. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Misn. Negaim. c. 11. sect. 2. & Kilaim, c. 9. sect. 1. Talmud.

Bab. Menachot, fol. 39. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Bereshit Rabba, fol. 18. 2.

<sup>10</sup> T. Hieros. Nedarim, fol. 40. 3.

this would have been too fine and soft for John to wear, which is denied of him, Matt. xi. 8. but either of a camel's skin with the hair on it, such was the rough garment, or garment of hair, the prophets used to wear, Zech. xiii. 4. or of camel's hair not softened but undressed; and so was very coarse and rough, and which was suitable to the austerity of his life, and the roughness of his ministry. And it is to be observed he appeared in the same dress as Elijah or Elias did, 2 Kings i. 8. in whose spirit and power he came, and whose name he bore, Luke i. 17. Matt. xi. 14. *And a leathern girdle about his loins*; and such an one also Elijah was girt with, 2 Kings i. 8. and which added to the roughness of his garment, though it shews he was prepared and in a readiness to do the work he was sent about. *And his meat was locusts and wild honey*; by the locusts some have thought are meant a sort of fish called crabs, which John found upon the banks of Jordan, and lived upon; others, that a sort of wild fruit, or the tops of trees and plants he found in the wilderness and fed on, are designed; but the truth is, these were a sort of creatures called locusts, and which by the ceremonial law were lawful to be eaten, see Lev. xi. 92. The Misnic doctors describe such as are fit to be eaten after this manner; "all that have four feet and four wings, and whose thighs and wings cover the greatest part of their body, and whose name is *חַגַב* a locust." For it seems they must not only have these marks and signs, but must be so called, or by a word in any other language which answers to it, as the commentators<sup>d</sup> on this passage observe; and very frequently do these writers speak<sup>e</sup> of locusts that are clean, and may be eaten. Maimonides<sup>f</sup> reckons up eight sorts of them, which might be eaten according to the law. Besides, these were eaten by people of other nations, particularly the Ethiopians<sup>g</sup>, Parthians<sup>h</sup>, and Lybians<sup>i</sup>. *And wild honey*: this was honey of bees, which were not kept at home, but such as were in the woods and fields; of this sort was that which Jonathan found, and eat of, 1 Sam. xiv. 25, 26, 27. now the honey of bees might be eat, according to the Jewish laws<sup>k</sup>, though bees themselves might not.

Ver. 5. *Then went out to him Jerusalem, &c.*] The uncommon appearance of this person, the oddness of his dress, the austerity of his life, together with the awfulness and importance of his doctrine, and the novelty of the ordinance of baptism he administered, and the Jews having had no prophet for some hundreds of years, and imagining he might be the Messiah, quickly drew large numbers of people to him. Some copies read *all Jerusalem*; that is, the inhabitants of that city, a very large number of them; and *all Judea*, a great number of people from all parts of that country. *All*

is here put for *many*. And *all the region round about Jordan*; multitudes from thence, which seems to be the same country with that which is called *beyond Jordan*, Matt. iv. 25. and is distinguished from Judea, as here. The Septuagint in 2 Chron. iv. 17. use the same phrase the Evangelist does here, and likewise in Gen. xiii. 10, 11.

Ver. 6. *And were baptized of him, &c.*] The place where they were baptized of him was, *in Jordan*; some copies read, *in the river Jordan*, as in Mark i. 5. As to the name of this river, and the etymology of it, the Jews say<sup>l</sup> it was so called, שׂוּרְר מִן because it descended from Dan, i. e. *Leshem Dan*, or *Pamias*, which they say is a cave at the head of it. It was in John's time and long after a considerable river, a river to swim in; we<sup>m</sup> read that "*Resh Lakish* דוּק בַּיַּרְדֵּן was swimming in Jordan." And elsewhere<sup>n</sup>, that one day "*R. Jochanan was swimming in Jordan*." Also it was a river for boats and ships to pass in, so that it was a navigable river; hence we read<sup>o</sup> of עֵיבֵית דִּירְדֵן the boat of Jordan, and of ships in it, and of such and such things being forbidden to be carried over Jordan in a ship<sup>p</sup>; particularly, "a man might not take the water of the sin-offering, and the ashes of the sin-offering, and carry them over Jordan in a ship." Pliny<sup>q</sup>, Pausanias<sup>r</sup>, Solinus<sup>s</sup>, and others, speak of it as a very considerable and delightful river; see Joshua iii. 15, 16, 17. The Christians of Christ's time are called by the Jews, in a way of contempt, apostates, that received the doctrine of baptism, and were שְׂבִימִים בִּירְדֵן dipped in Jordan<sup>t</sup>. The manner in which they were baptized by him was by immersion or plunging them in the water: this may be concluded from the signification of the word βεβαπτισθη here used, which in the primary sense of it signifies to dip or plunge; from the place in which they were baptized, the river Jordan; and from John's constant manner of baptizing elsewhere, who chose places for this purpose, where and because there was there much water; see John i. 28. and iii. 23. The character of the persons baptized by him is this, they were such as were confessing their sins. They were called to repentance by John's ministry, and had the grace of it bestowed upon them; being thoroughly convinced of sin, and truly sorry for it, they were ready to acknowledge and confess it to God and men; and such an abiding sense they had of it upon their minds, that they continued doing it: they were not only confessing their sins before baptism, which engaged John to administer it to them; since we find afterwards he refused to admit others, because of their want of repentance and fruits meet for it; but also whilst they were going into the water, and when they came up out of it, so full were they of a sense of sin, and so ready to

<sup>c</sup> Misn. Cholin c. 3. sect. 7.

<sup>d</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>e</sup> Misn. Beracot, c. 6. sect. 3. Terumot. c. 10. sect. 9. & Ediot. c. 7. sect. 2. & 8. 4.

<sup>f</sup> Maecolot Asurot, c. 1. sect. 21.

<sup>g</sup> Phin. Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 30. Alex. ab Alex. l. 3. c. 11. Ludolph. Hist.

Ethiop. l. 1. c. 13.

<sup>h</sup> Phin. Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29.

<sup>i</sup> Hieron. adv. Jovinian. fol. 26. Tom. 2.

<sup>j</sup> Moses Kotzensis Mizvot Tora precept. neg. 132.

<sup>k</sup> T. Bab. Beccorot. fol. 55. l. Kimchi in Josh. xix. 47.

<sup>l</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 9. 2.

<sup>m</sup> T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 84. 1.

<sup>n</sup> T. Hieros. Sabbat. fol. 7. 1. Midraah Kobolet, fol. 64. 2.

<sup>o</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 116. 2. Chagiga, fol. 23. l. Sabbat. fol. 60. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Parah Adumah, c. 10. sect. 2. & Bartenora in Misn. Parah, c. 9. sect. 6.

<sup>p</sup> Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 15.

<sup>q</sup> L. 5. p. 29.

<sup>r</sup> Polyhist. c. 48.

<sup>s</sup> Coeri, p. 3. sect. 65. p. 241. Ed. Buxtorf.

own it. Even in baptism itself there is a tacit confession and acknowledgment of sin, for it represents the sufferings and death of Christ which were for sin, into which persons are baptized, and profess to be dead to sin thereby; and also the resurrection of Christ for justification from sin, which obliges the baptized person to walk in newness of life, sec Rom. vi. 3, 4, 5. besides, in this ordinance believers are led to the blood of Christ, both for the cleansing and remission of their sins, which suppose filth and guilt, Acts xxii. 16. and ii. 38. Now this is the character given of the very first persons that were baptized by John, and ought surely to be attended to by us; and as much care as possible should be taken, that none but such as have a true sense of sin, and are brought to an humble and hearty acknowledgment of it, be admitted to this ordinance.

Ver. 7. *But when he saw many of the Pharisees, &c.*] This being the first place in which mention is made of the Pharisees and Sadducees, it may not be amiss to give some account of them once for all, and to begin with the Pharisees, and first with their name. Some derive this word from פָּרַץ *pharatz* to divide, to make a breach, from whence Phares had his name, Gen. xxxviii. 29. so Jerom<sup>u</sup>, who observes, that "the Pharisees, who separated themselves from the people as righteous persons, were called *divisi*, the divided." And in another place, "because the Pharisees were divided from the Jews on account of some superfluous observations, they also took their name from their disagreement." Origen<sup>x</sup> seems to refer to this etymology of the word, when he says, "the Pharisees, according to their name, were *διμετρητοί* *διμετρητοί* *και* *ετασθενοί*, certain divided and seditious persons." And true it is, that this sect often meddled with the affairs of the government, and were very ambitious of being concerned therein. Josephus<sup>y</sup> observes of queen Alexandra, that she governed others, and the Pharisees governed her; hence, though they were in great esteem with the people, they were rather dreaded than loved by the government. Others derive this name from פָּרַשׁ *Pharas* to expand, or stretch out; either because they made broad their phylacteries, and enlarged the borders of their garments; or because they exposed themselves to public notice, did all they could to be seen of men, prayed in the corners of the streets, had a trumpet blown before them when they gave alms, chose the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, greetings in the markets, and to be called of men *Rabbi*: all which to be sure are their just characters. Others derive it from the same word, as signifying to explain or expound; because it was one part of their work, and in which they excelled, to expound the law; but this can't be the reason of their general name, because there were women Pharisees as well as men, who can't be thought to be employed in that work. The more generally received opinion is, that this name is taken from the above word, as signifying to separate; because they sepa-

rated themselves from the men and manners of the world, to the study of the law, and to a greater degree of holiness, at least in pretence, than other persons. They were strict observers of the traditions of the elders; are said to hold both fate and free will; they owned the resurrection of the dead, and that there were angels and spirits, in which they differed from the Sadducees. Or rather they have their name from פָּרַשׁ, which signifies a reward; they being stiff defenders of the doctrine of rewards and punishments in a future state, which the Sadducees denied. The Talmudic writers<sup>z</sup> say, there were seven sorts of them, and if it would not be too tedious to the reader, I would give the names of them; and the rather, because some of them seem to tally with the complexion and conduct of the Pharisees mentioned in the scriptures. There were then, 1. פְּרוּשׁ שִׁכְמִי *the Shechemite Pharisee*, who does as Shechem did; is circumcised, not on God's account, or for his glory, or because circumcision is a command of his, but for his own profit and advantage, and that he may get honour from men. 2. פְּרוּשׁ נִקְפִי *the dashing Pharisee*; who walks gently, the heel of one foot touching the great toe of the other; and scarce lifts up his feet from the earth, so that he dashes them against the stones, and would be thought hereby to be in deep meditation. 3. פְּרוּשׁ קִיָּא *the Pharisee letting blood*; who makes as if he shut his eyes, that he may not look upon women, and so runs and dashes his head against the wall, till the blood gushes out, as though a vein was opened. 4. פְּרוּשׁ מְרוּכָא *the depressed Pharisee*; who went double, or bowed down, or as others render the phrase, *the mortar Pharisee*; either because he wore a garment like a mortar, with the mouth turned downwards; or a hat resembling such a vessel; so that he could not look upward, nor on either side, only downward, or right forward. 5. פְּרוּשׁ מֵה דְרֹבְרֵי וְיֹאנְעִנָה *the Pharisee*, that said, what is my duty and I will do it? the gloss upon it is, teach me what is my duty, and I will do it: lo! this is his excellency, if he is not expert in the prohibitions and niceties of the commands, and comes to learn; or thus, what is more to be done and I have not done it? so that he shews himself, or would appear as if he had performed all. 6. פְּרוּשׁ יִרְאָה *the Pharisee of fear*; who does what he does from fear of punishment. 7. פְּרוּשׁ אֲהִבָּה *the Pharisee of love*; who does what he does from love; which the gloss explains thus: for the love of the reward of the commandment, and not for the love of the commandment of his Creator; though they say of all these there is none to be beloved, but the Pharisee of love. When this sect first began, and who was the first author of it, is not easy to say; 'tis certain there were great numbers of them in the times of John the Baptist, and of Christ, and for some time after. The Jews say<sup>a</sup>, that when the temple was destroyed the second time, the Pharisees increased in Israel. Next let us consider the Sadducees, who they were, and from whence they sprung. These have their name not from צְדִיק *Saddik righteous*<sup>b</sup>, or צְדֵק *Sedek righteous-*

<sup>u</sup> Trad. Heb. in Gen. fol. 72. D. Tom. 3.

<sup>v</sup> Adv. Luciferian. fol. 49. K. Tom. 2. so Tertullian. præscript. hæret. c. 45.

<sup>x</sup> Comment. in Joan. p. 115. Ed. Huët.

<sup>y</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 5. sect. 2.

<sup>z</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 14. 2. & Sota fol. 20. 3. Bab. Sota, fol. 22. 2. eight sorts are reckoned in Abot R. Nathan, c. 37. fol. 9. 4.

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 60. 2.

<sup>b</sup> So Epiphanius contr. Hæres. l. 1. Hæres. 14. Hieron. Comment. in Matt. c. 22. l. 3. fol. 30. M. Tom. 9.

ness, being self justitiaries; for though they were, yet this would not have distinguished them from the Pharisees, who were likewise such; but from פְּרִי *Sadok* or *Saduk*, a disciple of Antigonus, a man of Socho. The occasion of this new sect was this; Antigonus, among the instructions he gave to his scholars, had this saying; "be not as servants who serve their master for the sake of reward; but be ye as servants that serve their master not for the sake of reward, and let the fear of God be upon you." Which, when Sadok and a fellow scholar, whose name was Baithos, or Baithus, heard, not rightly understanding him, concluded that there was no future state of rewards and punishments; which notion they broached and had their followers, who from the one were called Sadducees, and sometimes from the other Baithuseans: these men held the Scriptures only, rejecting the traditions of the elders; they denied fate, and ascribed all to free will; they affirmed that there is no resurrection of the dead; that the soul dies with the body; that there is no future state after this life, and that there are neither angels nor spirits. Now when *John saw* or observed many of both these sects come to his baptism; not merely to see it administered, led thither by the novelty of the thing; but to submit to it, to which they might be induced by that very great character of a very holy good man, which John had got among the people; and they were desirous of being thought so too, and therefore desired to be baptized by him; but he knowing the men and their manners, said unto them; addressed them in a very severe style, quite contrary to their expectation, and the opinion the people had of them, *O generation of vipers!* It seems their parents before them were vipers, and they their offspring were like them, in hypocrisy and malice. The viper appears very beautiful outwardly, but is full of poison; it looks harmless and innocent, as if it neither could nor would do any hurt, its teeth being hid, but is a most deadly and hurtful creature: so these men, though they made specious pretences to religion and holiness, yet were full of the deadly poison of hypocrisy, malice, and error. A very disagreeable salutation this must be to men, who were desirous of being reckoned very religious, and who boasted of, and trusted in, their being the seed of Abraham; when they were the children of the devil, the seed of the old serpent, and the offspring of the worst of men, and in whom was verified the proverb, like father like son. John proceeds and asks, saying, *who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* who has suggested this to you? from whom have ye received this hint? who has pointed out the way to you to escape divine vengeance, or the ruin which will quickly come upon you? for by *wrath to come* is not meant hell fire, everlasting destruction, from which baptism could not save them; but temporal calamity and destruction, the wrath which in a little time came upon that nation to the uttermost, for rejecting the Messiah, and the Gospel dispensation; from which they might have been saved, had they given credit to Jesus as the Messiah; though only with a bare assent; and had they entered into the kingdom

of heaven, or Messiah, the Gospel dispensation, by receiving its doctrines, and submitting to its ordinances, though only externally.

Ver. 8. *Bring forth therefore fruits, &c.*] That is, if you are truly penitent, if you have a proper sense of sin, and true repentance for it, do such works as are suitable to it, and will shew the genuineness of it; for *fruits meet for repentance* are the same as *works meet for repentance*, Acts xxvi. 20. and as a tree is known by its fruit, so repentance is known by good works; these are the fruits and effects of repentance, and which are proofs with men of the sincerity of it. Those which follow upon evangelical repentance are such as are mentioned in 2 Cor. vii. 11. Now let it be observed, that John insisted upon repentance, and a good conversation, attesting the truth of it as necessary prerequisites to the ordinance of baptism; and so Peter first urged repentance, and then proposed baptism, Acts ii. 38. from whence one should think it may be rationally and strongly concluded, that none but truly repenting sinners, and such who have given proofs that they are so, are to be admitted to this ordinance.

Ver. 9. *And think not to say within yourselves, &c.*] John knew the sentiments of their minds, and the prevailing opinion they had given into, against which he cautions them; as, that because they were Abraham's seed, they were in a state of salvation, in the favour of God, and had a right to all privileges and ordinances: this they trusted in, and boasted of, and would often think of it within themselves, pleasing themselves with the thoughts of it, and speak of it to others; *we have Abraham for our father.* The Baptist was aware how ready they would be to object this to him; and therefore prevents their plea from hence in favour of their admission to baptism, by assuring them, that this would have no weight with him, nor give them any right to the ordinance he administered: hence it appears that it is not a person's being born of believing parents that can entitle him to water baptism; or be a reason why it ought to be administered to him: if nothing more than this can be said in his favour, it is a plain case from hence, he ought to be debarred from it. The reason John gives why such a plea as this would be insufficient is, *for I say unto you; I assure you of it; you may depend on it as a certain truth, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.* To raise up children is an Hebrew way of speaking, and the same with שֶׁבַע or לְרַבֵּם to raise up seed, or a name to another, Gen. xxxviii. 8. Deut. xxv. 7. Ruth iv. 10. and signifies to beget children for another, who are to be called by his name. Some by the stones understand the Gentiles, comparable to stones, both for the hardness of their hearts, and their idolatry in worshipping stocks and stones; of and among whom God was able to raise, and has raised up, a spiritual seed to Abraham; who are of the same faith with him, who walk in his steps, and whose father he is: but then it must be supposed, according to this sense, that there were some Gentiles present, since John calls them these stones, pointing to some persons or things, that were before him; wherefore I

\* Abot R. Nathan c. 5. fol. 3. 1. Sopher Cosri orat. 3. fol. 187. 2. & R. Juda Muscatus in ib. Maimon. in Pir. Abot. c. 1. sect. 3. Juchasin.

fol. 15. 2. Ganz. Tremach David. par. 1. fol. 20. 2. & Bartenora in Misn. Judaim, c. 4. sect. 6.

rather think that this phrase is to be taken literally, and that John pointed to some certain stones that were near him, within sight, and which lay upon the banks of Jordan, where he was baptizing; for what is it that the omnipotent God cannot do? He could as easily of stones make men, as make Adam out of the dust of the earth, and then make these men, in a spiritual sense, children of Abraham; that is, believers in Christ, and partakers of his grace; for if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise, Gal. iii. 29. So that God stood in no need of these persons, nor had they any reason to boast of their natural descent from Abraham; since this in spiritual matters, and in things relating to the Gospel dispensation, would stand them in no stead, or be of any advantage to them.

Ver. 10. *And now also the axe is laid, &c.*] These words may be rendered, *for now also*, and contain in them a reason why they might expect future wrath; why they should bring forth good fruit; and why they should not trust to nor plead their descent from Abraham, because *the axe is now laid*: by which is meant, not the Gospel which now began to be preached by John; though this was like an axe laid to the root of, and which cut down, their pride and vanity, their self-confidence and glorying in their righteousness, holiness, carnal wisdom, and fleshly privileges: but rather, the axe of God's judgment and vengeance is here designed, which, because of the certainty and near approach of it, is said to be *now laid*; and that not to some of the branches only, to lop them off, to take away from the Jews some particular privileges, but to the root of all their privileges, civil and ecclesiastical; even the covenant which God had made with that people as a nation, who was now about to write *Lo Ammi* upon them; so that henceforward they would have nothing to expect from their being the seed of Abraham, Israelites, or circumcised persons. The time was just at hand, when the Lord would take his *staff Beauty and cut it asunder, that he might break the covenant he had made with all the people*, Zech. xi. 10. in a short time their civil polity and church state would be both at an end. The Romans, who were already among them and over them, would very quickly come upon them, and cut them off root and branch; and utterly destroy their temple, city, and nation: and this ruin and destruction was levelled not at a single tree, a single person, or family only, as Jesse's, or any others, but at the root of the trees: of all the trees of the whole body of the people; for the covenant which was made with them all being broke, and which was their hedge and fence, they were all exposed to the wild boar of the forest. *Therefore every tree*, every individual person, though one of Abraham's children, and made never such a fair shew in the flesh, *which bringeth not forth good fruit*; does not perform good works from a right principle, to a right end, such as are meet for repentance; particularly, does not believe in the Messiah now ready to be revealed, which is the main and principal work; and does not continue so doing, and thus believing, *is hewn down and cast into the fire*. Temporal ruin and destruction shall come upon him;

he shall not escape divine vengeance here, and shall be cast into everlasting burnings hereafter; which is quite contrary to a notion of theirs, that בְּכֹתֵי דַאֲבְרָהָם by the merits of Abraham, the Israelites shall be delivered from the fire of hell<sup>4</sup>.

Ver. 11. *I indeed baptize you with water, &c.*] These words, at first view, look as if they were a continuation of John's discourse with the Pharisees and Sadducees, and as though he had baptized them; whereas by comparing them with what the other Evangelists relate, see Mark i. 5, 8. Luke iii. 10, 15, 16. they are spoken to the people, who, confessing their sins, had been baptized by him; to whom he gives an account of the ordinance of water baptism, of which he was the administrator, in what manner, and on what account he performed it: *I indeed baptize you*; or, as Mark says, *I have baptized you*: I have authority from God so to do; my commission reaches thus far, and no farther; I can administer, and have administered the outward ordinance to you; but the inward grace and increase of it, together with the ordinary and extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, I can't confer. I can, and do baptize, upon a profession of repentance, and I can threaten impenitent sinners with divine vengeance; but I can't bestow the grace of repentance on any, nor punish for impenitence, either here or hereafter; these things are out of my power, and belong to another person hereafter named: all that I do, and pretend to do, is to baptize with water, or rather in water, as בְּמַיִם should be rendered. Our version seems to be calculated in favour of pouring, or sprinkling water upon, or application of it to the person baptized, in opposition to immersion in it; whereas the preposition is not instrumental, but local, and denotes the place, the river Jordan, and the element of water there, in which John was baptizing: and this he did unto repentance, or at, or upon repentance: for so אֵינִי may be rendered, as it is in Matt. xii. 41. for the meaning is not that John baptized them, in order to bring them to repentance; since he required repentance and fruits meet for it, previous to baptism; but that he had baptized them upon the foot of their repentance; and so the learned Grotius observes, that the phrase may be very aptly explained thus: "I baptize you upon the profession of repentance which ye make." John gives a hint of the person whose forerunner he was, and of his superior excellency to him: he indeed first speaks of him as one behind him, not in nature or dignity, but in order of time as man; but he that comes after me. John was born before Jesus, and began his ministry before he did; he was his harbinger; Jesus was now coming after him to Jordan from Galilee, to be baptized by him, and then enter on his public ministry: but though he came after him in this sense, he was not beneath, but above him in character; which he freely declares, saying, *is mightier than I*; not only as he is the mighty God, and so infinitely mightier than he; but in his office and ministry, which was exercised with greater power and authority, and attended with mighty works and miracles, and was followed with the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit. Not to mention

<sup>4</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 34. 4.

the mighty work of redemption performed by him; the resurrection of his own body from the dead; and his exaltation in human nature, above all power, might, and dominion. The Baptist was so sensible of the inequality between them, and of his unworthiness to be mentioned with him, that he seems at a loss almost to express his distance from him; and therefore signifies it by his being unfit to perform one of the most servile offices to him, *whose shoes I am not worthy to bear*; or as the other Evangelists relate it, *whose shoelatchet I am not worthy to unloose*; which amounts to the same sense, since shoes are unloosed in order to be taken from, or carried before, or after a person; which to do was the work of servants among the Jews. In the Talmud<sup>e</sup> 'tis asked, "What is the manner of possessing of servants? or what is their service? He buckles his (master's) shoes; he *unlooses his shoes, and carries them before him to the bath.*" Or, as is elsewhere<sup>f</sup> said, "he *unlooses his shoes, or carries after him his vessels (whatever he wants) to the bath; he unclothes him, he washes him, he anoints him, he rubs him, he clothes him, he buckles his shoes, and lifts him up.*" This was such a servile work, that it was thought too mean for a scholar or a disciple to do; for 'tis<sup>g</sup> said, "all services which a servant does for his master, a disciple does for his master, *דוץ מחרתת לו מנעל, except unloosing his shoes.*" The gloss on it says, "he that sees it, will say, he's a Canaanitish servant:" for only a Canaanitish, not an Hebrew servant<sup>h</sup>, might be employed in, or obliged to such work; for it was reckoned not only mean and servile, but even base and reproachful. 'Tis one of their<sup>i</sup> canons; "if thy brother is become poor, and is sold unto thee, thou shalt not make him do the work of a servant; that is, *עבודת של ננאי, any reproachful work*; such as to buckle his shoes, or unloose them, or carry his instruments (or necessaries) after him to the bath." Now John thought himself unworthy; it was too great an honour for him to do that for Christ, which was thought too mean for a disciple to do for a wise man, and too scandalous for an Hebrew servant to do for his master, to whom he was sold; which shews the great humility of John, and the high opinion he had of Christ. It has been controverted whether Christ wore shoes or not; Jerom affirmed that he did not: but it seems from hence that he did; nor were the Jews used to walk barefoot, but on certain occasions. The Baptist points at the peculiar work of this great person, in which he greatly exceeds any thing done by him; *he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire*; referring, either to the extraordinary gifts of the spirit, to be bestowed on the disciples on the day of Pentecost, of which the cloven tongues, like as of fire, which appeared unto them, and sat upon them, were the symbols; which was an instance of the great power and grace of Christ, and of his exaltation at the father's right hand. Or rather, this phrase is expressive of the awful judgments which

should be inflicted by him on the Jewish nation; when he by his spirit should *reprove* them for the sin of rejecting him; and when he should appear as a *refiner's fire*, and as *fuller's soap*; when *the day of the Lord should burn as an oven*; when he should *purge the blood of Jerusalem*, his own blood, and the blood of the Apostles and Prophets shed in it, *from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning*; the same with the *Holy Ghost and fire* here, or the fire of the Holy Ghost, or the holy spirit of fire; and is the same with the *wrath to come*, and with what is threatened in the context: the unfruitful trees shall be *cut down, and cast into the fire*, and the *chaff shall be burnt with unquenchable fire*. And as this sense best agrees with the context, it may the rather be thought to be genuine; since John is speaking not to the disciples of Christ, who were not yet called, and who only on the day of Pentecost were baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire, in the other sense of this phrase; but to the people of the Jews, some of whom had been baptized by him; and others were asking him questions, others gazing upon him, and wondering what manner of person he was; and multitudes of them continued obdurate and impenitent under his ministry, whom he threatens severely in the context. Add to all this, that the phrase of dipping or baptizing in fire seems to be used in this sense by the Jewish writers. In the Talmud<sup>k</sup> one puts the question, In what does he (God,) dip? You'll say in water, as it is written, *who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand?* Another replies, *בנורה טביל, he dips in fire*; as it is written, *for behold the Lord will come with fire*. What is the meaning of *בנורה טבילונה, baptism in fire?* He answers, according to the mind of Rabbah, the root of *dipping in the fire*, is what is written; *all that abideth not the fire, ye shall make go through the water*. Dipping in the fire of the law, is a phrase used by the Jews<sup>l</sup>. The phrases of *dipping, and washing in fire*, are also used by Greek<sup>m</sup> authors.

Ver. 12. *Whose fan is in his hand, &c.*] The Jews had their hand-fans, and which were like a man's hand; their names were *מעבר מורה מנוב*; which, as Maimonides says<sup>n</sup>, were three sorts of instruments used in the floor, in form of a man's hand; with which they cleansed the wheat and barley from the straw; and their names differ according to their form: some have many teeth, and with them they cleanse the wheat at the end of the work; and there are others that have few teeth, no more than three, and with these they purge the wheat at first, from the thick straw. By the *fan*, here is meant, either the Gospel which Christ was just ready to publish; by which he would effectually call his chosen people among the Jews, and so distinguish and separate them from others, as well as purify and cleanse them; or rather the awful judgment of God, which Christ was ready to execute, and in a short time would execute on the unbelieving and impenitent Jews: hence it is said to be

<sup>e</sup> T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 59. 4. Maimon. & T. Bartenora in Misn. Kiddushin, c. 1. sect. 3.

<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 22. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Mechirah, c. 2. sect. 2.

<sup>g</sup> T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 96. 1. Maimon. Talmud Torā, c. 5. sect. 8.

<sup>h</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Abadim, c. 1. sect. 7.

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>i</sup> Mosee Kotzensis Mitzvot Torah, precept. neg. 176.

<sup>k</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 39. 1.

<sup>l</sup> Tzeror Hammor. fol. 104. 4. & 143. 3. & 170. 1.

<sup>m</sup> Moechi Idyll. 1. Philostrat. Vit. Apollon, l. 3. c. 5.

<sup>n</sup> In Misn. Celim. c. 13. sect. 7. Vid. Jarchi & Bartenora in ib. & ia. Misn. Tibbul. Yom. c. 4. sect. 6.

*in his hand*; being put there by his father, who *hath committed all judgment to the son*. That this is the meaning of the *Baptist*, seems evident, since *fanning* is always, when figuratively taken, used for judgments, Isa. xli. 6. Jer. xv. 17. and li. 2. By *his floor*, is meant the land of Israel, where he was born, brought up, and lived; of which the Lord says, *O my threshing, and the corn of my floor!* Isa. xxi. 10. This, he says, *he will thoroughly purge* of all his refuse and chaff, that is, by fanning: so fanning and cleansing, or purging, are joined together, Jer. iv. 11. so ברר is used for purging by fanning, in the Misnic writings<sup>o</sup>. By *his wheat*, are meant his elect among the Jews, the chosen of God and precious; so called because of their excellency, purity, usefulness, solidity, and constancy: these he *will gather into his garner*; meaning either some place of protection, where he would direct his people to for safety from that wrath, ruin, and destruction, which should fall upon the Jewish nation; or else the kingdom of heaven, into which he would bring them, by taking them out of the world from the evil to come. By *the chaff*, are meant wicked and ungodly persons, such as are destitute of the grace of God, whether professors, or profane; being empty, barren, and unfruitful; and so good for nothing but the fire, which therefore *he will burn with unquenchable fire*, of divine wrath and vengeance: an allusion to a custom among the Jews, who, when they purified the increase of their unclean fields, gathered it together in an *area* or floor, in the midst of them, and then sifted it with sieves; one sort with two sieves, another with three, that they might thoroughly purge it, and burnt the chaff and stalks<sup>p</sup>; see Isa. v. 24.

Ver. 13. *Then cometh Jesus, &c.*] That is, when John had been some time preaching the doctrine of repentance, and administering the ordinance of baptism; for which, time must be allowed, since he went into all the country about Jordan, and preached unto them, and baptized such large numbers: very probably it might be six months from his first entrance on his ministry; since there was this difference in their age, and so might be in their baptism and preaching. Now when John had given notice of the Messiah's coming, and so had prepared his way; had declared the excellency of his person, the nature of his work, and office, and had raised in the people an expectation of him, *then cometh Jesus from Galilee*; from Nazareth of Galilee, Mark i. 9. where he had lived for many years, as the Jews<sup>q</sup> themselves own; in great obscurity, in all obedience to God, in subjection to his parents, exercising a conscience void of offence towards God and man, and employing his time in devotion and business: from hence he came to Jordan to John, who was baptizing there; which shews the great humility of Christ, who comes to John, and does not send for him, though John was his servant, and he was his Lord and Master; and also his cheerful and voluntary subjection to the ordinance of baptism, since of himself, of his own accord, he took this long and fatiguing journey; for Nazareth,

according to David de Pomis<sup>r</sup>, was three days journey from Jerusalem, though somewhat nearer Jordan; the end and design of his coming was *to be baptized of him*. It may reasonably be inquired what should be Christ's view in desiring to be baptized; it could not be to take away original or actual sin, since he had neither; nor has baptism any such efficacy to do this, in those who have either or both: but, it was to shew his approbation of John's baptism, and to bear a testimony of it, that it was from heaven; and also that he himself might receive a testimony both from heaven, and from John, that he was the son of God and true Messiah, before he entered upon his public ministry, into which he was in some measure initiated and installed hereby; and moreover, to set an example to his followers, and thereby engage their attention and subjection to this ordinance; and, in a word, as he himself says, to fulfil all righteousness.

Ver. 14. *But John forbad him, saying, &c.*] It appears from hence, that John knew Christ before he baptized him, and before he saw the spirit descending and abiding on him, John i. 33. wherefore that was not a signal, whereby he should first know him, but whereby his knowledge of him should be confirmed; which knowledge of him he had, not through his kindred to him, or by any conversation he had with him before, but by immediate, divine revelation: upon which account he *forbad him*; refused to administer the ordinance to him; earnestly entreated that he would not insist upon it; desired to be excused being concerned herein: and this he did, partly lest the people should think Christ was not so great a person as he had represented him to be; yea, that he was one of the penitent sinners John had admitted to his baptism; and chiefly because of the majesty and dignity of Christ's person, who he knew stood in no need of such an outward ordinance; and because of his own unworthiness to administer it to him, as is evident from what follows, *I have need to be baptized of thee*; not with water-baptism, which Christ never administered, but with the baptism of the spirit, which was his peculiar office. Hence we learn, that though John was so holy a man, was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, had such large measures of grace, and lived such an exemplary life and conversation; yet was far from thinking, that he was perfect and righteous in himself, but stood in need of Christ, and of more grace from him. He seems surprised that Christ should come to him, and make such a motion to him; when it was his duty and privilege to come to him daily for fresh supplies of grace, and always to trust in him for life and salvation; *and comest thou to me?* who am of the earth, earthly, when thou art the Lord from heaven; *to me*, a poor sinful creature, when thou art the holy one of God; *to me*, who am thy servant, when thou art Lord of all; *to me*, who always stand in need of thy grace, when thou art God all-sufficient.

Ver. 15. *And Jesus answering, said unto him, &c.*] This is an Hebrew way of speaking, often used in the Old Testament, and answers to יען ויאמר

<sup>o</sup> Misn. Sabbat. c. 7. sect. 2. & Gittin, c. 5. sect. 9.  
<sup>p</sup> Misn. Oholot. c. 18. sect. 2.

<sup>q</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 6.  
<sup>r</sup> Tzemach David, fol. 141. 2.



Job iii. 1. He replied to John, who had made use of very forbidding words, after this manner, *suffer it to be so now*; let me have my request; don't go on to object, but comply with my desire; let it be done *now*, immediately, directly, at this present time; don't put me off with any excuse; it is a proper season for it, even *now*, since the time is not yet come that I am to baptize with the Holy Ghost; and besides, *thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness*. It became John to administer the ordinance of baptism to Christ, as he was his forerunner, and the only administrator of it, and that he might fulfil the ministry which he had received; and as it became Christ to fulfil all righteousness, moral and ceremonial, and baptism being a part of his father's will, which he came to do, it became him to fulfil this also. And since it became Christ, it cannot be unbecoming us to submit to this ordinance; and since he looked upon it as a part of righteousness to be fulfilled by him, it ought to be attended to by all those who would be accounted followers of him. Christ having strongly urged the conveniency and equity of the administration of baptism to him, which shewed his eager desire after it, and the lowliness of his mind; and John being convinced, and overcome by the force of his reasoning, agrees to his baptism; then he suffered him, i. e. to be baptized in water by him, as he had requested, and accordingly did administer it to him.

Ver. 16. *And Jesus, when he was baptized, &c.*] Christ, when he was baptized by John in the river Jordan, the place where he was baptizing, *went up straightway out of the water*. One would be at a loss at first sight for a reason why the Evangelist should relate this circumstance; for after the ordinance was administered, why should he stay in the water? what should he do there? Every one would naturally and reasonably conclude, without the mention of such a circumstance, that as soon as his baptism was over, he would immediately come up out of the water. However, we learn this from it, that since it is said, that he came up out of the water, he must first have gone down into it; must have been in it, and was baptized in it; a circumstance strongly in favour of baptism by immersion: for that Christ should go down into the river, more or less deep, to the ancles, or up to the knees, in order that John should sprinkle water on his face, or pour it on his head, as is ridiculously represented in the prints, can hardly obtain any credit with persons of thought and sense. But the chief view of the Evangelist in relating this circumstance, is with respect to what follows; and to shew, that as soon as Christ was baptized, and before he had well got out of the water, *lo the heavens were opened*; and some indeed read the word *straightway*, in connection with this phrase, and not with the words *went up*: but there is no need of supposing such a trajection, for the whole may be rendered thus; *and Jesus, when he was baptized, was scarcely come up out of the water, but lo, immediately, directly, as soon as he was out, or rather before, the heavens were opened to him*; the airy heaven was materially and really opened, parted, rent, or cloven asunder, as

in Mark i. 10. which made way for the visible descent of the Holy Ghost in a bodily shape. A difficulty arises here, whether the words, *to him*, are to be referred to Christ, or to John; no doubt but the opening of the heavens was seen by them both: but to me it seems that John is particularly designed, since this vision was upon his account, and for his sake, and to him the following words belong; *and he, that is, John, saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him*: for this is what was promised to John, as a sign, which should confirm his faith in Jesus, as the true Messiah, and which he himself says he saw, and upon which he founded the record and testimony he bore to Christ, as the son of God; see John i. 32, 33, 34. not but that the descent of the Holy Ghost in this manner might be seen by Christ, as well as John, according to Mark i. 10. The *spirit of God*, here said to descend and light on Christ, is the same, which in the first creation moved upon the face of the waters, and now comes down on Christ, just as he was coming up out of the waters of Jordan, where he had been baptized; and which the Jews<sup>1</sup> so often call *רוח מלך המשיח* *the spirit of the king Messiah, and the spirit of the Messiah*. The descent of him was in a *bodily shape*, as Luke says, ch. iii. 32. either in the shape of a dove, which is a very fit emblem of the spirit of God who descended, and the fruits thereof, such as simplicity, meekness, love, &c. and also of the dove-like innocence, humility, and affection of Christ, on whom he lighted; or it was in some other visible form, not expressed, which pretty much resembled the hovering and lighting of a dove upon any thing: for it does not necessarily follow from any of the accounts the Evangelists give of this matter, that the holy spirit assumed, or appeared in, the form of a dove; only that his visible descent and lighting on Christ was *וּנְתַנְּחָה*, as a dove descends, hovers and lights; which does not necessarily design the form of the creature, but the manner of its motion. However, who can read this account without thinking of Noah's dove, which brought in its mouth the olive leaf, a token of peace and reconciliation, when the waters were abated from off the earth? Give me leave to transcribe a passage I have met with in the book of Zohar<sup>2</sup>; "a door shall be opened, and out of it shall come forth the dove which Noah sent out in the days of the flood, as it is written, *and he sent forth the dove*, that famous dove; but the ancients speak not of it, for they knew not what it was, only from whence it came, and did its message; as it is written, *it returned not again unto him any more*: no man knows whither it went, but it returned to its place, and was hid within this door; and it shall take a crown in its mouth, and put it upon the head of the king Messiah." And a little after, the dove is said to abide upon his head, and he to receive glory from it. Whether this is the remains of some ancient tradition, these men studiously conceal, concerning the opening of the heavens, and the descent of the spirit of God, as a dove, upon the *Messiah*; or whether it is hammered out of the evangelic history, let the reader judge.

<sup>1</sup> Bereshit Rabba, fol. s. 4. & 6. 3. Vajikra Rabba, fol. 156. 4.

Zohar in Gen. fol. 107. 3. & 128. 3. Baal Hatturim in Gen. i. 2. Caphtor Uperah, fol. 113. 2. <sup>2</sup> In Num. fol. 68. 3, 4.

Ver. 17. *And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, &c.*] At the same time the heavens were opened, and the spirit of God descended as a dove, and lighted on Christ, and whilst it abode upon him, an extraordinary voice was heard; hence the note of attention and admiration, *lo*, is prefixed unto it, as before, to the opening of the heavens; being what was unusual and surprising; and as denoting something to be expressed of great moment and importance. The Jews, in order to render this circumstance less considerable, and to have it believed, that these voices from heaven heard in the time of Jesus, and in relation to him, were common things, have invented a great many stories concerning *בת קול משמים*, *the voice*, or *the daughter of the voice from heaven*; which they pretend came in the room of prophecy: their words are, "after the death of the latter prophets, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, the holy spirit departed from Israel, and thenceforwards they used *Bath Kol*, *the voice*. One time they were sitting in the chamber of the house of Guria in Jericho, and there came to them *בת קול משמים*, *the voice from heaven*, (saying;) there is one here, who is fit to have the Shekinah (or divine majesty) abide on him, as Moses our master; but because his generation was not worthy, therefore the wise men set their eyes on Hillel, the elder; and when he died, they said concerning him, this was a holy man, a meek man, a disciple of Ezra. Again, another time they were sitting in a chamber in Jabneh, and there came to them *the voice from heaven*, (saying;) there is one here, who is fit to have the Shekinah dwell on him; but because his generation was not worthy, therefore the wise men set their eyes on Samuel the "little." I have cited this passage at large, partly because, according to them, it fixes the date and use of *the voice*; and partly, because it affords instances of it, wherefore more need not be mentioned; for it would be endless to repeat the several things spoken by it; such as encouraging Herod to rebel, and seize his master's kingdom; forbidding Ben Uzziel to go on with his paraphrase on the Hagiographa, or holy books, when he had finished his Targum on the prophets; declaring the words of Hillel and Shammai to be the words of the living God; signifying the conception, birth, and death of persons, and the like; all which seem to be mere fiction and imagination, diabolical delusions, or satanical imitations of this voice, that was now heard, in order to lessen the credit of it. But, to proceed; this extraordinary voice from heaven, which was formed in articulate sounds, for the sake of John; and, according to the

other Evangelists, was directed to Christ, Mark i. 11. Luke iii. 22. expressed the following words, *this is my beloved son*. This person, who had been baptized in water, on whom the holy spirit now rested, is no other than the son of God in human nature; which he assumed, in order to be obedient to this, and the whole of his father's will: he is his own proper son, not by creation, as angels, and men; nor by adoption, as saints; nor by office, as magistrates; but in such a way of filiation as no other is: he is the natural, essential, and only-begotten son of God; his beloved son, whom the father loved from everlasting, as his own son; the image of himself, of the same nature with him, and possessed of the same perfections; whom he loved, and continued to love in time, though clothed with human nature, and the infirmities of it; appearing in the likeness of sinful flesh; being in his state of humiliation, he loved him through it, and all sorrows and sufferings that attended it. Christ always was, and ever will be considered, both in his person as the son of God, and in his office as mediator, the object of his love and delight; wherefore he adds, *in whom I am well pleased*. Jehovah the father took infinite delight and pleasure in him as his own son, who lay in his bosom before all worlds; and was well pleased with him in his office-relation, and capacity: he was both well pleased in him as his son, and delighted in him as his servant, Isa. xlii. 1. he was pleased with his assumption of human nature; with his whole obedience to the law; and with his bearing the penalty and curse of it, in the room and stead of his people: he was well pleased with and for his righteousness, sacrifice and atonement; whereby his law was fulfilled, and his justice satisfied. God is not only well pleased in, and with his son, but with all his people, as considered in him; in him he loves them, takes delight in them, is pacified towards them, and graciously accepts of them. It would be almost unpardonable, not to take notice of the testimony here given to the doctrine of the Trinity; since a voice was heard from the father in heaven, bearing witness to the son in human nature on earth, on whom the spirit had descended and now abode. The ancients looked upon this as so clear and full a proof of this truth, that they were wont to say: Go to Jordan, and there learn the doctrine of the Trinity. Add to all this, that since this declaration was immediately upon the baptism of Christ, it shews that his father highly approved of, and was well pleased with his submission to that ordinance; and which should be an encouraging motive to all believers to follow him in it.

## C H A P. IV.

Ver. 1. *THEN was Jesus led up of the spirit, &c.*] The Evangelist having finished his account of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ; of his ministry and baptism; and particularly of the baptism of

Christ; when the Holy Ghost came down upon him in a visible and eminent manner; whereby he was anointed for his public work, according to Isa. lxi. 1. proceeds to give a narration of his temptations by

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 11. 1. Sota, fol. 48. 2. Yoma. fol. 9. 2.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 3. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Megilla, fol. 3. 1.

<sup>4</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 3. 2.

<sup>5</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 22. 1. T. Hieros. Sabbat. fol. 8. 3.

Satan, which immediately followed his baptism; and of those conflicts he had with the enemy of mankind, before he entered on his public ministry. The occasion, nature, and success of these temptations are here related. The occasion of them, or the opportunity given to the tempter, is spoken of in this and the following *verse*. In this may be observed the action of the spirit in and upon Christ; he was led up of the spirit: by the spirit is meant the same spirit of God, which had descended and lighted on him in a bodily shape, with the gifts and graces of which he was anointed, in an extraordinary manner, for public service; of which he was full, Luke iv. 1. not but that he was endowed with the Holy Ghost before, which he received without measure from his father; but now this more eminently and manifestly appeared, and by this spirit was he led; both the Syriac and the Persic versions read, *by the holy spirit*. Being led by him, denotes an internal impulse of the spirit in him, stirring him up, and putting him upon going into the wilderness: and this impulse being very strong and vehement, another Evangelist thus expresses it; *the spirit driveth him, ⲁⲓⲉⲗⲗⲏⲓ, thrusts him forth into the wilderness*, Mark i. 12. though not against his will; to which was added an external impulse, or outward rapture, somewhat like that action of the spirit on Philip, Acts viii. 39. When he is said to be led up, the meaning is, that he was led up from the low parts of the wilderness, where he was, to the higher and mountainous parts thereof, which were desolate and uninhabited. The place where he was led was into the wilderness, i. e. of Judea, into the more remote parts of it; for he was before in this wilderness, where John was preaching and baptizing; but in that part of it which was inhabited. There was another part which was uninhabited, but by *wild beasts* and here Christ was led, and with these he was, Mark i. 13. all alone, retired from the company of men; could have no assistance from any, and wholly destitute of any supply: so that Satan had a fair opportunity of trying his whole strength upon him; having all advantages on his side he could wish for. The end of his being led there, was to be tempted of the devil: by the devil is meant Satan, the prince of devils, the enemy of mankind, the old serpent, who has his name here from accusing and calumniating; so the Syriac calls him ⲁⲓⲕⲗ ⲕⲣⲏⲁ, the accuser, or publisher of accusations. He was the accuser of God to men, and is the accuser of men to God; his principal business is to tempt, and Christ was brought here to be tempted by him, that he might be tried before he entered on his public work; that he might be in all things like unto his brethren; that he might have a heart as man, as well as power, as God, to succour them that are tempted; and that Satan, whose works he came to destroy, might have a specimen of his power, and expect, in a short time, the ruin of his kingdom by him. The time when this was done was then: when Jesus had been baptized by John; when the Holy Ghost descended on him, and he was full of it; when he had such a testimony from his father of his relation to him, affection for him, and delight in him; then was he led,

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 12. 1, 2. Misn. Taanith, c. 1. sect. 3.

immediately, as Mark says, ch. i. 12. As soon as all this was done, directly upon this, he was had into the wilderness to be tempted by, and to combat with Satan; and so it often is, that after sweet communion with God in his ordinances, after large discoveries of his love and interest in him, follow sore temptations, trials, and exercises. There is a very great resemblance and conformity between Christ and his people in these things.

Ver. 2. *And when he had fasted forty days, &c.* As Moses did, when he was about to deliver the law to the Israelites, Exod. xxxiv. 28. and as Elijah did, when he bore his testimony for the Lord of hosts, 1 Kings xix. 8. so did Christ, when he was about to publish the Gospel of his grace, and bear witness to the truth. *Forty nights*, as well as days, are mentioned; partly to shew that these were whole entire days, consisting of twenty-four hours; and partly to distinguish this fast of Christ from the common fastings of the Jews, who used to eat in the night, though they fasted in the day: for according to their canons<sup>2</sup>, they might eat and drink as soon as it was dark, and that till cock-crowing; and others say, till break of day. Maimonides<sup>3</sup> says, they might eat and drink at night, in all fasts, except the *ninth of Ab*. What is very surprising in this fasting of our Lord, which was made and recorded, not for our imitation, is, that during the whole time he should not be attended with hunger; for 'tis added, *he was afterwards an hungered*; that is, as Luke says, *when the forty days were ended*, ch. iv. 2. which seized upon him, and is related, both to express the reality of his human nature, which though miraculously supported for so long a time without food, and insensible of hunger; yet at length had appetite for food; and also that very advantageous opportunity Satan had to attack him in the manner he did, with his first temptation.

Ver. 3. *And when the tempter came to him, &c.* By the tempter, is meant the devil, see 1 Thess. iii. 5. so called, because it is his principal work and business, in which he employs himself, to solicit men to sin; and tempt them either to deny, or call in question the being of God, arraign his perfections, murmur at his providences, and disbelieve his promises. When he is here said to come to Christ at the end of forty days and nights, we are not to suppose, that he now first began to tempt him; for the other Evangelists expressly say, that he was tempted of him forty days, Mark i. 13. Luke iv. 2. but he now appeared openly, and in a visible shape: all the forty days and nights before, he had been tempting him secretly and inwardly; suggesting things suitable to, and taking the advantage of the solitary and desolate condition he was in. But finding these suggestions and temptations unsuccessful, and observing him to be an hungered, he puts on a visible form, and with an articulate, audible voice, he said, *if thou be the son of God*: either doubting of his divine sonship, calling it in question, and putting him upon doing so too; wherefore it is no wonder that the children of God should be assaulted with the like temptation: or else arguing from it, *if, or seeing thou art the son of*

<sup>2</sup> Hilch. Taanith, c. 5. sect. 5.

God; for he must know that he was, by the voice which came from heaven, and declared it: and certain it is, that the devils both knew, and were obliged to confess that Jesus was the son of God, Luke iv. 41. by which is meant, not a good, or righteous man, or one dear to God, and in an office; but a divine person, one possessed of almighty power; and therefore, as a proof and demonstration of it, he urges him to command that these stones be made bread, pointing to some which lay hard by; *אמר, say* but the word, and it will be done. He did not doubt but he was able to do it, by a word speaking; but he would have had him to have done it at his motion, which would have been enough for his purpose; who wanted to have him obedient to him: and he might hope the rather to succeed in this temptation, because Christ was now an hungry; and because he had carried his point with our first parents, by tempting them to eat of the forbidden fruit.

Ver. 4. *But he answered and said, it is written, &c.*] The passage referred to, and cited, is in Deut. viii. 3. the manner of citing it is what was common and usual with the Jews; and is often to be met with in the Talmudic writings; who, when they produce any passage of scripture, say *דכתיב, as it is written*. The meaning of this scripture is; not that as the body lives by bread, so the soul lives by the word of God, and doctrines of the Gospel; though this is a certain truth: or that man lives by obedience to the commands of God, as was promised to the Israelites in the wilderness, and in the land of Canaan; but that God, in satisfying man's hunger, and in supporting and preserving his life, is not tied to bread only, but can make use of other means, and order whatever he pleases to answer these ends; as, by raining manna from heaven, which is mentioned in the passage cited; and therefore there was no occasion to change the nature of things, to turn stones into bread; since that was not so absolutely necessary to the sustenance of life, as that it could not be maintained without it. Our Lord hereby expresses his strong faith and confidence in God, that he was able to support him, and would do it, though in a wilderness, and destitute of supply; whereby he overcame this temptation of Satan. Christ, in this, and some following citations, bears a testimony to, and establishes the authority of the sacred writings; and though he was full of the Holy Ghost, makes them the rule of his conduct; which ought to be observed against those, who, under a pretence of the spirit, deny the scriptures to be the only rule of faith and practice; and at the same time points out to us the safest and best method of opposing Satan's temptations; namely, by applying to, and making use of the word of God.

Ver. 5. *Then the devil taketh him up, &c.*] This was done, not in a visionary way, but really and truly: Satan, by divine permission, and with the consent of Christ, which shews his great humiliation and condescension, had power over his body, to move it from place to place; in some such like manner as the

spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, Acts viii. 39. he took him up, raised him above ground, and carried him through the air, *into the holy city*: this was Jerusalem; for Luke expressly says, *he brought him to Jerusalem*, ch. iv. 9. called so, because of the presence, worship, and service of God, which had been in it, though then in a great measure gone; and according to the common notions of the Jews, who say <sup>b</sup> Jerusalem was more holy than any other cities in the land, and that because of the Shekinah. The inscription on one side of their shekels was *ירושלם עיר הקודש, Jerusalem, the holy city*. Satan frequents all sorts of places; men are no where free from his temptations; Christ himself was not in the holy city, no nor in the holy temple; hither also he had him, and seteth him upon a pinnacle, or wing of the temple. In this place <sup>d</sup> the Jews set James, the brother of Christ, and from it cast him down headlong: this was the *ακρος, the summit, or top* of it; and intends either the roof encompassed with battlements, to keep persons from falling off; or the top of the porch before the temple, which was 120 cubits high; or the top of the royal gallery, built by Herod, which was of such an height, that if a man looked down from it, he soon became dizzy <sup>e</sup>. The view Satan had in setting him here appears in the next verse.

Ver. 6. *And saith unto him, if thou be the son of God, &c.*] He addresses him after the same manner as before; *if, or seeing, thou art the son of God*, shew thyself to be so; give proof of thy sonship before all the priests which are in and about the temple, and before all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; *cast thyself down*: that is, from the pinnacle of the temple: for since thou art the son of God, no hurt will come to thee; thou wilt be in the utmost safety; and this will at once be a full demonstration to all the people, that thou art the son of God: for hither Satan brought him, hoping to have got an advantage of him publicly; otherwise, had his view only been to have got him to cast himself down from any place of eminence, and so to have destroyed himself, he might have set him upon any other precipice; but he chose to have it done in the sight of the people, and in the holy city, and holy place. Let it be observed, that Satan did not offer to cast him down himself; for this was not in his power, nor within his permission, which reached only to tempt; and besides, would not have answered his end; for that would have been his own sin, and not Christ's: accordingly, we may observe, that when he seeks the lives of men, he does not attempt to destroy them himself, but always puts them upon doing it. To proceed, Satan not only argues from his divine power, as the son of God, that he would be safe in casting himself down; but observing the advantageous use Christ made of the scriptures, transforms himself into an angel of light, and cites scripture too, to encourage him to this action, assuring him of the protection of angels. The passage cited is Psal. xci. 11, 12. which expresses God's tender care and concern for his people, in charging the angels with the guardianship and preservation of them, in all their

<sup>b</sup> Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 183. 4. & Maimon. Hilch. Beth. Hachirah, c. 7. sect. 14. & 6. 16.

<sup>c</sup> Wasceus de Antiq. Numm. Heb. l. 2. c. 5.

<sup>d</sup> Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 23.

<sup>e</sup> Jos. ph. Antiq. Jud. l. 15. c. 14.

ways, that they might be secured from sin and danger. It does not appear that Satan was wrong in the application of this passage to Christ; for since it respects all the righteous in general, why not Christ as man? the head, as well as the members? And certain it is, that angels had the charge of him, did watch over him, and were a guard about him; the angels of God ascended, and descended on him; they were employed in preserving him from Herod's malice in his infancy; they ministered to him here in the wilderness, and attended him in his agony in the garden: but what Satan failed in, and that wilfully, and wickedly, was, in omitting that part of it, to keep *thee in all thy ways*; which he saw was contrary to his purpose, and would have spoiled his design at once; and also in urging this passage, which only regards godly persons, in the way of their duty, to countenance actions which are out of the way of a man's calling, or which he is not called unto; and which are contrary to religion, and a tempting God. Satan before tempted Christ to distrust the providence of God, and now he tempts him to presume upon it: in like manner he deals with men, when he argues from the doctrines of predestination and providence to the disuse of means, for their good, either for this life, or that which is to come; and if he tempted the son of God to destroy himself, 'tis no wonder that the saints should be sometimes harassed with this temptation.

Ver. 7. *Jesus saith unto him, it is written again, &c.*] Christ takes no notice of the false and wrong citation of scripture made by the devil, nor of any misapplication of it; but mildly replies, by opposing another passage of scripture to him, Deut. vi. 16. *ye shall not tempt the Lord your God*, thereby tacitly shewing, that he had produced scripture to a very wrong purpose, since that could never contradict itself; and also, that for a person to neglect the ordinary means of safety, and to expect, that as God can, so he will, preserve without the use of such means, is a tempting him. The Hebrew word *נִסֶּה*, tempt, as Manasseh ben Israel observes, is always taken in an ill part, and is to be understood of such who would try the power, goodness, or will of God. And which, as it is not fitting it should be done by any man, so not by himself; and perhaps he hereby intimates too, that he himself was God; and therefore, as it was not right in him to tempt God the father, by taking such a step as Satan solicited him to; nor would it be right in any other; so it was iniquitous in the devil to tempt him who was God over all, blessed for ever.

Ver. 8. *Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, &c.*] That is, he took him off from the pinnacle of the temple, and carried him through the air, to one of the mountains which were round about Jerusalem; or to some very high mountain at a greater distance; but what mountain is not certain; nor can it be known; nor is it of any moment; it has been said<sup>2</sup> to be Mount Lebanon: here he

sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. By all the kingdoms of the world are meant, not only the Roman empire, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, though that was, to be sure, the greatest in the world at that time; but all the kingdoms in the whole world, which subsisted in any form, whether within, or independent of the Roman empire; or whether greater or lesser: and by the *glory of them*, is meant, the riches, pomp, power, and grandeur of them. Now the view which Satan gave Christ of all this, was not by a representation of them in a picture, or in a map, or in any geographical tables, as<sup>b</sup> some have thought; since to do this, there was no need to take him up into a mountain, and that an exceeding high one; for this might have been done in a valley, as well as in a mountain: and yet it could not be a true and real sight of these things he gave him; for there is no mountain in the world, from whence can be beheld any one kingdom, much less all the kingdoms of the world; and still less the riches, glory, pomp, and power of them: but this was a fictitious, delusive representation, which Satan was permitted to make; to cover which, and that it might be thought to be real, he took Christ into an high mountain; where he proposed an object externally to his sight, and internally to his imagination, which represented, in appearance, the whole world, and all its glory. Xiphilinus<sup>1</sup> reports of Severus, that he dreamed, he was had by a certain person, to a place where he could look all around him, and from thence he beheld *παραυμι την γην, παραυ δι της θαλασσης, all the earth, and also all the sea*; which was all in imagination. Satan thought to have imposed on Christ this way, but failed in his attempt. Luke says, this was done *in a moment of time*, in the twinkling of an eye; as these two phrases are joined together, 1 Cor. xv. 52. or *in a point of time*. The word *στιγμη*, used by Luke, ch. iv. 5. sometimes signifies a mathematical point, which Zeno says<sup>k</sup> is the end of the line, and the least mark; to which the allusion may be here, and designs the smallest part of time that can be conceived of. Antoninus the emperor uses the word, as here, for a point of time; and says<sup>l</sup>, that the time of human life, and the whole present time, is but *στιγμη*, a point. Would you know what a moment, or point of time is, according to the calculation of the Jewish doctors, take the account as follows; though in it they differ: a moment, say they<sup>m</sup>, is the fifty-six thousandth, elsewhere<sup>n</sup>, the fifty-eight thousandth, and in another place<sup>o</sup>, the fifty-three thousandth and eight hundredth and forty-eighth, or, according to another account<sup>p</sup>, eighty-eighth part of an hour. If this could be thought to be a true and exact account of a moment, or point of time, it was a very short space of time indeed, in which the devil shewed to Christ the kingdoms of this world, and their glory; but this is not more surprising than his vanity, pride, and impudence, in the following verse.

<sup>1</sup> Conciliat. in Deut. Quest. 3. p. 223.

<sup>2</sup> Vid. Fabricii Bibliograph. Antiq. c. 5. p. 137.

<sup>3</sup> Vid. Fabricium, ibid. & Grotium in loc.

<sup>4</sup> Apud Fabricium, ib.

<sup>5</sup> Vid. Laertium in Vit. Zenou.

<sup>1</sup> De scipso, l. 2. c. 17. & l. 6. c. 36.

<sup>2</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 2. 4.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 7. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Avoda Zara, fol. 4. 1.

<sup>5</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 7. 1.

Ver. 9. *And saith unto him, all these things will I give thee, &c.*] This is more fully and strongly expressed by the Evangelist Luke, ch. iv. 6, 7. *And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it—all shall be thine.* In which words he sets up himself to be the God of this world, and the sovereign disposer of it: he pretends it was delivered to him by the true God, who had left it to his arbitrary disposal; and that he could invest Christ with the power and government of it, and put him in possession of all its glory, and make good and support his title to it, and interest in it. Never was such monstrous arrogance expressed as this; when this poor, proud, wretched creature, has not the disposal, at his pleasure, of any one single thing; no not the least in the whole universe. He could not touch, neither Job's person, nor any of his substance, without divine permission; nor enter into an herd of swine without Christ's leave; and yet had the front to make an offer of the whole world, as if he had a despotic power over it; and that upon this horrid and blasphemous condition, *if thou wilt fall down and worship me.* This was the highest degree of effrontery and impudence. The devil is not content to be worshipped by men, but seeks for adoration from the son of God: this opens at once his proud, ambitious, and aspiring views, to be as God himself; for with nothing less can he be satisfied.

Ver. 10. *Then saith Jesus to him, get thee hence, Satan, &c.*] In Luke iv. 8. 'tis *get thee behind me:* and so some copies read here, and is expressive of indignation and abhorrence; see Matt. xvi. 23. rebuking his impudence, and detesting his impiety: he had borne his insults and temptations with great patience; he had answered him with mildness and gentleness; but now his behaviour to him was intolerable, which obliged him to shew his resentment, exert his power and authority, and rid himself at once of so vile a creature; giving this reason for it; *for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* The place referred to is in Deut. vi. 13. *thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him:* to fear the Lord, and to worship him, is the same thing. Worship includes both an internal and external reverence of God: the word *only* is not in the original text, but is added by our Lord; and that very justly; partly to express the emphasis which is on the word *him*; and in perfect agreement with the context, which requires it; since it follows, *ye shall not go after other Gods.* Moreover, not to take notice of the Septuagint version, in which the word *only* is also added, Josephus<sup>9</sup>, the Jewish historian, referring to this law, says, because God is one, καὶ δεῖ τρεῖς ἀγαθαὶ μόνου, therefore he only is to be worshipped. And Aben Ezra<sup>2</sup>, a Jewish writer, explaining the last clause in the verse, and thou shalt swear by his name, uses the word *only*; and which indeed, of right, belongs to every clause in it. The meaning of our Lord in citing it is; that since the Lord God is the

alone object of worship, it was horrid blasphemy in Satan to desire it might be given to him, and which could not be done without the greatest impiety.

Ver. 11. *Then the devil leaveth him, &c.*] Luke, in ch. iv. 13. says, *when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season, or until a season.* That is, having tempted him with all sorts of temptations, and tried him every way to no purpose; having gone through, and finished the whole scheme and course of temptations he had devised, without success; and having orders from Christ to depart, which he was obliged to obey, leaves him for a while, till another opportunity of tempting him in some other way should offer; or till the time came, when he should be so far able to get the advantage of him, as to bruise his heel, or bring him to the dust of death; see John xiv. 30. Luke xxii. 53. and when he was gone, better company came in his room; *behold, angels came and ministered to him.* They came to him in a visible, human form, as they were used to do under the Old Testament dispensation, and that after the temptation was over; after Satan was foiled, and was gone; that it might appear that Christ alone had got the victory over him, without any help or assistance from them. When they were come, they *ministered to him*; that is, they brought him food of their own preparing and dressing, as they formerly did to Elijah, 1 Kings xix. 5, 6, 7, 8. to satisfy his hunger, and refresh his animal spirits; which had undergone a very great fatigue during this length of time, in which he fasted, and was tempted by Satan. Thus, as the angels are ministring spirits to the heirs of salvation, both in a temporal and in a spiritual sense, Heb. i. 14. so they were to Christ. Nothing is more frequent with the Jews than to call the angels מלאכי השרת, ministring angels: it would be needless and endless to refer to particular places.

Ver. 12. *Now, when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, &c.*] John was cast into prison by Herod; the reason of it may be seen in Matt. xiv. 3, 4. The prison into which he was cast, according to Josephus<sup>3</sup>, was the castle of Machærus: here he continued some time before he was put to death; for from hence he sent two disciples to Jesus, to know if he was the Messiah, Matt. xi. 2. Now when Jesus heard of this his imprisonment, he departed into Galilee; not so much on account of safety, or for fear of Herod, but to call his disciples, who lived in that country.

Ver. 13. *And leaving Nazareth, &c.*] Where he was educated, and had lived many years together; and where he preached first to the good liking of the people, who wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth: though afterwards they were so much displeas'd with him, that they thrust him out of their city; and intended to have destroyed him, by casting him down headlong from the brow of an hill; and which seems to be the reason of his leaving this city; see Luke iv. 16—22—28, 29, 30, 31. he came and dwelt in Capernaum, a city of Galilee, Luke iv. 31. which is upon the sea-coast, by the sea of Tiberias, or Genesareth, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthali: it bordered on both these tribes; it signifies the village

<sup>9</sup> Antiq. Jud. i. 9. c. 5. sect. 5.

<sup>2</sup> In Deut. vi. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Antiq. i. 18. c. 7.

of consolation<sup>1</sup>; and so it was, whilst the consolation of Israel dwelt there. The Jews speak very evilly of it: no doubt because it was the dwelling-place of Christ; and because there might be some in it who believed in him: they represent the inhabitants of it as very great sinners, heretics, and dealers in magic art. Chanina, the brother's son of R. Joshua, they say<sup>2</sup>, went to Capernaum, and the heretics did something to him; according to the gloss, they bewitched him: and elsewhere<sup>3</sup> explaining the words in Eccl. vii. 26. *who so pleaseth God, &c.*; this, they say, is Chaniah, the brother's son of R. Joshua; and *the sinner*; these are *the children*, or inhabitants of Capernaum. Thus they shew their spite against the very place in which Christ dwelt.

Ver. 14, 15. *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken, &c.*] Christ's dwelling in Capernaum accomplished a prophecy of the prophet Esaias, ch. ix. 1, 2. and he went and dwelt there, that it might be fulfilled which he had spoken: the meaning of which prophecy is<sup>4</sup>, that as those parts of the land of Israel, there mentioned, had suffered much by Tiglath Pilezer, who had carried them captive, 2 Kings xv. 29. and is *the vexation* referred to; so they should be honoured, and made very glorious, by the presence and conversation of the Messiah among them, and which now had its literal fulfilment: for Christ now came and dwelt in Capernaum, which lay between the lands and upon the borders both of Zabulon and Nephthali; was situated by the sea of Tiberias, beyond Jordan, and in *Galilee of the nations*; the upper Galilee, which had in it people of other nations besides Jews. The ancient Jews expected the Messiah to make his first appearance in Galilee; which expectation must be grounded on this prophecy; for so they say<sup>5</sup> expressly, "the king Messiah shall be revealed בְּאֶרֶץ דְּנִלִּי, *in the land of Galilee*." And in another place<sup>6</sup> explaining Isa. ii. 19. they paraphrase it thus, "for fear of the Lord; this is the indignation of the whole world: and for the glory of his majesty: this is the Messiah; when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth, when he shall arise and be revealed בְּאֶרֶץ דְּנִלִּי, *in the land of Galilee*: because that this is the first place to be destroyed in the holy land; therefore he shall be revealed there the first of all places." Here Jesus, the true Messiah, made his first appearance publicly; here he called his disciples, and began his ministry.

Ver. 16. *The people which sat in darkness, &c.*] The inhabitants of Galilee, who sat or walked, as in Isaias; that is, continued in spiritual darkness, in ignorance, blindness, error, and infidelity, *saw great light*; Christ himself, who came a light into the world; he conversed with them, preached unto them, and opened the eyes of their understandings to behold his glory, and to know him, and salvation by him. *And to them which sat in the region and shadow of death*: the same persons who sit in darkness, sit also in the region of death; for such are dead in trespasses and sins: where there is

no spiritual light, there is no spiritual life, and such are in danger of the second death; but the happiness of these people was, that to them *light is sprung up*, like the rising sun, and this without their asking or seeking for: Christ, the sun of righteousness, arose upon them, without any desert, desire, or expectation of theirs, with healing in his wings; and cured them of their darkness and deadness, turned them from darkness to light, and caused them to pass from death to life. *Light* is not only a character under which Christ frequently goes in the New Testament, see John i. 4—8, 9. and iii. 19. and viii. 12. and xii. 46. but is one of the names by which the Messiah was known under the Old Testament; see Dan. ii. 22. Psal. xliii. 3. and which the Jews give unto him: says R. Aba<sup>7</sup> Serungia, *and the light dwelleth with him*; this is the king Messiah. The note of R. Sol. Jarchi on these words, *send forth thy light*, is, the king Messiah; who is compared to light, according to Psal. cxxxii. 17. the days of the Messiah are by them said to<sup>8</sup> *ימי אור*, *days of light*; and so these Galileans found them to be; as all do, to whom the Gospel of Christ comes with power and demonstration of the spirit. And these days of light first begun in the land of Zabulon; which, according to Philo the Jew<sup>9</sup>, was *συμβολον φωτος*, "a symbol of light"; since (adds he) its name signifies "the nature of night; but the night removing, and departing, light necessarily arises." As did, in a spiritual sense, here, when Christ the light arose.

Ver. 17. *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, &c.*] Not from the time he dwelt in Capernaum; for he had preached in Nazareth before he came there, Luke iv. 16, 31. nor from the time of John's being cast into prison; for he had preached, and made disciples, who were baptized by his orders, before John's imprisonment, John iii. 22, 24—26. and iv. 1. but from the time that Satan left tempting him; as soon as that combat was over, immediately he went into Galilee, began to preach, and called his disciples. The words with which he began his ministry are the same with which John began his; which shews the entire agreement between them, in that they not only preached the same doctrine, but in the same words; see the note on Matt. iii. 2.

Ver. 18. *And Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee, &c.*] Not for his recreation and diversion, or by accident: but on purpose to look out for, and call some, whom he had chosen to be his disciples. And as he was walking about, to and fro, he saw two persons; and as soon as he saw them, he knew them to be those he had determined to make his apostles: and these are described by their relation to each other, *brethren*; not merely because they were of the same nation, or of the same religion, or of the same employ and business of life, but because they were of the same blood; and by their names, *Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother*. Simon is the same name with שמעון, *Simeon*; and so he is called, Acts xv. 14. and which, in the

<sup>1</sup> Vid. Benjamin Tudelens. Itinerar. p. 37. & l'Empercur, not. in ib. & Hieron. in Mar. i. 21. & Origen. Comment. in Matt. p. 317. vol. 1. Ed. Huet.

<sup>2</sup> Midrash Koheleth. fol. 63. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ib. fol. 77. 1.

<sup>4</sup> See my Treatise upon the Prophecies of the Messiah, &c. p. 147, &c.

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>7</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 74. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Ib. in Exod. fol. 3. 3. & 98. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Bereshith Rabba, fol. 1. 3. & Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Baal Hattarim in Gen. fol. 2. 2.

<sup>11</sup> De Somniis, p. 1113.

Jerusalem dialect, is read סימון, *Simon*. His surname *Peter*, which was afterwards given him by Christ, Matt. xvi. 18. John i. 42. is Greek, and answers to *Cephas*, signifying a *rock*: though this name is to be met with in the Talmudic<sup>d</sup> writings, where we read of R. Jose, בר פיטרס, *bar Petros*. This his surname is added here, to distinguish him from Simon, the Canaanite. The name of his brother Andrew is generally thought to be Greek; though some have derived it from נדר, *to vow*, and is also to be observed in the writings of the Jews<sup>e</sup>; where mention is made of R. Chanina, בר אנדריי, *bar Andrei*. They are further described by the work they were at, or business they were employed in, *casting a net into the sea*; either in order to catch fish in it, or to wash it, Luke v. 2. and the reason of their so doing is added; *for they were fishers*. Of this mean employment were the very first persons Christ was pleased to call to the work of the ministry; men of no education, who made no figure in life, but were despicable and contemptible: this he did, to make it appear, that they were not qualified for such service of themselves; that all their gifts and qualifications were from him; to shew his own power; to confound the wisdom of the wise; and to let men see, that none ought to glory in themselves, but in him. The Jews have a notion of the word of God and prophecy being received and embraced only by such sort of persons: says R. Isaac Arama<sup>f</sup>, "his word came to heal all, but some particular persons only receive it; and who of all men are of a dull understanding, דינייב עבדי הים, *fishermen, who do business in the sea*: this is what is written; *they that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord*: these seem not indeed fit to receive any thing that belongs to the understanding, because of their dulness; and yet these receive the truth of prophecy and vision, because they believe his word." I can't but think, that some respect is had to these fishers, in Ezek. xlvi. 10. *And it shall come to pass that fishers shall stand upon it*: that is, upon, or by the river of waters, said ver. 8. *to issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert*: which both R. Jarchi and Kimchi understand of the sea of Tiberias; the same with the sea of Galilee, by which Christ walked; and where he found these fishers at work, and called them. See also Jer. xvi. 16.

Ver. 19. *And he saith unto them, follow me, &c.*] These two brethren had been the disciples of John, as Theophylact thinks, and which seems agreeable to John i. 35—40. and though through John's pointing out Christ unto them, they had some knowledge of him, and conversation with him, yet they abode with him but for that day, ver. 37, 38, 39. and afterwards returned to their master; and upon his imprisonment, betook themselves to their former employment: from whence Christ now calls them to be his disciples, saying *follow me, or come after me*: that is, be a disciple of mine; see Luke xiv. 27. And to encourage them

to it, makes use of this argument; *and, or for, I will make you fishers of men*: you shall be fishers still, but in a higher sense; and in a far more noble employment, and to much better purpose. The net they were to spread and cast was the Gospel, see Matt. xiii. 47. for Christ made them not דיניי תורה, *fishers of the law*, to use the words of Maimonides<sup>g</sup>, but fishers of the Gospel. The sea into which they were to cast the net was first Judea, and then the whole world; the fish they were to catch were the souls of men, both among Jews and Gentiles; of whose conversion and faith they were to be the happy instruments: now none could make them fishers in this sense, or fit them for such service, and succeed them in it, but Christ; and who here promises it unto them.

Ver. 20. *And they straightway left their nets, &c.*] That is, as soon as he had called them, they left their worldly employment, and followed him; they gave up themselves to his service, and became his disciples; they not only left their *nets*, but their fishing-boats, and fishing trade, and all that belonged to it, even all their substance; and also their relations, friends, and acquaintance, see Matt. xix. 27. which shews what a mighty power went along with the words and call of Christ; and what a ready, cheerful, and voluntary subjection this produces, wherever it takes place.

Ver. 21. *And going on from thence, he saw other two, &c.*] When he had gone but a little way further, Mark i. 19. he spied two other persons he was looking for, and had designed to call to the office of apostleship; and these are also described as *brethren*, and by name, *James, the son of Zebedee, and John his brother*. The Jews make mention in their writings<sup>h</sup>, of one ריעקב בר זבדי, *R. James, the son of Zebedee*: which Capellus<sup>i</sup> conjectures is the very same person here mentioned: but the James they speak of as a disciple of Jesus, they call יעקב מינאה, *James the heretic*<sup>k</sup>; who, they say, was of the village of Secaniah, and sometimes of the village of Sama. His brother's name was John, who was the Evangelist, as well as Apostle: these were *in a ship with their father Zebedee*. Men of this name, and sons of men of this name, were very common among the Jewish Rabbins; but neither this man, nor his sons, were masters or doctors in Israel; for such Christ chose not for his apostles. It seems to be the same name with Zebadiah, 1 Chron. xxvii. 7. these, with him, were *mending their nets*, which were broken, and needed repairing; and perhaps being poor, could not afford to buy new ones: this shews their industry and diligence, and may be a pattern and example to persons, closely to attend the business of their calling, whilst the providence of God continues them in it. *And he called them*: from their employment, to follow him, and become his disciples; and no doubt gave them the same promise and encouragement he had given the two former.

Ver. 22. *And they immediately left the ship, &c.*] More is expressed here than before, for they not only

<sup>d</sup> T. Hieros. Moed Katon, fol. 82. 4. Avoda Zara, fol. 42. 3.

<sup>e</sup> T. Hieros. Megilla, fol. 75. 2. & Beracot, fol. 2. 3.

<sup>f</sup> Apud Galatin. de Arcana. Cathol. ver. l. 3. c. 5. p. 119. & Crocium de Messia Thes. 213. p. 62, 63.

<sup>g</sup> Hilchot. Talmud. Torah, c. 1. sect. 12. 80 Dr. Lightfoot cites the phrase, but in Ed. Amsterd. דיניי תורה, *the judgments of the law*.

<sup>h</sup> T. Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 9. 4. & Maaser Shevi, fol. 55. 2. Tru-

mot. fol. 45. 2. Shviith. fol. 35. 1. Bereshith Rab. fol. 31. 4. & 36. 2.

<sup>i</sup> Spicilegium in loc.

<sup>k</sup> T. Bab. Megilla, 23. 1. Avoda Zara, fol. 17. 1. & 27. 2. & 28. 1. Cholin. fol. 84. 1. T. Hieros. Sabbat. fol. 14. 4. & Avoda Zara, fol. 40.

4. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 62. 4. & 77. 1. Juchasin, fol. 41. 1.



left their nets, but their ship too; which was of much more value; nay, even their father also, with the hired servants, Mark i. 20. and so complied with the call of Christ to his people, Psal. xlv. 10. and thereby proved, that they were sincerely his followers, Luke xiv. 26. and might expect the gracious promise of Christ to be made good unto them, Matt. xix. 23, 29.

Ver. 23. *And Jesus went about all Galilee, &c.]* Having called four of his disciples, he took a tour throughout Galilee; a country mean and despicable, inhabited by persons poor, illiterate, vile, and wicked: such had the first fruits of Christ's ministry, and messages of his grace; which shews the freeness, sovereignty, and riches, of his abounding goodness. He went about *all* this country, both upper and nether Galilee, which was very populous: Josephus says<sup>1</sup>, there were two hundred and four cities and towns in it; he means, which were places of note, besides villages. He went about, not like Satan, seeking the destruction of men; but as one that went along with him says, *doing good*, Acts 10. 38, both to the bodies and souls of men; for he was *teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom*. The places where he taught were their *synagogues*: he did not creep into private houses, as the Pharisees then, and false apostles afterwards did; but he appeared openly, and declared his doctrine in places of public worship; where the Jews met together for divine service, to pray, read the Scriptures, and give a word of exhortation to the people; for though they had but one temple, which was at Jerusalem, they had many synagogues, or meeting-places, all over the land: here Christ not only prayed and read, but *preached*; and the subject-matter of his ministry was, *the Gospel of the kingdom*: that is, the good news of the kingdom of the Messiah being come, and which now took place; wherefore he exhorted them to repent of, and relinquish their former principles; to receive the doctrines, and submit to the ordinances of the Gospel dispensation: he also preached to them the things concerning the kingdom of heaven; as that except a man be born again, he cannot see it; and unless he has a better righteousness than his own, he cannot enter into it: he was also *healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people*. 'Tis in the Greek text, *every sickness and every disease*; that is, all sorts of maladies, disorders and distempers, which attend the bodies of men; and is another instance, besides Matt. iii. 5. in which the word *all*, or *every*, is to be taken in a limited and restrained sense, for *some*, or *some of all sorts*; which teaches us how to understand those phrases, when used in the doctrine of redemption by Christ.

Ver. 24. *And his fame went throughout all Syria, &c.]* For his ministry and miracles, especially the latter; wherefore *they brought to him*, that is, out of Syria, the sick. Syria was in some respects reckoned as the land of Israel, though in others not. "The <sup>m</sup>Rab-<sup>n</sup>bins teach, that in three respects Syria was like to "the land of Israel, and in three to the countries with-

"out the land: the dust defiled, as without the land.  
"he that sold his servant to (one in) Syria, was as if  
"he sold him to one without the land; and he that  
"brought a bill of divorce from Syria, as if he brought  
"it from without the land: and in three things it  
"was like to the land of Israel; it was bound to tithes,  
"and to the observance of the seventh year; and he  
"that would go into it, might go into it with purity;  
"and he that purchased a field in Syria, was as if he  
"had purchased one in the suburbs of Jerusalem."  
*All sick people, that were taken with divers diseases and  
torments*. This expresses in general, the grievous and  
tormenting diseases with which the persons were af-  
flicted, who were brought to Christ for healing:  
some particular ones follow; and those which were pos-  
sessed with devils; in body as well as in mind; of  
which there were many instances, permitted by God  
on purpose, that Christ might have an opportunity of  
shewing his power over those evil spirits. *And those  
which were lunatic*; either melancholy persons, or mad  
and distracted men; that retired from the conversa-  
tion of men, into fields or desert places: or such,  
whose disorders were influenced by the change of the  
moon; such as those who are troubled with the falling  
sickness; so the Greeks<sup>2</sup> call such persons *ασθημαξ-  
μους*, the word here used by the Evangelist. *And  
those that had the palsy*. These were each of them  
such disorders, as were incurable by the art of me-  
dicine; or for which rarely, and with great difficulty,  
any manner of relief could be obtained; and he *healed  
them*; without any means, by a word speaking; which  
shewed him more than a man, and truly and properly  
God.

Ver. 25. *And there followed him great multitudes of  
people, &c.]* Some on one account, and some on  
another; some out of good will, others out of ill will;  
some for the healing of their bodies, others for the  
good of their souls; some to see his miracles, others  
to hear his doctrine; and what with one and another,  
the concourse of people that followed him was greater  
than that which followed John. The Greek word  
for *multitude* is adopted into the Talmudic language,  
and is often used by the doctors; who have a tradition  
to this purpose, that אין אוכלוסא פחותה משישים רבוא,  
*there is no multitude less than sixty myriads*<sup>3</sup>; but we  
are not to imagine, that when here, and elsewhere, a  
multitude is said to follow, or attend on Christ, that  
he had such a number of people after him as this;  
only that the number was very large. The places from  
whence they came are particularly mentioned, as *from  
Galilee*; where he had called his disciples, had been  
preaching the Gospel, and healing all manner of diseases;  
and therefore it is not to be wondered at that he should  
have a large number of followers from hence. This  
country was divided into <sup>p</sup>three parts: "There was  
"upper Galilee, and nether Galilee, and the valley from  
"Capharhananiah and upwards: all that part which  
"did not bring forth sycamine trees was upper Galilee,  
"and from Capharhananiah downwards: all that  
"part which did bring forth sycamine trees was

<sup>1</sup> In vita ejus.

<sup>m</sup> T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 8. 1. 2. vid. Maimon. Hilcb. Tunnath Meth. c. 11. sect. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Vid. Fabricii Bibl. Græc. vol. 2. l. 3. c. 26. p. 656—658.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 53. 1.

<sup>p</sup> Misn. Sheviith. c. 9. sect. 2.

"nether Galilee; and the coast of Tiberias was the valley." Frequent mention is made in the Talmudic writings of upper Galilee, as distinct from the other. *And from Decapolis*; a tract of land so called, from the ten cities that were in it; and which, according to Pliny<sup>1</sup>, were these following; Damascus, Opaton, Philadelphia, Raphana, Scythopolis, Gadara, Hippondion, Pella, Galasa, and Canatha; see Mark v. 20. and vii. 31. *And from Jerusalem*; the metropolis of the whole land; for his fame had reached that great city, and there were some there, curious and desirous to see him, and hear him; though he was got into those distant and obscure parts. *And from Judea*; from the other parts of it: *and from beyond Jordan*; which was a distinct country of itself, known by the name of Perea; so called, perhaps, from *περα*, the word here translated, *from beyond*. It is to be observed, that here are three countries distinctly mentioned, Galilee, Judea, and *beyond Jordan*; which was the division of the land of Israel; of these three lands the Talmudists often speak. "It is a tradition of the Rabbins", "that in three countries they intercalate the year;

Judea, and *beyond Jordan*, and Galilee." Again, "There are three lands, that are obliged to the removing of offruits; Judea, and beyond Jordan, and Galilee." Once more, "There are three countries for celebration of marriages, Judea, and *beyond Jordan*, and Galilee." The account which Maimonides gives of these three countries is this; "The land of Judea, all of it, the mountain, the plain, and the valley, are one country beyond Jordan, all of it, the plain of Lydda, and the mountain of the plain of Lydda, and from Betheron to the sea, are one country: Galilee, all of it, the upper and nether, and the coast of Tiberias, are one country." The country beyond Jordan was not so much esteemed as what was properly the land of Canaan, or Israel; for the Jews<sup>2</sup> say, "the land of Israel is holier than all lands; because they bring out of it the sheaf, the first fruits, and the shew-bread, which they don't bring from other lands: the land of Canaan is holier than beyond Jordan; the land of Canaan is fit to be the habitation of the Shekinah; beyond Jordan is not." This, they say<sup>3</sup>, was not the land flowing with milk and honey.

## C H A P. V.

Ver. 1. *AND seeing the multitudes, &c.*] The great concourse of people that followed him from the places before mentioned, *he went up into a mountain*; either to pray alone, which was sometimes his custom to do, or to shun the multitude; or rather, because it was a commodious place for teaching the people: *and when he was sat*; not for rest, but in order to teach; for sitting was the posture of masters, or teachers, see Matt. xiii. 2. Luke iv. 20. and v. 3. John viii. 2. The form in which the master and his disciples sat is thus described by Maimonides<sup>4</sup>. "The master sits at the head, or in the chief place, and the disciples before him in a circuit, like a crown; so that they all see the master, and hear his words; and the master may not sit upon a seat, and the scholars upon the ground; but either all upon the earth, or upon seats: indeed from the beginning, or formerly, היה הרב יושב, *the master used to sit*, and the disciples stand; but before the destruction of the second temple, all used to teach their disciples as they were sitting." With respect to this latter custom, the Talmudists say<sup>5</sup>, that "from the days of Moses, to Rabban Gamaliel (the master of the Apostle Paul), they did not learn the law, unless standing; after Rabban Gamaliel died, sickness came into the world, and they learnt the law sitting: hence it is a tradition, that after Rabbin Gamaliel died, the glory of the law ceased." *His disciples came unto him*; not only the twelve, but the company, or multitude, of his disciples, Luke vi. 17. which he

made in the several places, where he had been preaching; for the number of his disciples was larger than John's.

Ver. 2. *And he opened his mouth, &c.*] He spoke with a clear and strong voice, that all the people might hear him; and with great freedom, utterance, and cheerfulness, and things of the greatest moment and importance; *and taught them*; not his disciples only, but the whole multitude, who heard him with astonishment; see ch. vii. 28, 29. Some things in the following discourse are directed to the disciples in particular, and others regard the multitude in general.

Ver. 3. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, &c.*] Not the poor in purse, or who are so with respect to things temporal: for though God has chosen and called many, who are in such a condition of life, yet not all; the kingdom of heaven can't be said to belong to them all, or only; but such as are poor in a spiritual sense. All mankind are spiritually poor; they have nothing to eat that is fit and proper; nor any clothes to wear, but rags; nor are they able to purchase either; they have no money to buy with; they are in debt, owe ten thousand talents, and have nothing to pay; and in such a condition, that they are not able to help themselves. The greater part of mankind are insensible of this their condition; but think themselves rich, and increased with goods: there are some who are sensible of it, who see their poverty and want, freely acknowledge it, bewail it, and mourn over it;

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 80. 1. Cetubot, fol. 67. 2. & Succa, fol. 27. 2. & 28. 1. Zohar in Gen. fol. 129. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 18.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 11. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Mian. Shevith, c. 9. sect. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Mian. Cetubot, c. 13. sect. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Hilch. Shevith, c. 7. sect. 9.

<sup>1</sup> Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 7. fol. 188. 3. Maimon. Beth Habechira,

c. 7. sect. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Mian. Biecnrim, c. 1. sect. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Hilch. Talmud Torah, c. 4. sect. 2.

<sup>4</sup> T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 21. 1. Vid. Mian. Sota, c. 9. sect. 15. & Jarchi, Maimonides & Bartenora in ib.

are humbled for it, and are broken under a sense of it; entertain low and mean thoughts of themselves; seek after the true riches, both of grace and glory; and frankly acknowledge, that all they have, or hope to have, is owing to the free grace of God. Now these are the persons intended in this place; who are not only *poor*, but are poor *in spirit*; in their own spirits, in their own sense, apprehension, and judgment: and may even be called *beggars*, as the word may be rendered; for being sensible of their poverty, they place themselves at the door of mercy, and knock there; their language is, *God be merciful*; their posture is standing, watching, and waiting, at wisdom's gates, and at the posts of her door; they are importunate, will have no denial, yet receive the least favour with thankfulness. Now these are pronounced *blessed*, for this reason, *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*: not only the Gospel, and the ministration of it, which belongs to them. *The poor have the Gospel preached*: it not only reaches their ears, but their hearts; it enters into them, is applied unto them, they receive and embrace it with the utmost joy and gladness; but eternal glory, this is prepared for them, and given to them; they are born heirs of it, have a right unto it, are making meet for it, and shall enjoy it.

Ver. 4. *Blessed are they that mourn*, &c.] For sin, for their own sins; the sin of their nature, in-dwelling sin, which is always working in them, and is a continual grief of mind to them; the unbelief of their hearts, notwithstanding the many instances, declarations, promises, and discoveries of grace made unto them; their daily infirmities, and many sins of life, because they are committed against a God of love, grace, and mercy, grieve the spirit, and dishonour the Gospel of Christ: who mourn also for the sins of others, for the sins of the world, the profaneness and wickedness that abound in it; and more especially for the sins of professors, by reason of which, the name of God, and ways of Christ, are evil spoken of: who likewise mourn under afflictions, spiritual ones, temptations, desertions, and declensions; temporal ones, their own, which they receive, either more immediately from the hand of God, or from men; such as they endure for the sake of Christ, and the profession of his Gospel; and who sympathize with others in their afflictions. These, how sorrowful and distressed soever they may appear, are *blessed*: *for they shall be comforted*: here, in this life, by the God of all comfort, by Christ the comforter; by the spirit of God, whose work and office it is to comfort; by the Scriptures of truth, which are written for their consolation; by the promises of the Gospel, through which the heirs of promise have strong consolation; by the ordinances of it, which are breasts of consolation; and by the ministers of the word, who have a commission from the Lord to speak comfortably to them; and then are they comforted, when they have the discoveries of the love of God, manifestations of pardoning grace, through the blood of Christ, and enjoy the divine presence: and they shall be comforted hereafter; when freed from all the troubles of this life, they shall be blessed with uninterrupted communion with the Father, Son, and Spirit, and with the happy so-

ciety of angels and glorified saints. Isa. lxi. 1, 2, 3. seems to be referred to, both in this, and in the preceding *verse*.

Ver. 5. *Blessed are the meek*, &c.] Who are not easily provoked to anger; who patiently bear, and put up with injuries and affronts; carry themselves courteously, and affably to all; have the meekest thoughts of themselves, and the best of others; don't envy the gifts and graces of other men; are willing to be instructed and admonished, by the meekest of the saints; quietly submit to the will of God, in adverse dispensations of providence; and ascribe all they have, and are, to the grace of God. Meekness, or humility, is very valuable and commendable. The Jews, though a proud, haughty, and wrathful people, cannot but speak in its praise: "Wisdom, fear, and meekness," say<sup>b</sup> they, are of high esteem; but עניוּת, *meekness*, is "greater than them all." They had two very considerable doctors in the time of Christ, Hillel and Shammai; the one was of a meek, the other of an angry disposition: hence, say they<sup>c</sup>, "Let a man be "always meek as Hillel, and let him not be angry as "Shammai." Here meekness is to be considered, not as a moral virtue, but as a Christian grace, a fruit of the spirit of God; which was eminently in Christ, and is very ornamental to believers; and of great advantage and use to them, in hearing and receiving the word; in giving an account of the reason of the hope that is in them; in instructing and restoring such, who have backslidden, either in principle or practice; and in the whole of their lives and conversations; and serves greatly to recommend religion to others: such who are possessed of it, and exercise it, are well pleasing to God; when disconsolate, he comforts them; when hungry, he satisfies them; when they want direction, he gives it to them; when wronged, he'll do them right; he gives them more grace here, and glory hereafter. The blessing instanced, in which they shall partake of, is, *they shall inherit the earth*: not the land of Canaan, though that may be alluded to; nor this world, at least in its present situation; for this is not the saints' rest and inheritance: but rather, the *new earth*, which will be after this is burnt up; in which only such persons as are here described shall dwell; and who shall inherit it, by virtue of their being heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; whose is the earth, and the fulness thereof. Though some think heaven is here designed, and is so called, partly for the sake of variety of expression, from ver. 3. and partly in allusion to the land of Canaan, a type of it; and may be called an earth, or country, that is an heavenly one, in opposition to this earthly one; as the heavenly Jerusalem is opposed to the earthly one, and which will be a glorious inheritance. The passage referred to is Psal. xxxvii. 11.

Ver. 6. *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst*, &c.] Not after the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world, but *after righteousness*; by which is meant, not justice and equity, as persons oppressed and injured; nor a moral, legal righteousness, which the generality of the Jewish nation were eagerly pursuing; but the justifying righteousness of Christ, which is

<sup>b</sup> Piske Tosaphot Yebamot, art. 196.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 30. 2.

imputed by God the father, and received by faith. To hunger and thirst after this, supposes a want of righteousness, which is the case of all men; a sense of want of it, which is only perceived by persons spiritually enlightened; a discovery of the righteousness of Christ to them, which is made in the Gospel, and by the spirit of God; a value for it, and a preference of it to all other righteousness; and an earnest desire after it, to be possessed of it, and found in it; and that nothing can be more grateful than that, because of its perfection, purity, suitableness, and use: happy souls are these, *for they shall be filled*: with that righteousness, and with all other good things, in consequence of it; and particularly with joy and peace, which are the certain effects of it: or, *they shall be satisfied*, that they have an interest in it; and so satisfied with it, that they shall never seek for any other righteousness, as a justifying one, in the sight of God; this being full, perfect, sufficient, and entirely complete.

Ver. 7. *Blessed are the merciful, &c.*] Who shew mercy to the bodies of men, to those that are poor, indigent, and miserable, in their outward circumstances; by both sympathizing with them, and distributing unto them; not only making use of expressions of pity and concern; but communicating with readiness and cheerfulness, with affection and tenderness, and with a view to the glory of God: who also shew mercy to the souls of men, by instructing such as are ignorant, giving them good counsel and advice: reproving them for sin, praying for them, forgiving injuries done by them, and by comforting those that are cast down. To shew mercy is very delightful to, and desirable by God; it is what he requires, and is one of the weightier matters of the law; it is very ornamental to a child of God, and what makes him more like to his heavenly father. The happiness of such persons is this, that *they shall obtain mercy*: from man, whenever they are attended with any uncomfortable circumstances of life; *כל מרחם מרחמין עליו*, *whoever is merciful, men shew mercy to him*<sup>4</sup>; and from God, through Christ; which is free, sovereign, abundant, and eternal. Men are said to obtain this, when they are regenerated, and called by grace; and when they have a discovery, and an application, of the forgiveness of their sins: but here, it seems to design those supplies of grace and mercy, which merciful persons may expect to find and obtain, at the throne of grace, to help them in time of need; and who shall not only obtain mercy of God in this life, but in the world to come, in the great day of the Lord; for which the Apostle prayed for Onesiphorus, 2 Tim. i. 18.

Ver. 8. *Blessed are the pure in heart, &c.*] Not in the head; for men may have pure notions and impure hearts; not in the hand, or action, or in outward conversation only; so the Pharisees were outwardly righteous before men, but inwardly full of impurity; but *in heart*. The heart of man is naturally unclean; nor is it in the power of man to make it clean, or to be pure from his sin; nor is any man in this life, in such sense, so pure in heart, as to be entirely free from

sin. This is only true of Christ, angels, and glorified saints: but such may be said to be so, who, though they have sin dwelling in them, are justified from all sin, by the righteousness of Christ, and are *clean through the word*, or sentence of justification pronounced upon them, on the account of that righteousness; whose iniquities are all of them forgiven, and whose hearts are sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, which cleanses from all sin; and who have the grace of God wrought in their hearts, which, though as yet imperfect, it is entirely pure; there is not the least spot or stain of sin in it: and such souls as they are in love with, so they most earnestly desire after more purity of heart, lip, life, and conversation. And happy they are, *for they shall see God*: in this life, enjoying communion with him, both in private and public, in the several duties of religion, in the house and ordinances of God; where they often behold his beauty, see his power and his glory, and taste, and know, that he is good and gracious: and in the other world, where they shall see God in Christ, with the eyes of their understanding; and God incarnate, with the eyes of their bodies, after the resurrection; which sight of Christ, and God in Christ, will be unspeakably glorious, desirable, delightful, and satisfying; it will be free from all darkness and error, and from all interruption; it will be an appropriating and transforming one, and will last for ever.

Ver. 9. *Blessed are the peace-makers, &c.*] Not between God and man, for no man can make his own peace with God; nor can any mere creature, angels, or men, make it for him; Christ, in this sense, is the only peace-maker: but between men and men; and such are they, who are of peaceable dispositions themselves; live peaceably with all men, and with one another, as their relation obliges to, and their mutual comfort requires; and with the men of the world; and who are ready, willing, and very serviceable, in composing differences, and making peace between their fellow-creatures and fellow-Christians. The Jews speak very highly, and much, in the commendation of peace-making; they reckon this among the things which shall be of use to a man, both in this, and the other world. "These are the things, (say they<sup>5</sup>;) the fruit of which a man enjoys in this world, and his lot or portion remains for him in the world to come; honouring father and mother, liberality, והבאת שלום בין אדם לחבירו, and making peace between a man and his neighbour." This, they say<sup>6</sup>, Aaron was much disposed to. "Moses used to say, let justice break through the mountain; but Aaron loved peace, and pursued it, and made peace between a man and his neighbour, as is said, Mal. ii. 6." Hence that saying of Hillel<sup>7</sup>, "be thou one of the disciples of Aaron, who loved peace, and followed after it; he loved men, and brought them to the law." Now of such persons it is said, that *they shall be called the children of God*; that is, they are the children of God by adopting grace, which is made manifest in their regeneration; and that is evidenced by the fruits of it,

<sup>4</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Mattanot Anayim. c. 10. sect. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Misn. Peab. c. 1. sect. 1. T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 127. 1. & Kiddushin. fol. 40. 1.

<sup>6</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 6. 2. Vid. Abot. R. Nathan, c. 12. fol. 4. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Pirke Abot. c. 1. sect. 12.

of which this is one; they not only shall be, and more manifestly appear to be, the sons of God hereafter; but they are, and are known to be so now, by their peaceable disposition, which is wrought in them by the spirit of God; whereby they become like to the God of peace, and to Christ, the great and only peacemaker, and so are truly sons of peace.

Ver. 10. *Blessed are they which are persecuted, &c.*] Not for any crimes they have done, for unrighteousness and iniquity, as murderers, thieves, and evil doers, but for righteousness sake: on account of their righteous and godly conversation, which brings upon them the hatred and enmity of the men of the world: for saints, by living righteously, separate themselves from them, and profess themselves not to belong to them; their religious life sets a brand upon, and distinguishes other persons; yea, it reproveth and condemns their wicked lives and practices; and this fills them with wrath against them, and puts them on persecuting them: or by righteousness may be meant, a righteous cause, the cause of Christ and his Gospel; for by making a profession of Christ, shewing a concern for his interest, and by engaging in a vindication of his person and truths, saints expose themselves to the rage and persecution of men: and particularly, they are persecuted for preaching, maintaining, or embracing, the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ; because it is not of man, nor agreeable to the carnal reason of man; it is opposite to the way of justification, which men naturally receive; it excludes boasting, and is contrary to their carnal and selfish principles: persecution is either verbal with the tongue, by cruel mockings and reproachful language; or real, by deeds, such as confiscation of goods, banishment, imprisonment of body, and innumerable sorts of death: the latter seems here more especially designed, and both are expressed in the following verse; and yet the saints, though thus used, or rather abused, are happy; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven: the same blessedness is predicated of these as of the poor in spirit, ver. 3.

Ver. 11. *Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, &c.*] These words are particularly directed to the disciples of Christ, and are designed to inform them, that they should not be exempted from reproach and persecution, and to animate and fortify them against it; and are prophetic of what they, and the first Christians particularly, were to endure for Christ's sake. Men should revile them, speak very reproachfully of them, brand them with infamy, and load them with disgrace; and persecute you from place to place, by ill usage of all sorts; and shall say all manner of evil against you; the worst things they could think of and invent, and all of them; such as that they were seditious persons, enemies to the commonwealth, and the public good, guilty of sacrilege, incest, and murder: but what would serve to relieve them under these heavy charges is, that they were falsely laid; there was not a word of truth in them; wherefore their own hearts would not reproach them; but all were the ma-

licious lies of men, invented on purpose to bring them and Christianity into disgrace: and that they were brought against them for Christ's sake, for his name's sake, for the sake of his Gospel and interest: the treatment they meet with is on his account, and the same that he himself met with; the like reproaches fell on him, which will be all wiped off from him and them another day; when they'll appear to be the blessed persons, and their revilers and persecutors the unhappy ones. The Jews have some sayings not unlike these, and which may serve to illustrate them: "לֹא לְרִשָּׁעִים לֵאמֹר" "לֹא לְרִשָּׁעִים לֵאמֹר", be thou cursed, or bearing curses, but do not curse.<sup>2</sup> The gloss upon it is, it is better to be one of them that are cursed, than to be of them that curse; for, at the end, the curse causes less returns to him that curseth." Again<sup>h</sup>, "for ever let a man be of them that are persecuted, and not of them that persecute; of them that suffer injury, and not of them that do it." Once more<sup>i</sup>, "they that suffer injury, and do it not; who hear reproach, and don't return it; who act from love, and rejoice in chastisements, of them the Scripture says, let them that love him, &c. Judg. v. 31."

Ver. 12. *Rejoice and be exceeding glad, &c.*] Because of the honour put upon them, the glory they bring to Christ and his cause, by cheerfully suffering for it; and because of the glory and happiness that shall follow upon their sufferings: for great is your reward in heaven; not of debt, but of grace; for there is no proportion or comparison between what the saints suffer for Christ, and the glory that shall be revealed in them by him; not in earth, but in heaven. Saints must not expect their reward here, but hereafter, when God himself will be their reward; he will be all in all; Christ and all his glory, glory and all the riches of it will be the reward of the inheritance, and which must needs be a great one. And the more to animate them to suffer with joyfulness, and to support them under all their reproaches and persecutions, 'tis added; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you; as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, and others; which shews, that what should befall them was no new and strange thing, but what had been the lot of the most eminent servants of God in former ages.

Ver. 13. *Ye are the salt of the earth, &c.*] This is to be understood of the disciples and apostles of Christ; who might be compared to salt, because of the savoury doctrines they preached; as all such are, which are agreeable to the Scriptures, and are of the evangelic kind, which are full of Christ, serve to exalt him, and to magnify the grace of God; and are suitable to the experiences of the saints, and are according to godliness, and tend to promote it: also because of their savoury lives and conversations; whereby they recommended, and gave sanction to the doctrines they preached, were examples to the saints, and checks upon wicked men. These were the salt of the earth; that is, of the inhabitants of the earth, not of the land of Judea only, where they first lived and preached, but of the whole world, into which they were afterwards sent

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Sauehdrim, fol. 49. 1.

<sup>h</sup> T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 93. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Deyot. c. 5. sect. 13.

<sup>i</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 98. 2. Yoma, fol. 23. 1. & Gittin, fol. 26. 2.

to preach the Gospel. *But if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?* The savour here supposed that it may be lost, cannot mean the savour of grace, or true grace itself, which cannot be lost, being an incorruptible seed; but either gifts qualifying men for the ministry, which may cease; or the savoury doctrines of the Gospel, which may be departed from; or a seeming savoury conversation, which may be neglected; or that seeming savour, zeal, and affection, with which the Gospel is preached, which may be dropped: and particular respect seems to be had to Judas, whom Christ had chosen to the apostleship, and was a devil; and who he knew would lose his usefulness and place, and become an unprofitable wretch, and at last be rejected of God and men; and this case is proposed to them all, in order to engage them to take heed to themselves, their doctrine and ministry. Moreover, this is but a supposition; *if the salt, &c.* and proves no matter of fact; and the Jews have a saying<sup>k</sup>, that "all that season lose their savour, מלח נמרח, *אינה מפניה טעמה, but salt does not lose its savour.*" Should it do so, it is *thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot.* Salt is good for nothing, but to make things savoury, and preserve from putrefaction; and when it has lost its savour, it is of no use, neither to men nor beasts, as some things are when corrupted; nor is it of any use to the land, or dunghill, for it makes barren, and not fruitful: so ministers of the word, when they have dropped the savoury doctrines of the Gospel, or have quitted their former seeming savoury and exemplary conversations; as their usefulness is gone, so, generally speaking, it is never retrieved; they are cast out of the churches of Christ, and are treated with contempt by every one.

Ver. 14. *Ye are the light of the world, &c.*] What the luminaries, the sun and moon, are in the heavens, with respect to corporal light, that the apostles were in the world with regard to spiritual light; carrying and spreading the light of the Gospel not only in Judea, but all over the world, which was in great darkness of ignorance and error; and through a divine blessing attending their ministry, many were turned from the darkness of Judaism and Gentilism, of sin and infidelity, to the marvellous light of divine grace. The Jews were wont to say, that of the Israelites in general, and particularly of their sanhedrim, and of their learned doctors, what Christ more truly applies here to his apostles; they observe<sup>l</sup>, that "on the fourth day it was said, *let there be light*; which was done with respect to the Israelites, because they are *מאירים לעולם, which give light to the world, as it is written, Dan. xii. 3.*" And in another place<sup>m</sup>, say they, "how beautiful are the great ones of the congregation, and the wise men, who sit in the sanhedrim! for they are they *מאירים לעולם, that enlighten the world, the people of the house of Israel.*" So R. Meir, R. Akiba his disciple, and R. Judah the prince, are each of them called *אור העולם, the light of the world*; as R. Jochanan ben Zaccai is by his disciples, *נר עולם,*

*the lamp of the world*<sup>n</sup>; and it was usual for the head of a school, or of an university, to be styled *נררמא דעלמא, the light of the world*; but this title much better agrees and suits with the persons Christ gives it to, who, no question, had a view to those exalted characters the Jews gave to their celebrated Rabbins. A city that *is set on an hill cannot be hid*; alluding either to Nazareth, where he was educated, and had lately preached, which was built on an hill, from the brow of which the inhabitants sought to have cast him headlong, Luke iv. 29. or to Capernaum, which, on account of its height, is said to be *exalted unto heaven*, Matt. xi. 23. or to the city of Jerusalem, which was situated on a very considerable eminence. The land of Israel, the Jews say<sup>o</sup>, was higher than all other lands; and the temple at Jerusalem was higher than any other part of the land of Israel. And as a city can't be hid which is built on a high place, so neither could, nor ought the doctrines which the apostles were commissioned to preach, be hid, or concealed from men: they were not to shun to declare the whole counsel of God, nor study to avoid the reproaches and persecutions of men; for they were to be *made a spectacle*: to be set as in a public theatre, to be seen by *the world, angels, and men.*

Ver. 15. *Neither do men light a candle, &c.*] Which may be read impersonally, *a candle is not lighted*: and by it may be meant the Gospel, and gifts qualifying men to preach it; which, like a candle, was lighted in the evening of the Jewish dispensation, though not confined to the land of Judea; but has shone throughout the world, being as a candle to be removed, and has been removed from place to place: wherever it is set, it gives light, more or less, and dispels darkness; it is useful both to work by and walk with; it does not always burn alike clearly, it needs looking after; it has its thieves, as candles sometimes have; and will give the greatest light towards the close of the world, as they usually do, when ready to go out. Now when a candle is lighted by men, they don't *put it under a bushel*, or any thing which may hide and cover it, and so hinder its light and usefulness. The Greek word *μυστος*, rendered a *bushel*, answers to the Hebrew *סאה*, *seah*, which is the very word used in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; and this was a dry measure that held about a gallon and a half; and accordingly is rendered here by the Syriac *סאתא*. The design of the expression is, that Christ has lighted the candle of the everlasting Gospel, and given gifts to men for the ministration of it, not to be concealed and neglected, or to be used as the servant did his lord's money, wrap it up in a napkin, and hide it in the earth. Ministers are not, through slothfulness, to neglect the gift that is in them; nor, through fear, to hide their talents, or keep back any part of the Gospel, or cover any thing out of sight, which may be profitable to souls: *but men, when they light a candle, put it on a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house*; as on the candlestick in the temple, a type of the church; where Christ has set the light of the Gospel, where it is held

<sup>k</sup> T. Bab. Betsab, fol. 14. 1.

<sup>l</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 1. 3.

<sup>m</sup> Targum in Cant. iv. 1.

<sup>n</sup> Juchasin, fol. 63. 2.

<sup>o</sup> Abot R. Nathan, c. 25. fol. 6. 3.

<sup>p</sup> Juchasin, fol. 121. 1.

<sup>q</sup> T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 69. 1. Sanhedrim, fol. 87. 1. Zebachim, fol. 54. 2.

forth particularly by the ministers of the word, to illuminate the whole house and family of God; by the light of which poor sinners, the lost pieces of silver, are looked up; straggling souls are brought home; hypocrites and formalists are detected; and saints are enlightened, directed, and comforted. Much such a proverbial saying is used by the Jews: "don't leave a vessel of balsam in a dunghill, but move it from its place, that its smell may spread, and men may receive profit from it."

Ver. 16. *Let your light so shine before men, &c.*] Here Christ applies the foregoing simile to his disciples, and more fully opens the meaning and design of it. His sense is this; that the light of the Gospel, which he had communicated to them, the spiritual knowledge of the mysteries of grace, which he had favoured them with, were to be openly declared, and made manifest before men. Light was not given merely for their own private use, but for the public good of mankind; and therefore, as they were placed as lights in the world, they were to hold forth, in the most open and conspicuous manner, the word of light and life: *that they may see your good works*; meaning their zeal and fervency; their plainness and openness; their sincerity, faithfulness, and integrity; their courage and intrepidity; their diligence, industry, and indefatigableness in preaching the Gospel; their strict regard to truth, the honour of Christ, and the good of souls; as also their very great care and concern to recommend the doctrines of grace, by their example in their lives and conversations: *and glorify your father which is in heaven*; that is, that when the ministration of the Gospel has been blessed, for the illumination of the minds of men, to a thorough conviction of their state; and for their regeneration, conversion, sanctification, and comfort; they may give praise to God, and bless his name for qualifying and sending such Gospel-ministers to shew unto them the way of salvation; and that the word has been made useful to them for communicating spiritual light, life, joy, and comfort. אֲנִינוּ שֶׁשָׁמַיִם. *Our and your father which is in heaven*, is a name, appellation, or periphrasis of God, frequently used by Jewish writers<sup>1</sup>; and is often expressed by Christ in these his sermons on the mount.

Ver 17. *Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets, &c.*] From verse 3 to the 10<sup>th</sup> inclusive, our Lord seems chiefly to respect the whole body of his true disciples and followers; from thence, to the 16<sup>th</sup> inclusive, he addresses the disciples, whom he had called to be ministers of the word; and in this *verse*, to the end of his discourse, he applies himself to the whole multitude in general; many of whom might be ready to imagine, that by the light of the Gospel, he was giving his disciples instructions to spread in the world, he was going to set aside, as useless, the law of Moses, or the prophets, the interpreters of it, and commentators upon it. Christ knew the thoughts of their hearts, that they had taken up such prejudices

in their minds against him; wherefore he says, *think not*; he was sensible what objections they were forming, and what an improvement they would make of them against his being the Messiah, and therefore prevents them, saying, *I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil*. By *the law* is meant the moral law, as appears from the whole discourse following: this he came not to *destroy*, or loose men's obligations to, as a rule of walk and conversation, but to *fulfil* it; which he did doctrinally, by setting it forth fully, and giving the true sense and meaning of it; and practically, by yielding perfect obedience to all its commands, whereby he became *the end*, the fulfilling end of it. By *the prophets* are meant the writings of the prophets, in which they illustrated and explained the law of Moses; urged the duties of it; encouraged men thereunto by promises; and directed the people to the Messiah, and to an expectation of the blessings of grace by him: all which explanations, promises, and prophecies, were so far from being made void by Christ, that they receive their full accomplishment in him. The Jews pretend that these words of Christ are contrary to the religion and faith of his followers, who assert, that the law of Moses is abolished; which is easily refuted, by observing the exact agreement between Christ and the Apostle Paul, Rom. iii. 31. and x. 4. and whenever he, or any other of the apostles, speaks of the abrogation of the law, it is to be understood of the ceremonial law, which in course ceased by being fulfilled; or if of the moral law, not of the matter, but of the ministry of it. This passage of Christ is cited in the Talmud<sup>2</sup>, after this manner: "it is written in it, *i. e.* in the Gospel, *I Aven*, neither to diminish from the law of Moses am I come, *but, or nor* (for in the Amsterdam edition they have inserted אֵין between two hooks), "to add to the law of Moses am I come." Which, with their last correction, though not a just citation, yet tolerably well expresses the sense; but a most blasphemous character is affixed to Christ, when they call him *Aven*; which signifies *iniquity* itself, and seems to be a wilful corruption of the word *Amen*, which begins the next *verse*.

Ver. 18. *For verily I say unto you, &c.*] Or *I Amen say unto you*, which is one of the names of Christ; see Rev. iii. 14. or the word *Amen* is only used by Christ as an asseveration of what he was about to say; and which, for greater confirmation, is usually doubled in the Evangelist John, *Amen, Amen, or verily, verily*. The word is used by the Jews<sup>3</sup> for an oath; they swore by it; and it is a rule with them, that whoever answers *Amen* after an oath, it is all one as if he had pronounced the oath itself. The thing so strongly affirmed in this solemn manner is, *till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled*. The word אֵין or *jot*, in the Greek language, answers to *jod* in the Hebrew, the least of all the letters in the alphabet; hence a little city is called by this name, and this reason is given for it, \* שִׁיר קַמְנָה בְּאוֹרֵייתָ, because that *jod* is

<sup>1</sup> Vid. Joh. Isaac. Prefat. ad Elize Levit. Methurgeman.

<sup>2</sup> Vid. Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 15. & Yoma, c. 8. sect. 9.

<sup>3</sup> R. Isaac Chizuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 10. p. 401.

<sup>4</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 116. 2.

<sup>1</sup> T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 60. 4. Misn. Bava Kama, c. 9. sect. 7. 8. T. Bab. Shebuot, fol. 36. 1. Debarim Rabba, fol. 242. 2. Maimou Hich. Shebuot, c. 2. sect. 1.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 21. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

the least among letters. We read also of Rabbi Jod <sup>7</sup>, perhaps so called because *יהוד קטן*, he was little, as the author of Juchasin observes <sup>2</sup>. This shews in what language the law was written; not in the Samaritan language, for the *jod* in that is a large letter, but in the Hebrew, in which it is very small; and particularly is written in a very diminutive character, in Deut. xxxii. 18. *by one tittle* some think is meant one of those ducts, dashes, or corners of letters, which distinguish one letter from another, that are much alike; others have thought that one of the pricks or vowel-points is intended; others, one of those little strokes in the tops of letters, which the Jews call *crowns and spikes*, is here meant, in which they imagined great mysteries were contained; and there were some persons among them, who made it their business to search into the meaning of every letter, and of every one of these little horns, or pricks, that were upon the top of them. So says R. Meir <sup>3</sup>, "in the time of the prophets there were such who very diligently searched every letter in the law, and explained every letter by itself; and don't wonder at this that they should expound every letter by itself, for they commented *ואות ואות על כל קוץ וקוץ של כל אות ואות*, upon every one of the tops of each letter." Such an expounder was Akiba ben Joseph <sup>4</sup>. To which custom Christ is here supposed to have respect: however, certain it is that he speaks very much in the language, and agreeably to the mind of the Jewish doctors; and some things in their writings will serve to illustrate this passage, "If, (say they <sup>5</sup>), all the nations of the world were gathered together, to root one word out of the law, they could not do it; which you may learn from Solomon, who sought to root one letter out of the law, the letter *jod*, in Deut. xvii. 16, 17. but the holy blessed God said, Solomon shall cease, and an hundred such as he (in the Talmud <sup>6</sup> it is a thousand such as he) *יהוד כמד אינה בשילה לעולם*, but *jod shan't cease from thee (the law) for ever*." And elsewhere the same expression is used <sup>7</sup>, and 'tis added, *וקוצה כמד איני מבטל*, but *a tittle from thee shall not perish*." The design of Christ, in conformity to the language of the Jews, is to declare, that no part of the law, not one of the least commandments in it, as he explains himself in the next verse, should be unaccomplished; but all should be fulfilled before heaven and earth pass away, as they will, with a great noise and fervent heat, as to their present form and condition; or sooner shall they pass away, than the least part of the law shall: which expresses the perpetuity of the law, and the impossibility of its passing away, and the superior excellency of it to the heavens and the earth. It is a saying of one of the Jewish doctors <sup>8</sup>, that "the whole world is not equal even to one word out of the law," in which 'tis said, there is not one letter deficient or superfluous.

Ver. 19. *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, &c.*] Which are to be understood not of the beatitudes in the preceding verses, for these were not delivered by Christ under the form of commandments; nor of any of the peculiar commands of Christ under the Gospel-dispensation; but of the precepts of the law, of which some were comparatively lesser than others; and might be said to be broke, loosed, or dissolved, as the word here used signifies, when men acted contrary to them. *And shall teach men so*; not only teach them by their example to break the commandments, but by express orders: for however gross and absurd this may seem to be, that there should be any such teachers, and they should have any hearers, yet such there were among the Jews; and our Lord here manifestly strikes at them: for notwithstanding the great and excellent things they say of the law, yet they tell us, that the doctors of the sanhedrim had power to root any thing out of the law; to loose or make void any of its commands, for a time, excepting in the case of idolatry; and so might any true prophet, or wise man; which they pretend is sometimes necessary for the glory of God, and the good of men; and they are to be heard and obeyed, when they say, transgress any one of all the commands which are in the law <sup>9</sup>. Maimonides says <sup>1</sup>, that the sanhedrim had power, when it was convenient, for the time present, to make void an affirmative command, and to transgress a negative one, in order to return many to their religion; or to deliver many of the Israelites from stumbling at other things, they may do whatsoever the present time makes necessary: for so, adds he, the former wise men say, a man may profane one sabbath, in order to keep many sabbaths. And elsewhere <sup>2</sup> he affirms, "if a prophet, whom we know to be a prophet, should order us *לעבור על אחת מכל מצות*, to transgress any one of the commands, which are mentioned in the law, or many commands, whether light or heavy, for a time, we are ordered to hearken to him; and so we learn from the former wise men, by tradition, that in every thing a prophet shall say *עבור על דברי תורה*, transgress the words of the law, as Elias on Mount Carmel, hear him, except in the case of idolatry." And another of their writers says <sup>3</sup>, "it is lawful sometimes to make void the law, and to do that which appears to be forbidden." Nay, they even <sup>4</sup> say, that if a Gentile should bid an Israelite transgress any one of the commands mentioned in the law, excepting idolatry, adultery, and murder, he may transgress with impunity, provided it is done privately. You see what reason Christ had to express himself in the manner he does, and that with resentment, saying, *he shall be called*, or be the least in the kingdom of heaven; meaning either the church of God, where

<sup>7</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 22. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Fol. 93. 2.

<sup>9</sup> T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 29. 2.

<sup>1</sup> In Semitis fidei, fol. 104. 4. & 105. 1. apud Capell. in loc.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 29. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Vajikra Rabba, fol. 160. 3. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 20. 2.

<sup>4</sup> T. Hieros. Sanhedrim, fol. 20. 3.

<sup>1</sup> Shemot Rabba, fol. 96. 1.

<sup>2</sup> T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 15. 4.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 79. 1. & 89. 2. & 90. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Hilch. Memarim, c. 9. sect. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Hilch. Yesode Hattorah, c. 9. sect. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Bartenora in Misn. Beracot, c. 9. sect. 5.

<sup>7</sup> T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 35. 1.



he shall have neither a name, nor place; he shall not be in the least esteemed, but shall be cast out as a worthless man; or the ultimate state of happiness and glory, in the other world, where he shall not enter, as is said in the next *verse*; but, on the other hand, *whosoever shall do and teach*; whose doctrine and conversation, principles and practices agree together; who both teach obedience to the law, and perform it themselves: where again he glances at the masters in Israel, and tacitly reproves them who said, but did not; taught the people what they themselves did not practise; and so were unworthy of the honour, which he that both teaches and does shall have: *for the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven*; he shall be highly esteemed of in the church here, and be honoured hereafter in the world to come. The Jews have a saying somewhat like this; "he that lessens himself for the words of the law in this world, *בְּעֵשֶׂה נָדוּל*, he shall become great in the world to come," or days of the Messiah.

Ver. 20. *For I say unto you, &c.*] These words are directed, not to the true disciples of Christ in general, or to his apostles in particular, but to the whole multitude of the people; who had in great esteem and admiration the Scribes and Pharisees, for their seeming righteousness and holiness; concerning which Christ says, *that except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven*. He mentions the Scribes, because they were the more learned part of the people, who were employed in writing out, and expounding the law; and the Pharisees, because they were the strictest sect among the Jews for outward religion and righteousness; and yet, it seems, their righteousness was very defective; it lay only in an external observance of the law; did not arise from a purified heart, or the principles of grace; nor was it performed sincerely, and with a view to the glory of God; but for their own applause, and in order to obtain eternal life: besides, they neglected the weightier matters of the law, and contented themselves with the lesser ones; and as they were deficient in their practice, so they were very lax in their doctrines, as appears from the foregoing *verse*. Wherefore Christ informs his hearers, that they must have a better righteousness than these men had, if ever they expected to enter into the kingdom of heaven. There will be no admission into heaven without a righteousness: 'twas the loss of righteousness which removed Adam out of his earthly paradise; and 'tis not agreeable to the justice of God, to admit man into his heavenly paradise without one; yea, it is contrary to his nature, and would be destructive to the comfort of saints, to receive an unrighteous person into his kingdom and glory. A pharisaical righteousness will never bring a person thither; nor will any righteousness of man's, be it what it will, because the best is imperfect; it must be a righteousness exceeding that of the Scribes and Pharisees; and such is the righteousness of the saints:

indeed their inherent righteousness, or the sanctification of the spirit, is preferable to any righteousness of a natural man; it exceeds it in its author, nature, effects, and usefulness; yea, even works of righteousness done by believers are greatly preferable to any done by such men as are here mentioned: but, above all, the righteousness of Christ, which is imputed to them, and received by faith, is infinitely more excellent in its author, perfection, purity, and use; and which is their only right and title to eternal glory; and without which no man will be admitted into that glorious state.

Ver. 21. *Ye have heard, &c.*] That is, from the Scriptures being read to them, and the explanations of the ancients, which were called *שמיעותא*, *hearing*, being read in the schools, and heard by the scholars<sup>q</sup>; so that to *hear*, was along with the recital of the text, to receive by tradition, the sense the elders had given of it: of this kind is the instance produced by Christ. Thus Onkelos, and Jonathan ben Uzziel, render the phrase, *him shall ye hear*, in Deut. xviii. 15. *בְּיָדוֹ תִקְבְּלוּ*, *from him shall ye receive*; so those phrases *לִמְדוּ מִפִּי הַשְּׂמוּעָה*, *they learn from hearing*, or by report from others; and *אָמְרוּ מִפִּי הַשְּׂמוּעָה*, *they speak from hearing*, or from what they have heard, are often used for receiving and reporting things as they have them by tradition. That it was said, or it hath been said: this is also a Talmudic form of expression; often is this phrase to be met with in the Talmud, *אֵיתְּמַר*, *it has been said*<sup>r</sup>; that is, by the ancient doctors, as here, *בְּיָמֵינוּ*, *by them of old time, or to the ancients*, so in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; not to the Israelites in the time of Moses, but to the ancestors of the Jews, since the times of Ezra; by the elders, who were cotemporary with them; and who by their false glosses corrupted the law, when they recited any part of it to the people; or *by the ancients*, the ancient doctors and commentators, which preceded the times of Christ, whom the Jews often call *קַדְמוֹנֵינוּ*, *our ancients*<sup>s</sup>. Now, upon that law, *thou shalt not kill*, they put this gloss, or added this by way of interpretation, and *whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment*; which they understood only of actual murder, either committed in their own persons, or by the means of others. Their rules for the judgment of such persons were these; "every one that kills his neighbour with his hand; as if he strikes him with a sword, or with a stone that kills him; or strangles him till he die; or burns him in fire; seeing he kills him in any manner, in his own person, lo! such an one must be put to death *בְּבֵית דִּין*, *by the house of judgment*, or the "sanhedrim". Not that which consisted of three persons only, but either that which consisted of twenty-three, or the supreme one, which was made up of seventy-one; which two last had only power of judging capital offences. Again, "if a man hires a murderer to kill his neighbour, or sends his servants, and they kill him, or binds him, and

<sup>q</sup> T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 85. 2.

<sup>r</sup> Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Rabbin, col. 9453.

<sup>s</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Issure Mizbeach, c. 1. sect. 2, 4, 5, 7, 10. & passim, & T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 88. 1.

<sup>q</sup> Vid. Edzardi Not. in Avoda Zara, c. 2. p. 284.

<sup>r</sup> Vid. R. Aben Ezra in Exod. xxi. 17. & in Isa. lii. 13. & lxxvi. 94.

<sup>s</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Rotseach, c. 2. sect. 1.

"leaves him before a lion, or the like, and the beast kills him, every one of these is a shedder of blood; and the sin of slaughter is in his hand; and he is guilty of death by the hand of heaven, *i. e.* God; but he is not to be put to death by the house of judgment, or the sanhedrim." A little after, 'tis said, *their judgment* is delivered to heaven, *i. e.* to God; and this seems to be the sense of the word *judgment* here, namely, the judgment of God, or death by the hand of God; since it is manifestly distinguished from the council, or sanhedrim, in the next *verse*. The phrase, *in danger of judgment*, is the same with "דַּיִב דִּין", *guilty of judgment*, or deserves condemnation.

Ver. 22. *But I say unto you, &c.*] This is a Rabbinical way of speaking, used when a question is determined, and a false notion is refuted; it is a magisterial form of expression, and well suits with Christ, the great teacher and master in Israel; who spake as one having authority, opposing himself, not to the law of Moses, *thou shalt not kill*; but to the false gloss the ancient doctors had put upon it, with which their later ones agreed. You say, that if one man kills another himself, he is to be put to death by the sanhedrim; and if he does it by proxy, he is to be left to the judgment of God, so wholly restraining the law to actual murder; but I affirm, that *whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of judgment*. By *brother* is meant, not in a religious sense, one that is of the same faith, or in the same church-state; nor, in a strict natural sense, one that is so in the bonds of consanguinity; but in a large sense, any man, of whatsoever country or nation: for we are to be angry with no man; that is, as is rightly added, *without a cause*: for otherwise there is an anger which is not sinful, is in God, in Christ, in the holy angels; and is commendable in the people of God, when it arises from a true zeal for religion, the glory of God, and the interest of Christ; and is kindled against sin, their own, or others, all manner of vice, false doctrine, and false worship: but it is causeless anger which is here condemned by Christ, as a breach of the law, *thou shalt not kill*; and such persons are *in danger of judgment*; not of any of the courts of judicature among the Jews, as the sanhedrim of three, or of twenty-three, or of seventy-one, which took no notice of anger, as a passion in the mind, only of facts committed; but of the judgment of God, as in the preceding *verse*, it being distinguished from the sanhedrim, or council, in the next clause. *And whosoever shall say to his brother Raca, shall be in danger of the council, or sanhedrim*. The word *Raca* is expressive of indignation and contempt; it was used as a term of reproach. Some derive it from רַקַּק, *to spit upon*; as if the person that used it thought the man he spoke to deserved to be spit upon, and treated in the most contemptuous manner: but rather the word signifies *empty* and *vain*, and denotes a worthless, empty-headed man; a man of no brains; a foolish, witless, fellow:

so it is often used in Jewish writings. Take a few instances, as follow: "a certain person said to R. "Jochanan", Rabbi, expound, for it becomes thee "to expound; for as thou hast said, so have I seen: "he replied to him, רֵיקָא, *Reka*, if thou hadst not "seen, thou wouldst not have believed." Again, it happened to R. Simeon ben Eliezer of Migdal Edar, who went from the house of Rabbi; and he met with a certain man very much deformed; he says unto him, "רֵיקָא, *Reka*, how many are the deformed sons of "Abraham our father?" Many more instances might be given. Now I don't find that the use of this reproachful word was cognizable by the Jewish sanhedrim, or great council; nor is it our Lord's meaning that it was, only that it ought to have been taken notice of in a proper manner, as well as actual murder. He adds, *but whosoever shall say thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire*. The word *fool* does not signify a man of weak parts, one that is very ignorant in things natural; this the word *Raca* imports; but a wicked, reprobate man; in which sense Solomon often uses the word. The Persic version renders it here *wicked*. There is a manifest gradation in the text from causeless anger in the breast, or reproachful words; and from thence to a censorious judging of a man's spiritual and eternal estate, which is what is here condemned. *Thou fool*, is, thou wicked man, thou ungodly wretch, thou graceless creature, whose portion will be eternal damnation. Calling a man by such names was not allowed of by the Jews themselves, whose rules are: "he that calls his neighbour a servant, let him be excommunicated; a bastard, let him be beaten with forty stripes; רֵשָׁע, *a wicked man*, let him descend with him into his life or livelihood." The gloss upon it is, "as if he should say, to this the sanhedrim is not obliged, but it is lawful to hate him, yea to lessen his sustenance, and exercise his trade," which was done to bring him to poverty and distress. So, it seems, the sanhedrim were not obliged to take notice of him. Again, they say, "it is forbidden a man to call his neighbour by a name of reproach"; "every one that calls his neighbour רֵשָׁע, *a wicked man*, shall be brought down to hell;" which is pretty much what Christ here says, *shall be in danger of hell-fire*; or deserving of hell-fire; or liable to, and in danger of punishment, even *unto hell-fire*. An expression much like this may be observed in Jarchi, on Isa. xxiv. 23. where he speaks of some persons מְרוֹיִיבֵי גֵהֶנְנִים לְהַלְלֵם, *who are guilty, deserving, or in danger of hell unto hell*. The word גֵּהֶנְנִים, here used, and which is often used in the New Testament for *hell*, is but the Hebrew גֵּי הַחַיִּים, *Ge-Hinnom*, the valley of Hinnom, where the children were caused to pass through the fire to Moloch. This place, the Jewish writers<sup>b</sup> say, "was a place well known, near to Jerusalem, a valley, whose fire was never quenched; and in which they burned the bones of any thing that was unclean, and dead carcasses, and other "pollutions." Hence the word came to be used

<sup>1</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Rotsesch, c. 2. sect. 2.

<sup>2</sup> In Targ. in 2 Chron. xix. 10.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 100. 1. T. Bava Bathra, fol. 75. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Massechet Derech Eretz, c. 4. fol. 18. 1.

<sup>1</sup> Vid. T. Bab. Beraot, fol. 39. 2. Zohar in Exod. fol. 50. 2.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 98. 1. Bava Metzia, fol. 71. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 50. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Sopher Cosri, fol. 67. 2. Vid. Kimchi in Psal. xxvii. 13.

among them, as might be shewn in innumerable instances, to express the place and state of the damned; and very fitly describes it.

Ver. 23. *Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, &c.*] The Jews obliged such who had done any damage to their neighbours, by stealing from them, to make satisfaction before they brought their offering; concerning which they say, "he that brings what he has stolen, before he brings his trespass-offering, is right; he that brings his trespass-offering, before he brings that which he has stolen, is not right." Again<sup>d</sup>, "they don't bring the trespass-offering before the sum of what is stolen is returned, either to the owners, or to the priests." Some have thought Christ refers to this; only what they restrained to pecuniary damages, he extends to all sorts of offences. But not a trespass-offering, but a free-will-offering, seems to be designed by *the gift*: which, when a man either intended to bring, or was going to bring, or had already brought, as a voluntary sacrifice to be offered unto God; and it came into his mind, that he had offended any man by shewing any undue passion, or by any reproachful words, then he was to do what is advised in the following verse: *and there*, whilst going, or when at the altar, *rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee*: hath any thing to charge thee with; any just ground of complaint against thee; if thou hast done him any injury, or given him any offence: particularly, if he had at any time said *Raca* to him, or called him *fool*: for those words have reference to what goes before, and are a corollary, or conclusion from them, as appears from the causal particle *therefore*.

Ver. 24. *Leave there thy gift before the altar, &c.*] This might easily be done, and the business soon dispatched, at some seasons; particularly, at their public feasts, as the passover, pentecost, and feast of tabernacles, when all the Israelites were together: *and go thy way*: make what haste thou canst, *first be reconciled to thy brother*: use all means to reconcile him; acknowledge the offence; ask his pardon; assure him that thou wishest well to him, and not ill; *and then come and offer thy gift*, by putting it on the altar, before which it was left. This shews, that acts of love and friendship are preferable to sacrifices; and that sacrifices offered up in wrath, and whilst unreconciled to others, are unacceptable to God, and of no avail: and so much the Jews themselves seem to acknowledge, when they say<sup>e</sup>: "that transgressions, which are between a man and God, the day of atonement expiates; the transgressions which are between a man and his neighbour, the day of atonement does not expiate, עַד שֶׁיִצְדַּח אֶת חֶבְרֵי בֹרַח." Which is enlarged upon, and explained by Maimonides<sup>f</sup>, after this manner: "the day of atonement does not expiate any transgressions, but those that are between a man and God, as when one eats any thing that is forbidden, and lies with any thing that is forbidden, or the like; but transgressions which are between a man and his neigh-

bour, as he that hurts his neighbour, or curses his neighbour, or steals from him, and the like, are never forgiven, until he has given his neighbour what he owed him, and has reconciled him; yea, though he has returned to him the money he owed him, he ought to reconcile him, and desire him to forgive him; yea, even though he has only provoked him by words, (which is the very case in the text before us), צָרִיד לְפִיּוֹ, he ought to reconcile him, and to meet him until he forgives him: if his neighbour will not forgive, he must bring with him three of his friends, and meet him, and entreat him; and if he will not be reconciled by them, he must bring them a second, and a third time." So that he was to use all means to obtain a reconciliation.

Ver. 25. *Agree with thine adversary quickly, &c.*] These words are not to be understood in an allegorical sense, as if the adversary was the justice of God, demanding payment of debts; *the way*, this present life; *the judge*, God himself; *the officer*, the devil; *the prison*, the pit of hell; and *the uttermost farthing*, the least sin, which will never be remitted without satisfaction: but the design of them is to prevent law-suits about debts, which may be in dispute; it being much better for debtor and creditor, especially the former, to compose such differences among themselves, than to litigate the matter in a court of judicature. By *the adversary* is meant not an enemy, one that bears hatred and ill-will, but a brother that has ought against a man; a creditor, who demands and insists upon payment of what is owing to him; and for this purpose has taken methods towards bringing the debtor before a proper magistrate, in order to oblige him to payment: wherefore it is better for him to make up and agree the matter directly, as soon as possible, *whilst thou art in the way with him*; that is, whilst the creditor and debtor are going together to some inferior magistrate, or lesser court, as the sanhedrim, which consisted of three persons only, before whom such causes might be tried: for מִמוֹנֵת דֵּינֵי בִשְׁלוּשָׁה, pecuniary causes, or causes relating to money-matters, were tried by the bench of three<sup>g</sup>: and the self-same advice is given in the Talmud<sup>h</sup>, as here, where it seems to be a common proverb; for it is said, "there are men that say, or men usually say, אַבָּב אֲוָרְחָךְ לְבַעַל דְּבַרְךָ אִישְׁתַּמַּע, whilst thou art in the way with thine adversary, be obedient." Lest at any time the adversary should deliver thee to the judge, a superior magistrate in a higher court; for if the creditor would, he could oblige the debtor to go with him to the supreme court of judicature, and try the cause there; for so say the Jewish<sup>i</sup> canons: "if the creditor says we will go to the great sanhedrim, they compel the debtor, and he goes up with them, as it is said, the borrower is servant to the lender," where it might go harder with the poor debtor; and therefore it was advisable to prevent it by an agreement, lest the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. "It was an af-

<sup>c</sup> Misn. Bava Kama, c. 9. sect. 19.

<sup>d</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Gezela, c. 8. sect. 13.

<sup>e</sup> Misn. Yoma, c. 8. sect. 9.

<sup>f</sup> Hilchot Teshuba, c. 2. sect. 9. Vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 87. 1.

<sup>g</sup> Misn. Sanhedrim, c. 1. sect. 1.

<sup>h</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 95. 2.

<sup>i</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrim, c. 6. sect. 7.

"firmative command in the law," says Maimonides, "to appoint *judges* and *officers* in every country and province, as it is said, Deut. xvi. 18. שופטים, *judges*. "they are the judges that are fixed in the sanhedrim, and such that engage in law-suits come before them: שוטרים, *officers*; these are the masters of the rod and scourge, i. e. who beat and scourge delinquents; and these stand before the judges—and all they do, is by the order of the judges." Now it is one of these that is meant by the *officer*; in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, he is called שומר; who, when he had authority from the judge, could cast into prison, and that for debt; of which we have no account in the law of Moses.

Ver. 26. *Verily, I say unto thee, &c.*] This may be depended upon, you may assure yourself of it, that *thou shalt by no means come out thence, from prison, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing, or last farthing*; or as the Ethiopic version reads it, *till thou hast exactly paid all*; which seems to express the inexorableness of the creditor, and the impossibility of the debtor's release.

Ver. 27. *Ye have heard that it was said, &c.*] These forms of speech, as well as what follows, by them of old time, have been explained, in ver. 21. The law here mentioned, *thou shalt not commit adultery*, is recorded in Exod. xx. 14. and the meaning of our Lord is, not that the then present Jews had heard that such a law had been delivered to the ancients, their fathers, at Mount Sinai; for that they could read in their Bibles: but they had received it by tradition, that the sense of it, which had been given to their ancestors, by the ancient doctors of the church, was, that this law is to be taken strictly, as it lies, and only regards the sin of uncleanness in married persons; or, what was strictly adultery, and that actual; so that it had no respect to fornication, or unchaste thoughts, words, or actions, but that single act only.

Ver. 28. *But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman, &c.*] Many and severe are the prohibitions of the Jews, concerning looking upon a woman, which they aggravate as a very great sin: they say<sup>k</sup>, it is not lawful to look upon a beautiful woman, though unmarried; nor upon another man's wife, though deformed; nor upon a woman's coloured garments: they forbid<sup>l</sup> looking on a woman's little finger, and say<sup>m</sup>, that he that tells money to a woman, out of his hand into her's, that he may look upon her, though he is possessed of the law and good works, even as Moses, he shan't escape the damnation of hell: they affirm<sup>n</sup>, that he that looks upon a woman's heel, his children shall not be virtuous; and that a man may not go after a woman in the way, no, not after his wife: should he meet her on a bridge, he must take her to the side of him; and whoever goes through a river after a woman, shall have no part in the world to

come: nay, they forbid<sup>p</sup> a man looking on the beauty of his own wife. Now these things were said by them, chiefly to cover themselves, and because they would be thought to be very chaste; when they were, as Christ calls them, an *adulterous generation* in a literal sense: they usually did what our Lord observes, *strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel*. We read in the Talmud<sup>q</sup>, of חסיד שומא, a *foolish saint*. and it is asked, who is he? and it is answered, one that sees a woman drowning in a river, and says it is not lawful for me לראותה, *to look upon her*, and deliver her. It was not any looking upon a woman, that is forbid by Christ as criminal; but so to look, as to *lust after her*; for such an one *hath committed adultery with her already in his heart*. But these men, who forbid external looking upon a woman, generally speaking, had no notion of heart-sins; and which was the prevailing opinion of the Pharisees, in Christ's time. "A good thought, they allow, is reckoned as if done; as it is said, Mal. iii. 16. Upon which it is asked, what is the meaning of that, and *that thought upon his name*? Says R. Ase, if a man thinks to do a good work, and is hindered, and does it not, the Scripture reckons it to him, as if he did it; but an evil thought, the holy blessed God does not account of it as if done, as is said, Psal. lxxvi. 18." Upon which words, a noted commentator<sup>r</sup> of their's has this remark: "Though I regard iniquity in my heart to do it, even in thought, yea, against God himself, as if I had expressed it with my lips, he does not hear it; that is, לא רשע לי עין, *he does not reckon it to me for sin*; because the holy blessed God does not account an evil thought for an action, to them that are in the faith of God, or of the true religion." For it seems, this is only true of the Israelites; 'tis just the reverse with the Gentiles, in whom God does not reckon of a good thought, as if it was done, but does of an evil one, as if it was in act. It must be owned, that this is not the sense of them all; for some of them have gone so far as to say<sup>s</sup>, that "the thoughts of sin are greater, or harder, than sin itself:" by which they mean, that it is more difficult to subdue sinful lusts, than to refrain from the act of sin itself; and particularly, some of them say things which agree with, and come very near to what our Lord here says; as when they affirm<sup>t</sup>, that "every one that looks upon a woman בכוונה, *with intention*, it is all one as if he lay with her." And that הוא נקרא נראה ונראה, *he that committeth adultery with his eyes, is called an adulterer*<sup>u</sup>. Yea, they also observe<sup>v</sup>, that a woman may commit adultery in her heart, as well as a man; but the Pharisees of Christ's time were of another mind.

Ver. 29. *And if thy right eye offend thee, &c.*] Or *cause thee to offend*, to stumble, and fall into sin. Our Lord has no regard here to near and dear rela-

<sup>k</sup> T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 1. 2.

<sup>l</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 24. 1. Sabbat. fol. 64. 2.

<sup>m</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 61. 1. Eruvin, fol. 18. 2.

<sup>n</sup> T. Bab. Nedarium, fol. 20. 1. T. Hieros. Challa, fol. 58. 3. Derech Eretz. c. 1. fol. 17. 3.

<sup>o</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 61. 1. Eruvin, fol. 18. 2.

<sup>p</sup> Zohar in Lev. fol. 34. 4.

<sup>q</sup> T. Bab. Sota, fol. 21. 2.

<sup>r</sup> T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 40. 1.

<sup>s</sup> R. David Kimchi, in Psal. lxxvi. 18.

<sup>t</sup> T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 16. 2.

<sup>u</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 29. 1.

<sup>v</sup> T. Hieros. Challa, fol. 58. 3. Massechet Calah, fol. 16. 4. Vid. Maimon. Issue Bia, c. 21. sect. 2. & Moses Kotsensis Mizvot Torat precept. neg. 126.

<sup>w</sup> Vajikra Rabba, sect. 93. fol. 165. 1.

<sup>x</sup> Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 196. 1.

tions, seeking to alienate us from God and Christ, and hinder us in the pursuit of divine things; whose solicitations are to be rejected with the utmost indignation, and they themselves to be parted with, and forsaken, rather than complied with; which is in the sense some give of the words: for both in this, and the following verse, respect is had only to the law of adultery; and to such members of the body, which often are the means of leading persons on to the breach of it; particularly the eye and hand. The eye is often the instrument of ensnaring the heart this way: hence the Jews have a saying, "whoever looks upon women, at the end comes into the hands of transgression." Mention is only made of the right eye; not but that the left may be an occasion of sinning, as well as the right; but that being most dear and valuable, is instanced in, and ordered to be parted with: *pluck it out, and cast it from thee*: which is not to be understood literally; for no man is obliged to mutilate any part of his body, to prevent sin, or on account of the commission of it; this is no where required, and if done, would be sinful, as in the case of Origen: but figuratively; and the sense is, that persons should make a covenant with their eyes, as Job did; and turn them away from beholding such objects, which may tend to excite impure thoughts and desires; deny themselves the gratification of the sense of seeing, or feeding the eyes with such sights, as are graceful to the flesh; and with indignation and contempt, reject, and avoid all opportunities and occasions of sinning; which the eye may be the instrument of, and lead unto: *for it is profitable for thee, that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell*. This is still a continuation of the figure here used; and the meaning is, that it will turn to better account, to lose all the carnal pleasures of the eye, or all those pleasing sights, which are grateful to a carnal heart, than, by enjoying them, to expose the whole man, body and soul, to everlasting destruction, in the fire of hell.

Ver. 30. *And if thy right hand offend thee, &c.*] Or cause thee to offend; that is, is the means of ensnaring thine heart; and of drawing thee into either mental, or actual adultery; for, as before, all unchaste looks, so here, all unchaste touches, embraces, &c. are condemned. As adultery may be committed in the heart, and by the eye, so with the hand: "says R. Eliezer<sup>a</sup>, what's the meaning of that Scripture, *your hands are full of blood*, Isa. 1. 15.?" 'Tis replied, *אלו המאפים ביד, these are they, that commit adultery with the hand*. "Tis a tradition of the house of R. Ishmael, that the sense of that command, *thou shalt not commit adultery*, is, there shall be none that commits adultery in thee, whether *with the hand, or with the foot*." Like orders are given as before, *cut it off, and cast it from thee*; as a man would choose to do, or have it done for him, when such a part of the body is mortified, and endangers all the rest. The Jews enjoined cutting off of the hand, on several accounts; if in a

morning, before a man had washed his hands, he put his hand to his eye, nose, mouth, ear, &c. *תוקצץ*, it was to be cut off<sup>b</sup>; particularly, the handling of the *membrum virile*, was punishable with cutting off of the hand. "Says R. Tarphon, if the hand is moved to the privy parts, *תקצץ ידו, let his hand be cut off to his navel*." That is, that it may reach no further; for below that part of the body the hand might not be put<sup>c</sup>; lest unclean thoughts, and desires, should be excited. In the above place it is added, "what if a thorn should be in his belly, must he not take it away?" 'Tis replied, no: 'tis further asked, must not his belly be ripped up then? 'Tis answered, it is better that his belly be ripped up, *ויאל ירד לבאר שחת, than that he should go down to the pit of corruption*. A way of speaking, much like what our Lord here uses; and to the above orders and canons, he may be very well thought to allude: but he is not to be understood literally, as enjoining the cutting off of the right hand, as they did; but of men's refraining from all such impure practices, either with themselves, or women, which are of a defiling nature; and endanger the salvation of them, body and soul; the same reason is given as before.

Ver. 31. *It hath been said, &c.*] 'Tis not added here, as in the former instances, *by them of old time*; nor prefaced with these words, *ye have heard*; because the case of divorce was not any law of Moses, or of God by him; but only a permission, because of the hardness of the hearts of the Jews: and as to the controversy, about the causes of divorce, this was not debated by them of old time, but was a new thing, just started in the time of Christ; and was a controversy then agitating, between the schools of Hillel and Shammai: the one allowing it upon any frivolous cause; the other, only on account of adultery. *Whosoever shall put away his wife*, dissolve the marriage bond, dismiss her from his bed, and send her from his house, see Deut. xxiv. 1, 2, *let him give her a writing of divorcement, ספר כריתת, a bill of divorcement, or a book of cutting off*. For though a wife was obtained by several ways, there was but one way of dismissing her, as the Jews observe<sup>d</sup>, and that was, by giving her a bill. The form of a writing of divorcement, as given by Maimonides<sup>e</sup>, is as follows: "On such a day of the week, in such a month, of such a year, either from the creation, or the epocha of contracts, according to the usual way of computation, which we observe in such a place; I such an one, the son of such an one, of such a place; or if I have any other name, or surname, or my parents, or my place, or the place of my parents; by my own will, without any force, I put away, dismiss, and divorce thee. Thee, I say, who art such an one, the daughter of such an one, of such a place; or if thou hast any other name, or surname, or thy parents, or thy place, or the place of thy parents; who wast my wife heretofore, but now I put thee away, dismiss and divorce thee; so that thou art in thine own hand, and hast power

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 20. 1.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 13. 2. Vid. Maimon. Issure Bia, c. 21. sect. 18.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 108. 2. Massechet Callah, fol. 17. 1.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 13. 2.

<sup>e</sup> Maimon. Issure Bia, c. 21. sect. 23.

<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 13. 2.

<sup>g</sup> Baal Hatturim in Deut. xxiv. 1. Maimon. Hilehot Isheet, c. 1. sect. 2. 3.

<sup>h</sup> Hilchot Gerushia, c. 4. sect. 12.

“over thyself, to go, and marry any other man, whom thou pleasest; and let no man hinder thee in my name, from this day forward and for ever; and lo! thou art free to any man: and let this be unto thee, from me, a bill of divorce, an instrument of dismissal, and a letter of forsaking, according to the law of Moses and Israel.

“Such an one, the son of such an one, witness.

“Such an one, the son of such an one, witness.”

Would you choose to have one of these bills, filled up in proper form, take it in manner<sup>h</sup> following. “On the fourth day of the week, on the eleventh day of the month Cisleu, in the year five thousand four hundred and fifty-four, from the creation of the world; according to the computation which we follow here, in the city of Amsterdam, which is called Amstelredam; situated by the sea-side, called Taya, and by the river Amstel; I Abraham, the son of Benjamin, surnamed Wolphius, the priest; and at this time dwelling in the city of Amsterdam, which is called Amstelredam, which is situated by the sea-side, called Taya, and by the river Amstel; or if I have any other name, or surname, or my parents, or my place, or the place of my parents; by my own free will, without any compulsion, I put away, dismiss, and divorce thee, my wife Rebecca, the daughter of Jonas the Levite; who at this time abides in the city of Amsterdam, called Amstelredam, situated by the sea-side, called Taya, and by the river Amstel; or if thou hast any other name, or surname, or thy parents, or thy place, or the place of thy parents, who wast heretofore my wife; but now I put thee away, dismiss, and divorce thee; so that thou art in thine own hands, and hast power over thyself, to go and marry any other man, whom thou pleasest: and let no man hinder thee in my name, from this day forward, and for ever; and lo! thou art free to any man. Let this be to thee, from me, a bill of divorce, an instrument of dismissal, and a letter of forsaking, according to the law of Moses and Israel.

“Sealtiel, the son of Paltiel, witness.

“Calonymus, the son of Gabriel, witness.”

This bill being written in twelve lines, neither more nor less, and being sealed by the husband, and signed by the witnesses, was delivered, either by him, or by a messenger, or deputy of his or her's, into her hand, lap, or bosom, in the presence of two persons; after which, she might, if she would, enrol it in the public records, and marry whom she pleased.

Ver. 32. *But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, &c.*] Christ does not infringe, or revoke the original grant, or permission of divorce; only frees it from the false interpretations, and ill use; the Pharisees made of it; and restores the ancient sense of it, in which only it was to be understood: for a divorce was allowable in no case, *saving for the cause of fornication*; which must not be taken strictly

for what is called fornication, but as including adultery, incest, or any unlawful copulation; and is opposed to the sense and practices of the Pharisees, who were on the side of Hillel: who admitted of divorce, upon the most foolish and frivolous pretences whatever; when Shammai and his followers insisted on it, that a man ought only to put away his wife for uncleanness; in which they agreed with Christ. For so it is written<sup>l</sup>, “The house of Shammai say, a man may not put away his wife, unless he finds some uncleanness in her, according to Deut. xxiv. 1. The house of Hillel say, if she should spoil his food, (that is, as Jarchi and Bartenora explain it, burns it either at the fire, or with salt, *i. e.* over-roasts or over-salts it,) who appeal also to Deut. xxiv. 1. R. Akiba says, if he finds another more beautiful than her, as it is said, Deut. xxiv. 1. *and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes.*” The commentators<sup>k</sup> on this passage say, that the determination of the matter is, according to the school of Hillel; so that, according to them, a woman might be put away for a very trivial thing: some difference is made by some of the Jewish doctors, between a first and second wife; the first wife, they say<sup>l</sup>, might not be put away, but for adultery; but the second might be put away, if her husband hated her; or she was of ill behaviour, and impudent, and not modest, as the daughters of Israel. Now our Lord says, without any exception, that a man ought not to put away his wife, whether first or second, for any other reason than uncleanness; and that whoever does, upon any other account, *causeth her to commit adultery*: that is, as much as in him lies: should she commit it, he is the cause of it, by exposing her, through a rejection of her, to the sinful embraces of others; and, indeed, should she marry another man, whilst he is alive, which her divorce allows her to do, she must be guilty of adultery; since she is his proper wife, the bond of marriage not being dissolved by such a divorce: and *whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery*; because the divorced woman he marries, and takes to his bed; is legally the wife of another man; and it may be added, from Matt. xix. 9. that her husband, who has put her away, upon any other account than fornication, should he marry another woman, would be guilty of the same crime.

Ver. 33. *Again, ye have heard that it hath been said, &c.*] Besides what has been observed, in ver. 21. 27. you know it has also been said, *by, or to them of old time*, what is written in Lev. xix. 12. *And ye shall not swear by my name falsely*: which seems to be referred to, when it is said, *thou shalt not forswear thyself*; and is the law forbidding perjury, or false swearing; and was what the Jews were chiefly, if not only concerned about; little regarding the vanity, only the truth of an oath: for they took swearing vainly, to be the same as swearing falsely; wherefore so long as what they swore was truth,

<sup>h</sup> In Surenbusii Misna, Vol. III. p. 324. Vid. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora pr. affirm. 50.

<sup>l</sup> Misn. Gittin, c. 9. sect. 10. Vid. T. Hieros. Gittin, fol. 4g. 4. & Sota, fol. 16. 2. & Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 195. 2.

<sup>k</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in Gittin, c. 9. sect. 10.

<sup>l</sup> T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 90. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Gerushin, c. 10. sect. 21. 22.

they were not careful whether it was of any importance or no: moreover, these men sinned, in that they swore by the creatures, which they thought they might do, and not sin; and when they had so done, were not under obligation to perform; because they made no use of the name of God, to whom only vows and oaths were to be performed, *but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths*, Numb. xxx. 2. which they understood of vows only made to the Lord, and not to others; and of oaths, when in his name, and not by others; which they did do, and yet thought themselves not obliged by them.

Ver. 34. *But I say unto you, swear not at all, &c.*] Which must not be understood in the strictest sense, as though it was not lawful to take an oath upon any occasion, in an affair of moment, in a solemn serious manner, and in the name of God; which may be safely done: but of rash swearing, about trivial matters, and by the creatures; as appears by what follows, *neither by heaven*: which is directly contrary to the Jewish canons<sup>m</sup>, which say, "they that swear בַּשָּׁמַיִם, by heaven, and by earth, are free." Upon the words in Cant. ii. 7. *I adjure you, &c.* 'tis asked, "by what does she adjure them? R. Eliezer says, *by the heavens, and by the earth*: by the hosts, the "host above, and the host below." So Philo the Jew says<sup>n</sup>, that the most high and ancient cause need not to be immediately mentioned in swearing; but the earth, the sun, the stars, *σφαιρα, heaven*, and the whole world. So R. Aben Ezra, and R. David Kimchi, explain Amos iv. 2. *The Lord God hath sworn by his holiness*; that is, say they, בַּשָּׁמַיִם, by heaven: which may be thought to justify them, in this form of swearing; though they did not look upon it as a binding oath, and therefore if broken they were not criminal<sup>o</sup>. "He that swears בַּשָּׁמַיִם, by heaven, and by the earth, and by the sun, and the like; though his intention is nothing less than to him that created them, this is no "oath." The reason why it is forbidden by Christ to swear by heaven, is, *for it is God's throne*; referring to Isa. lxvi. 1. where he sits, the glory of his majesty shines forth, and is itself glorious and excellent, and not to be mentioned in a vain way; and especially, for the reason Christ elsewhere gives, Matt. xxiii. 22. *that he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon*; so that they doubly sinned, first, by openly swearing by that which is God's creature; and then, by tacitly bringing God into their rash and vain oaths.

Ver. 35. *Nor by the earth, for it is his footstool, &c.*] That the Jews were wont to swear by the earth, is clear from the above-mentioned instances; and is condemned by Christ for this reason, because the earth is God's *footstool*, referring, as before, to Isa. lxvi. 1. on which he treads; and where he also manifests forth his glory, and is a considerable part of the work of his hands. *Neither by Jerusalem*, which the Jews

used to swear by: such forms of vows as these are to be met with in their writings<sup>q</sup>; "as the altar, as the temple, בִּירוּשָׁלַם, as Jerusalem;" that is, by Jerusalem, I vow I'll do this, or the other thing. "R. Judah says, he that says Jerusalem (*i. e.* as Bartenora 'observes', without the note of comparison, *as*) says "nothing." In the Gemara<sup>r</sup> it is, "he that says as Jerusalem, does not say any thing, till he has made his vow concerning a thing, which is offered up in Jerusalem." Dr. Lightfoot<sup>s</sup> has produced forms of vowing and swearing, which have not occurred to me. "Jerusalem; לִירוּשָׁלַם, for, or unto Jerusalem, which "exactly answers to τὴν Ἱερουσαλήμ here; and by Jerusalem." The reason given for prohibiting this kind of oath, is; *for it is the city of the great king*: not of David, but of the King of kings, the Lord of hosts; who had his residence, and his worship, here; see Psal. xlvi. 2.

Ver. 36. *Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, &c.*] This also was a common form of swearing among the Jews: take a few instances. "If any one is bound to his friend by an oath, and says to him, vow unto me בְּדוֹי רֵאשִׁיךָ, by the life of thy head; R. Meir says<sup>t</sup>, he may retract it; but the wise men say, he cannot." Again<sup>u</sup>, a certain Rabbi said to Elijah, "I heard Bath Kol (or the voice from heaven) mourning like a dove, and saying, woe to my children; for, because of their sins, I have destroyed my house, and have burnt my temple, and have carried them captive among the nations: and he (Elijah) said unto him דְּוִיד דְּוִיד רֵאשִׁיךָ, by thy life, and by the life of thy head, not this time only it says so, but it says so three times every day." Once more<sup>v</sup>, says R. Simeon ben Antipatras, to R. Joshua, "I have heard from the mouth of the wise men, that he that vows in the law, and transgresses, is to be beaten with forty stripes: he replies, blessed art thou of God, that thou hast so done, דְּוִיד דְּוִיד רֵאשִׁיךָ, by thy life, and by the life of thy head, he that is used to do "so is to be beaten." This form of swearing is condemned, for this reason, *because thou canst not make one hair white or black*: which shows, that a man's head, nor, indeed, one hair of his head, is in his own power, and therefore he ought not to swear by it; as he ought not to swear by heaven, or earth, or Jerusalem, because these were in the possession of God. Some copies read, *canst not make one white hair black*.

Ver. 37. *But let your communication be yea, yea, &c.*] That is, let your speech, in your common conversation, and daily business of life, when ye answer to any thing in the affirmative, be *yea*; and when ye answer to any thing in the negative, *no*; and for the stronger asseveration of the matter, when it is necessary, double these words; but let no oaths be joined unto them: this is enough; a righteous man's yea, is yea, and his no, is no; his word is sufficient. Hence it appears, that our Lord is here speaking of rash

<sup>m</sup> Misn. Shebuot, c. 4. sect. 13.

<sup>n</sup> Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 10. 4.

<sup>o</sup> De Special. leg. p. 770.

<sup>p</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Shebuot, c. 12. sect. 3.

<sup>q</sup> Misn. Nedarim, c. 1. sect. 3.

<sup>r</sup> In. ib.

<sup>s</sup> T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 11. 1.

<sup>t</sup> In loc. ex Tosapht. in Nedarim, c. 1.

<sup>u</sup> Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 3. sect. 2.

<sup>v</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 3. 1.

<sup>w</sup> Derech. Eretz, c. 6. fol. 18. 2.

swearing, and such as was used in common conversation, and is justly condemned by him. The Jews have no reason to reject this advice of Christ, who often use and recommend the same modes of expression. They endeavour to raise the esteem of their doctors and wise men, by saying, that their words, both in doctrines and dealings with men, are *yea, yea*?. One of their commentators on the word *saying*, in Exod. xx. 1. makes this observation; "hence we learn, that they used to answer, על קון ועל לאו לאו, concerning *yea, yea, and concerning nay, nay*." This way of speaking, they looked upon equivalent to an oath; *yea*, they affirm it was one. "Says R. Eliezer, לאו שבטעה קון שבטעה, *nay is an oath, yea is an oath, absolutely; nay is an oath, as it is written, Gen. ix. 11. and Isa. liv. 9. But that yea is an oath, how does it appear? It is concluded from hence, that nay is an oath; saith Rabba, there are that say nay, nay, twice; and there are that say yea, yea, twice; as it is written, Gen. ix. 11. and from hence, that nay is written, yea is also twice said.*" The gloss upon it is, "he that says either *nay, nay, twice, or yea, yea, twice; lo! it is כשבוטעה מאחר, as an after oath, which confirms his words.*" For *whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil*: that is, whatever exceeds this way of speaking and conversation, in the common affairs of life, is either from the devil, who is the evil one, by way of eminency; or from the evil heart of man, from the pride, malice, envy, &c. that are in it.

Ver. 38. *Ye have heard that it hath been said, &c.*] That is, to, or by them of old time, as is expressed in some of the foregoing instances, *an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*, Exod. xxi. 24. This is *lex talionis, the law of retaliation*; which, whether it is to be understood literally, or not, is a matter of question. The Baithuseans, or Sadducees, among the Jews, took it in a literal sense, and so does Josephus, who says, he that shall blind, *i. e.* put out a man's eyes, shall suffer the like. But the Jewish doctors generally understood it of paying a price equivalent to the damage done, except in case of life. R. Sol. Jarchi explains the law thus: "He that puts out his neighbour's eye, must give him רבוי עינו, *the price of his eye*, according to the price of a servant sold in the market; and so the same of them all; for, not taking away of the member is strictly meant." And, says Maimonides, "if a man cuts off his neighbour's hand, or foot, he is to be considered as if he was a servant sold in a market; what he was worth then, and what he is worth now; and he must pay the diminution which is made of his price; as it is said, *eye for eye*. From tradition 'tis learned, that this *for*, spoken of, is to be understood of paying money; this is what is said in the law, *as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again*. Not that he is to be hurt, as he has hurt his neighbour; but inasmuch as he deserves to want a member, or to be hurt as he has

done; therefore he ought to pay the damage." And Josephus himself says, that he must be deprived of that, which he has deprived another of, except he that has his eye put out is willing to receive money; and which, he observes, the law allows of. The controversy about the sense of this law may be seen in a few words, as managed between R. Saadiah Hagoon, and Ben Zeta. "Says R. Saadiah, we can't explain this verse according to its literal sense; for if a man should smite the eye of his neighbour, and the third part of the light of his eye should depart, how will he order it, to strike such a stroke, as that, without adding or lessening? perhaps he will put out the whole light of his eye. And it is yet more difficult with respect to burning, wound, and stripe; for should they be in a dangerous place, the man might die, but that's intolerable. Ben Zeta answers him, is it not written, in another place, *as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again*? To which Hagoon replies, *ב, in*, is instead of *על, upon, or against*; and lo! the sense is, so shall the punishment be upon him. Ben Zeta answers him again, as he does, so shall it be done to him. Hagoon replies, behold Samson said, *as they have done to me, so will I do to them*; but Samson did not take their wives, and give them to others, he only rendered to them their reward: but Ben Zeta replies, if a poor man should smite, what must be his punishment? Hagoon answers him, if a blind man should put out the eye of one that sees, what shall be done to him? as for the poor man, he may become rich, and pay, but the blind man can never pay." Now our Lord here, does not find fault with the law of retaliation, as delivered by Moses, but with the false gloss of the Scribes and Pharisees; who, as they interpreted it of pecuniary mulcts, as a compensation for the loss of a member, which sometimes exceeded all just and due bounds; so they applied it to private revenge, and in favour of it: whereas this law did not allow of a retaliation to be made by private persons, at their pleasure, but by the civil magistrate only.

Ver. 39. *But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil, &c.*] This is not to be understood of any sort of evil, not of the evil of sin, of bad actions, and false doctrines, which are to be opposed; nor of the evil one, Satan, who is to be resisted; but of an evil man, an injurious one, who has done us an injury. We must not render evil for evil, or repay him in the same way; see James v. 6. Not but that a man may lawfully defend himself, and endeavour to secure himself from injuries; and may appeal to the civil magistrate for redress of grievances; but he is not to make use of private revenge. As if a man should pluck out one of his eyes, he must not in revenge pluck out one of his; or should he strike out one of his teeth, he must not use him in the same manner; but patiently bear the affront, or seek for satisfaction in another way.

<sup>7</sup> T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 20. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Dayot. c. 5. sect. 13.

<sup>8</sup> R. Sol. Jarchi, in Exod. xx. 1.

<sup>9</sup> T. Bab. Shebuot, fol. 36. 1. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Shebuot, c. 2. sect. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Antiq. Jud. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 35.

<sup>c</sup> In Exod. xxi. 24.

<sup>d</sup> Hithot Chehal. c. 1. sect. 2, 3.

<sup>e</sup> In loc. supra-citat.

<sup>f</sup> In Aben Ezra in Exod. xxi. 24.



But whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also; which is to be understood comparatively, rather than seek revenge, and is directly contrary to the Jewish canons; which require, in such a case, a pecuniary fine<sup>a</sup>. "He that strikes his neighbour (which Maimonides explains, he that strikes his neighbour with his hand shut, about the neck) he shall give him a *sela*, or *shekel*: R. Judah says, in the name of R. Jose thé Galilean, one pound: if he smite him (i. e. as Maimonides says, if he smite him with his double fist upon the face; or, as Bartenora, with the palm of his hand, *לרד*, on the cheek, which is a greater reproach) he shall give him two hundred *zuzim*; and if he does it with the back of his hand, four hundred *zuzim*." R. Isaac Sangari<sup>b</sup> manifestly refers to this passage of Christ's, when he says to the king he's conversing with, "I perceive that thou upbraided us with poverty and want; but in them the great men of other nations glory: for they do not glory but in him, who said, *Whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the left; and whosoever taketh away thy coat, give him thy cloak*."

Ver. 40. *And if any man will sue thee at the law, &c.*] Or will contend with thee, or as the Syriac renders it, *דנדן עמך*, will strive, or litigate with thee; not contest the matter, or try the cause in an open court of judicature, a sense our version inclines to; but will wrangle and quarrel in a private way, in order to take away thy coat, by force and violence, let him have thy cloak also; don't forbid, or hinder him from taking it; see Luke vi. 29. The coat, is the same with *שליט*, the upper garment; and what we render a cloak, answers to *דולק*, the inward garment; by which words Sangari expresses the passage in the place before cited: and the sense is, if a wrangling, quarrelsome man, insists upon having thy coat, or upper garment, let him take the next; and rather suffer thyself to be stripped naked than engage in a litigious broil with him. This also is contrary to the above canon of the Jews<sup>c</sup>, which says; "If a man should pull another by his ear, or pluck off his hair, or spit, and his spittle should come to him, *העביר שליטו ממנו*, or should take his coat from him, or uncover a woman's head in the street, he shall pay four hundred *zuzim*, and all this is according to his dignity; says R. Akiba; even the poor in Israel, they consider them as if they were noblemen, who are fallen from their estates, for they are the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Ver. 41. *And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, &c.*] The word *ἀναγκάζω*, rendered *compel*, is generally said to be of Persic original; the *Angari*, among the Persians, were the king's messengers, or those who rode post, and were maintained at the king's expenses; and had power to take horses, and other carriages, and even men, into their service, by force, when they had occasion for them: hence the word is used to force, or compel persons to do this or the other thing; the word *אנכרייא* is often to be met with in the Jewish writings, and is in them expounded to be<sup>k</sup>, the taking of any thing for

the service of the king. David de Pomis renders it by *על*, a yoke<sup>l</sup>; meaning any servile work, which such, who were pressed into the king's service, were obliged unto. And *עשה אנכרייא* is used to compel persons to go along with others, to do any service; in which sense it is here used: and Christ advises, rather than to contend and quarrel with such a person, that obliges to go with him a mile, to go with him *twain*: his meaning is, not to dispute such a matter, though it may be somewhat laborious and disagreeable, but comply, for the sake of peace. The Jews<sup>m</sup>, in their blasphemous book of the birth of Christ, own that he gave advice in such words as these, when they introduce Peter thus speaking of him. "He, i. e. Jesus, hath warned and commanded you to do no more evil to a Jew; but if a Jew should say to a Nazarene, go with me one mile, he shall go with him two miles; and if a Jew shall smite him on the left cheek, he shall turn to him also the right." Can a Jew find fault with this advice?

Ver. 42. *Give to him that asketh thee, &c.*] To every man, Luke vi. 30. whether Jew or Gentile; friend or foe; believer or unbeliever; a good, or a bad man; worthy or unworthy; deserving or not, that asketh alms, whether food or money; give it freely, readily, cheerfully, according to your abilities, and as the necessity of the object requires: for such rules are always supposed, and to be observed; and though all are to be relieved, yet the circumstances of persons, and their relation to men, are to be considered, and special regard is to be had to the household of faith. *And from him that would borrow of thee, turn not away*; refuse him not, turn not away from him with a frown, or without speaking to him, or with a denial; look upon him with a pleasant countenance, cheerfully lend him what he wants, whether he be a Jew, from whom it was not lawful to take usury, or a stranger, from whom it was lawful to take it, yet take it not; lend him freely, *hoping for nothing again*, Luke vi. 35. which must not be understood of not hoping for the money lent, for then it would be giving, and not lending; but of not hoping for any reward for lending it: and indeed the money itself is not to be hoped for again, when the circumstances of the borrower are such, that he is not able to make a return.

Ver. 43. *Ye have heard that it hath been said, &c.*] By, or to them of old time. This law has been delivered to them, *thou shalt love thy neighbour*, with this appendage to it, or false gloss upon it, *and hate thine enemy*; for the first of these only is the law of Moses, Levit. xix. 18. the other is the addition, or wrong interpretation of the Scribes and Pharisees: wherefore the Jew<sup>n</sup> has no reason to charge Christ, or the Evangelist, with a false testimony, as he does, because the latter is no where written in the law, nor in the prophets: nor does Christ say it is; he only observes, that it had been traditionally handed down to them from the ancients, by the masters of the traditions of the elders, that the law of loving the neighbour was so to be

<sup>a</sup> Misn. Bava Kama, c. 8. sect. 6. Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>b</sup> Spher Cosi, Orat. 1. Sign. 113. fol. 56. i.

<sup>c</sup> Misn. Bava Kama, c. 8. sect. 6.

<sup>k</sup> Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 6. sect. 3.

<sup>l</sup> Tzemach David, fol. 8. 4.

<sup>m</sup> Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Rabb. p. 131, 133.

<sup>n</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 22.

<sup>o</sup> R. Isaac Chizuk Emanah, par. 2. c. 11. p. 408.

understood as to allow, and even enjoin, hatred of enemies: in proof of which, take the following instances.<sup>p</sup> "When one man sins against another, he may not hate him in his heart, and be silent, as is said of the wicked; Absalom spoke not with Amnon: but it is commanded to make it known to him, and to say to him, why hast thou done to me so and so? As it is said, *rebuking, thou shalt rebuke thy neighbour*; and if he returns, and desires him to pardon him, he shall not be implacable and cruel; but if he reproves him many times, and he don't receive his reproof, nor turn from his sin, then *לשנאתו כותרת, it is lawful to hate him*." Again, they say,<sup>q</sup> "Every disciple of a wise man, *ושור נקום ונוטר כנוח, who does not revenge, and keep as a serpent*; that is, as the gloss explains it, *enmity in his heart*, as a serpent, is no disciple of a wise man." And so Maimonides<sup>r</sup>, one of their better sort of writers, says; "A disciple of a wise man, or a scholar, whom a man despises and reproaches publicly, it is forbidden him to forgive him, because of his honour; and if he forgives him, he is to be punished, for this is a contempt of the law; but he must *revenge, and keep the thing as a serpent, until the other asks pardon of him, and then he may forgive him*." Thus they bred their scholars in hatred and malice against their enemies. This arises from a mistaken sense of the word *neighbour*, which they understood only of a friend; and concluded, that if a friend was to be loved, an enemy was to be hated; not the Gentiles only, but any one among themselves, which could come under that name.

Ver. 44. *But I say unto you, love your enemies, &c.*] That is, as the Apostle Paul may be thought to interpret the words of Christ, Rom. xii. 20. *If thine enemy hunger, feed him: if he thirst, give him drink*: unless our Lord should be supposed rather to regard the internal affection of the mind; since outward expressions of love, by words and works, are urged in the following exhortations: the actions of a man may be hated, and just indignation be expressed against them, and yet his person be loved, tenderness be used to him, and pity shown him: all men, even enemies, are to be loved with a natural love, as men; though they can't be loved with a spiritual affection, as brethren in Christ: and in natural affection there are degrees, according to the relation and circumstances that persons stand in to one another. *Bless them that curse you*: when wicked men curse you, as Shimei cursed David, don't *render evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing*; give good words, use kind language, mild and soft expressions; such as may either win upon them, or put them to shame and silence: *bless, and curse not*; the latter belongs to them, the former to you; *let them curse, but bless thou*: curses better fit their mouths, and blessings thine. Blessing here, does not signify praising them, for that would be sinful, which is sometimes the sense of the word; nor wishing, or praying for a blessing on them, which is right and good; but this is mentioned afterwards,

as distinct from blessing; wherefore, it is better to understand it of a sweet and engaging address unto, and behaviour and conduct towards such, whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. *Do good to them that hate you*; such as hate you in their hearts, and discover their hatred by their actions; don't make returns in the same way, but on the contrary, do them all the good you can; perform all the kind offices that lie in your power; let them partake of your bounty and liberality; if poor, feed, clothe, and supply them, as you are able, with the necessaries of life; and give them wholesome advice for the good of their souls: *by so doing, you will heap coals of fire on their heads*: of enemies, make them friends; engage their affections to you, and you may be happy instruments in doing them good, both in soul and body: *and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you*. What Christ here commands and advises to, he himself did; for as he hung upon the cross, he prayed for his crucifiers, who were then using him in the most despicable, as well as cruel manner; saying, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*: and in this he has left us an example, that we should tread in his steps; and herein he was quickly followed by his holy martyr Stephen; who, whilst he was stoning, prayed for his persecutors and murderers, saying, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*. This breathes out the true spirit of Christianity, and is peculiar to it. The whole of this is directly opposite to the tenets of the Jews, particularly the Scribes and Pharisees; who allowed of revenge, and keeping anger against any person that had done them an injury, as has been observed: and which were also the sentiments of the Karaites, or Scripturarians, another sect among them who kept to the letter of the Scriptures, and rejected the traditions of the elders, which the Pharisees held: but in this they agreed with them, "that it was right to do good to their friends, and to forgive them that asked pardon of them; but to such men who rendered evil, and did not return to do well, that they might receive forgiveness, *אינו אסור לנקום ולנוטר כנוח, it is not forbidden to revenge, and to keep anger against them*." It is indeed said<sup>s</sup> of their former holy men, *חסידים, Hasidians*, which some have thought to be the same with the *Essenes*, and a sort of Christians; however, were a better sort of Jews; that these "heard their reproach, but did not return it; and not only so, but they pardoned him that reproached them, and gave him." And it is reported of these men, that they used to pray to God to pardon and forgive all that disturbed them. But the Pharisees, whom Christ had to do with, and against whom he inveighs, were men of another complexion.

Ver. 45. *That ye may be the children of your father, &c.*] Not that any became the children of God, by doing things in imitation of him: for as in nature no man becomes the son of another by imitating him, or by doing the things he does, but either by birth, or by adoption; so in grace no man becomes a child of

<sup>p</sup> Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora precept. neg. 5. Vid. Maimon. Hilchot Rotsuch, c. 13. sect. 14.

<sup>q</sup> Bab. Yoma, fol. 22. 2. & 23. 1.

<sup>r</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Talmud Tora, c. 7. sect. 13.

<sup>s</sup> R. Eliahu in Adderet, c. 3. apud Trigland. de Sect. Karzorum, c. 10. p. 166, 167.

<sup>t</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Talmud Tora, c. 7. sect. 13.

God by the works he does, as a follower of God, but by adopting grace; and which is discovered in regeneration. Christ's meaning is, that they might appear, and be known to be the children of God, by doing those things in which they resemble their heavenly father; and which are agreeable to his nature and conduct; as the tree is known by its fruit, and the cause by its effect: for where adoption and regenerating grace take place, the fruit of good works is brought forth to the glory of God. Some copies, instead of *υιοι*, *children*, read *ομοιοι*, *like*: and accordingly, the Persic version renders it thus, *that ye may be like to your father, which is in heaven*. Our Lord seems to have respect to the Jews, often having in their mouths this expression, *אבינו בשמים*, *our father which is in heaven*; and to their frequent boasting that they were the children of God; and therefore he would have them make this manifest by their being like him, or acting in imitation of him; *for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil, and on the good*. Christ instances in one of the greatest blessings in nature, the *sun*, so useful to the earth, and so beneficial to mankind for light and heat; which he calls *his sun*: his own, and not another's; which he has made, and maintains, orders to run its race, and commands it to rise morning by morning, and that upon good and bad men; one, as well as another; all equally share in, and partake of its benign influences, and enjoy the comfortable effects and blessings of it: *and sendeth rain on the just and unjust*; that is, on the fields of persons of such different characters, even both the early and the latter rain; which makes the earth fruitful, crowns it with goodness, and causes it to bring forth bread to the eater, and seed to the sower. This is one of the most considerable blessings of life; the gift of it is God's sole prerogative; it is peculiar to him; it is what none of the vanities of the Gentiles can give; and yet is bestowed by him on the most worthless and undeserving. This flows from that perfection of God, which the Cabbalists call "*chesed, mercy, or benignity, to which it is essential to give largely to all, both to the just and unjust*." The Jews have a saying<sup>x</sup>, that "*greater is the day of rain, than the resurrection of the dead*; for the resurrection of the dead is for the just; but *rain is בן לצדקים בן לרשעים, both for the just, and for the wicked*:" a way of speaking much like this here. They also used to praise God for rain; on this consideration, because it was given to unworthy persons. " R. Jose Bar Jacob went to visit R. Joden of Magdala; whilst he was there, rain descended, and he heard his voice, saying, thousands of thousands, and millions of millions are bound to praise thy name, O our king, for every drop thou causest to descend upon us, שאת נומל טובה לרשעים, *because thou renderest good to the wicked*." Now our Lord instances in things which could not be denied, and they themselves allowed; and makes use of their own words, to

engage them to imitate God, whom they call their father, by doing good to their enemies, and them that hated them, as well as to their friends and neighbours: yet sometimes they could scarcely allow, that the Gentiles had the same share in this divine favour with themselves; for they say<sup>z</sup>, that " God works by way of miracle, that rain should not be wanting in his land, although it is wanting in the countries of the Heathen; as he says, Job v. 10. *who giveth rain on the earth, which is the land of Israel*; for on that *רב מטר*, a great rain descends, and *sendeth waters, מעטים*, few (which is added to the text) *upon the fields*: which relates to what is without the land, whereupon it does not descend, but the substance of the land of Israel; therefore he saith, the Lord will open to thee his good treasure, and not to others."

Ver. 46. *For if ye love them which love you, &c.*] That is, if ye only love such that love you; for that such who love should be loved again, is both natural and just: our Lord's meaning is not, that ye ought not to love them that love you, but that these should not be the only objects of your love; for should this be the case, *what reward have ye? or shall ye have?* Do you deserve any thanks for your love now? none at all, it is what you are obliged to by your friend's love to you. Do you expect any hereafter with God? if you do, you'll be mistaken; you have your reward with men, who have loved you as much as you have done them, and therefore none can be due to you, either from God or men: besides, *do not even the publicans the same?* men of the worst characters, and who were most hateful to the Jews, upon many accounts; partly because of their business, which was to collect the Roman tax, and carry it to the proper officers appointed to receive it, and of whom they sometimes farmed it. Now the Roman yoke was very grievous to the Jews, who boasted of their being a free people; nor did they willingly pay their tribute-money; and some of them would refuse to do it, under a pretence of religion; wherefore those publicans, or tax-gatherers, which were oftentimes men of their own nation, as appears from the instances of Levi and Zaccheus, were very odious to them; because they looked upon them as joining with the Romans, in oppressing them, and abridging them in their liberty: and partly because of their character and conduct, being men of great improbity, rapine, and covetousness: hence, as in the New Testament, they are frequently joined with *sinners*, as being notorious ones themselves; so in the Talmudic writings, with thieves<sup>a</sup>, and are reckoned as thieves, with murderers, and robbers<sup>b</sup>; they were not allowed as witnesses<sup>c</sup> in any of their courts of judicature; nor were they to be kept company<sup>d</sup> with in private houses. Now our Lord instances in these men who were the most profligate part of the nation, and had in greatest contempt by the rest; and yet these, by the very dictates of nature, loved such as loved them: wherefore

<sup>u</sup> Sepher Shaar Hassamaim, Tract. 7. c. 12. p. 155.

<sup>x</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 7. 1.

<sup>y</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 14. 1. & Taanith, fol. 64. 2.

<sup>z</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 152. 4.

<sup>a</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Gezela, c. 5. sect. 9. 11.

<sup>b</sup> Misn. Nedarim, c. 3. sect. 4.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 25. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Eduth, c. 10. sect. 4. Moses Kotsensis Mizvot Tora pr. neg. 214.

<sup>d</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Mishcal, c. 10. sect. 8.

it must be shameful and scandalous in the Pharisees, and others, who pretended to great sanctity and religion, to do no more than these persons did.

Ver. 47. *And if you salute your brethren only, &c.*] This does not mean salutation by embraces or kisses, but by words, asking of each other's welfare, and wishing prosperity and happiness to one another. "The manner of salutation among the wise men" was this; he that salutes says, a good day to my lord; and he replies, saying, a good, and long day to my lord: always he that replies doubles "the salutation." The persons they usually gave their salutations to were those of their own nation, their countrymen, relations, and friends; and who are here designed by *brethren*; meaning, not brethren in the strict sense, but any kindred, acquaintance, or any of their own nation. Some copies read it *friends*, who, generally speaking, only partook of such favours. "A man, (says Maimonides<sup>h</sup>), might not salute his master, nor return a salutation to him in the manner they gave a salutation לרעים, to friends; and they return it to one another." They were not very free in saluting any persons, as strangers and Gentiles: such advice as this is indeed given אדם כל בשלום כל אדם, prevent every man with a salutation, or be first in saluting every man; upon which passage their commentators<sup>h</sup> say, even a Gentile in the streets. Accordingly, 'tis elsewhere<sup>l</sup> observed, that "R. Abai used to say, let a man be always cunning with fear, for a soft answer turns away wrath; and multiply salutation with his brethren, and with his relations, and with every man, even with a stranger in the streets." But this proceeded not from any cordial hearty respect, but out of policy, and from fear; and in order to maintain peace; and for selfish ends, and with sinister views: otherwise their salutations were confined to their brethren and kinsfolk

after the flesh. Now, this being the case, says Christ, *what do ye more than others? do not even publicans so?* Or, as some copies read it, Gentiles or Heathens; and accordingly the Ethiopic version, and the Vulgate Latin so render it: the Arabic renders it *idolaters*. Now, what great matter was this to salute their brethren and their friends, when even the very Heathens, who had nothing but the light of nature to guide them, did the same?

Ver. 48. *Be ye therefore perfect, as your father, &c.*] This perfection is to be restrained to the subject Christ is upon, love to men, and not to be referred to any, or every other thing; wherefore, in Luke vi. 36. 'tis, *be ye merciful, as your father also is merciful*; and regards not a perfection of degree in that, but objects and quality: that is to say, not that men may, or can, or ought to be as perfect in love, as to the degree of it, as God is; that is impossible: the *as* here, is not a note of equality, but of likeness: such, who profess God to be their father, ought to imitate him, particularly in their love to men, which ought to be extended to the same objects, as the divine goodness is; that, as he shews regard in a providential way to all men, good and bad, just and unjust, and his tender mercies are over all his works; so ought they to love all men with a natural affection, and hate no man, no, not their enemies: for he that loves only his friends, and not his enemies, loves imperfectly; he does not take in the whole compass of objects his love is to extend unto; and as God loves sincerely, and without dissimulation, so should they. To be *perfect*, is to be sincere and upright: in this sense is the word often used, and answers to the Hebrew word תמים, which signifies the same: see Deut. xviii. 13. which is the passage Christ seems to refer to here; and the sense is, be ye sincere and upright in your love to all men, as your heavenly father is hearty and sincere in his affections to them.

## C H A P. VI.

Ver. 1. *TAKE heed that ye do not your alms before men, &c.*] Some copies read, *take heed that ye do not your righteousness, &c.* which is a very good reading: but then, by *righteousness*, is not meant righteousness, as comprehending all other righteous acts, as particularly alms, prayer, and fasting, hereafter mentioned; but alms only; nothing being more common with the Jews than to call alms צדקה, righteousness: and whatever word Matthew made use of, there is no doubt to be made of it, but this was the word Christ used. Now alms was so called, because it is a righteous action, which ought to be performed; and to withhold from the poor what is meet, is to deal unrighteously: hence we read of the *mammon of unrighteousness*: by which is meant, not money unrighteously got, but that which is unrighteously kept from the poor: also it might be so called, because the Jews

very much placed their justifying righteousness before God in the performance of it: let us first see how, according to them, it was to be done, and then what confidence they placed in it, and how much they made use of it. The account Maimonides<sup>k</sup> gives is as follows, who observes: that "we are bound to take heed to the commandment of alms more than all the affirmative commands; because alms is a sign of a *righteous* man, the seed of Abraham our father; as it is said, in Gen. xviii. 19. Nor is the throne of Israel established, nor can the law of truth stand, but by alms; as it is said, Prov. xvi. 12. Nor shall Israel be redeemed, but by alms, according to Isa. i. 27. There are (says he) eight degrees in giving alms, the one above another; the highest, than which there is none higher, is this; when one relieves an Israelite, and gives him a gift, or lends

<sup>h</sup> Sopher Chasidim, fol. 5. col. 2. apud Buxtorf. Florileg. Heb. p. 300, 301.

<sup>l</sup> Hilch. Talmud Tora, c. 5. sect. 5.

<sup>k</sup> Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 15.

<sup>h</sup> Jarchi & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>l</sup> T. Bab. Beraot, fol. 17. 1.

<sup>k</sup> Hilch. Mattanot Anayim, c. 10. sect. 1. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

“ to him, or takes him into partnership, or finds him work, so that he strengthens his hands before he stands in need of asking; and of this it is said, *thou shalt relieve him, a stranger and a sojourner, that he may live with thee:* which is as much as to say, relieve him before he falls, and is brought to necessity. The next to this is, when a man gives alms to the poor, and he knows not to whom he gives; nor does the poor man know of whom he receives; for, behold, this is doing it for the sake of it; as the chamber of secrets, which was in the sanctuary, into which righteous men privately put, and the poor children of good men were privately supported: and the next to this is, when a man puts into the alms-chest: and a man does not put into the alms-chest except he knows that the governor is faithful and wise, and knows how to manage as should be; such an one as R. Chananiah ben Tradion. The next to this is, when the giver knows to whom he gives, but the poor man does not know from whom he receives; as the great ones of the wise men, who used to go secretly, and cast their money at the doors of the poor; and this is right to do, and a good method it is when the governors of alms do not dispose aright. The next to this is, when the poor man knows of whom he takes, but does not know the giver; as the great men among the wise men, who used to bind up their money in linen cloths, and put them behind them, and the poor came and took them, that they might not be ashamed. The next to this is, when a man puts it into his hands before he asks. The next to this is, when he gives to him after he has asked. The next to this is, when he gives to him less than is proper, with a pleasant countenance. The next to this is, when he gives with grief.” Now this work, or duty, they magnify at a very great rate: not content to say <sup>a</sup>, that “ he that does alms, does that which is more excellent than all offerings;” they further affirm <sup>b</sup>, that “ giving of alms and beneficence כולו חמורה כולו, are equal to the whole law.” or, it is all one as if a man performed the whole law. Moreover, they give <sup>c</sup> out, that whoever takes of his goods, and does alms with them, he shall be delivered from the damnation of hell.” Yea, they reckon that this gives a right and title to eternal life <sup>d</sup>. “ He that says, let this sela, or shekel, be for alms, that his children may live, and that he may be worthy of the life of the world to come, lo! this is צדיק נמר, a perfect righteous man.” Or, as elsewhere <sup>e</sup> expressed, “ let this sela be for alms, that my son may live, and that he may be a son of the world to come; lo! this is a perfect righteous man.” Thus, you see, they looked upon it as their righteousness; and what made them heirs of heaven, and gave them a title to eternal glory. Now our Lord advises them to take heed, as what would be of bad consequence, and very detrimental to them, that they did not their alms before men, to be seen of them; not but alms may be law-

fully done before, or in the sight of men, and a good end may be answered by it; namely, to stir up others to acts of liberality; but then this must not be done with this view, to be seen of men, in order to gain their applause, and a good name among them, otherwise, ye have no reward of your father, which is in heaven. You expect a reward, and a very great one, for your alms; but if you do them only to raise your credit, and gain esteem among men, you have your reward already with men: nor must you expect any from God, since you seek not his glory, but your own. When a man's self, and not the glory of God, is the chief end of any action, that can't be call'd a good work, nor will it have any reward; whereas a good work, which springs from a principle of grace, and is directed to the glory of God, will have a reward, not of debt, but of grace, from whence it arises.

Ver. 2. *Wherefore, when thou dost thine alms, &c.* Christ proceeds to give some directions and cautions about giving of alms, that they might be done aright, and answer some valuable purposes for the glory of God, the good of others, and their own: do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. The persons Christ has reference to were the Scribes and Pharisees, who did all they did to be seen of men; whom he calls hypocrites; as he often does, because they put on an appearance of religion and holiness, but inwardly, and otherwise, were very wicked men. It does not appear that any such practice was literally performed, as blowing a trumpet before them, when they gave their alms; though the collectors of alms did, by some means, publicly notify to the people when they were about that service: for one of their rules is <sup>a</sup>, “ the collectors of alms don't proclaim on a feast, as they proclaim on a common day; but they collected בַּיְחִיבָה, privately, and put it into their bosom, and distributed it to every one by himself.” Wherefore this must be understood proverbially; and the sense is, that when they did their alms, they chose public places for it, such as the synagogues, where was a large concourse of people met together for religious worship; or the open streets of the city, where people were continually walking to and fro, so that nothing could be done in this way, but what must be seen and observed: and moreover, they took care, either by themselves, or others, to proclaim their good actions, that they might have glory of men; not only of the poor, or the collectors for them, but of the spectators. R. Aben Ezra <sup>b</sup> says, that “ a man that gives alms to the poor, must not give it because of the glory of the collector, i. e. that he may have glory of him; nor that the children of men may praise him.” But his ancestors were of another mind: but what did they get by it? verily I say unto you, they have their reward; and a poor one it is, the applause of men: however, it is what they seek after, and is all their empty performances deserve, and all they will have. “ He that glories in any thing done by himself, דוּמָה נוֹשֵׁל אֶת שְׂכָרוֹ, he takes, or receives

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Succa, fol. 49. 2.

<sup>b</sup> T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 15. 2. 3.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 7. 1. 2.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Roshhashana, fol. 4. 1. Bava Bathra, fol. 10. 2.

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. s. 1. 2.

<sup>2</sup> T. Hieros. Demai, fol. 23. 2.

<sup>3</sup> In Exod. xx. 3.

"his reward"; for as for any reward from God, they'll "have none;" in this sense, as the Ethiopic version reads it, *they have lost their reward*; and, as a learned critic has thought, is the sense of the Greek word, *they forbid, or hinder their reward*. By seeking the glory of men, they lay impediments in the way of receiving honour from God.

Ver. 3. *But when thou dost alms, &c.*] Do it so privately, and with so much secrecy, that, if it was possible, thou mightest not know it thyself, much less make it known to others: *let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth*; acquaint not thy nearest and dearest friend with it; let not one that sits at thy left hand know what thou art doing with thy right hand; 'tis a proverbial and hyperbolical phrase, expressing the secrecy of the action. It is a Jewish canon<sup>o</sup>, that "he that gives a gift to his friend out of love, may make it known, *אבל לא בצדקה*, but not if it be by way of alms."

Ver. 4. *That thine alms may be in secret, &c.*] May be done in secret, and be kept a secret. The allusion seems to be to the secret chamber, where money was brought privately for the relief of the poor. "There were two chambers in the sanctuary, the one was *לשכת השאים*, the chamber of secrets, and the other the chamber of vessels: the chamber of secrets was that into which pious persons put *בכסות*, in secret, and the poor children of good men were maintained out of it privately<sup>q</sup>." The Jews say many things in favour of doing alms privately. "Greater, (say they<sup>r</sup>), is he that gives alms *בסתור*, in secret, than Moses our master." They tell us<sup>s</sup>, that "R. Jannai seeing a certain man give Zuz (a piece of money) to a poor man publicly, said unto him, it would have been better, if thou hadst not have given him any thing, than to have given him in this manner." This was the practice of the ancient religious Jews, to give their alms privately; but the Scribes and Pharisees had brought that practice into disuse, and which our Lord labours to restore; adding, for encouragement, *and thy father, which seeth in secret*; beholds all secret actions, and knows the secret springs of actions, *himself shall reward thee openly*; in the great day of account, before angels and men, when all secret things shall be brought to light, and every good man have praise of God. This duty, of giving alms to the poor, is mentioned by Christ before prayer to God; it may be for this reason, because it was usual to give alms before prayer. "The great, or famous men, among the wise men, used to give a Prutah (a small piece of money) to a poor man before every prayer, and after that they prayed; as it is said, *I shall behold thy face in righteousness*."

Ver. 5. *And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites, &c.*] As the Scribes and Pharisees; whose posture in prayer, the places they chose to

pray in, and the view they had therein, are particularly taken notice of: *for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men*. It was their usual custom to pray standing; nay, it is established by their canons. "There are eight things, (says Maimonides<sup>o</sup>), that a man that prays ought to take heed to do; and the first he mentions is *standing*; for, says he, no man may pray *אלה כעומד*, but *standing*: if he is sitting in a ship, or in a cart, if he can stand, he must stand; if not, he may sit in his place and pray." Several hints of this custom there are in the Misna<sup>p</sup>. "On their fast-days they used to bring out the ark into the streets—*עמדו בתפלה*, and they stood in prayer, or praying; and caused an old man to go down before the ark, who was used to recite prayers, and he said them." Again<sup>q</sup>, "whoever *עמד בתפלה*, stood praying, and remembered that any uncleanness attended him, he might not break off, but he might shorten." Yea, standing itself is interpreted of praying; for it is said<sup>r</sup>, "and Abraham rose up early in the morning to the place, where he stood, *ואין תפלה אלה בעמידה*, and there is no prayer but standing," though sometimes they prayed sitting, as David did, 2 Sam. vii. 18. so it is said of R. Jose, and R. Eleazar, that *יתבו וצלי*, they sat and prayed, and afterwards rose up and went on their way<sup>s</sup>. So it was likewise customary to go to the synagogues, and there pray; and indeed they were places built and appointed for this purpose. "Wherever there were ten Israelites, a house ought to be provided, in which they may go to prayer at every time of prayer; and this place is called a synagogue<sup>t</sup>." Hence some have thought, that not such places are here designed, but any assembly, or concourse of people gathered together upon any occasion; but such an interpretation will find no place, when the following things are observed. "For ever let a man go, morning and evening, to the synagogue; for no prayer is heard, at any time, but in the synagogue; and every one that hath a synagogue in his city, and does not pray in it with the congregation, is called a bad neighbour<sup>u</sup>." Again<sup>v</sup>, "he that prays in the house of the Lord, is as if he offered up a pure offering." Now, partly on account of the publicness of the place, and partly because they thought their prayers were only heard there, therefore they chose to pray in the synagogues; and also in the corners of the streets, where two streets met, and they might be the more easily seen. This was also a common thing to pray in the streets: "says R. Jochanan, I saw R. Jannai stand and pray in the streets of Tzipore<sup>w</sup>." And a little after, 'tis said of another, that he stood and prayed *באסותיה*, in the streets; though such places were not reckoned holy, as the synagogues were. "The street of a city, (says Maimonides<sup>x</sup>), although the people pray in it at fasts and stations,

<sup>o</sup> R. Jona apud Capell. Spicileg. in loc.

<sup>p</sup> Piske Tosephot in Sabbat. c. 1. art. 134.

<sup>q</sup> Misn. Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 6. Maimon. Hilch. Eracin, c. 2. sect. 12.

<sup>r</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 9. 2.

<sup>s</sup> T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 5. 1.

<sup>t</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Mattanot Anayim, c. 10. sect. 15.

<sup>u</sup> Hilch. Tephilla, c. 5. sect. 1, 2.

<sup>v</sup> Misn. Taanith, c. 2. sect. 1, 2.

<sup>w</sup> Misn. Beracot, c. 3. sect. 5.

<sup>y</sup> Zohar in Lev. fol. 47. 1. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 26. 2.

<sup>z</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 4. 4.

<sup>a</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 11. 1.

<sup>b</sup> lb. c. 8. sect. 1. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 2. 1. & Piske Tosephot Beracot, c. 1. art. 7.

<sup>c</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 8. 4.

<sup>d</sup> lb. fol. 2. 3. & 9. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Hilch. Tephilla, c. 11. sect. 21. Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in

<sup>f</sup> Megilla, c. 3. sect. 1.

“ because that there is a great collection of people, and the synagogues can't hold them, has no holiness in it, because it is accidental, and not appointed for prayer.” Wherefore streets were only used in case of necessity, or by such of the Pharisees, who chose to be seen of men. A reason is given for this practice in another place<sup>1</sup>, where 'tis asked, “ why do they go out to the streets, *i. e.* on their fast-days? to shew that we are reckoned as if we were carried captive before thee: says Joshua ben Levi, because they prayed in *secret*, and were not answered; therefore they went without, *ייתפסמו*, that they might be made public.” Now let it be observed, that neither the posture, nor places of prayer, are condemned by our Lord, but their view in all to be seen of men; and a considerable emphasis lies upon the word *love*; they loved *standing* in prayer, rather than any other posture, because they could be better seen; and they loved to be in the synagogues and streets, rather than in their closets; they liked public better than private prayer, because it gained them applause among men. *Verily I say unto you, they have their reward*; they gain their point; they have what they seek for; and this is all they will have.

Ver. 6. *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, &c.]* Or chamber, a secret place, fit for private retirement, meditation, and prayer. *And when thou hast shut thy door*; see some such like phrases in Isa. xxvi. 20. where they are used to express security, here secrecy. Our Lord does not mean to exclude and condemn public prayer, in joining with few, or more persons, in such service; for he himself directs to it, and approves of it, ch. xviii. 19, 20. but his view is to instruct persons that they should not only pray in public, but in private also; and especially the latter, which is more suitable and fitting for their particular cases, and less liable to pride, hypocrisy, and vanity. *Pray to thy father, which is in secret*; who is invisible; not to be seen with the eyes of the body, but to be approached with a true heart, in faith and fear, through his son Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and man; and who is the image of the invisible God, and in whom he is pleased to manifest himself to his people, so as he does not unto the world: *and thy father, which seeth in secret*, observes and takes notice of the secret breathings, pantings, desires, and requests of thy heart and lips, *shall reward thee openly*, both here and hereafter; by pouring into thy bosom all the good things thou hast been praying for, both for time and eternity. This is agreeable to what the Jews sometimes say, “ that a man ought not to cause his voice to be heard in prayer; but should pray *בלחש*, *silently*, with a voice that is not heard; and this is the prayer which is daily accepted<sup>2</sup>.”

Ver. 7. *But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, &c.]* Saying the same things over and over again, as the Heathens do, as the worshippers of Baal, from morning till noon, 1 Kings xviii. 26. This our Lord observes, to dissuade from such practices, because the Gentiles, who were odious to the Jews, used them,

and the Jews were guilty of the same; had they not, there would not have been any need of such advice: *for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking*; as did the Jews, who, under pretence of long prayers, devoured widows' houses; and with whom it is an axiom, that *every one* *תפילה נענה*, that *multiplies prayer is heard*<sup>3</sup>; and whoever prolongs his prayer, his prayer does not return empty; and he that is long in prayer, his days are prolonged<sup>4</sup>: and, according to their canons, every day a man ought to pray eighteen prayers. Moreover, their prayer-books abound in tautologies, and in expressing the same things in different words, and by a multiplicity of them.

Ver. 8. *Be not ye therefore like unto them, &c.]* Don't be imitators of them, and follow their ways, who have only the dim light of nature to guide them; it would be shameful in you to do as they do, when you have a divine revelation for your direction; and especially, because *your father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him*; and therefore have no need to make use of many words, or much speaking, or long prayers. The omniscience of God is a considerable argument, and a great encouragement to prayer; he knows our persons and our wants before-hand; and as he is able to help us, we have reason to believe he will; especially since he stands in the relation of a father to us.

Ver. 9. *After this manner therefore pray ye, &c.]* That is, in such a concise and short way, without much speaking and vain repetitions; making use of such like words and expressions as the following: not that Christ meant to pin down his disciples to these express words, and no other; for this prayer is not a strict form, but a pattern of prayer, and a directory to it, both as to brevity, order, and matter; for we don't find the disciples ever making use of it in form; and when it is recited by another Evangelist, it is not in the self-same words as here; which it would have been, had it been designed as an exact form. Besides, Christ does not bid them pray in these very words, but *after this manner*; somewhat like this: not but that it is very lawful to use the very express words of this prayer in any of the petitions here directed to; and which indeed were no other than what good people among the Jews did frequently make use of; and which were collected and singled out by Christ, as what he approved of, in distinction from, and opposition to, other impertinent expressions, and vain repetitions, which some used; as will appear by a particular consideration of them. *Our father which art in heaven*. This may be looked upon as the preface and introduction to the prayer, and regards the object of it, and his character, which is an epithet of God, often to be met with in Jewish writings, and particularly in their prayers; for thus they<sup>5</sup> say, “ *אבנו* “ *אבינו*, our father which art in heaven, shew mercy to us, because thy great name is called upon us.” Again<sup>6</sup>, let the prayers and the requests of all Israel be received by *אבותנו* *אבותנו*, their father, which is in heaven. They seem to have a regard to this prayer, when they apply that passage in Prov. iii. 35. *shame*

<sup>1</sup> T. Hieros. Taaniot, fol. 65. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 114. 4.

<sup>3</sup> T. Hieros. Taaniot, fol. 67. 3.

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>4</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 104. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Seder Tephillot, fol. 4. 2. Ed. Basil.

<sup>6</sup> Ib. fol. 33. 2.

shall be the promotion of fools, to the nations of the earth, who, they say<sup>m</sup>, “do not consider the glory of the law; and how, say they, *our father which art in heaven*, hear our voice, have mercy on us, and receive our prayer?” So in confessions, thanksgivings, and sacrifices of praise, they required, and looked upon it, as the main thing, for a man to direct his heart *לאביו שבשמים*, to his father which is in heaven. By *father*, our Lord means the first person in the Trinity, who is the father of all men by creation, and of the saints by adoption; who are to address him in prayer under the character of *our father*, partly to command a reverential fear of him, and partly to secure boldness and liberty of speech before him; and also to express fiducial confidence in him, faith of interest in him, and relation to him; which arises from some experience of his paternal love, and requires the witnessings of the spirit of adoption; and inasmuch as the direction is not to say *my father*, but *our father*; it shews that we should pray for others as well as for ourselves, even for all the dear children of God. For it is a rule<sup>n</sup> with the Jews, “that a man ought always to join himself in prayer with the church;” upon which the gloss says, “let him not pray the short prayer *בלשון יחיד אלא בלשון רבים*, in the singular, but in the plural number, that so his prayer may be heard.” The object of prayer is further described by the place of his residence, *in heaven*; not that he is included in any place, but that the heaven of heavens is the place where he most eminently displays his glory: and this may teach us to look upwards in prayer, and seek those things which are above; and also, that this earth, on which we dwell, is not our native country, but heaven is, where our father dwells. Next follows the first petition, *hallowed, or sanctified be thy name*; so the Jews<sup>p</sup> in their prayers, “*תקדש שםך*, let thy name be hallowed, or sanctified by us, O Lord our God, before the eyes of all living.” And very often<sup>q</sup>, “let his great name be magnified and sanctified in the world, which he hath created according to his will.” And again<sup>r</sup>, “let us sanctify thy name in the world, as they sanctify it in the highest heavens.” By the name of God is meant he himself, the perfections of his nature, and the several names by which he is known, and which we are to think and speak of with holy reverence. By sanctifying his name, is not meant a making him holy, but acknowledging, and declaring him to be holy, and a glorifying him, and all his perfections. He is sanctified by himself, by declaring himself to be holy; by glorifying his perfections in his works; by implanting grace and holiness in the hearts of his people; by restoring the purity of his worship; by diffusing the knowledge of himself in the world; and by taking vengeance on the wicked: and he is sanctified by others, when they fear him, believe in him, call upon his name, use it reverently, submit to his will, acknowledge his mercies, regard his commands and ordinances, and live a holy life and conversation; all which is earnestly desired by truly gracious souls.

Ver. 10. *Thy kingdom come, &c.*] The form of expression used by the ancient Jews, relating to this article, before the coming of Christ, doubtless was, as it now stands in their prayers<sup>s</sup>, *מלכות משיח יבא, the kingdom of thy Messiah come*. Christ alters the expression, leaves out the word *Messiah*, and puts it thus, *thy kingdom come*, to let them know that the Messiah was come; and that it was the kingdom of the father, in the power of his grace, upon the souls of men, they must pray for and expect: however, he conformed to a rule of their’s in this, as well as in the former petition<sup>t</sup>; that “every blessing, or prayer, in which there is no זכרת השם, mention made of the name, i. e. of God, is no prayer; and that every prayer, in which there is not מלכות, the kingdom, is no prayer.” In this petition the disciples were taught to pray for the success of the Gospel, both among Jews and Gentiles; for the conversion of God’s elect, in which the kingdom of God would greatly appear, to the destruction of the kingdom of Satan, and the abolition of the kingdom of the beast, in the latter day; which will usher in the kingdom of the mediator, he will receive from his father; and this will terminate in the kingdom of glory: in a word, not the kingdom of nature and providence is meant, which always was; but the kingdom of heaven, which was at hand, nay had taken place, though as yet was not very visible, and which is spiritual in the hearts of God’s people, Jews and Gentiles; and which will appear exceeding glorious in the latter day, and at last be swallowed up in the ultimate glory; all which must be very desirable by the sincere lovers of Jesus Christ. *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*. There is some appearance of this petition still remaining, in what the Jews call the short prayer: “what is the short prayer? R. Eliezer says, *עשה רצונך בשמים*, do thy will in heaven; and give quietness of spirit, or acquiescence of spirit in thy will, to them that fear thee below.” Christ says *thy will*; not the will of wicked men, nor the will of Satan, nor a man’s own will, but the will of God: by which is meant either his secret will, which is the rule of all his proceedings both in providence and grace; is unknown to us, till facts make it appear; is always fulfilled in heaven and in earth; and sometimes is fulfilled by those who have no regard to his revealed will; and is what ought to be submitted to patiently, and without murmuring: or rather his revealed will, which consists partly in the declarations of his grace and mercy; as that salvation is by Christ, whoever believes in him shall be saved, that all the redeemed be sanctified, persevere to the end, and be glorified; and partly in the commands enjoined his people, which will of his is good, perfect, and acceptable. The will of God may be said to be done by us, when our wills are resigned to his; when we patiently submit to every adverse dispensation of providence; when our hearts and actions are, in some measure, conformed to his law; when what is done, is done in faith, with a view to his glory, and without dependence upon it;

<sup>m</sup> Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Lev. fol. 34. 1.

<sup>n</sup> T. Bab. Shebuot, fol. 15. 1.

<sup>p</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 30. 1.

<sup>q</sup> Seder Tephillot, fol. 78. 1. Ed. Amstelod. Zohar in Exod. fol. 43. 4.

<sup>r</sup> Seder Tephillot, fol. 17. 2. Ed. Basil. & passim.

<sup>s</sup> Seder T. phillot, fol. 22. 1. & passim.

<sup>t</sup> Seder Teph. lot, fol. 128. 2. Ed. Basil.

<sup>u</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 40. 2.

<sup>v</sup> Ib. fol. 29. 2.



of which such only are capable who have a spiritual understanding of the will of God, believe in Christ, receive grace and strength from him, and are assisted by his spirit. These desire to do the will of God, as it is done in heaven; meaning not so much by the inanimate creatures, the sun, and moon, and stars, as glorified saints and holy angels, who do it voluntarily and cheerfully; speedily, and without delay; constantly, and without any interruption; and perfectly and completely.

Ver. 11. *Give us this day our daily bread.*] The Arabic version reads it, *our bread for to-morrow*; and Jerom says, that in the Hebrew Gospel, used by the Nazarenes, he found the word כֹּמֶר, which signifies *to-morrow*: but this reading and sense seem to be contradicted by Christ, ver. 34. were it not that it may be observed, that this signifies the whole subsequent time of life, and so furnishes us with a very commodious sense of this petition; which is, that God would give us, *day by day*, as Luke expresses it, ch. xi. 3. that is, every day of our lives, to the end thereof, a proper supply of food: or the meaning of it is, that God would give us, for the present time, such food as we stand in need of; is suitable to us, to our nature and constitution, state and condition, and is sufficient and convenient for us: to which agrees the petition of the Jews: "The necessities of thy people are great, and their knowledge short; let it be thy good will and pleasure, O Lord, our God, that thou wouldst give to every one כֹּרֵי פִּרְסָתוֹ, *what is sufficient for his sustenance*, and to every one's body what it wants."—Says R. Jose<sup>u</sup>, all the children of faith seek every day מִנְיָוִדוֹ לִשְׂאֵלָה, *to ask their food of the Lord*, and to pray a prayer for it." By *bread* is meant all the necessaries of life, and for the support of it: it is called *our's*; not that we have a right unto it, much less deserve it, but to distinguish it from that of beasts; and because it is what we need, and can't do without; what is appointed for us by providence, is our's by gift, and possessed by labour. It is said to be *daily bread*, and to be asked for *day by day*: which suggests the uncertainty of life; strikes at all anxious and immoderate cares for the morrow; is designed to restrain from covetousness, and to keep up the duty of prayer, and constant dependence on God; whom we must every day ask to give us our daily bread: for he is the sole author of all our mercies; which are all his free gifts; we deserve nothing at his hands: wherefore we ought to be thankful for what we have, without murmuring at his providences, or envying at what he bestows on others. All kind of food, every thing that is eatable, is with the Jews called לֶחֶם, *bread*<sup>1</sup>.

Ver. 12. *And forgive us our debts, &c.*] Nothing is more frequent in the Jewish writings than to call sins רֵבָבִי, *debts*; and the phrase, of forgiving, is used both of God and men. Thus the prayer of Solomon is paraphrased<sup>2</sup> by the Targumist: "and hear thou the petition of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall make before this place; and do thou re-

ceive it from the place of the house of thy Shekinah, from heaven; and do thou accept their prayer וְתִשָּׁבַח לְפָנֶיךָ, *and forgive their debts*." So Joseph's brethren signify to him, that it was their father's orders to say unto him, *forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin*; which is rendered by the Chaldee paraphrasts שְׂבוּק לְרֵבָבִי, *forgive the debts of thy brethren, and their sins*. Accordingly, by *debts* are meant sins here, as appears from Luke xi. 4. where it is read, and *forgive us our sins*. These are called *debts*: not because they are so in themselves, for then it would be right to do them; debts should be paid; they are not debts we owe to God, but are so called, because on account of them we owe satisfaction to the law and justice of God: the proper debts we owe to God are love, obedience, and gratitude; and in default of these, we owe the debt of punishment. Now these debts are numerous, and we are incapable of paying, nor can any mere creature pay them for us; wherefore, we are directed to pray, that God would forgive them, or remit the obligation to punishment we lie under, on account of sin. This petition supposes a sense, acknowledgment, and confession of sin, and of inability to make satisfaction for it; and that God only can forgive it, who does, for Christ's sake, and on account of his blood, sacrifice, and satisfaction: what is here requested is a manifestation and application of pardon to the conscience of a sensible sinner; which, as it is daily needed, is daily to be asked for. The argument, or reason used, is, *as we forgive our debtors*; which is to be understood not so much of pecuniary debtors, though they are to be forgiven, when poor and unable to pay; but of such who have offended, or done real injuries to others, either by word or deed: the injuries of enemies, the unkindness of friends, all sorts of offences, are to be forgiven by us; and not only so, but we are to pray to God to forgive them also. Now this is mentioned, not as if our forgiving others is the cause of God's forgiving us, or the model of it, or as setting him an example, or as if his and our forgiving were to be compared together, since these will admit of no comparison; but this is an argument founded upon God's own promise and grace, to forgive such who have compassion on their fellow-creatures.

Ver. 13. *And lead us not into temptation, &c.*] Such a petition as this is often to be observed in the prayers of the Jews<sup>3</sup>, אַל תְּבִיאֵנִי, *do not lead me* neither into sin, nor into transgression and iniquity, וְלֹא לְיַדֵּי נִסְיוֹן, *nor into temptation, or into the hands of temptation*: that is, into the power of it, so as to be overcome by it, and sink under it; in which sense the phrase is to be understood here. We are not here taught to pray against temptations at all, or in any sense, for they are sometimes needful and useful; but that they may not have the power over us, and destroy us. There are various sorts of temptations. There are the temptations of God; who may be said to tempt, not by infusing any thing that is sinful, or by soliciting to it;

<sup>u</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 29. 2.

<sup>v</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 26. 2.

<sup>w</sup> Jarchi in Job, vi. 7.

<sup>x</sup> Targum in 2 Chron. vi. 21.

<sup>z</sup> Targum Onkelos & Jon. ben Uzziel in Gen. i. 17. Vid. Targum in 1 Chron. iv. 18. & in Cant. i. 1. & in Gen. iv. 13. & passim.

<sup>1</sup> Seder Tephillot, fol. 3. 1. Ed. Basil. fol. 4. 2. Ed. Amstelod. Share Zion, fol. 73. 1. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 60. 2.

but by enjoining things hard and disagreeable to nature, as in the case of Abraham; by afflicting, either in body or estate, of which Job is an instance; by permitting and letting loose the reins to Satan, and a man's own corruptions; by withdrawing his presence, and withholding the communications of his grace; and sometimes by suffering false prophets to arise among his people: his ends in them are on his own account, the display of his power, grace, wisdom, and faithfulness; on account of his son, that his saints might be like him, and he might have an opportunity of exercising his power and pity: and on his people's account, that they might be humbled; their faith and patience tried; might see their weakness, and need of Christ, and be excited to prayer and watchfulness. There are also the temptations of Satan; which lie in soliciting to evil, suggesting hard and blasphemous thoughts of God, and filling with doubts and fears; which are cunningly formed by him, and are, very afflictive. There are moreover the temptations of the world, which arise from poverty and riches, from the men of the world, the lusts of it, and from both its frowns and flatteries: add to all this, that there are temptations arising from a man's own heart. Now, in this petition, the children of God pray, that they may be kept from every occasion and object of sinning; from those sins they are most inclined to; that God would not leave them to Satan, and their own corrupt hearts; nor suffer them to sink under the weight of temptations of any sort; but that, in the issue, they might have a way to escape, and be victorious over all. *But deliver us from evil.* This petition, with the Jews, is in this<sup>b</sup> form: "וְתִצִּילֵנוּ מִכָּל רָע, *but deliver me from an evil accident, and diseases; and do not trouble me with evil dreams, and evil imaginations.*" R. Juda, after his prayer, or at the close of it, as is this petition, used<sup>c</sup> to say; "let it be thy good pleasure, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, שְׂתַצִּילֵנוּ, *that thou wouldst deliver us from impudent men, and impudence; from an evil man, and from an evil accident; from the evil imagination, i. e. the corruption of nature; from an evil companion; from an evil neighbour; and from Satan the destroyer; and from hard judgment; and from an hard adversary, whether he is the son of the covenant, or is not the son of the covenant.*" And most, if not all of these things, may be very well thought to be comprised in the word *evil here*: particularly Satan may be meant, by *evil, or the evil one*, as the word may be rendered; who is eminently, originally, and immutably evil; his whole work and employment is nothing else but evil: and to be delivered from him, is to be rescued out of his hands, preserved from his snares, and delivered from his temptations. Evil men may also be intended: all men are naturally evil, and unalterably so, without the grace of God; and some are notoriously wicked; from whose company, sinful lusts, and pleasures, to which they are addicted, as well as from their rage and persecution, good men cannot but desire deliverance; as also from the evil of afflictions, and especially from

the evil of sin; as that they may be kept from the commission of it; have the guilt of it removed; be preserved from its power and dominion; and, at last, be freed from the very being of it. *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.* This conclusion is left out in the Arabic and Vulgate Latin versions, as it is in Luke xi. 4. It stands thus in the Jewish prayers<sup>d</sup>, "כִּי הַמְּלֻכּוֹת שֶׁלךָ הוּא, *for the kingdom is thine, and thou shalt reign in glory for ever and ever.*" The usual response at the close of prayers, and reading the Shema, instead of *Amen*, was<sup>e</sup> this: "Blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom, for ever and ever." Which bears some resemblance to this concluding expression, which ascribes everlasting kingdom, power, and glory, to God: which may be considered either as a doxology, or an ascription of glory to God, which is his due; and ought to be given him in all our prayers to him; or as so many reasons strengthening our faith in prayer; or as so many arguments with God, with respect to the petitions made; since the kingdom of nature, providence, grace, and glory, is his: he is omnipotent, he has power to give us our daily bread; to forgive our sins; to preserve from, support under, and deliver out of temptation; to keep from all evil, and preserve from a total and final falling away: whose glory is concerned in all, to whom the glory of all is, and to whom it must, and shall be given; and all this for ever: and the whole is concluded with the word *Amen*; which is a note of asseveration; of the truth herein contained; is added by way of assent to every petition made; is expressive of an hearty wish, and desire to have all fulfilled; and also of faith and confidence, that they will be answered. And this word being retained, and kept the same in all languages, signifies the unity of the spirit, and faith in prayer, in all the saints, in all ages. I leave this prayer with one observation, and that is, whereas it has been so long, and so often said, that this is the Lord's prayer, it can never be proved that he ever made use of it; and it is certain that he did not make it, as appears from what has been cited out of the Jewish records: the several petitions in it were in being and use before he directed to them; and not only the petitions, but even the very preface and conclusion, are manifestly of Jewish original: what our Lord did was, he took the most proper and pertinent petitions, that had been used by good men among that people; which, with some alterations much for the better, he put together in this order, and gave his approbation of; and that with this view, to point out to his disciples some of the best and most suitable petitions to be made; and to give them a pattern of brevity and conciseness in prayer; and teach them to pray after such a manner, or in some such like words and expressions. 'This I observe, not to lessen the usefulness of this excellent pattern of sound words; the whole, and every part of it, being exceedingly instructive, and worthy of imitation; but to rectify a vulgar mistake, and to abate the formal and superstitious observance of it.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 60. 2.

<sup>c</sup> Ib. fol. 16. 2.

<sup>d</sup> Seder Tephillot, fol. 280. 1. Ed. Basil.

<sup>e</sup> Misn. Yoma, c. 4. sect. 1. & 6. 2. T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 56. 1. & Taanith, fol. 16. 2. Seder Tephillot, fol. 70. 2. Ed. Basil.

Ver. 14. *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, &c.*] Christ here refers to the petition in ver. 12. which is enforced with this reason and argument, *as, or for, so* Luke xi. 4. *we forgive our debtors*; which he repeats and explains; and the reason why he singles out this particularly is, because he knew the Jews were a people very subject to revenge; and were very hardly brought to forgive any injuries done them: wherefore Christ presses it upon them closely to *forgive men their trespasses*; all sorts of injuries done them, or offences given them, whether by word or deed; and that fully, freely, from the heart; forgetting, as well as forgiving; not upbraiding them with former offences; and even without asking pardon, and though there might be no appearance of repentance. Now to this he encourages by saying, *your heavenly father will also forgive you*; will hear your prayers, and manifest his forgiving love to you: not that the forgiveness of others is the procuring cause of forgiveness with God, which is the blood of Christ; or of the manifestation and application of it, that is, the advocacy of Christ; nor the moving cause of it, that is, the free grace of God: but this enters into the character, and is descriptive of the persons, to whom God is pleased to make a comfortable discovery, and give a delightful sense of his pardoning grace; such persons, so disposed and assisted by his grace, may expect it of him.

Ver. 15. *But if you forgive not men their trespasses, &c.*] On the other hand, where men are not of a forgiving temper to their fellow-creatures and fellow-Christians, how can they expect forgiveness at the hands of God? or what sense of pardoning grace can there be upon their minds? Had they any right apprehensions of the grace and goodness of God, in the forgiveness of their sins, this would influence their minds, and engage their hearts to forgive such who have offended them: wherefore, where this is wanting, it may be concluded of, and said to such persons, *neither will your father forgive your trespasses*. It is a plain case, that your father has not given you a true sense of the pardon of your sins, nor can you be certain that he will; nor have you any reason to expect it, when you are so cruel and revengeful to others. There is a considerable emphasis lies upon the word *men*, to which *heavenly father* is opposed, and the sense, according to it, is, that if men, who are upon an equal foot with each other, should not forgive one another, how should it be expected that our father which is in heaven, who is so much above, and no ways obliged to us, should forgive us?

Ver. 16. *Moreover when ye fast, &c.*] This is to be understood, not so much of their public stated fasts, and which were by divine appointment, as of their private fasts; which, with the Jews, were very frequent and numerous, and particularly every Monday and Thursday; see Luke xviii. 12. in which they affected great severity, and is here condemned by Christ: *be not as the hypocrites*, the Scribes and Pharisees, of a *sad countenance*; who put on very mournful airs, and dismal looks; made wry faces, and dis-

torted countenances; banished all pleasantry and cheerfulness from them, so that they looked quite like other men than they really were; *for they disfigure their faces*; not by covering them out of sight, by putting a veil over them, as some have thought; but they neglected to wash their faces, and make them clean, as at other times; and not only so, but put ashes upon their heads, and other methods they used: they discoloured their faces, or *made them black*, as the Arabic version reads it; that they might look as if they became so through fasting; and such persons were in great esteem, and thought to be very religious. It is said<sup>f</sup>, in commendation of R. Joshua ben Chananiah, that all his days *פניו כשחור*, *his face was black*, through fastings; and this is said<sup>g</sup> to be the reason of Ashur's name, in 1 Chron. iv. 5. because *his face was black* with fasting; yea, they looked upon such a disfiguring of the face to be meritorious, and what would be rewarded hereafter. "Whoever (say they<sup>h</sup>) *פניו כשחור*, *makes his face black*, on account of the law in this world, God will make his brightness to shine in the world to come." Now these practices they used, *that they might appear unto men to fast*: so that either they did not really fast, when they pretended to it; only put on these outward appearances, that men might think they did; or, not content with real fasting, which they must be conscious of themselves, and God knew, they took such methods, that it might appear to men that they fasted, and that they might be taken notice of, and applauded by them: for their view in fasting was not to satisfy their own consciences, or please God, but that they might have glory of men. Hence, says Christ, *verily I say unto you, they have their reward*; they obtain what they seek for, honour from men, and that is all they will have.

Ver. 17. *But thou, when thou fastest, &c.*] Christ allows of fasting, but what is of a quite different kind from that of the Jews; which lay not in an outward abstinence from food, and other conveniences of life, and refreshments of nature; but in an abstinence from sin, in acknowledgment and confession of it; and in the exercise of faith and hope in God, as a God pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin; wherefore cheerfulness, and a free use of the creatures, without an abuse of them, best became such persons. *Anoint thine head, and wash thy face*; directly contrary to the Jewish canons, which forbid these things, with others, on fast-days: "On the day of atonement, (say<sup>i</sup> they,) a man is forbidden eating and drinking, *ויברדו ציה ויבטיחו*, *and washing and anointing*, and putting on of shoes, "and the use of the bed." And the same were forbidden on other fasts: in anointings, the head was anointed first, and this rule and reason are given for it: "he that would anoint his whole body, *סך ראשו*, *let him anoint his head first*, because it is king over all its members<sup>k</sup>." Anointing and washing were signs of cheerfulness and joy; see Ruth iii. 3. 2 Sam. xii. 20.

Ver. 18. *That thou appear not unto men to fast, &c.*] Which is just the reverse of the hypocrites, the Scribes

<sup>f</sup> Juchasin, fol. 59. 1.

<sup>g</sup> T. Bab. Sota, fol. 12. 1.

<sup>h</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 100. 1.

<sup>i</sup> Misn. Yoma, c. 8. sect. 1. & Taanith, c. 1. sect. 4, 5, 6. T. Bab.

Yoma, fol. 77. 2. Taanith, fol. 12. 2. Moses Kotsensis *Mitzvot Tora*, pr. affirm. 32.

<sup>k</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 61. 1.

and Pharisees; and quite contrary to the customs of the Jews, who when they fasted, particularly on their noted fasts<sup>1</sup>, "brought out the ark into the street of the city, and put burnt ashes upon it, and upon the head of the prince, and upon the head of the president of the sanhedrim, and every man upon his own head." All which was done, to be seen of men to fast; but Christ directs to such sorts of fasting, and which is to be done in such a manner, as only to be seen by God: *but unto thy father which is in secret*: who is invisible, and who sees what is done in secret, and takes notice of the internal exercise of grace; which he approves of, and prefers to outward fastings; and *thy father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly*: and to have honour from God, is infinitely more than to have the applause of men; for as God delights in, so he will reward his own grace with glory.

Ver. 19. *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, &c.*] Meaning either treasures that are of an earthly nature and kind, the more valuable and excellent things of the earth, worldly wealth and riches; or the things and places, in which these are laid up, as bags, chests, or coffers, barns and other treasuries, private or public. Christ here dissuades from covetousness, and worldly-mindedness; an anxious care and concern, to hoard up plenty of worldly things for themselves, for time to come, making no use of them at present for the good of others: and this he does, from the nature of the things themselves; the places where they are laid up; the difficulty of keeping them; and their liability to be corrupted or lost. *Where moth and rust doth corrupt, and thieves break through and steal.* Garments, formerly, were a considerable part of the treasures of great men, as well as gold and silver; see Job xxvii. 16. So according to the Targumist, Haman is bid to go *לביית נגני דמלכא*, to the king's treasury, and take from thence one of the purple garments, the best, and raiment of the best silk, &c. and these were liable to be eaten with the moth, James v. 2. The word translated *rust*, does not here signify the rust of metals, as gold and silver; by which there is not so much damage done, so as to destroy them, and make them useless; but whatever corrupts and consumes things eatable, as blasting and mildew in corn, or any sort of vermin in granaries: for gold and silver, or money, with jewels and precious stones, which make a very great part of worldly treasure, seem to be more particularly designed, by what thieves break through into houses for, and carry away. So that here are three sorts of earthly treasures pointed at, which are liable to be corrupted, or taken away: garments, which may be destroyed, and rendered useless for wearing; provisions of things eatable, as all sorts of corn and grain, which may be so corrupted by smut and vermin, as not to be fit for use; and money and jewels, which may be stolen by thieves: so that no sort of worldly riches and treasure is safe, and to be depended on; and therefore it is a great folly and vanity to lay it up, and trust in it.

Ver. 20. *But lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven,*

&c.] That is, either be concerned for, and seek after heavenly treasure, the riches of glory, the joys and glories of another world, which infinitely excel every thing that is valuable on earth; and which can never be corrupted, or taken away: or rather, lay up your earthly treasures in heaven; that is, put them into the hands of God in heaven; and this is done, by liberally communicating to the poor; by which means men *provide themselves bags which wax not old, and a treasure in heaven that faileth not*, Luke xii. 33. They shall never want any good thing here, and they lay up in store for themselves, a good foundation against the time to come, 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19. This is the way to have worldly treasure secured from moth, rust, and thieves; for to lay it up in heaven with God, to give it to him, to his poor, to make use of it for his glory, is to lay it up in a place, *where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.* Treasures are safer here than in our own hands, and will turn to better account, and more to our own advantage, both in this life, and that which is to come; see Matt. xix. 21. In this way, though not for it, men come to have treasure in heaven, even the treasure of eternal life, glory, and happiness. Heaven is often represented by the Jewish writers as a treasury; and the treasures which are in it are said<sup>a</sup> to be "נגני דיי, treasures of life, and treasures of peace, and treasures of blessing; and the souls of the righteous, and the spirits and souls that shall be created, and the dew with which God will quicken the dead." Those words in Deut. xxxi. 16. *And the Lord said unto Moses, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers*, are thus paraphrased. "And the Lord said unto Moses, lo! thou shalt sleep in the dust with thy fathers, and thy soul shall be treasured up *בנגני דיי עלמא*, in the treasury of eternal life, with thy fathers." They tell us<sup>b</sup> a story of Monbaz the king, who was son to queen Helena; in which are many things agreeable to these words of Christ, and which may serve to illustrate them. "Monbaz the king stood and gave all his goods to the poor: his relations sent to him, and said, thy fathers added to that which was their's, and to that which was their fathers; but thou hast given away that which was thine, and that which was thy father's: he replied to them all thus: my fathers *בארץ ואני נגורני בשמים*, laid up treasure on earth, but I have laid up treasure in heaven, according to Psal. lxxxv. 11. My fathers laid up treasures, which do not bring forth fruit; but I have laid up treasures, which bring forth fruit, according to Isa. iii. 10. My fathers gathered in a place, where the hand, *i. e.* of man rules, (where thieves break through and steal,) but I have gathered in a place where the hand of man does not rule, according to Psal. xcvi. 2. My fathers gathered mammon, or money, but I have gathered souls, according to Prov. xi. 30. My fathers gathered for others, but I have gathered *לעצמי*, for myself, according to Deut. xxiv. 13. My fathers gathered in this world, but I have gathered for the world to come." One of their commentators<sup>c</sup> on the phrase, *my fathers laid*

<sup>1</sup> Mira. Taanith, c. 2. sect. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Targum Sheui, in Esth. vi. 10.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 12. 2.

<sup>a</sup> Targum Jon. ben Uzziel, in Deut. xxxi. 16.

<sup>b</sup> T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 15. 2.

<sup>c</sup> Caphtor, fol. 97. 1.

*up treasures below*, as it is in the Babylonish Talmud<sup>1</sup>, has this remark: “for lo! all that they treasured up was for the necessities of this world; which is *בְּקִיּוֹם עֵפֶר רִמְה תוֹלְעָה*, a place of dust and vermin, which corrupt and destroy every thing; but I have laid up treasures above, a place secure and firm, and which preserves every thing that is put into it.”

Ver. 21. *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*] This seems to be a proverbial expression, and contains in it another reason, dissuading from worldly-mindedness; because of the danger the heart is in of being ensnared and ruined thereby: and the sense of it is, if your treasure is on earth, and lies in earthly things, your hearts will be set upon them, and be in them, in your bags, your coffers and store-houses; and so your souls will be in danger of being lost; which loss will be an irreparable one, though you should gain the whole world. But if your treasure is put into the hands of God, your hearts will be with him, and be settled on him; your desires will be after heavenly things; your affections will be set on things above; your conversation will be in heaven, whilst you are on earth; and that will be the place and seat of your happiness, to all eternity.

Ver. 22. *The light of the body is the eye, &c.*] Or, the *candle of the body is the eye*: for the eye is that in the body, as a candle is in the house; by the light of it, the several members of the body perform their office; and what is said of the eye of the body, is transferred to the eye of the mind: *if therefore thine eye be single*: that is, if thy mind be liberal, generous, and bountiful: for Christ is still upon the same subject of liberality, and against covetousness; and here speaks entirely in the language of the Jews, who could easily understand him; in whose writings we read of three sorts of eyes; a good eye, a middling one, and an evil one; so in the offerings of the first-fruits<sup>2</sup>, “עֵינַי יָפֶה, a good eye gave the fortieth, the house Shammai say, “the thirtieth part; a middling one, the fiftieth; “and an evil one, the sixtieth part.” Upon which the commentators say<sup>3</sup>, a good eye means one that is liberal, and an evil eye the contrary: hence you often read<sup>4</sup> of *trading, dedicating, and giving with a good or an evil eye*: that is, either generously, liberally, or in a niggardly and grudging manner; which may help us to the sense of our Lord in these words; whose meaning is, that if a man is not covetous, but his mind is disposed to generosity and liberality; if this be the case, as if he should say, *thy whole body shall be full of light*: all thy actions will be influenced by this noble principle; thy whole life will be illuminated, guided and governed by it; thy mind will be cheerful and pleasant, and thy estate and condition will be prosperous and successful.

Ver. 23. *But if thine eye be evil, &c.*] If thou art of a sordid disposition, of an avaricious temper, if the sin of covetousness prevails over thee, *thy whole body will be full of darkness*: thy judgment will be so influenced by that sordid principle, that thou wilt not

be able to discern what is agreeable to the law of God, or human reason; what is fitting to be done for thyself, for God, or for thy fellow-creatures; all the powers and faculties of thy soul will be enslaved by it, and all be intent upon, and employed in the gratification of it: thy mind will be always sad and sorrowful, harassed and distressed; and thy estate, and condition, will be most miserable and uncomfortable: *if therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!* as it is in the body, so it is with the mind; as when the eye, the light of the body, is put out by any means, all the members of the body are in entire darkness; so when the light of reason in the mind is so far extinguished by any prevailing iniquity, particularly the sin of covetousness, so that it is wholly influenced and governed by it, what irregular actions is it led into! What deeds of darkness does it perform! and what will be the consequence of it, but utter and eternal darkness, if grace prevent not!

Ver. 24. *No man can serve two masters, &c.*] Whose orders are directly contrary to one another: otherwise, if they were the same, or agreed, both might be served; but this is rarely the case, and seldom done. This is a proverbial expression, and is elsewhere used by Christ, Luke xvi. 13. The Jews have sayings pretty much like it, and of the same sense as when they say<sup>5</sup>, “we have not found that *כָּל אָדָם כֹּלֵי שְׂלֵחָנוֹת*, *any man is fit for two tables.*” And again<sup>6</sup>, “that it is not proper for one man to “have two governments.” their meaning is, that two things can’t be done together: *for, either he will hate the one, and love the other*; he will have less affection and regard to the one, than to the other; as the service or orders of the one, are less agreeable to him than the others; or *else he will hold to the one*: hearken to his commands, obey his orders, and abide in his service; and *despise the other*; shew disrespect to his person, neglect his orders, and desert his service: *ye cannot serve God and mammon.* The word *mammon* is a Syriac word, and signifies money, wealth, riches, substance, and every thing that comes under the name of worldly goods. Jerom says, that riches, in the Syriac language, are called *mammon*; and so the word is often used in the above senses, in the Chaldee paraphrases<sup>7</sup>, and in the Talmudic writings; where<sup>8</sup> *דיני ממונות*, *pecuniary judgments*, or causes relating to money affairs, in which were pecuniary mulcts, are opposed to *דיני נפשות*, *judgment of souls*, or causes relating to life and death. The account and interpretation Irenæus<sup>9</sup> gives of the word, is very wide and foreign; who says, that “Mammon, according to the Jewish way of speaking, which the Samaritans used, is one that is greedy, and would have more than he ought; but, according to the Hebrew language, it is called adjectively Mam, and signifies one that is glut-tonous; that is, who can’t refrain himself from glut-tony.” Whereas it is not an Hebrew word, nor an adjective, but a substantive, and signifies riches; which

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 11. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Misa. Trumot, c. 4. sect. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Maimon. Bartanora & Ez. Chayim in ib.

<sup>4</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 37. 2. & 71. 1. & 72. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Prefat. Celi Jaker, fol. 3. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Piske Tosephot Cetubot, art. 359.

<sup>7</sup> Vid. Targum Onkelos, & Jon. in Gen. xiii. 13. & in Jud. v. 19. & in Prov. iii. 9. & in Isa. xlv. 13. & passim.

<sup>8</sup> Misa. Sanhed. c. 1. sect. 1. & c. 4. sect. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Adv. Hæres. l. 3. c. 8. p. 249.

are opposed to God, being by some men loved, admired, trusted in, and worshipped, as if they were God; and which is incompatible with the service of the true God: for such persons, whose hearts go after their covetousness, and are set upon earthly riches, who give up themselves to them, are eagerly and anxiously pursuing after them, and place their confidence in them; whatever pretensions they may make to the service of God, as did the Scribes and Pharisees, who are particularly struck at by this expression, both here and elsewhere, they cannot truly and heartily serve the Lord. *Mammon* is the god they serve; which word may well be thought to answer to Pluto, the god of riches, among the Heathens. The Jews, in Christ's time, were notorious for the love of *mammon*; and they themselves own, that this was the cause of the destruction of the second temple: the character they give of those, who lived under the second temple, is this: "we know that they laboured in the law, and took care of the commandments, and of the tithes, and that their whole conversation was good; only that they *אהבין את הממון*, *loved the mammon*, and hated one another without a cause<sup>b</sup>."

Ver. 25. *Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, &c.*] Since ye cannot serve both God and *mammon*, obey one, and neglect the other. Christ does not forbid labour to maintain, support, and preserve, this animal life; nor does he forbid all thought and care about it, but all anxious, immoderate, perplexing, and distressing thoughts and cares; such as arise from diffidence and unbelief, and tend to despair; which are dishonourable to God, as the God of nature and providence, and uncomfortable to men: *what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.* The several and the only things, which are necessary for the support and comfort of human life, are mentioned; as meat, drink, and clothing. Eating and drinking are necessary to preserve life; and raiment, to cover and defend the body, from the injuries of the heavens: and having these, men have every thing necessary, and ought herewith to be content; nor should they be anxiously thoughtful about these: *for is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?* And yet, God has given these without man's thought: and since these are better, and much more excellent, than food and raiment, as all must and will acknowledge; and God has given these the greater gifts, it may be depended upon, that he will give the lesser; that he will give meat and drink; to uphold that valuable life, which he is the author of; and raiment to clothe that body, which he, with so much wisdom and power, has accurately and wonderfully made.

Ver. 26. *Behold the fowls of the air, &c.*] Not such as are brought up in houses, but which fly abroad in the air, wild; and are not supported by their own, or any human care, but by the care of God: Luke, ch. xii. 24. particularly mentions the *ravens*, referring probably to Psal. cxlvii. 9, and because they are very voracious creatures: and there it

is said, *consider the ravens; look attentively upon them, and with observation, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns.* This is not said, that men should not sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns: but to reprove their diffidence and unbelief: who, though they have the opportunity of sowing, reaping, and gathering in, year by year, yet distrust the providence of God; when the fowls of the air do none of these, *yet your heavenly father feedeth them;* see Psal. cxlv. 15, 16. and cxlvii. 9. The Jews acknowledge this, that the least and meanest of creatures are fed by God. "Mar says<sup>c</sup>, the holy "blessed God sits *מן*, and feeds, i. e. all creatures, "and takes care of them." *Are ye not much better than they?* Don't you differ from them? are ye not much more excellent than they? And if God feeds and provides for inferior creatures, such as are very mean and contemptible, how much more will he not provide for you? There is a passage in the Talmud, which has great affinity to this of Christ's, and appears to have in it pretty much of the like kind of reasoning. In the Misna<sup>d</sup> it is said, that R. Simeon ben Eleazar should say, "Did you ever see a beast, or a fowl, that had a trade? but they are fed without trouble." In the Gemara<sup>e</sup> is added, "Did you ever see a lion bearing burdens, an hart gathering summer-fruits, a fox a money-changer, or a wolf selling pots? And yet *כלא יצער*, *מהפנינסן בלא יצער*, *they are nourished without labour*, and wherefore are they created? To serve me, and I am created to serve my Maker: and lo! these things have in them an argument, *from the less to the greater*; for if these, which are created to serve me after this manner, are supported without trouble; I, who am created to serve my Maker, is it not fit that I should be supplied without trouble? And what is the reason that I am sustained with trouble? "My sins."

Ver. 27. *Which of you by taking thought, &c.*] As Christ argued before, from the unnecessary of anxious thoughts and cares, about the provisions of life; so here, from the unprofitableness of them; it being impossible for a man, with all his care and thought, to *add one cubit unto his stature*, or to his age; so the word is rendered, John ix. 21—23. Heb. xi. 11. to the days of his life, he is so solicitous about; for a cubit may as well be applied to a man's age, as an *hand's breadth* is to his days, Psal. xxxix. 5. Nor is it so reasonable to think, that Christ should be speaking of making such an addition to a man's height; though that, to be sure, is an impossible thing: since the far greater part of Christ's hearers must be come to their full growth, and could not hope to have any addition made to their height; though they might hope to add to their days; much less such a monstrous one as that of a cubit, and which is a strong reason against the other sense of the word, and for this: for our Lord is speaking of something very small, which men can't do; as appears from what Luke says, ch. xii. 26. *If ye then be not*

<sup>b</sup> T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 38. 3.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 107. 2. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 2.

<sup>d</sup> Kiddushin, c. 4. sect. 14.

<sup>e</sup> T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 66. 2. Vid. T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 82. 1. 2.

able to do that which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? Whereas, to add a cubit to a man's height, is a great deal: "the stature of a middling man (says 'Bartenora) is three cubits." And to add one more, makes a large addition to his stature; but to apply this to a man's age, is a small matter, and yet is what men can't do: the sense of the words is this, that no man, by all the care and thought he can make use of, is ever able to add one cubit, or the least measure to his days; he can't lengthen out his life one year, one month, one day, one hour; no, not one moment.

Ver. 28. *And why take ye thought for raiment, &c.*] Having exposed the folly of an anxious and immoderate care and thought, for food to support and prolong life, our Lord proceeds to shew the vanity of an over concern for raiment: *consider the lilies of the field, or the flowers of the field*, as the Arabic version reads it, the lilies being put for all sorts of flowers. The Persic version mentions both rose and lily; the one being beautifully clothed in red, the other in white. Christ does not direct his hearers to the lilies, or flowers which grow in the garden, which receive some advantage from the management and care of the gardener; but to those of the field, where the art and care of men were not so exercised: and besides, he was now preaching on the mount, in an open place; and as he could point to the fowls of the air, flying in their sight, so to the flowers, in the adjacent fields and valleys: which he would have them look upon, with their eyes, consider and contemplate in their minds, *how they grow*: in what variety of garbs they appear, of what different beautiful colours, and fragrant odours, they were; and yet *they toil not*, or do not labour as husbandmen do, in tilling their land, ploughing their fields, and sowing them with flax, out of which linen garments are made: *neither do they spin*; the flax, when plucked and dressed, as women do, in order for clothing; nor do they weave it into cloth, or make it up into garments, as other artificers do.

Ver. 29. *And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory, &c.*] This is a certain truth, to be affirmed in the strongest manner, and to be believed, that not only men and kings too in general; but even particularly Solomon, the richest and most magnificent of all the kings of Israel, whose grandeur, and glory, exceeded all the princes of the earth; that even he, not in his common dress, but when *in his glory*, and in *all his glory*, when arrayed with his royal and richest robes, with his crown on his head, and when seated on his throne, *was not arrayed like one of these lilies, or flowers of the field*: for the glory and beauty of his garments were purely from art, but their's by nature; which can never be equalled by art. This phrase, *Solomon in all his glory*, is the same which the Jewish doctors, in their writings, express by שלמה בשעתו, *Solomon in his hour*<sup>f</sup>: that is, as their commentators explain it<sup>h</sup>, בעת מלכותו, *in the time of his*

reign; for they say he was first a king, and then a private person. Now, not whilst he was a private person, but when a king, in the height of his grandeur and magnificence, and when dressed out in the most splendid manner, he was exceeded in array by a single lily: or the sense is, in his royal apparel. For as the same doctors say, "what is a man's glory?" "It is his clothing that is his outward glory; and again, garments are the glory of a man."

Ver. 30. *Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field, &c.*] These words are a conclusion from the former, and contain an argument from the lesser to the greater; that if God, for this is solely his work, so clothes the lilies, the flowers of the field, and whatever grows up out of the earth, in such a beautiful and splendid manner, as even to outdo Solomon, in his richest apparel; there's no doubt to be made of it, or at least ought not, but that he will much more provide clothing for men. The argument is illustrated, by the short continuance of the grass of the field, which is so clothed; and the use it is put to, when cut down; *which to-day is in being, but abides not long*, as it were but for a day: it flourishes in the morning, continues for the day in its glory and verdure, is cut down at evening, and withers and dies, *and to-morrow is cast into the oven*, to heat it with, or as the Syriac version reads בתנורא, *in the furnace*. And so Munster's Hebrew edition of this Gospel. For furnaces used to be heated with straw and stubble, and such like things, as were gathered out of the fields; so, we read in the Misna<sup>i</sup>, that pots and furnaces were heated; "a pot which they heat with straw and stubble, they put into it that which is to be boiled" — a furnace which they heat with straw and stubble, they put nothing into it, nor upon it (i. e. till they have removed the coals or ashes): a little furnace, which they heat ונבבא בקס, *with straw and stubble*, is as the pots." The last word, נבבא, Bartenora says, signifies wood, or sticks, small as stubble, which they gather out of the field; that is, the stalks of some sort of herbs and plants, that grow in the field: now if God clothes these plants, which are so short-lived, and at last used for such mean purposes; shall he not much more clothe you men, his people, who are of a much longer life, and designed for greater ends and purposes; for the worship and service of God, for his honour and glory here, and for eternal life and happiness hereafter, O ye of little faith? As such persons are, who distrust the providence of God, with respect to food and raiment. The phrase, קפני אמנה, *men of little faith*, is often to be met with in the Rabbinical writings: so Noah is represented by them, as one of *little faith*, who believed, and did not believe the flood; and therefore did not go into the ark, till the waters drove him<sup>l</sup>: and though he is said to be perfect, this was not by his works, but by the grace of God<sup>m</sup>. So the Israelites at the Red Sea, who thought that when they came out on one side, the Egyptians would come out on

<sup>f</sup> In Misn. Erubim, c. 4. sect. 5. & Negain, c. 13. sect. 11.

<sup>g</sup> Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 7. sect. 1. T. Bab. ib. fol. 49. 1. & p. 3. & 86. 2.

<sup>h</sup> Jarchi & Bartenora in ib.

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>i</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 95. 1. & 99. 4. & 110. 4.

<sup>k</sup> Sabbat, c. 3. sect. 1. 2.

<sup>l</sup> Jarchi in Gen. vii. 7.

<sup>m</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 10. 2.

the " other. So the little children that mocked Elisha, are said to be so called, because they were men of little <sup>o</sup> faith. So every one that exalts his voice in prayer, is reckoned such an one <sup>p</sup>. But what comes nearest to the case before us, is the following <sup>q</sup> passage; " Says R. Eliezer the Great, whoever has a morsel in his basket, and says, what shall I eat to-morrow? is no other than אֲכַנֵּי מָחָר, one of those of little faith."

Ver. 31. *Therefore take no thought, &c.*] That is, for the morrow, as it is explained, ver. 34. for it is lawful to take proper care and thought for present food, drink, and raiment; but not to be anxiously concerned for futurity; saying, *what shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?* These are a repetition of the several things instanced in, and are the very language and expressions of men of little faith; as in the above citation, מִה אֲכַנֵּי לְמָחָר, *what shall I eat to-morrow?*

Ver. 32. *For after all these things do the Gentiles seek, &c.*] Or *the nations of the world*, as in Luke xii. 30. The Syriac reads it so here: the phrase, אֲדֻמֵי הָעוֹלָם, *the nations of the world*, is used of the Gentiles, in distinction from the Israelites, thousands of times in the Jewish writings; it would be endless to give instances. These knew not God, nor acknowledged his providence; the greater part of them thought, that the soul perished with the body; few of them thought, that any thing remained after death; and they that did, spoke very doubtfully of it: wherefore it is no wonder, that such persons should greedily seek after, and be anxiously concerned for all these things, food, raiment, and riches, and a great plenty of them; since this is all the happiness they expect; and imagine, that this is to be acquired by their care, thought, diligence, and industry; having no regard to a superior being, and his all-wise providence: but for the Jews, and so Christians, who have a divine revelation, the knowledge of God, and his providence, and of a future state after this life, to act the same part the Heathens do, is exceedingly unbecoming, absurd, and wicked: and besides, such greedy desires, immoderate care, and anxious solicitude, are altogether unnecessary; *for your heavenly father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.* Every word almost, carries in it an argument, to strengthen the faith of God's children, to encourage them to believe, that he will bestow upon them, whatever is needful, for meat, drink, and clothing: he is a father, and will take care of his children; *their father*; they have interest in him, being related to him, and need not doubt of his paternal care, and affectionate regard to them: *their heavenly father*, or their father in heaven; who has all things at his command, who sits there, and does whatever he pleaseth on earth: *he knoweth that they have need*; he knows all things, all their straits, difficulties, wants and necessities; he knows they need every day, *all these things*, food and raiment, and can't do without them: and therefore they may depend upon it, that as it is in his power to relieve them, and their persons and cases are not unknown to

him; he who stands in the relation of a father to them, will supply them with whatever is proper and convenient for them.

Ver. 33. *But seek first the kingdom of God, &c.*] Meaning either the Gospel, and the ministration of it; in which sense this phrase is often used, see Matt. xxi. 43. Mark i. 14. Luke iv. 43. and ix. 2—60. and xvi. 16. and which is diligently to be sought after, and into; to be constantly attended on, and to be preferred to our necessary food, to raiment, or riches, or any enjoyment of life: or else the kingdom of glory, which is prepared by God, and is his gift; for which he makes his people meet here, and will introduce them into it hereafter. *And his righteousness*; the righteousness of God, which is revealed in the Gospel, and is what gives a right and title to the kingdom of heaven. This is not the righteousness of man, but of God; and is no other than the righteousness of Christ; so called, because he is God who has wrought it; it is what God approves of, accepts, and imputes, and which only can justify in his sight, and give an abundant entrance into his kingdom and glory. Heaven is to be sought for in the first place, as the perfection of the saints' happiness; and Christ's righteousness is to be sought for, and laid hold on by faith, as the way and means of enjoying that happiness; without which, there will be no entering into the kingdom of heaven. *And all these things shall be added unto you*; of the free bounty, goodness, and liberality of God, without your thought and care, and much less merit; even *all these things*, meat, drink, clothing, or whatsoever worldly sustenance else is necessary for you: which are not parts of the happiness of saints, only appendages thereunto; which they have over and above what they are, or should be chiefly seeking after. The Hebrews' say, " that no good sign will be shewn to Israel, until they return and seek three things: *afterwards the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord*; אוֹ מַלְכוּת שָׁמַיִם, *this is the kingdom of heaven*; and *David their king*, according to its literal sense; and *shall fear the Lord and his goodness*; this is the house of the sanctuary, as it is said, *this goodly mountain, and Lebanon.*"

Ver. 34. *Take therefore no thought for the morrow, &c.*] Reference is had to Prov. xxvii. 1. *Boast not of thyself to-morrow*: a man can't promise or assure himself, that he shall have a morrow, and therefore 'tis great weakness and folly to be anxiously thoughtful about it. This is expressed in the Talmud<sup>4</sup>, nearer the sense of Christ's words, after this manner: " אַל תִּצַר צִרְתְּ מָחָר, *don't distress thyself with to-morrow's affliction, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth*: perhaps to-morrow may not be, and thou wilt be found distressing thyself, for the time which is nothing to thee." And should it come, it is unnecessary to be thoughtful of it in a distressing manner before-hand; *for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.* The morrow is here introduced by a *prosopeia*, as if it was a person sufficiently thoughtful and careful for the necessities of it: every day brings along with it fresh care and thought, being attended with fresh wants and

<sup>o</sup> T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 118. 2. Erachin, fol. 15. 1.

<sup>p</sup> T. Bab. Sota, fol. 46. 2. Zohar in Exod. fol. 90. 2.

<sup>q</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 24. 2. Zohar in Num. fol. 93. 2.

<sup>4</sup> T. Bab. Sota, fol. 48. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Jarchi & Kimchi, in Hos. iii. 5.

<sup>6</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 100. 2.



troubles; and therefore, it is very unadvisable, to bring the cares and troubles of two days upon one; as he does, who is anxiously concerned to-day, for the things of to-morrow; *sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof*. This proverb is thus expressed in the Talmud<sup>1</sup>, *דיה לצרה בשעתה*, *sufficient for distress, or vexation, is the present time*; which the gloss explains thus, "sufficient for the vexation it is, that men should

"grieve for it, at the time that it comes upon them." It is very wrong to anticipate trouble, or meet it before-hand; if it was for no other reason but this, that every day's trouble is enough, and should not be needlessly added to, by an over concern what shall be done for to-morrow; or how shall the necessities of it be answered, or the trials of it be endured.

## C H A P. VII.

Ver. 1. *JUDGE not, that ye be not judged.*] This is not to be understood of any sort of judgment; not of judgment in the civil courts of judicature, by proper magistrates, which ought to be made and pass, according to the nature of the case; nor of judgment in the churches of Christ, where offenders are to be called to an account, examined, tried, and dealt with according to the rules of the Gospel; nor of every private judgment, which one man may make upon another, without any detriment to him; but of rash judgment, interpreting men's words and deeds to the worst sense, and censuring them in a very severe manner; even passing sentence on them, with respect to their eternal state and condition. Good is the advice given by the famous Hillel<sup>2</sup>, who lived a little before Christ's time; "Don't judge thy neighbour, (says he,) until thou comest into his place." It would be well, if persons subject to a censorious spirit, would put themselves in the case and circumstances the persons are in they judge; and then consider, what judgment they would choose others should pass on them. The argument Christ uses to dissuade from this evil, which the Jews were very prone to, is, *that ye be not judged*; meaning, either by men, for such censorious persons rarely have the good will of their fellow-creatures, but are commonly repaid in the same way; or else by God, which will be the most awful and tremendous: for such persons take upon them the place of God, usurp his prerogative, as if they knew the hearts and states of men; and therefore will have judgment without mercy at the hands of God.

Ver. 2. *For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, &c.*] Both by God and men; to which agree those proverbial sentences used by the Jews; "He that judgeth his neighbour according to the balance of righteousness, or innocence, they judge him according to righteousness."<sup>3</sup> And a little after, "As ye have judged me according to the balance of righteousness, God will judge you according to the balance of righteousness." Hence that advice of Joshua ben Perachiah<sup>4</sup>, who, by the Jewish writers, is said to be the master of Christ; "Judge every man according to the balance of righteousness." Which their commentators explain thus<sup>5</sup>; when you see a man as it were in *equilibrio*, inclining to neither part, it is not clear from what he does, that he is either good or evil, righte-

ous or unrighteous; yet when you see him do a thing which may be interpreted either to a good or a bad sense, it ought always to be interpreted to the best. *And with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again*. This was an usual proverb among the Jews; it is sometimes delivered out thus, *מדה כנגד מדה*, *measure against measure*<sup>6</sup>; but oftener thus, and nearer the form of it here, *במדה שאתם מודד ביה מודדין לו*, *with what measure a man measures, they measure to him*: one might fill up almost a page, in referring to places, where it is used in this form: besides those in the <sup>a</sup>margin, take the following, and the rather, because it gives instances of this retaliation<sup>b</sup>: "With what measure a man measures, they measure to him"; so the woman suspected of adultery, she adorned herself to commit sin, and God dishonoured her; she exposed herself to iniquity, God therefore stripped her naked; the same part of her body in which her sin begun, her punishment did. Samson walked after his eyes, and therefore the Philistines plucked out his eyes. Absalom was lifted up in his mind, with his hair, and therefore he was hanged by it; and because he lay with his father's ten concubines, they therefore pierced him with ten lances; and because he stole away three hearts, the heart of his father, the heart of the sanhedrim, and the heart of Israel, therefore he was thrust with three darts: and so it is with respect to good things; Miriam waited for Moses one hour, therefore the Israelites waited for her seven days in the wilderness; Joseph, who was greater than his brethren, buried his father; and Moses, who was the greatest among the Israelites, took care of the bones of Joseph, and God himself buried Moses.<sup>c</sup>

Ver. 3. *And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye? &c.*] By *mote* is meant, any little bit of straw, or small splinter of wood, that flies into the eye, and does it damage, hinders its sight, and gives it pain; and designs little sins, comparatively speaking, such as youthful follies, human frailties, and infirmities, inadvertencies and imprudencies; which may be said to be light faults, in comparison of others: and though not to be vindicated, nor continued in, yet not to be severely looked upon and chastised. To scrutinize diligently into, aggravate, dwell upon, and sharply reprove the lighter faults of others, is a con-

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 9. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 4.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 137. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>6</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 7. 4.

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 12. 2. Sota, fol. 8. 3. Sanhedrim, fol. 100.

<sup>b</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 87. 4. & in Lev. fol. 36. 1. & 39. 3. & in Num. fol. 67. 3. Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 194. 1. Misn. Beracot, c. 9. sect. 5.

<sup>c</sup> Misn. Sota, c. 1. sect. 7, 8, 9. Vid. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 99. 1, 2.

duct, which is here inveighed against, and condemned by Christ; and more especially, when it may be said with the greatest truth and justice to such, *but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye*: by the *beam* is meant, greater sins, grosser abominations, and such as were more peculiar to the Pharisees; as pride, arrogance, a vain opinion of themselves, confidence in their own righteousness, hypocrisy, covetousness, and iniquity; things they did not advert to in themselves, when they loudly exclaimed against lesser evils in others. Such men must be of all persons inexcusable, who condemn that in others, which either they themselves do, or what is abundantly worse.

Ver. 4. *Or how wilt thou say to thy brother? &c.*] This is not so much an interrogation, as an expression of admiration, at the front and impudence of such censorious remarkers, and rigid observers; who not content to point at the faults of others, take upon them to reprove them in a very magisterial way: and it is as if Christ had said, with what face canst thou say to thy friend or neighbour, *let me pull out the mote out of thine eye?* give me leave to rebuke thee sharply for thy sin, as it deserves, *and behold a beam is in thine own eye*; thou art guilty of a far greater iniquity: astonishing impudence! Art thou so blind, as not to see and observe thy viler wickedness? Or which, if conscious of, how canst thou prevail upon thyself to take upon thee to reprove and censure others? Dost thou think thy brother can't see thy beam? And may he not justly retort thine iniquities upon thee, which exceed his? and then what success canst thou promise thyself? Such persons are very unfit to be reprovers of others.

Ver. 5. *Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, &c.*] Very rightly does our Lord call such a man an hypocrite, who is very free in remarking and reproving other men's sins, and covering his own; and indeed, one end of his critical observations, rigid censures, and rash judgments is, that he might be thought to be holier than he is. Christ very manifestly points at the Scribes and Pharisees, who were men of such a complexion; and whom he often, without any breach of charity, calls hypocrites. The meaning of this proverbial expression is, that a man should first begin with himself, take notice of his own sins, reprove himself for them, and reform; and then it will be soon enough to observe other men's. *And then shalt thou see clearly, to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye*: then will he, and not before, be a proper person to reprove others; all objections and impediments to such a work will then be removed. Our Lord here speaks in the language of the Jewish nation, with whom such like expressions were common, and of long standing.<sup>c</sup> "In the generation that judged the judges, one said to another, *שול קיסם מבין עיניך, cast out the mote out of thine eye*: to whom it was replied, *שול קורה, cast out the beam from thine eye*: one said to another, *thy silver is become dross*: the other replies, *thy wine is mixed with water*." Again<sup>d</sup>, "R. Taphon said, I wonder whether there is any in

this generation, that will receive reproof; if one should say to him, *cast out the mote out of thine eye*, will he say to him, *cast out the beam out of thine eye?* Says R. Eleazer ben Azariah, I wonder whether there is any in this generation, that knows how to reprove." From whence it is clear, that these phrases were used in the same sense they are by Christ; and which is still more evident by the gloss upon them: for upon the word *mote*, it observes, "That it is as if it had been said, *עון קטן, a little sin*, which is in thine hand (*i. e.* which thou hast committed): the other could say to him, *cast thou away גידול, the great sin*, which is in thine hand; so that they could not reprove, because they were all sinners." Agreeable to these, are some other proverbs used by the Jews, such as "a vice which is in thyself, do not speak of to thy neighbour,"<sup>e</sup> or upbraid him with it: and again, "adorn thyself, and afterwards adorn others." Which is produced by a noted commentator<sup>f</sup> of their's, to illustrate the text in Zeph. ii. 1. on which he also makes this remark; "inquire first into your own blemishes, and then inquire into the blemishes of others." The sense of each of them is, that a man should first reform himself, and then others; and that he that finds faults with others, ought to be without blame himself.

Ver. 6. *Give not that which is holy to the dogs, &c.*] Dogs were unclean creatures by the law; and the price of one might not be brought into the house of the Lord, for a vow, Deut. xxiii. 18. yea, these creatures were not admitted into several temples of the Heathens<sup>g</sup>. Things profane and unclean, as flesh torn by beasts, were ordered to be given to them, Exod. xxii. 31. but nothing that was holy was to be given them, as holy flesh, or the holy oblations, or any thing that was consecrated to holy uses; to which is the allusion here. It is a common maxim<sup>h</sup> with the Jews, "שאין פודין את הקדשים להאכילן לכלבים, that they don't redeem holy things, to give to the dogs to eat." Here the phrase is used in a metaphorical sense; and is generally understood of not delivering or communicating the holy word of God, and the truths of the Gospel, comparable to pearls, or the ordinances of it, to persons notoriously vile and sinful: to men, who being violent and furious persecutors, and impudent blasphemers, are compared to *dogs*; or to such, who are scandalously vile, impure in their lives and conversations, and are therefore compared to swine; *neither cast ye your pearls before swine*. But since the subject Christ is upon is reproof, it seems rather to be the design of these expressions, that men should be cautious, and prudent, in rebuking and admonishing such persons for their sins, in whom there is no appearance or hope of success; yea, where there is danger of sustaining loss; *lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you*: that is, despise the admonitions and reproofs given, and hurt the persons who give them, either by words or deeds; see Prov. ix. 7, 8. The Jews have some sayings much like these, and will serve to illustrate them<sup>k</sup>; "אלי

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 2.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Erachin, fol. 16. 2.

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 59. 2.

<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 19. 1.

<sup>g</sup> R. David Kimchi in Zeph. ii. 1. Vid. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 142. 4.

<sup>h</sup> Vid. Alex. ab. Alex. Gacial. Dier. 1. 2. c. 14.

<sup>i</sup> T. Bab. Temura, fol. 17. 1. & 31. 1. & 33. 2. Becorot, fol. 15. 1. Hieroa. Pesachim, fol. 27. 4. & Maaser Sheni, fol. 53. 3.

<sup>k</sup> Mischar Happeninim apud Buxtorf. Florileg. Heb. p. 306.

“תשליכו הפנינים לפני החזירים, *do not cast pearls before swine*, nor deliver wisdom to him, who knows not the excellency of it; for wisdom is better than pearls, and he that does not seek after it, is worse than a swine.”

Ver. 7. *Ask and it shall be given you, &c.*] This is to be understood of asking of God in prayer, for such things as are wanting; whether of a temporal nature, as food and raiment, which Christ, in the former chapter, had warned against an immoderate and anxious concern for; or of a spiritual nature, as grace, and wisdom to behave in a proper manner, both towards God and men: and such, who ask according to the will of God, in the name of Christ, and under the direction, guidance, and influence of the spirit, who ask in faith and fear, and with submission to the divine will, shall have what they ask for; not as what they deserve, but as a free gift. *Seek, and ye shall find.* This is still meant of prayer, and of seeking God, his face and favour: which such shall find, who seek in a right way, by Christ, and with their whole hearts, diligently: *knock and it shall be opened unto you*: as beggars do, who use much importunity for relief and assistance. So men should stand and knock at the door of mercy, which will not always be shut against them. Faith in prayer is a key that opens this door, when a poor soul finds grace and mercy to help it in time of need. Our Lord's design is to express the nature, fervour, and constancy of prayer, and to encourage it to it.

Ver. 8. *For every one that asketh receiveth, &c.*] For God is no respecter of persons; whoever makes application, be he a Jew, or a Gentile, rich or poor, bond or free, a man of great gifts, or mean parts, provided he asks aright, from right principles, and with right views, shall not lose his labour; but shall receive all such good things at the hand of God, as are suitable and convenient for him. *And he that seeketh findeth*; he that seeks for God in Christ, the grace and mercy of God, the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; that seeks after the true riches, both of grace and glory, shall be sure to find them; see Prov. xxi. 21. *And to him that knocketh it shall be opened*; that is, to him that is constant at the throne of grace, who continues knocking at the door of mercy, and will have no denial, it shall be opened to him; and he shall have entrance into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus.

Ver. 9. *Or what man is there of you, &c.*] *That is a father*, as in Luke xi. 11. that is, is in the relation, and has the affections of a father; and indeed is a man, and has the nature and passions of a man; unless he is become a mere brute, and devoid of all humanity, *whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?* No, by no means; no man can act such a merciless, cruel part as this to a child: for though he might impose upon him by the likeness of some sort of stones with bread; yet could not hope to satisfy his hunger, or stop his mouth this way; but must expect to hear from him again with bitter complaints.

Ver. 10. *Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?*] Which is somewhat like a fish, especially an eel. Fish and bread are mentioned, because these

were common food; see Mark v. 41. and viii. 6, 7. John xxi. 13. and particularly in Galilee, a fish-country, where Christ now was, and from whence he had called his disciples, who were fishermen. In Luke xi. 12. 'tis added, *or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?* which is used, as the rest, to shew the absurdity and inhumanity of such conduct; and that indeed nothing of this kind is to be found among men, unless it be among monsters in nature.

Ver. 11. *If ye then being evil, &c.*] As all mankind in general are, both by nature and practice: they are conceived in sin, shapen in iniquity; are evil from their youth, and transgressors from the womb; are corrupt, and do abominable things; and such these Jews were Christ speaks unto; and who, very likely, has respect chiefly to the evil of covetousness they were addicted to. The argument is taken from the lesser to the greater, and runs thus; that if ye, who are but men, men on earth, yea evil men, not over liberal and beneficent, nay covetous and niggardly, *know how to give good gifts unto your children*; can find in your hearts, having it in the power of your hands, to give suitable provisions for the support and sustenance of your children; *how much more shall your father, which is in heaven*; who is omniscient and omnipotent; who knows the persons and wants of his children, and what is proper for them, and is able to relieve them, being Lord of heaven and earth, *give good things to them that ask him?* Not only temporal good things, as meat, drink, and clothing; but all spiritual good things; every supply of grace; all things pertaining to life and godliness. In Luke xi. 13. *the holy spirit* is mentioned, and so seems to design his gifts and graces, every thing that is necessary for the spiritual and eternal good of his people: but for these things he must be inquired of, and sought after; and it is the least saints can do to ask for them; and they have encouragement enough to ask; for 'tis but ask and have.

Ver. 12. *Therefore all things whatsoever, &c.*] These words are the epilogue, or conclusion of our Lord's discourse; the sum of what he had delivered in the two preceding chapters, and in this hitherto, is contained in these words; for they not only respect the exhortation about judging and reproving; but every duty respecting our neighbour; it is a summary of the whole. 'Tis a golden rule, here delivered, and ought to be observed by all mankind, Jews and Gentiles. So the Karaite Jews<sup>1</sup> say, “all things that a man would not take to himself, *אין ראוי לעשותם לאחיו*, it is not fit to do them to his brethren.” And Maimonides<sup>2</sup> has expressed it much in the same words our Lord here does; “all things whatsoever ye would that others should do to you, (says he,) do you the same to your brethren, in the law, and in the commandments:” only there seems to be a restriction in the word *brethren*; the Jews, perhaps, meaning no other than Israelites; whereas our Lord's rule reaches to all without exception, *all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them*: let them be who they will, whether brethren, or kinsmen, according to the flesh, or what not; *for this is the law*

<sup>1</sup> R. Elishu Addaret, c. 3. apud Trigland de sect. Karæorum, c. 10. p. 166. Vid. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 146. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Hilch. Ebel. c. 14. sect. 1.

and the prophets: the sum of the law and the prophets; not the whole sum of them, or the sunn of the whole law: but of that part of it which respects our neighbours. Remarkable is the advice given by Hillel<sup>1</sup>, to one who came to be made a proselyte by him; "whatsoever is hateful to thee, that do not thou to thy neighbour; וְרוּחַ כָּל הַתּוֹרָה כוֹלֵהּ, *this is all the whole law*, and the rest is an explication of it, go and be perfect." yea, this rule is not only agreeable to the law of Moses, and the prophets, but even to the law and light of nature. Aristotle being asked, how we ought to carry ourselves to our friends, answered<sup>2</sup>, as we would wish they would carry it to us. Alexander Severus, a Heathen emperor, so greatly admired this rule of Christ's, that he ordered it to be written on the walls of his closet.

Ver. 13. *Enter ye in at the strait gate, &c.*] By the *strait gate* is meant Christ himself; who elsewhere calls himself *the door*, John x. 7—9. as he is into the church below, and into all the ordinances and privileges of it; as also to the father, by whom we have access unto him, and are let into communion with him, and a participation of all the blessings of grace; yea, he is the gate of heaven, through which we have boldness to enter into the holiest of all by faith and hope now; as there will be hereafter an abundant entrance into the kingdom and glory of God, through his blood and righteousness. This is called *strait*; because faith in Christ, a profession of it, and a life and conversation agreeable to it, are attended with many afflictions, temptations, reproaches, and persecutions. *Entering in at it is by faith*, and making a profession of it: hence it follows, that faith is not the gate itself, but the grace, by which men enter in at the right door, and walk on in Christ, as they begin with him. *For wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction*; so that the one may be easily known from the other. There is no difficulty in finding out, or entering in at, or walking in the way of sin, which leads to eternal ruin. The gate of carnal lusts, and worldly pleasures, stands wide open, and many there be which go in thereat; even all men in a state of nature; the way of the ungodly is *broad*, smooth, easy, and every way agreeable to the flesh; it takes in a large compass of vices, and has in it abundance of company; but its end is destruction. Our Lord seems to allude to the private and public roads, whose measures are fixed by the Jewish canons; which say<sup>3</sup>, that "a private way was four cubits broad, a way from city to city eight cubits, a public way sixteen cubits, and the way to the cities of refuge thirty-two cubits."

Ver. 14. *Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, &c.*] And so, difficult to enter in at; and when entered, the way is unpleasant to the flesh to walk in, being hedged up on each side with afflictions and tribulations; and moreover, is like the *narrow place*, or στενός τοπος, the *strait place*, as the Septuagint in Numb. xxii. 26. render it; in which the angel that met Balaam stood; and in which there was no turning to the

right hand or the left; and such is the way to eternal happiness. The great encouragement to walk on in it is, because it is that way which *leadeth unto life*; unto eternal life: it certainly leads thither; it never fails of bringing persons to it; believers in Christ, all that walk in Christ the way, though they are said to be *scarcely* saved, by reason of their afflictions and trials, they meet with in their way to the kingdom; yet they are, and shall be certainly saved: they shall be safely brought to glory; which will be an abundant recompense for all the troubles and sorrows that have attended them in their journey. *And few there be that find it*; the way, and so consequently the life it leads to. *The gate is strait*; small and little, and so unobserved: there is but one way to heaven, and the generality of men neglect it. *The way is narrow*, and so disagreeable; the company few, and not engaging. Men choose large gates, broad ways, and much company. The flesh loves to walk at liberty, unconfined, and uncontrolled, and with a multitude to do evil: hence, Zion's ways are thin of passengers; a small number, comparatively speaking, walk therein, and will be saved; a remnant, a little flock, a little city, and few men in it. 'Tis asked in the Talmud<sup>4</sup>, "why is the world to come created with *jod*?" (the least of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet:) the answer is, because שְׁבוּ צְדִיקִים כְּרֵעִים, *the righteous which are in it are few*." Some read the words, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Vulgate Latin, with a note of admiration, *how strait is the gate!* &c. and so some copies.

Ver. 15. *Beware of false prophets, &c.*] Or false teachers; for not such who pretended to foretell things to come, but such who set up themselves to be teachers of others, are here meant; see 2 Pet. ii. 1. It may be queried, whether our Lord has not respect to the Scribes and Pharisees, who sat in Moses's chair, and taught, for doctrines, the commandments of men? and of whose doctrines he elsewhere bids men beware: for whatever plausible pretences for holiness and righteousness might appear in them, they were repugnant to the word of God, and destructive to the souls of men; such as their doctrines of free will, justification by the works of the law, the traditions of the elders, &c. since it follows, *which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves*; for these loved to go in long clothing, Mark. xii. 38. בְּטִלִית, in a garment which reached to the feet; and was made of the wool of sheep. The Babylonish garment Achan saw and stole, Rab says<sup>5</sup>, was אֵיצְמֵלָה דְּמִלְתָּה, a garment called *melotes*: which is the very Greek word the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews uses for sheep-skins, persecuted saints wandered about in, Heb. xi. 37. and the gloss upon the place, in the Talmud referred to, says, that this was צִמְרֵן שֶׁל צִמְרֵן, *a talith, or garment of pure wool*; and Jarchi<sup>6</sup> says, that "it was the way of deceivers, and profane men, to cover themselves, בְּטִלִיתִם, *with their talith, or long garment, as if they were righteous men*, that persons might receive their lies." All which agrees very well with the Pharisees, who would have been thought to have been holy and

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 31. 1. Maimon. in Misn. Peah, c. 1. sect. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Diog. Laert. in Vit. Aristotel. l. 5.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 100. 1, 2. Vid. Maimon. & R. Sampson in Misn. Peah, c. 2. sect. 1. & Maimon in Sabbat. c. 1. sect. 1.

<sup>4</sup> T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 29. 2.

<sup>5</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 41. 1.

<sup>6</sup> In Zech. xiii. 4.

righteous, humble, modest, and self-denying men; when they were inwardly full of hypocrisy and iniquity, of rapine, oppression, and covetousness; and, under a pretence of religion, *devoured widows' houses*. Though, it seems, by what follows, that Christ has respect, at least also, to such, who bore his name, and came in his name, though not sent by him, and called him Lord, and prophesied, and cast out devils, and did many wonderful works in his name; who, that they might get the good will and affections of the people, clothed themselves, not in garments made of sheep's wool, but in the very skins of sheep, with the wool on them, in imitation of the true prophets, and good men of old; pretending great humility, and self-denial, and so wore a rough garment to deceive, Zech. xiii. 4. when they were inwardly greedy dogs, grievous wolves, of insatiable covetousness; and, when opportunity offered, spared not the flock to satisfy their rapacious and devouring appetites. The Jews speak of a *wolfish humility*: like that of the wolf in the fable, which put on a sheep-skin. "There are some men, (says one of their writers,) who appear to be humble, and fear God in a deceitful and hypocritical way, but inwardly lay wait: this humility our wise men call עניו ותבית, *wolfish humility*." Such is this our Lord inveighs against, and bids his followers beware of.

Ver. 16. *Ye shall know them by their fruits, &c.*] By fruits are meant, not so much their external works in life and conversation; for a false prophet may so behave, as not to be discovered thereby. So the Pharisees were outwardly righteous before men; and false teachers among Christians may have the form of godliness, and keep it up, though they are strangers to, and even deny the power of it: but their doctrines are here meant, and the effects of them. When doctrines are contrary to the perfections of God, repugnant to the Scriptures of truth, tend to depreciate the person and office, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, to lessen the glory of God's grace, to exalt the creature, and to fill men's minds with notions of the purity, self-sufficiency, and ability of human nature; when they are calculated to feed the pride and vanity of men, to get money, and gain applause, to serve their own interests, and gratify men's lusts and passions, they may be easily discerned who they are, and from whence they come. The Jews have a proverb pretty much like this, "בוצין מקטפיה דרע, a gourd is known by its branches. The gloss upon it is, "it is, as if it was said, "from the time it buds forth, and goes out of the branch, it is known whether it is good or no;" i. e. the goodness of the gourd is known by the fruit its branches bear. So a good preacher is known by the good doctrine he brings, and a bad one, by his unsound doctrine. Christ is not speaking of these false prophets, as men, or as private professors of religion, but as prophets, or teachers. *Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?* Grapes and figs were common fruit; there was great plenty of them in Judea; we often read of the gathering of them. It is a matter in dispute with the doctors, "if a man intends ללקט תאנים ורקט ענבים, *to gather figs, and he gathers grapes, black ones, and*

he gathers white ones, white ones, and he gathers black ones, whether he is guilty of a sin-offering or no." One says he is, another says he is not. These words of Christ put me in mind of another passage, which seems to speak of grapes of thorns; "he that marries his daughter to a scholar, it is like to grapes of the vine, with grapes of the vine, a thing beautiful and acceptable; but he that marries his daughter to a plebeian, it is like to grapes of the vine, בענבי הסנה, *with grapes of the thorn*, a thing ugly, and unacceptable." Though ענבי, in the last sentence, must be taken for berries which grow on some thorn-bushes, and not what are properly grapes; for grapes do not grow upon, and are not to be gathered from thorns, and bramble-bushes. The meaning of our Lord is, that from the false doctrines of men comes no good fruit of faith, holiness, joy, peace, and comfort. Their doctrines are like thorns, which prick and pierce, give pain and uneasiness; and, like thistles, choak, and are unprofitable, afford no solid food and nourishment; yea, their words eat as do a canker, are contrary to vital religion and powerful godliness. This sense I prefer; because, on the one hand, it is possible for a false teacher to do works, which may be externally good; though indeed no good works, properly speaking, can be performed by an unregenerate man, because he has neither good principles to act from, nor good ends in view: and, on the other hand, a man who is destitute of the grace of God, and lives ill, may yet have right notions of the Gospel, though he has no experimental knowledge and relish of it; but where false doctrines are imbibed, and propagated, no good fruit can follow upon it.

Ver. 17. *Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, &c.*] As is the tree, so is its fruit; if the tree is good, it will bring forth good fruit. The tree that brings forth good fruit, is good antecedent to the fruit it produces; it is first good, and then puts forth good fruit: it is not the fruit that makes the tree good, but makes it appear to be so; but it is the goodness of the tree that makes the fruit good. As a good man does, and will do good works, but his works don't make him a good man; he is so before he performs good works, or he would never be able to do them; these make him appear to be a good man: so a good preacher, that has an experimental knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel, will deliver out sound doctrine, who is first made so by the gifts and graces of the spirit of God; and by searching the Scriptures, and examining his doctrines by them; he will be known and appear to be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and good doctrine; and such a good minister of the Gospel, out of the good treasure of Gospel-truths put into his earthen vessel, will bring forth, from time to time, good and excellent truths, to the edification and profit of those that hear: but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit; if the tree is corrupt, the fruit will be corrupt; and as is the preacher, so will be his doctrines: if he is a corrupt preacher, or a man of a corrupt mind, destitute of the truth, his preaching will be such as will tend to corrupt both the

<sup>1</sup> Abarhinel Nachal:th Abot, fol. 193. 1.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 48. 1.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 19. 1, 2. & 20. 1.

<sup>4</sup> T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 49. 1.

principles and practices of men; for such evil men and seducers, out of the evil treasure of false doctrines, which they have received into their judgments, will bring forth, either more secretly or openly, evil tenets in their ministry, which prove of bad consequence to the souls of men.

Ver. 18. *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, &c.*] A man that is imprincipled with the grace of God, has an experimental acquaintance with the Gospel of Christ, and is guided by the spirit of God into all truth, as it is in Jesus, cannot knowingly deliver, maintain, and abide by any doctrine that is contrary to the glory of God's grace, and the person of Christ, the work of the spirit, the fundamental doctrines of the Bible; or what is repugnant to the experiences of God's people, and prejudicial to their souls. *Neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.* A corrupt preacher, one destitute of the truth of the Gospel, reprobate concerning the faith, who never had any experience of the doctrines of grace, and denies them in the theory of them, can't, consistent with himself, and his own principles, deliver, or preach good doctrine; or that which tends to produce any good fruit, either in the experience or lives of men. 'Tis true, a corrupt man, that is, an unregenerate man, may preach sound doctrine, it being what he believes, though he has no experience of it: but then this man is not a *corrupt tree*, that is, a corrupt preacher, though a corrupt man. As our Lord means by a *good tree*, not a good man, barely, or one that is made so by the grace of God; but a good minister, one that is furnished by the spirit of God, and is well instructed in the kingdom of heaven: so by a *corrupt tree* he does not mean a corrupt man, a man that is in a state of nature, habitually and practically evil; but a corrupt preacher, a false prophet or teacher, that has sucked in corrupt principles, and has nothing else in him, and therefore can bring forth no other.

Ver. 19. *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, &c.*] Every preacher and teacher that does not bring the Gospel of Christ with him, and plainly and faithfully preach it to the people, sooner or later, *is hewn down*: however he may have appeared as a tall lofty cedar, and have carried it with a high hand against Christ and his Gospel, spoke *great swelling words of vanity*, and behaved with much *loftiness and haughtiness*; yet the time comes on, when all this is bowed and made low, and *the Lord alone is exalted*: such preachers are either cut off from the churches of Christ, or hewn down by death, and *cast into the fire*: into the fire of hell; into the lake of fire and brimstone, *where the beast and false prophet shall be*.

Ver. 20. *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*] This is the conclusion of the whole, and a repetition of what is before said, the more to fix the rule of judgment upon their minds, and engage them to try men by their doctrines, and their doctrines by the standard of the Scriptures, and not believe every spirit; for with some care and diligence such persons may be detected, and the malignant influence of their ministry be prevented. The sum of the whole is, that ordinarily, and generally speaking, as men are, so are the doctrines they preach, and by them they may be known, and judged to be what they are. Christ here, and in the

preceding verses, is speaking not of men of bad lives and conversations, who take upon them to teach others; for there is not so much reason to caution good men against these; they are easily detected, and generally discarded; but of men that put on sheep's clothing, who pretended to much holiness of life and conversation, and strictness of religion; and under that disguise delivered out the most corrupt and unwholesome doctrines; which tended greatly to depreciate him and his grace, and to do damage to the souls of men.

Ver. 21. *Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, &c.*] Not every one that calls Christ his Lord and Master, professes subjection to him, or that calls upon his name, or is called by his name; or makes use of it in his public ministrations. There are many who desire to be called, and accounted Christians, and who make mention of the name of Christ in their sermons, only to take away their reproach, to cover themselves, and gain credit with, and get into the affections and good will of the people; but have no hearty love to Christ, nor true faith in him: nor is it their concern to preach his Gospel, advance his glory, and promote his kingdom and interest; their chief view is to please men, aggrandize themselves, and set up the power of human nature in opposition to the grace of God, and the righteousness of Christ. Now not every one of these, no, not any of them, *shall enter into the kingdom of heaven*. This is to be understood not of the outward dispensation of the Gospel, or the Gospel church-state, or the visible church of Christ on earth, in which sense this phrase is sometimes used; because such persons may, and often do, enter here; but of eternal glory, into which none shall enter, *but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven*. This, as it may regard private Christians, intends not merely outward obedience to the will of God, declared in his law, nor barely subjection to the ordinances of the Gospel; but more especially faith in Christ for life and salvation; which is the source of all true evangelical obedience, and without which nothing is acceptable to God. He that seeth the son, looks unto him, ventures on him, commits himself to him, trusts in him, relies on him, and believes on him for righteousness, salvation, and eternal life, he it is that does the will of the father, and he only; and such an one, as he is desirous of doing the will of God in all acts of cheerful obedience to it, without dependence thereon; so he shall certainly enter the kingdom of heaven, and have everlasting life; see John vi. 40. but as these words chiefly respect preachers, the sense of them is this, that only such who are faithful dispensers of the word shall enter into the joy of their Lord. Such do the will of Christ's father, and so his own, which are the same, who fully and faithfully preach the Gospel of the grace of God; who declare the whole counsel of God, and keep back nothing that is profitable to the souls of men; who are neither ashamed of the testimony of Christ, nor afraid of the faces of men; but as they are put in trust with the Gospel, so they speak it boldly, with all sincerity, not as pleasing men, but God, and commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God: such as these shall have an abundant entrance into

the kingdom and glory of God. The Vulgate Latin adds this clause, *he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven*, and so does Munster's Hebrew edition of the Gospel according to Matthew.

Ver. 22. *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, &c.*] That is, in the last day, the day of judgment, the great and famous day, fixed by God, unknown to angels and men, which will be terrible to some, and joyful to others; the day in which the faithful ministers of the Gospel shall be owned by Christ, and received into the kingdom of heaven: *many*, not of the common people only, but of the preachers of the word, who have filled up the highest station in the church below; not one, or two, or a few of them only, but many of them *will say to me*; to Christ, who will appear then as the judge of quick and dead, to which he is ordained by his father, *Lord, Lord*; not *my Lord, my Lord*, as the Syriac version reads it; for they will not be able to claim any interest in him, though they will be obliged to own his dominion, power, and authority over them. The word is repeated to shew their impurity, sense of danger, the confusion they will be in, the wretched disappointment they will have; and therefore speak as persons amazed and confounded, having expected they would have been the first persons that should be admitted into heaven. Their pleas follow; *have we not prophesied in thy name?* This may be understood either of foretelling things to come; which gift wicked men may have, who have never had any experience of the grace of God, as Balaam, and Caiaphas, and others; or rather of preaching the word, which is sometimes called prophesying, Rom. xii. 6. 1 Cor. xiii. 9. and xiv. 1—3, 4, 5. and which may be done in the name of Christ, pretending mission and authority from him, and to be preachers of him, and yet be no better than *sounding brass*, or a *tinkling cymbal*; yea, nothing at all as to true grace, or spiritual experience. *And in thy name have cast out devils?* Diabolical possessions were very frequent in the times of Christ; no doubt but they were suffered, that Jesus might have an opportunity of shewing his power over Satan, by dispossessing him from the bodies, as well as the souls of men; and of giving proof of his deity, divine son-ship and Messiah-ship: and this power of casting out devils was given to others, not only to the twelve apostles, among whom Judas was, who had the same power with the rest, and to the seventy disciples; but even to some who did not follow him, and his disciples, Mark ix. 38. and some did this in the name of Jesus, who don't appear to have any true faith in him, and knowledge of him; as the vagabond Jews, exorcists, and the seven sons of Sceva, Acts xix. 13, 14. An awful consideration it is, that men should be able to cast out devils, and at last be cast to the devil. *And in thy name done many wonderful works?* that is, many miracles; not one, or a few only, but many; such as speaking with tongues, removing mountains, treading on serpents and scorpions, and drinking any deadly thing without hurt, and healing all manner of diseases and sicknesses. Judas, for one, was capable of pleading all these things;

he had the gift of preaching, and a call from Christ to it, and yet a castaway; he had the power of casting out devils, and yet could not prevent the devil from entering into him; he could perform miracles, do wonders in Christ's name, and yet, at last, was the betrayer of him. These pleas and arguments will be of no use to him, nor of any avail to any at the great day. It may be observed, that these men lay the whole stress of their salvation upon what they have done in Christ's name; and not on Christ himself, in whom there is salvation, and in no other: they say not a syllable of what Christ has done and suffered, not only of what they have done. Indeed, the things they instance in, are the greatest done among men; the gifts they had were the most excellent, excepting the grace of God; the works they did were of an extraordinary nature; whence it follows, that there can be no salvation, nor is it to be expected from men's works: for if preaching the word, which is attended with so much study, care, and labour, will not be a prevailing argument to admit men into the kingdom of heaven; how can it be thought that ever reading, or hearing, or any other external performance of religion, should bring persons thither?

Ver. 23. *Then will I profess unto them, &c.*] Publicly before men and angels, at the day of judgment, *I never knew you*; which must be understood consistent with the omniscience of Christ; for as the omniscient God he knew their persons and their works, and that they were workers of iniquity; he knew what they had been doing all their days under the guise of religion; he knew the principles of all their actions, and the views they had in all they did; nothing is hid from him. But, as words of knowledge often carry in them the ideas of affection, and approbation, see Psal. i. 6. 2 Tim. ii. 19. the meaning of Christ here is, I never had any love, or affection for you; I never esteemed you; I never made any account of you, as mine, as belonging to me; I never approved of you, nor your conduct; I never had any converse, communication, nor society with you, nor you with me. The Persic version reads it, *I have not known you of old*, from ancient times, or from everlasting; I never knew you in my father's choice, and my own, nor in my father's gift to me, nor in the everlasting covenant of grace; I never knew you as my sheep, for whom, in time, I died, and called by name; I never knew you believe in me, nor love me, or mine; I have seen you in my house, preaching in my name, and at my table administering mine ordinance; but I never knew you exalt my person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; you talk of the works you have done, I never knew you do one good work in all your lives, with a single eye to my glory; wherefore, I'll neither hear, nor see you; I have nothing to do with you. In this sense the phrase is used in the Talmud: "Bar Kaphra went to visit R. Juda; he says to him, Bar Kaphra, *איני מכירך מעולם*, I never knew thee." The gloss upon it is, "he intimates, that he would not see him." So here, Christ declares, he knew them not;

that is, he did not like them; he would not admit them into his presence and glory; but said, *depart from me, ye workers of iniquity*. The former of these expressions contains the awful sentence pronounced by Christ, the judge; which is, banishment from his presence, than which nothing is more terrible: for as it is his presence that makes heaven, it is his absence that makes hell; and this supposes a place and state, whither they are banished; which is elsewhere called their *own place*, the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; *everlasting fire*, prepared for the devil and his angels. Departure from Christ's presence is the punishment of loss, and being sent to everlasting burnings, is the punishment of sense; and the whole, as it is an instance of strict justice, so a display of Christ's almighty power. The latter expression contains the character of these persons, and in it a reason of their punishment; they were *workers of iniquity*: it may be, neither adulterers, nor murderers, nor drunkards, nor extortioners, nor thieves, or any other openly profane sinners; but inasmuch as they did the work of the Lord deceitfully, preached themselves, and not Christ; sought their own things, and not his; what they did, they did with a wicked mind, and not with a view to his glory; they wrought iniquity, whilst they were doing the very things they pleaded on their own behalf, for their admission into the kingdom of heaven. Some copies read, *all the workers of iniquity*, as in Psal. vi. 8. from whence the words are taken.

Ver. 24. *Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, &c.*] The comparison in this, and the following verses, is the concluding part of our Lord's discourses upon the mount, which are meant by *these sayings*, or doctrines, he here speaks of; and as he had in some foregoing verses chiefly respect to preachers, so here, to hearers, his disciples and followers in general. The subject of this comparison, in Luke vi. 47. is, *whosoever cometh unto me*; as all that are given to Christ by the father will do, sooner or later: such whom he encourages to come to him, are they that labour and are heavy laden; and they that come aright, come as poor perishing sinners; they believe in him, give up themselves to him, to be saved by him with an everlasting salvation; all which is owing to efficacious grace. These hear his sayings, as doctrines, not merely externally, but internally, having ears to hear given unto them, so as to understand them, love them, believe them, feel the power, taste the sweetness, and have a delightful relish of them; and such an one hears them, *and doth them*: he is not only an hearer, but a doer of the word of the Gospel; the doctrines of it he receives in the love of them, and exercises faith on them; upon Christ, his grace and righteousness held forth in them; which is the great work and business of a Christian, he is to do, and does do in this life: the ordinances of it he cheerfully obeys; and all the duties of religion he performs from love to Christ, without any view to obtain eternal life hereby, which he only expects from Christ, as his sayings and doctrines direct him. The comparison follows, *I will liken him to a wise man, which built his house upon a rock*. Luke says, *he is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock*. Every believer is a builder; the house he

builds, is his own soul, and the salvation of it; in order to which he digs deep, till he comes to a rock, to a good foundation; he searches diligently into the Scriptures of truth; he constantly attends the ministry of the word; he inquires of Gospel-preachers, and other saints, the way of salvation; which having found, he lays the whole stress of his salvation on the rock of ages, which rock is Christ: he makes him the foundation of all his hopes of eternal life and happiness; which is the foundation God has laid in Zion; and which has been laid ministerially by the prophets of the Old, and the apostles of the New Testament; and by believers themselves, when they build their faith and hope upon it. This foundation, the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, is as a rock, firm and strong, will bear the whole weight that is laid upon it; it is sure and certain, it will never give way; 'tis immovable and everlasting; the house built upon it stands safe and sure.

Ver. 25. *And the rains descended, and the floods came, &c.*] These several metaphors of *rain, floods, stream, and winds*, may design the temptations of Satan, the persecutions of the world, the corruptions of a man's own heart, and the errors and false doctrines of men; from all which such a man is safe, who is built upon the rock Christ Jesus; see Isa. xxxii. 2. not but that the rain of temptation may descend upon him, with great violence and force, but shall not beat him down; he shall be made able to bear the whole force of it; the gates of hell can't prevail against him; the floods of persecution may be cast after him, but shall not carry him away; the stream of corruption may run strong against him, yet shall not overset him; and the wind of divers and strange doctrines may blow hard upon him, but not cast him down: some damage he may receive by these several things, but shall not be destroyed; he may be shaken by them, but not so as to be removed off of the foundation, on which he is laid; yea, he may fall from some degree of the steadfastness of his faith, but not so as to fall totally and finally; the reason is, because he is founded on the rock Christ Jesus, which is sure and immovable: whence it appears that such a man acts the wise and prudent part, and may be truly called a *wise man*.

Ver. 26. *And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, &c.*] Who only externally hears them, but has no understanding of them; don't believe them, nor like and approve of them, but hates and despises them; or if not, depends upon his external hearing of them, and contents himself with a speculative knowledge, without the practice of them, *and doth them not*; does not yield the obedience of faith to the doctrines of the Gospel, nor submits to the ordinances of it, but neglects them, and all other duties of religion: or if he does obey, it is only outwardly, not from the heart; nor from a principle of love; nor in faith; nor in the name and strength of Christ; nor for the glory of God, but in order to obtain life for himself: such *shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand*; or, as Luke has it, *without a foundation upon the earth*; upon the surface of the earth, without digging into it for a foundation: and such may be said to build *without a foundation*,



who pretend to make their peace with God by their own works; who hope for pardon on the foot of the mercy of God, and their own repentance; seek for justification by their own, and not the righteousness of Christ; look for acceptance with God, for the sake of their own worthiness; and who expect salvation in any other way than by Christ: as in each of these articles, they leave out Christ, they may be said to build without a foundation indeed, and to build upon the surface of the earth; as they do, who build their hope of salvation upon any thing that is merely external; as, their riches and grandeur, their wisdom and learning, their natural descent, and religious education, their civility, courteousness, and what is called good nature, their liberality and alms-deeds, their morality, common justice and honesty, their legal righteousness, whether moral or ritual, and a round of religious duties; and such may be said to build upon the sand, on that which will bear no weight, but gives way, and sinks. The salvation of the soul is a weighty thing; and that which is like sand, as is every thing of a man's own, can never support it: God has therefore laid the salvation of his people on his own son; and he must be a foolish man that builds on any thing short of him.

Ver. 27. *And the rain descended, and the floods came, &c.*] Such builders, and such a building, can't stand against the violent rain of Satan's temptations, the floods of the world's persecutions, the stream and rapid torrent of their own heart's lusts, nor the blowing winds of heresy and false doctrine, and much less the storms of divine wrath and vengeance. They are in a most dangerous condition; they can't support themselves; they must fall, and great will be their fall; their destruction is inevitable, their ruin is irrecoverable. The Jews make use of some similes, which are pretty much like these of Christ's. "R. Eliezer ben Azariah used to say<sup>2</sup>, he whose wisdom is greater than his works, to what is he like? to a tree, whose branches are many, and its roots few, and the wind comes, and roots it up, and overturns it; as it is said, Jer. xvii. 6. but he whose works are greater than his wisdom, to what is he like? to a tree, whose branches are few, and its roots many, against which, if all the winds in the world were to come and blow, they could not move it out of its place: as it is said, Jer. xvii. 8." Again<sup>3</sup>, "Elisha ben Abujjah used to say, a man who hath good works, and learns the law much, to what is he like? to a man that builds with stones below, and afterwards with bricks; and though many waters come, and stand at their side, they cannot remove them out of their place; but a man who hath no good works, and learns the law, to what is he like? to a man that builds with bricks first, and afterwards with stones; and though few waters come, they immediately overturn them." The same used to say, "a man who hath good works, and learns the law much, to what is he like? to a mortar spread upon bricks; and though עלי עירי

נשמים, the rains descend upon it, they can't remove it out of its place: a man that hath no good works, and learns the law much, to what is he like? to a mortar thrown upon bricks; and though but a small rain descends upon it, it is immediately dissolved, and falls."

Ver. 28. *And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, &c.*] Delivered in this, and the two foregoing chapters, concerning true happiness; the duty and usefulness of Gospel-ministers; the true sense and meaning of several commandments in the law; concerning alms, prayer, and fasting; concerning the care of worldly things, rash judging, rigid censures, and reproofs; the straitness and narrowness of the way to eternal life, and the largeness and breadth of the way to destruction; concerning false prophets, and the right hearing of the word. *The people were astonished at his doctrine*; it being something new, and unheard-of, what they had not been used to; and coming in the demonstration of the spirit, and of power, it carried its own evidence along with it, wrought conviction in their minds, and obliged them to acknowledge the truth of it.

Ver. 29. *For he taught them, as one having authority, &c.*] This does not so much respect the subject-matter of his ministry, the gravity, weight, and solidity of his doctrine; which, to be sure, was greatly different from that of the Scribes, which chiefly lay in proposing and handling things trivial, and of no moment; such as the rituals of the law, the traditions of the elders, or washing of the hands and cups, &c. nor merely the manner of his delivery, which was with great affection, ardour, and fervency of spirit, with much liberty and utterance of speech, and with wonderful perspicuity and majesty; in which also he differed from the Scribes, who taught in a cold and lifeless manner, without any spirit and power; but this chiefly regards the method he used in preaching, which was by delivering truths of himself in his own name, and by his own authority; often using those words, *but I say unto you*: he spoke as a lawgiver, as one that had authority from heaven, and not from men; and not as the Scribes, who used to say, when they delivered any thing to the people, *our Rabbins, or our wise men say so* and so: such as were on the side of Hillel made use of his name; and those who were on the side of Shammai made use of his name; scarce ever would they venture to say any thing of themselves, but said, the ancient doctors say thus and thus: almost innumerable instances might be given, out of the Talmud, in which one Rabbi speaks in the name of another; but our Lord spoke boldly, of himself, in his own name, and did not go about to support his doctrine by the testimony of the elders; but spake, as having received power and authority, as man, from his father, and not as the Scribes. Some copies add, and Pharisees; these generally going together; and so read the Vulgate Latin, the Syriac, the Persic versions, and the Hebrew edition of Matthew by Munster.

<sup>2</sup> Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 17. & Abot R. Nathan, c. 29 fol. 6. 1, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Abot R. Nathan, c. 24. fol. 6. 2.

## C H A P. VIII.

Ver. 1. *WHEN he was come down from the mountain, &c.*] Into which he went up, and preached the sermon recorded in the three preceding chapters: *great multitudes followed him*: which is mentioned, partly to shew, that the people which came from several parts, still continued with him, being affected with his discourses and miracles; and partly on account of the following miracle, of healing the leper, which was not done in a corner, but before great multitudes, who were witnesses of it: though some think this miracle was wrought more privately.

Ver. 2. *And behold there came a leper, &c.*] As soon as he came down from the mountain, and whilst he was in the way; though Luke says, ch. v. *when he was in a certain city*: in one of the cities of Galilee; one of their large towns, or unwalled cities, into which a leper might come: he might not come into walled<sup>b</sup> towns, at least they might turn him out, though without punishment: for the canon runs thus<sup>c</sup>, "a leper that enters into Jerusalem is to be beaten; but if he enters into any of the other walled towns, though he has no right, as it is said, *he sitteth alone*, he is not to be beaten." Besides, this leper, as Luke says, was *full of leprosy*, ch. v. 12. see the note there; and he might be pronounced clean by the priest, though not healed, and so might go into any city or synagogue: the law concerning such an one, in Lev. xiii. is a very surprising one; that if only there were some risings and appearances of the leprosy here and there, the man was unclean; but if *the leprosy covered all his flesh*, then he was pronounced clean; and such was this man: he was a very lively emblem of a poor vile sinner, full of sin and iniquity, who is brought to see himself all over covered with sin, when he comes to Christ for pardon and cleansing; and is so considered by Christ the high-priest, when he applies his justifying righteousness and sin-purging blood to his conscience. A leper, by the Jews<sup>d</sup>, is called רשע, *a wicked man*; for they suppose leprosy comes upon him for evil speaking. This account is ushered in with a *behold*, as a note of admiration and attention, expressing the wonderfulness of the miracle wrought, and the seasonableness of it to confirm the doctrines Christ had been preaching to the multitude. This man came of his own accord, having heard of the fame of Christ; and worshipped him in a civil and respectful way, shewing great reverence to him as a man; which he did by falling down on his knees, and on his face; prostrating himself before him, in a very humble and submissive manner, as the other evangelists relate: for that he worshipped him as God, is not so manifest; though it is certain he had an high opinion of him, and great faith in him; which he very modestly expresses, *saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean*: he was fully assured of his

power, that he could make him clean, entirely rid him of his leprosy, which the priest could not do; who could only, according to the law, pronounce him clean, so that he might be admitted to company, but could not heal him of his disease: this the poor man was persuaded Christ could do for him, and humbly submits it to his will; of which, as yet, he had no intimation from him. And thus it is with poor sensible sinners under first awakenings; they can believe in the ability of Christ to justify them by his righteousness, cleanse them by his blood; and save them by his grace to the uttermost: but they stick at, and hesitate about his willingness, by reason of their own vileness and unworthiness.

Ver. 3. *And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, &c.*] This is a wonderful instance both of the grace, and goodness of Christ, in touching this loathsome creature; and of his unspotted purity and holiness, which could not be defiled by it; and of his mighty power in healing by a touch, and with a word of his mouth, *saying, I will, be thou clean*: in which he expresses at once his willingness, *I will*, of which the leper before was not certain; and his power by a word of command, *be thou clean*; and in which also is shewn the readiness of Christ to do it: he did not stand parleying with the man, or making any further trial of his faith, or objecting to him his uncleanness; but at once stretches out his hand, touches his filthy flesh, and commands off the disorder. A great encouragement this, for poor sensible sinners to betake themselves to Christ, under a sense of their guilt and filth; who readily receives such, in no wise casts them out, but gives immediate discoveries of his power and grace unto them: *And immediately his leprosy was cleansed*, or he was cleansed from it; he was not only pronounced clean, but was made so; he was thoroughly healed of the disease of leprosy. The Jews themselves acknowledge this fact; for so they tell us in their wicked and blasphemous book<sup>e</sup>, that Jesus should say, "bring me a leper, and I will heal him; and they brought him a leper, and he healed him" also by Shemhamphorash,<sup>f</sup> *i. e.* by the ineffable name Jehovah. Though they greatly misrepresent the matter; for this man was not brought by others, at the request of Christ, but came of his own accord; nor was he healed by the use of any name, as if it was done by a sort of magic, but by a touch of his hand, and the word of his mouth. Whether this was the same man with Simon the leper, Matt. xxvi. 6. as some have thought, is not certain.

Ver. 4. *And Jesus saith unto him, see thou tell no man, &c.*] Not that this fact could be concealed, if it was done publicly, before the multitude; nor was it Christ's design that it should be; only it was his counsel to this man, that whilst he was on the road to

<sup>b</sup> Misn. Celim. c. 1. sect. 7.

<sup>c</sup> Maimon. Biath Hamikdash, c. 3. sect. 8. & in Misn. Celim. c. 1. sect. 8.

<sup>d</sup> Maimon. in Misn. Negaim, c. 12. sect. 5. & Bartenora in ib. sect. 6.

<sup>e</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 8.

Jerusalem, and when he was come there, that he would speak of it to no man, before he came to the priest, or priests: lest out of ill will to Christ, they should refuse to pronounce him clean: *but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.* The man was now in one of the cities of Galilee; from hence Christ orders him to make the best of his way, directly to Jerusalem; and present himself to one of the priests, by him to be examined, whether he was free of his leprosy; and then offer what was ordered by the law of Moses in such cases: for as yet the ceremonial law was not abolished: and therefore, as Christ was subject to it himself, so he enjoins others the observance of it. There was a two-fold offering, according to the law of Moses, on account of the cleansing of the leper; see Lev. xiv. the one was on the first day of his cleansing, when he first shewed himself to the priest, and consisted of two birds, alive and clean, cedar-wood, scarlet, and hyssop; the other, and which was properly the offering on the eighth day, was, if the man was able, two he-lambs and one ewe-lamb, with a meat-offering; but if poor, one lamb, with a meat-offering, and two turtle doves, or two young pigeons. The Jewish canons, concerning this matter, are as follow: "when a leper is healed of his leprosy, after they have cleansed him with cedar-wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and the two birds, and have shaved all his flesh, and bathed him; after all this he enters into Jerusalem, and numbers seven days; and on the seventh day he shaves a second time, as he shaved at first, and bathes—and on the morrow, or eighth day, he bathes a second time, and after that they offer his offerings—he lathes on the eighth day in the court of the women, in the chamber of the lepers, which is there—if it is delayed, and he shaves not on the seventh day, but he shaves on the eighth, or some days after, on the day that he shaves, he bathes, and his sun sets; and on the morrow he brings his offerings, after he hath bathed a second time, as we have declared: how do they do unto him? The leper stands without the court of Israel, over against the eastern gate, in the gate of Nicanor. and his face to the west: and there stand all they that want atonement; and there they give the bitter waters to the suspected women: and the priest takes the leper's trespass-offering, while it is alive, and waves it with the log of oil, towards the east, according to the way of all wave-offerings; and if he waves this by itself, and this by itself, it is right: after that he brings the leper's trespass-offering to the door, and he brings it in both his hands into the court, and layeth them upon it; they slay it immediately, and two priests receive its blood: the one receives it in a vessel, and sprinkles it upon the top of the altar; and the other, in his right hand, and pours it into his left hand, and sprinkles with his finger the right hand; and if he repeats it, and receives it in his left hand first, it is unlawful. The priest that receives some of the blood in a vessel, carries it, and sprinkles it upon the altar first; and after that comes the priest, who receives the

blood in the palm of his hand, to the leper, the priest being within, and the leper without; and the leper puts in his head, and the priest puts of the blood that is in the palm of his hand, upon the tip of his right ear; after that he puts in his right hand, and he puts of it on the thumb of his hand; and after that he putteth in his right foot, and he puts of it upon the toe of his foot, and if he puts of it upon the left, it is not right; and after that he offers his sin-offering, and his burnt offering: and after that he hath put the blood upon his thumb and toe, the priest takes of the log of oil, and pours it into the left hand of his fellow-priest; and if he pours it into his own hand, it will do: and he dips the finger of his right hand into the oil, which is in his hand, and sprinkles it seven times towards the most holy place: at every sprinkling there is a dipping of the finger in the oil; and if he sprinkles, and does not intend it, over against the holy place, 'tis right; and after that, he comes to the leper, and puts of the oil upon the place of the blood of the trespass-offering, on the tip of the ear, and on the thumb of his hand, and toe of his foot; and that which is left of the oil, that is in his hand, he puts it on the head of him that is to be cleansed; and if he puts it not, atonement is not made; and the rest of the log is divided among the priests; and what remains of the log is not eaten, but in the court, by the males of the priests, as the rest of the holy things; and it is forbidden to eat of the log of oil, until he has sprinkled it seven times, and has put of it upon the thumb and toe; and if he eats, he is to be beaten, as he that eats holy things before sprinkling." Now these were the things which, as the other evangelists say, this leper was ordered to offer for his cleansing, *for a testimony unto them*; meaning either to the priests; for the Syriac and Persic versions read the former clause, *shew thyself to the priests*, in Luke xvii. 4. that they being satisfied of the healing and cleansing of this man, and accordingly pronouncing him clean, and accepting his offerings, this might be either a convincing testimony to them, that Jesus was the son of God, and true Messiah, and that he did not deny or oppose the law given by Moses; or might be a standing testimony against them, should they continue in unbelief; or else to the Jews, who saw the miracle, and heard the orders Christ gave to the man after he had healed him; or to the lepers that they were cleansed; or this law of Moses was for a testimony or statute to be always observed by them in such cases.

Ver. 5. *And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, &c.]* Was returned from his journey through Galilee, to the place where he before dwelt, and is called his own city, ch. ix. 1. *there came unto him a centurion*, a Roman officer, שר כנחו, a commander of an hundred men, as the Hebrew Gospel by Munster reads it: though the number of men under a centurion was more, according to some accounts. "A band ('tis said) made two centuries, each of which consisted of an hundred and twenty-eight soldiers; for a doubled century made a band, whose governor was called an ordinary centurion." Such an one was Cornelius, a

<sup>†</sup> Maimon. Hilchot Mechosre Capparab, c. 14. per totum.

<sup>‡</sup> Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 13.

centurion of a band, Acts x. 1. The other person that was healed was a Jew. The next instance of Christ's power and goodness is the servant of a Gentile; he came to do good both to Jews and Gentiles; *beseeking him*, not in person, but by his messengers; see Luke vii. 3. and the Jews<sup>b</sup> say, שְׁלֹחָיו שֶׁל אָדָם כְּמוֹתָיו, *that a man's messenger is as himself.*

Ver. 6. *And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home, &c.*] It would be a difficulty whether it was a son or a servant he was so concerned for; since *παῖς*, the word here used, more commonly signifies a *son* or *child*; but that Luke, supposing it to be the same case he relates, expressly calls him *δούλος*, a *servant*, Luke vii. 2. The concern of the *centurion* for him, shews him to have been a good servant, faithful and obedient to his master; since he was so much affected with his case, and took so much care of him; and Luke says, he was *dear unto him*; in great esteem, highly valued, and much beloved: and also, that the centurion was a good master; he does not put his sick servant from him, but takes care of him at home, and seeks out for relief for him, being greatly desirous of his life. And as his keeping him at home discovered a tender regard to him; so his not bringing him forth, or ordering him to be brought out to Christ, which was sometimes done in such cases, shews his great faith in Christ, that he was as able to cure him lying at home, as if brought before him; absent, as well as present. 'Tis in the original text, *is cast*: or, as it is rendered, ver. 14. *laid in the house*, as if he was dead, speechless, and without motion; and Luke says, that he was *ready to die*, being as one laid out for dead. The phrase answers to מוֹטֵל, a word often used by the Rabbins; sometimes of sick persons, as when they say<sup>1</sup> of any one, that he is *lying in bed*, *sick*, and *laid upon the bed*; and sometimes of a person really dead, and laid out: and often this phrase is to be met with, *מי שמוטל לפניו*, *he that hath his dead cast*, or *laid out before him*<sup>2</sup>; concerning whom they dispute many things; as what he is free from, the reading of Shema, prayer, and the phylacteries; and where he ought to eat and drink till such time his dead is buried out of his sight. But this man's servant was not dead, but lay as one dead; *sick of the palsy*, his nerves all relaxed, and he stupid, senseless, motionless, *grievously tormented*, or *punished*, or rather *afflicted*: as the Ethiopic version, and Munster's Hebrew edition read it; for paralytic persons don't feel much pain and torment: but the meaning is, that he was in a miserable afflicted condition. The account of his disorder is given to move Christ's compassion, and recorded to shew the greatness of the miracle.

Ver. 7. *And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.*] This answer of Christ's, which is short and full, not only shews the readiness of Christ to do good, how soon and easily he complied with the centurion's request, it being a prayer of faith, and so effectual, and was heard as soon as delivered; but also contains an absolute promise that he would heal him. He does not say that he would come and see him, and what his case was, and do what he could for him,

as ordinary physicians do; but he would come and heal him at once: and indeed 'tis a proposal of more than what was asked of him; his presence was not asked, and yet he offered it; though Luke says, that he besought him by the messengers to *come and heal his servant*; and so this is an answer to both parts of the request; the whole is granted. Christ can't deny any thing to faith, his presence or assistance.

Ver. 8. *The centurion answered, and said, &c.*] This, according to Luke vii. 6. was said by his friends in his name, when he understood that Christ had agreed to come to his house, with the elders of the Jews, he first sent to him; and after he was actually set out with them, and was in the way to his house; who, conscious of his own unworthiness, deputed some persons to him, to address him in this manner, *Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof.* This is not said as rejecting and despising the presence and company of Christ; but is expressive of his great modesty and humility, and of his consciousness of his own vileness, and unworthiness of having so great a person in his house: it was too great a favour for him to enjoy. And if such a man was unworthy, having been an idolater, and lived a profane course of life, that Christ should come into his house, and be, though but for a short time, under his roof; how much more unworthy are poor sinful creatures (and sensible sinners see themselves to be so unworthy), that Christ should come into their hearts, and dwell there by faith, as he does, in all true believers, however vile and sinful they have been? *But speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.* As the former expression declares his modesty and humility, and the mean apprehensions he had of himself; so this signifies his great faith in Christ, and the persuasion he had of his divine power: he does not say pray, and my servant shall be healed, as looking upon him barely as a man of God, a prophet, one that had great interest in God, and at the throne of grace; but speak, command, order it to be done, and it shall be done, which is ascribing omnipotence to him; such power as was put forth in creation, by the all-commanding word of God; *he spake, and it was done, he commanded, and it stood fast*, Psal. xxxiii. 9. yea, he signifies that if he would but speak a word, the least word whatever; or, as Luke has it, *say in a word*; let but a word come out of thy mouth, and it will be done.

Ver. 9. *For I am a man under authority, &c.*] Of Cæsar the Roman emperor, and of superior officers under him, as a tribune, &c. *having soldiers under me*; an hundred of them at least, for military service, and some of them were used by him as his domestics: *and I say unto this man go, and he goeth, and to another come, and he cometh*: for there is no disputing the commands of officers, by soldiers, in any thing, in exercises, marches, battles, &c. *and to my servant, that was more properly his domestic servant, who waited upon him, and did those things for him which every soldier under him was not employed in, do this, and he doth it*; immediately, without any more ado; as

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 34. 2.

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 146. 2. 147. 1. Cetubot, fol. 103. 2.

<sup>b</sup> Mien. Beracot, c. 3. sect. 1. T. Bab. Moed. Katon, fol. 23. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Ebel, c. 4. sect. 7.

indeed a servant ought. The Jews<sup>1</sup> have a saying, that "a servant over whom his master אֵין רֵשׁוּת *hath* "no power, is not called a servant." Now, these words are not a reason excusing Christ's coming to his house, or shewing how unworthy it was, and how unfit it would be for him to come thither, since he was a man that held soldiers under him, and his house was encumbered with them; for these were not with him, but quartered out elsewhere: but they are an argument, from the lesser to the greater, that seeing he was a man, and Christ was God, he was under the authority of others. Christ was subject to none; and yet he had such power over his soldiers and servants, that if he bid one go, and another come, or ordered them to stand in such a place, and in such a posture, or do this and the other servile work, his orders were immediately obeyed: how much more easily then could Christ, who had all power in heaven and in earth, command off this distemper his servant was afflicted with? He suggests, that as his soldiers were under him, and at his command; so all bodily diseases were under Christ, and to be controlled by him, at his pleasure; and that, if he would but say to that servant of his, the palsy, remove, it would remove at once.

Ver. 10. *When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, &c.*] Which must be understood of him as man; for as God, nothing could present itself unto him at unawares, unthought of, and not known before; and so could not raise admiration in him, and which cannot properly fall on a divine person: or he behaved, both by words and gesture, as persons do when they are astonished at any thing; and this he might do, to raise the attention and wonder of those that were with him: *and said to them that followed.* This agrees perfectly with the account that Luke gives, that Christ was set out, with the messengers the centurion sent unto him, in order to come to his house, and heal his servant, and these that followed him were his disciples, and so some copies read, and others that were following him thither to see the miracle. *Verily, I say unto you;* a strong asseveration, and which Christ used, when he was about to deliver any thing of considerable importance, and required attention: *I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel:* that is, among the people of Israel: so the Arabic version reads it, *in any of Israel;* and the Persic, *among the children of Israel;* and is to be understood, not of the patriarchs and prophets, and other eminent believers, which were in Israel formerly; but of the men of the then present generation, his mother and his apostles being excepted: though it may be questioned, whether the apostles themselves as yet, had expressed such a strong faith in him, as this man: or it may have a particular respect to them in Israel, who had applied to him for healing, and had been healed by him; that he had not met with and observed any such expression of faith, in his divine power from them, as this centurion had delivered. And it was the more remarkable, that it came from a Gentile, and from a soldier too: but as great as it was, he did not exceed it; he did not ascribe more to Christ

than was proper, and which, by the way, is a clear proof of our Lord's divinity: for had he not been truly God, he would have rebuked, and not have commended this man's faith in him: who ascribed that power to him, which is peculiar to God: he is so far from finding fault with him, for thinking or speaking so highly of him, that he praises him for it, and prefers his faith in him, to any instance of it he had met with among the Israelites; who yet had far greater advantages of knowing him, and believing in him. There is a phrase in the Talmud<sup>2</sup> somewhat like this, only used of a person of a different character; where a certain Jew, observing another called by some of his neighbours Rabbi, thus expressed himself; "If this be a "Rabbi, אֵל יִרְבוּ כְמוֹתוֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, *let there not be many such as he in Israel.*" And it is said<sup>3</sup> of Nadab and Abihu, "that two such were not found כּוֹתֵיבָיו בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, *as they in Israel.*"

Ver. 11. *And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, &c.*] On occasion of the faith of the centurion, who was a Gentile, our Lord makes a short digression, concerning the call of the Gentiles; and suggests, that what was seen in that man now, would be fulfilled in great numbers of them in a little time: that many of them from the several parts of the world, from the rising of the sun to the setting of it, from the four points of the heaven, east, west, north, and south, as in Luke xiii. 29. and from the four corners of the earth, should come and believe in him; *and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven:* signifying, that as the Gospel would be preached in a short time to all nations, many among them would believe in him, as Abraham, and the rest of the patriarchs did; and so would partake of the same blessings of grace with them; such as adoption, justification, pardon of sin, and the like: *for they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham,* Gal. iii. 9. now, under the Gospel dispensation, though Gentiles; and shall enjoy with him the same eternal glory and happiness he does, in the other world. Which shews, that the faith of Old and New Testament saints, Jews and Gentiles, is the same; their blessings the same, and so their eternal happiness; they have the same God and Father, the same Mediator and Redeemer, are actuated and influenced by the same spirit, partake of the same grace, and shall share the same glory. The allusion is to sitting, or rather lying along, which was the posture of the ancients at meals, and is here expressed, at a table, at a meal, or feast: and under the metaphor of a feast or plentiful table to set down to, are represented the blessings of the Gospel, and the joys of heaven; which are not restrained to any particular nation, or set of people: not to the Jews, to the exclusion of the Gentiles. Our Lord here, goes directly contrary to the notions and practices of the Jews, who thought it a crime to sit down at table, and eat with the Gentiles; see Acts xi. 3. and yet Gentiles shall sit at table, and eat with the principal men, the heads of their nation, in the kingdom of heaven, and they themselves at the same time shut out.

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 72. 2.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 20. 2. Derech Eretz. fol. 18. 1

<sup>3</sup> Zohar in Lev. fol. 24. 1. & 25. 4.

Ver. 12. *But the children of the kingdom, &c.*] The Jews, who were subjects of the kingdom, and commonwealth of Israel, from which the Gentiles were aliens; and who were also in the church of God, which is his kingdom on earth; and besides, had the promise of the Gospel dispensation, sometimes called the kingdom of heaven, and by them, often the world to come; and were by their own profession, and in their apprehension and expectation, children, and heirs of the kingdom of glory. These phrases, *בְּנֵי הַמְּלָכּוּת הַבָּאָה*, *a son of the world to come*, and *בְּנֵי עֵלְמָא דְרַתִּי*, *children of the world to come*, are frequent in their writings: these, Christ says, *shall be cast out*; out of the land of Israel, as they were in a few years after, and out of the church of God: these branches were broken off, and the Gentiles grafted in, in their room; and will be excluded from the kingdom of heaven, where they hoped to have a place, and *cast into outer darkness*: into the Gentile world, and into judicial blindness, and darkness of mind, and into the blackness of darkness in hell, *where shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth*. Phrases expressive of the miserable state and condition of persons out of the kingdom of heaven; who are weeping for what they have lost, and gnashing their teeth with the pain of what they endure. The Jews say<sup>o</sup>, “he that studies not in the law in this world, but is defiled with the pollutions of the world, he is taken *אִתְּרוּ דְבִרְהָהּ*, and cast with-  
“out: this is hell itself, to which such are adjudged, “who do not study the law.” The allusion in the text is, to the customs of the ancients at their feasts and entertainments; which were commonly made in the evening, when the hall or dining-room, in which they sat down, was very much illuminated with lamps and torches; but without in the streets, were entire darkness: and where were heard nothing but the cries of the poor, for something to be given them, and of the persons that were turned out as unworthy guests; and the gnashing of their teeth, either with cold in winter nights, or with indignation at their being kept out. Christ may also be thought to speak in the language, and according to the notions of the Jews, who ascribe gnashing of teeth to the devils in hell; for they say<sup>o</sup>, that “for the flattery with which they flattered Korah, in the business of rioting, the prince of hell “*דָּרַק שְׁנֵי*, *gnashed his teeth at them*.” The whole of this may be what they call *רְגוֹן נְהִימָה*, *the indignation, or tumult of hell*<sup>o</sup>.

Ver. 13. *And Jesus said unto the centurion, &c.*] Christ having finished the digression, returns an answer to the centurion, agreeably to his desire, saying to him, *go thy way*; not as displeased with him, but as granting his request: for it follows, *and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee*. As he had faith to believe, that Christ could cure his servant by a word speaking, it was done accordingly. Christ by his almighty fiat said, let him be healed, and he was healed: just as God in the creation said, *let there be light, and there was light*. He does not say according to thy prayer, or

according to thy righteousness, and goodness, but according to thy faith: and it is further to be observed, that this cure was wrought, not so much for the sake of the servant, as his master; and therefore Christ says, *be it done unto thee*: let him be healed for thy sake, and restored unto thee, to thy use, profit, and advantage. *And his servant was healed in the self-same hour*, at the very exact time, even in that moment. Some copies add, *and when the centurion returned to his house, in the self-same hour he found his servant healed*; which the Ethiopic version has, and it agrees with Luke vii. 10.

Ver. 14. *And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, &c.*] And which was also Andrew's, Mark i. 29. for these two brothers lived together, and this was in Capernaum, as appears from the context. Though Andrew and Peter were originally of Bethsaida, a place not far from this, but had removed hither since their call by Christ, this being his city; though probably this house was Peter's wife's mother's, and only called their's, because they lodged there, whilst in this city: into this house Christ entered, with James and John, and others; when he saw his (Peter's) wife's mother, laid, or cast on a bed, see note on ver. 6. and sick of a fever: Luke says, chap. iv. 38. that she was taken, or rather held, or detained with a great fever; the distemper was very raging and furious, it had got to a very great height. The other evangelists say, that the persons in the house told him of her, and besought him for her, that he would heal her, having a very great affection for her, and desire of her life, which seemed to be in great danger. Hence it may be observed against the Papists, that ministers of the Gospel may lawfully marry; Peter, an apostle, and from whom they pretend to derive their succession of bishops, was a married man, had a wife, and that after he was called to be an apostle. His wife's mother is expressly mentioned, being the person labouring under a violent fever, and whom Christ cured in the following manner.

Ver. 15. *And he touched her hand, &c.*] Sometimes he healed by a word, as the centurion's servant; and sometimes by a touch, as here; and sometimes by both, as the leper. Luke says, that he stood over her, reached over her to take her by the hand, and lift her up, and rebuked the fever. Just as he did the winds and sea, having all diseases, as well as the elements, at his beck and control; and the fever left her immediately, as the other evangelists say. *And she arose and ministered unto them*: the former of these actions is a proof of her being restored to health and strength, in so much that she could rise and walk about of herself; whereas generally, persons after fevers continue very weak a considerable time; which shews what a miracle was wrought upon her by Christ: and the latter of them expresses her gratitude, for the mercy she had received; she rises and serves him and his friends, preparing proper and suitable provisions for them.

Ver. 16. *When the even was come, &c.*] The other evangelists say, when the sun was set, or setting: which

<sup>o</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 4. 2. Taanith, fol. 92. 1. Megilla, fol. 28. 2. Yoma, fol. 88. 1. & Sanhedrim, fol. 88. 2. Raziel, fol. 37. 1. & 38. 1. Caphtor, fol. 15. 1. & 19. 2. & 60. 1. & 84. 2. Raya Mehimus, in Zohar in Lev. fol. 34. 2.

<sup>p</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 104. 3.

<sup>q</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 52. 1.

<sup>r</sup> Targum in Job, iii 17.

circumstances are observed, not as some think, because the cool of the evening, and when the sun was set, it was more seasonable and convenient, in those hot countries, to bring out their sick, than in the heat of the day: nor are they remarked, as others think, because it was an unseasonable time to bring them to Christ, when he had been fatigued all day long, and yet he healed them; such was his goodness and compassion: but the true reason of the mention of them is, because it had been their sabbath-day, as appears from Mark i. 21. Luke iv. 31. and they could not, according to their canons, bring them sooner. Their sabbath began at sun-setting; hence they say<sup>1</sup>, that on the eve of the sabbath, that is, immediately preceding it, when the sabbath is about to begin, it is lawful to work *עד שישקט היום*, until the sun sets: and so it ended at sun-setting the next day, which they judged of by the appearance of three stars<sup>2</sup>. "R. Phinehas, in the name of R. Aba Bar Papa, says, if but one star appears, it is certainly day; if two, it is a doubt whether it is night or no; if three, it is certainly night.—On the eve of the sabbath, if he sees one star and does any work, he's free; if two, he brings a trespass-offering for a doubt; if three, he brings a sin-offering; at the going out of the sabbath, if he sees one star, and does any work, he brings a sin-offering; if two, he brings a trespass-offering for a doubt; if three, he is free." So that till the sun was set, and three stars appeared as a proof of it, it was not lawful to do any sort of business; but as soon as it was out of doubt, that the sun was set, they might do any thing: and this being the case, they brought to him (Christ) many that were possessed with devils; whose bodies Satan had been suffered to enter into, and were acted, and governed, and thrown into strange disorders by him. Such possessions, through divine permission, were frequent; that Christ, who was come in the flesh, might have an opportunity of shewing his power over Satan, and giving proof of his deity and Messiah-ship. And he cast out the spirits with his word: only by speaking to them; who were obliged, at his command, and by his orders, to quit their tenements, though unwillingly enough. And healed all that were sick: whoever they were, without any respect of persons, of whatsoever disease attended them: the most stubborn, inveterate, and otherwise incurable disorder, was not too hard for him, which he cured without the help of medicine, and where that could be of no use, and either by speaking, or touching, or some such like means.

Ver. 17. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by *Isaias the prophet*, &c.] In Isa. liii. 4. He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, here rendered, *himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses*; very agreeable to the Hebrew text, *הוא, he himself*, not another; *נשא, took up*, upon himself voluntarily, freely, as a man lifts up a burden, and takes it on his shoulders; *חליו, our infirmities*, diseases, sicknesses, whether of body or soul, *ובכבדו סבלם, and bare*, or carried, as a man does a burden upon his back, *our sicknesses*, or diseases, which occasion pain and sorrow. And that these

words are spoken of the Messiah, the Jews themselves own; for among the names they give to the Messiah, a leper is one; which they prove from this passage<sup>3</sup>. "The Rabbins say, a leper of the house of Rabbi is his name; as it is said, *surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted*. Says R. Nachman, if he is of the living, he is as I am, as it is said, Jer. xxx. 21. Says Rab, if of the living, he is as our Rabbi, the holy." Upon which last clause the gloss is, "If the Messiah is of them that are alive, our Rabbi the holy is he, because *דסובל תחלוים, he bears infirmities*." Elsewhere<sup>4</sup> they say, "There is one temple that is called the temple of the sons of afflictions; and when the Messiah comes into that temple, and reads all the afflictions, all the griefs, and all the chastisements of Israel, which come upon them, then all of them shall come upon him: and if there was any that would lighten them off of Israel, and take them upon himself, there is no son of man that can bear the chastisements of Israel, because of the punishments of the law; as it is said, *surely he hath borne our griefs, &c.*" And in another ancient book<sup>5</sup> of their's, God is represented saying to the Messiah, "תסבול ישורין, will thou bear chastisements, in order to remove their iniquities? (the iniquities of the children of God,) as it is written, *surely he hath borne our griefs*: he replied, *I will bear them with joy*." Hence it is manifest, that according to the mind of the ancient Jews, this passage belongs to the Messiah, and is rightly applied to him by the evangelist. But the difficulty is, how it had its accomplishment in Christ's healing the bodily diseases of men; since *Isaias* speaks not of his actions and miracles, but of his sufferings and death; and not of bearing the diseases of the body, as it should seem, but of the diseases of the mind, of sins, as the Apostle Peter interprets it, 1 Peter ii. 24. To remove which, let it be observed, that though the prophet chiefly designs to point out Christ taking upon him, and bearing the sins of his people, in order to make satisfaction for them, and to save them from them; yet so likewise, as to include his bearing, by way of sympathy, and taking away by his power, the bodily diseases of men, which arise from sin; and which was not only an emblem of his bearing and taking away sin, but a proof of his power and ability to do it: for since he could do the one, it was plain he could do the other.

Ver. 18. Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, &c.] Who got together, partly out of novelty to see his person, of whom they had heard so much; and partly to see the miracles he wrought: some came to have their bodily diseases healed; few, if any, to hear the Gospel preached by him, and for the good of their immortal souls: the most part came with some sinister, selfish, and carnal views; wherefore he gave commandment to depart unto the other side. Different were the reasons, which at certain times moved Christ to depart from the multitude; as that he might have an opportunity of private prayer, or to preach to others, or to shew he sought not popular applause, and to

<sup>1</sup> T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 33. 1.

<sup>2</sup> T. Hieros. Beraicot, fol. 2. 2. Maimon. Sabbat, c. 5. sect. 4.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Saubhedrim, fol. 98. 2.

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>4</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 85. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Psikta in Abkath Rochel, l. 1. par. 2. p. 309 Ed. Huls.

avoid seditions: his reasons here seem to be with respect to himself, that being wearied as man, with the work of the day, he might have an opportunity of refreshing himself with sleep; with respect to his disciples, that he might have a trial of their faith, when in danger at sea; and with respect to the multitude, because of their carnality, and sole concern for their temporal, and worldly good. The persons he gave commandment to, must be either the multitude, or the disciples; not the former, because he studiously avoided their company, and his concern was to be rid of them; but the latter, and so the Vulgate Latin and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read, *he commanded his disciples*. The place he would have them go to was, the other side of the lake of Tiberias, or Genesareth; not over the river Euphrates, as says the author of the old Nizzachon<sup>7</sup>.

Ver. 19. *And a certain Scribe came, &c.*] *As they went in the way*, Luke ix. 57. to go to the sea-side, in order to take shipping, and pass to the other shore; and said unto him, *Master, or Rabbi, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest*. One would have thought, that this man desired in good earnest to be a disciple of Christ, were it not for Christ's answer to him, who knew his heart: from whence it appears, that he, seeing the miracles which Christ wrought, and observing the fame of him among the people, began to think that he would be generally received as the Messiah; and by joining himself to him, promised himself much ease, honour, and wealth. These seem to be the motives, which prevailed upon him to take so sudden and hasty a step; for he did not wait to be called to follow Christ, as the other disciples were, but offers himself to be one; that is, to be one of his intimates, one of his apostles; and besides, he rashly promises to do that, which he knew nothing of, and which in some cases is impossible to be done.

Ver. 20. *And Jesus saith unto him, &c.*] Knowing his heart, and the carnal and worldly views with which he acted; *the foxes have holes* in the earth, where they hide themselves from danger, take their rest, and secure their whelps; and *the birds of the air have nests*, where they sit, lay, and hatch their eggs, and bring up their young; but *the son of man has not where to lay his head*, when he is weary, and wants rest and sleep, as he did at this time. So that though he was Lord of all, as being the mighty God; yet as *the son of man*, a phrase, expressive both of the truth and meanness of his human nature, the most despicable of creatures in the earth and air, were richer than he. This he said, to convince the Scribe of his mistake; who expected much worldly grandeur and wealth, by becoming his disciple. When Christ styles himself *the son of man*, it is no contradiction to his being God; nor any objection to trust and confidence in him, as the Jew<sup>8</sup> suggests; for he is truly and properly God, as well as really man, having two natures, human and divine, united in his person; so that he is, as was prophesied of him, Emmanuel, God with us, in our nature, God manifested in the flesh: and since he is so, it can't be unlawful to trust in him; which it would be indeed,

was he a mere man. The Jews ought not to object to this name and title of the *Messiah, the son of man*; since he is so called, as their own writers and commentators acknowledge, in <sup>a</sup> Psal. lxxx. 17. and <sup>b</sup> Dan. vii. 14. And whereas it is further urged against these words of Christ, that if he was God, why does he complain of want of place? Is not the whole world his, according to Psal. xxiv. 1? It may be replied, that it is very true, that the whole world is his, nor could he be in want of any thing, as God; but yet, as man, for our sakes he became *poor*, that we *might be rich*: nor should this be any difficulty with a Jew, when they themselves say, as some have thought, if he (the Messiah) should come, *לֵי דוֹכְרָתָא דִּימִיבְנָא בֵּדָה*, *there's no place in which he can sit down*<sup>c</sup>. Unless it be understood of Nebuchadnezzar, as the gloss explains it; let the learned inspect the place, and judge: the coming of the Messiah is immediately spoken of.

Ver. 21. *And another of his disciples said unto him, &c.*] That is, one of his disciples; for this does not suppose, that the other, the Scribe before-mentioned, was one. 'Tis possible, he might be one of the twelve. The Persic version makes him one of the disciples, whom they call *Hawarion*, apostles; and, according to ancient tradition, it was <sup>d</sup> Philip. And certain it is, that he was one, who was called to preach the Gospel; so that he was not a common ordinary disciple; nor could he be one of the seventy disciples, since it was after this, that they were called and sent forth; as appears from Luke's account, chap. ix. 60. and x. 1. But who he particularly was, cannot be certainly known, nor is it of any great importance to know it: his address to Christ is made with great respect and reverence, and in a very modest and humble manner, *Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father*: for it seems, according to Luke, that Christ had bid him *follow* him: he had given him a call to be his disciple, and to go and preach the Gospel, which he did not refuse; but desires leave *first* to attend his father's funeral, who was now dead; as his requests, and Christ's answer, both suppose: though some conjecture, that he was only very aged, or was dangerously ill; and therefore it could not be thought he would live long: hence he was desirous of doing this last good office, before he entered on his public work; but these are conjectures, without any foundation: it is plain, his father was dead, and what he requested was, to go home, which perhaps might not be a great way off, and perform the funeral rites, and then return. This may seem very reasonable, since burying the dead was reckoned by the Jews, not only an act of kindness and respect to the deceased, but an act of piety and religion; and in which, men are followers of God, and imitate him, who himself buried the body of Moses<sup>e</sup>. And though this man was called to preach the Gospel, yet he might think he would be easily excused for the present, on this account; since, according to the Jewish canons, such whose dead lay before them, who were as yet unburied, were excused read-

<sup>7</sup> Pesikta in Abkath Roehel, l. 1. par. 2. p. 205. Ed. Huls.

<sup>8</sup> R. Isaac Chizzak Enuma, par. 2. c. 12. p. 403.

<sup>a</sup> Targum & Aben Ezra in loc. Abarbinel Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 81. 2.

<sup>b</sup> R. Jeshua in Aben Ezra in loc. & Saadiah Gaon & Jarchi in loc. Zohar in Gen. fol. 85. 4.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 96. 2.

<sup>d</sup> Clement. Alex. Strom. l. 3. p. 436.

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 30. 2. & Sota, fol. 14. 1.



ing the Shema, they were free from performing the duty of prayer, and were not obliged to wear their phylacteries<sup>f</sup>.

Ver. 22. *But Jesus said unto him, follow thou me, &c.*] Christ would not excuse him on this account, but insists on what he had before called him to; to attend upon him, and give himself up to the ministry of the word: which was done, partly to shew, that a greater regard ought to be had to him, than to the nearest relation and friend whatever; and partly, on account of the dignity of the Gospel ministry, which greatly exceeds any such services; as also to signify, of what little account were the traditions of the elders with him; wherefore he says, *let the dead bury the dead*. Our Lord is not to be understood, as speaking against, or disrespectfully of burying the dead; his words suppose it ought to be done: only it was not proper, that this person should be concerned in it at this time, who was called to an higher employment; and therefore should leave this to be done by persons, whom it better became. And however strange and odd such a phrase may sound in the ears of some, of one dead man's burying another, it was easily understood by a Jew; with whom it is common to say, *הרוצח חשב כמת*, *that a sinner is counted as<sup>g</sup> dead*, and that *ungodly persons, even while they are alive, are called dead<sup>h</sup>*. And in this sense is the word used, in the former part of this phrase; and Christ's meaning is, let such who are dead in trespasses and sins, and to all that is spiritually good, bury those who are dead in a natural or corporal sense. It is likely the deceased was an unregenerate man; however, it is plainly suggested, that many of the relations were; and there were enough of them to take care of this service: and therefore, there was no need why he should neglect the ministry of the Gospel to attend that; but ought to leave it to persons who were fitter for it.

Ver. 23. *And when he was entered into a ship, &c.*] Which was got ready by his disciples, or hired by them for his use, according to the directions he had given, *his disciples followed him into the ship, and they only*; for as for the men hereafter mentioned, they were the men that belonged to the ship, and had the management of it: the multitude were dismissed, and in order to be clear of them, Christ took this method; and being desirous also of trying the faith of his disciples, he ordered it so, that they should be alone with him.

Ver. 24. *And behold, there arose a great tempest, &c.*] *A great concussion, or shaking of the sea; the stormy wind moved the sea, and the waves thereof; and both wind and sea shook the ship, and the men that were in it*. Luke calls this tempest *a storm of wind*, chap. viii. 23. and Mark says, it was *a great storm of wind*, chap. iv. 37. and both use the word *welaps*, which signifies a particular kind of wind, which is suddenly whirled about upwards and downwards; or rather, a conflict of many winds: it seems to be a whirlwind, or hurricane. It is said, that this tempest *arose*, not by chance, nor by the power of

Satan, but by divine providence; for the trial of the faith of Christ's disciples, and that he might have an opportunity of giving proof of his deity on the sea, as he had lately done in several instances on the dry land. Luke says, that this storm of wind *came down*; referring to the motion and course of the winds, which are exhalations from the earth, raised up into the middle region of the air, from whence they are depelled by a superior force to the lower region, and from thence move in an oblique, slanting manner, downwards. The place where this tempest arose, or into which this storm of wind came down, is here said to be *in the sea*. Luke calls it a *lake*, and it was the lake of Genesareth. But both Matthew and Mark call it the sea, and is what is sometimes called the sea of Tiberias, and the sea of Galilee; see John vi. 1. and xxi. 1. agreeably to the language of the Jewish<sup>i</sup> writers. To all this, the word *behold!* is prefixed; which is sometimes used, when any thing extraordinary and preternatural is spoken of: and this storm seems to be more than an ordinary one; at least, it was very sudden and unexpected: when the disciples entered the ship, the air was serene, and the sea still and quiet; but as soon as they had set sail, at once, on a sudden, this storm came down, with great force into the sea, and lifted up its waves; *insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves*; it was just sinking to the bottom, so that they were in the utmost extremity: and what added to their distress was, *but he, Christ, was asleep*. Mark mentions the place where he was asleep, *in the hinder part of the ship*; that is in the stern: where he, as Lord and Master, should be, though to the great concern of his disciples, there asleep; and that in a deep sound sleep, as the word which Luke makes use of signifies; and as appears by the loud repeated call of his disciples to awake him: and though this sleep doubtless arose from natural causes, he being greatly fatigued with the business of the day past; yet was so ordered by the providence of God, to come upon him in such a manner at this time, for the trial of the faith of his disciples. Christ's body needing sleep, and refreshment by it, shews that it was a real human body he assumed; subject to the same infirmities as our's, excepting sin; and is no contradiction to the truth of his divinity, as the Jew<sup>k</sup> suggests. He slept as man, though, as God, he is Israel's keeper, who neither slumbers nor sleeps.

Ver. 25. *And his disciples came unto him, &c.*] From some other part of the ship, being in great consternation, and distress, *and awoke him; saying, Lord, save us, we perish*. They awoke him by their loud cries, and repeated calls; for in Luke, the form of address is doubled, *Master, Master!* expressing their distress, importunity, and haste for deliverance; saying, *save us, we perish, or we are lost*: which shews the apprehensions they had of their condition; not only that they were in danger of being lost, or were ready to be lost, but were lost: they saw no probability of escaping by any natural, rational methods; wherefore they apply to Christ, believing that he was

<sup>f</sup> Misn. Beracot, c. 3. sect. 1.

<sup>g</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 6. 2.

<sup>h</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 18. 2. Jarchi in Gen. 11. 32. Baal Hatturim, in Deut. xvii. 6. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 58. 3. Midrash Kohelet. fol. 78. 2. Capthor, fol. 79. 1. 2. & 84. 1.

<sup>i</sup> T. Bab. Moed. Katon, fol. 16. 2. Bava Kama, fol. 81. 2. Berechit Rabba, fol. 86. 2.

<sup>k</sup> Vet. Nizzachon, p. 210.

able to save them, in this their extremity; as they had indeed a great deal of reason to conclude, from the miracles they had that day seen performed by him.

Ver. 26. *And he saith unto them, why are ye fearful? &c.*] Though they had some faith in him, yet there was a great deal of fear and unbelief, for which Christ blames them, saying, *O ye of little faith*: see note on chap. vi. 30. In Luke, the phrase is, *where is your faith?* what is become of it? You professed but just now to believe in me, is your faith gone already? In Mark it is, *how is it that ye have no faith?* That is, in exercise, their faith was very small, it could hardly be discerned: some faith they had, as appears by their application to him, but it was very little. They had no faith in him, as sleeping, that he could deliver them; but had some little faith in him that he might, could he be awaked out of sleep; and for this Christ blames them; for he, as the eternal God, was as able to save them sleeping as waking. *Then, he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm*: being awaked by his disciples, he raises his head from his pillow, stands up, and with a majestic voice, in an authoritative manner, shewing some kind of resentment at the wind and sea, as if they had exceeded their commission; and the one had blown, and the other raged too much and too long; he rebukes them in such language as this, *peace, be still*; *σιωπα σιφιμωσο*, as it is in Mark, be silent, hold your peace, stop your mouth, put a bridle on it, as the words used signify; and go on no longer to threaten with shipwreck and loss of lives; upon which the wind ceased, the sea became calm, and the ship moved quietly on.

Ver. 27. *But the men marvelled, &c.*] Mark says, *they feared exceedingly*; and Luke, *they being afraid, wondered*: they were filled with astonishment and fear, or reverence: there was such a shine of majesty, such a lustre of divine power appeared in this affair. The other two evangelists seem to refer this to the disciples, which Matthew seems to ascribe to the men, the mariners that were in the ship; it is likely it had the same effect on both; and both were abundantly convinced of his deity and dignity, saying, *what manner of man, or person is this?* For the word *man*, is not in the text; of what qualities, perfections and powers, is he possessed? Surely he must be more than a mere man; he can be no other than the mighty God, *that even the winds and the sea obey him*: which can be said of no other, than the most high God: never was such a thing heard of, that the winds and sea should be rebuked by a mere creature, and should obey. That man must be an infidel to *revelation*, that can read this account, and deny the deity of Christ; to one or other of these he must be drove, either to deny the truth of the fact, and the circumstances of it, or believe that Jesus Christ is truly and properly God, as the disciples and mariners did.

Ver. 28. *And when he was come to the other side, &c.*] Of the lake, or sea of Tiberias, right over-

against Galilee, *into the country of Gergesenes*, the same with the Girgashites, Gen. xv. 21. Deut. vii. 1. Josh. iii. 10. whom Joshua drove out of the land of Canaan; and who, as a Jewish writer<sup>1</sup> says, left their country to the Israelites, and went to a country, which is called to this day, גֵּרְגֵּסָאן, *Gergestan*; of which these people were some remains: both in Mark, ch. v. 1. and Luke, ch. viii. 26. it is called the *country of the Gadarenes*; and so the Syriac and Persic versions read it here; which is easily reconciled by observing, not that Gergesa and Gadara were one and the same city, called by different names; but that these two cities were near each other, in the same country, which was sometimes denominated from the one, and sometimes from the other. Origen<sup>m</sup> has a remarkable passage, shewing the different situations of Gadara and Gergesa; and that the latter cannot be Gerasa in Arabia; and also the signification of the name, for the sake of which, I shall transcribe it. "Gerasa (says he) is a city of Arabia, having neither sea nor lake near it; wherefore the evangelists, who well knew the countries about Judea, would never have said so manifest an untruth: and as to what we find in some few copies, *into the country of the Gadarenes*, it must be said, that Gadara indeed was a city of Judea, about which were many famous baths; but there was no lake, or sea in it, adjacent with precipices; but Gergesa, from whence were the Gergasenes, is an ancient city about the lake, now called Tiberias; about which is a precipice adjacent to the lake, from whence is shewn, that the swine were cast down by the devils. Gergesa is interpreted, *παροικια εν εβραϊσμος*, *the habitation of those that cast out*; being called so perhaps prophetically, for what the inhabitants of those places did to the Saviour, beseeching him to depart out of their coasts." Dr. Lightfoot suggests, that this place might be so called, from גֵּרְגֵּסָא, which signifies *clay or dirt*, and mentions Lutetia for an example. But to pass this, as soon as Christ was got out of the ship, and come to land in this country, *there met him two possessed with devils*. Both Mark and Luke mention but one, which is no contradiction to Matthew; for they don't say that there was only one; and perhaps the reason why they only take notice of him is, because he was the fiercest, had a legion of devils in him, and was the principal one, that spake to Christ, and with whom he was chiefly concerned. This is to be understood, not of any natural disease of body, but of real possession by Satan. These possessed men met him, not purposely, or with design, but accidentally to them, and unawares to Satan too; for though he knows much, he's not omniscient: had he been aware of Christ's coming that way, and what he was about to do, he would have took care to have had the possessed out of the way; but so it was ordered by providence, that just as Christ landed, these should be *coming out of the tombs*. Their *cæmetèria*, or burying-places, were at some distance from towns or cities; wherefore Luke says, the possessed met him *out of the*

<sup>1</sup> Juchasin, fol. 135. 2.

<sup>m</sup> Comment. in Joannem, T. 2. p. 131. Ed. Huet.

city, a good way off from it; for the Jews<sup>a</sup> say, *לעיר לעיר בתי הקברות סמוכין לעיר*, *שלא היו בתי הקברות סמוכין לעיר*; *that the sepulchres were not near a city*; see Luke vii. 12. and these tombs were built so large, that persons might go into them, and sit and dwell in them, as these *demoniacs* did, and therefore are said to come out of them. The rules for making them are<sup>b</sup> these; "He that sells ground to his neighbour to make a burying-place, or that receives of his neighbour, to make him a burying-place, must make the inside of the cave four cubits by six, and open in it eight graves; three here and three there, and two over against them; and the graves must be four cubits long, and seven high, and six broad." R. Simeon says, he must make the inside of the cave six cubits by eight, and open within thirteen graves, four here, and four there, and three over against them; and one on the right hand of the door, and one on the left: and he must make *דוצר*, *a court*, at the mouth of the cave, six by six, according to the measure of the bier, and those that bury; and he must open in it two caves, one here and another there: R. Simeon says, four at the four sides. R. Simeon ben Gamaliel says, all is according to the nature of the rock." Now in the court, at the mouth, or entrance of the cave, which was made for the bearers to put down the bier or coffin upon, before the interment, there was room for persons to enter and lodge, as these possessed with devils did: which places were chosen by the devils, either because of the solitude, gloominess, and filthiness of them; or as some think, to confirm that persuasion some men had, that the souls of men after death, are changed into devils; or rather, to establish a notion which prevailed among the Jews, that the souls of the deceased continue for a while to be about their bodies; which drew persons to necromancy, or consulting with the dead. 'Tis a notion that obtains among the Jews<sup>c</sup>, that the soul for twelve months after its separation from the body, is more or less with it, hovering about it; and hence, some have been induced to go and dwell among the tombs, and inquire of spirits: they tell us<sup>d</sup>, "it happened to a certain holy man, that he gave a penny to a poor man, on the eve of the new year; and his wife provoked him, and he went *בבית הקברות*, *ולן*, *and lodged among the tombs*, and heard two spirits talking with one another." Or the devil chose these places, to render the persons possessed the more uncomfortable and distressed; to make them wilder and fiercer, by living in such desolate places, and so do more mischief to others: which was the case of these, who were exceeding fierce, wicked, malignant, mischievous, and troublesome, through the influence of the devils in them; so that no man might pass that way, without being insulted or hurt by them.

Ver. 29. *And behold they cried out, saying, &c.*] This is an instance and proof, of the wonderful power of Christ over the devils; and has therefore

the note of admiration, *behold!* prefixed to it, that the devils themselves who had took possession of these men, and made them so fierce and cruel, and outrageous, that there was no passing the way for them; yet upon the sight of Christ, and especially at hearing his orders to come out from them, not only say, but cry out, as being in great consternation, horror, and fear, and with the utmost subjection to him, *what have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of God?* They had nothing indeed to do with him; they had no interest in his grace, blood, righteousness, and salvation; he was no Saviour for them: but he had to do with them, and that was what they dreaded; and therefore mean, that he would let them alone, in the quiet possession of these men, and not disturb and dislodge them; for they knew that he was Jesus, the Saviour of sinful men, though none of their's, the true Messiah; and that he was also *the son of God*, a divine person, possessed of almighty power, and so an overmatch for them; at whose presence they trembled, and whose all-commanding voice they were obliged to obey, though sorely against their wills. *Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?* This question implies the apprehension the devils had of Christ as a judge, and their sense of his authority, and power, to punish them; as also that they deserved it, and expected it, nor do they say any thing against it; only imagine that the time of their full torment was not yet come; which is generally referred unto the day of judgment, to which they were reserved by the appointment of God; which they had some notion of, and as at a distance; and therefore complain of Christ's coming to them now, and expostulate with him about it: though it may be understood of the time they had proposed to themselves, to abide in the men they had possessed, and which they concluded they had a permission for; and nothing could give more torment, pain, and uneasiness, than to be turned out, and remanded to their prison, and restrained from doing more mischief to the bodies and souls of men. Or whether this may not have some respect to the time of the preaching of the Gospel, and setting up the kingdom of Christ among the Gentiles, the devils might have some hint of, as not yet to be, I leave to be considered, with this observation; that there seems to be a considerable emphasis on the word *hither*, meaning the country of the Gergesenes, an Heathen country, at least where many Gentiles inhabited: and it is as if they had said, is it not enough, that thou turnest us out of the land of Judea, and hast dispossessed us out of the bodies of men dwelling there; but thou pursuest us hither also, and will not let us have any rest, even in this Heathenish land; though the time is not yet come, for the dissolution of our empire and government in the Gentile world?

Ver. 30. *And there was a good way off from them, &c.*] *Nigh unto the mountains*, as Mark says, or *on the mountain*, as Luke, bordering on the sea-shore;

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Kiddushin. fol. 80. 2. Gloss.  
<sup>b</sup> Misn. Bava Bathra, c. 6. sect. 8.

<sup>c</sup> Nishmat Chayim, par. 2. c. 22. p. 81. 2. c. 24. p. 85. 1. & c. 29. p. 93. 1. p. 94. 1. 2.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 18. 2.

so that though it was at some distance, yet within sight. The Vulgate Latin, and the Hebrew edition of Munster read, *not far off*; and the Persic version, *near them*: which agree with the accounts of Mark and Luke, who say, that there were *there*, or hard by, *an herd of many swine feeding*. Since swine's flesh was forbidden the Jews to eat, Levit. xi. 7. it may be asked, how came it to pass, that there should be any number of these creatures, or that such a herd of them should be kept in the land of Israel? To which may be replied, that though the Jews might not eat swine's flesh, they were not forbid to bring them up; which they might do, in order to sell to the Gentiles, who dwelt among them; and particularly to the Romans, under whose government they now were, and with whom swine's flesh was in great esteem: but still a difficulty remains; for it was not only forbidden by the law of God to eat swine's flesh, but, by the Jewish canons, to bring them up, and make any advantage of them in any shape: their law was this, *לא יגדל ישראל חזירים בכל מקום*, *an Israelite might not bring up hogs in any place*: the reasons of this canon were many, partly because of the uncleanness of these creatures; hence one of their writers<sup>2</sup> observing, that next to those words, *they are unclean unto you*, are, *and the swine*, says, that this is to teach us, that it is forbidden to bring up hogs; and partly, because of the damage which these creatures do to other men's fields: hence<sup>3</sup> "the wise men say, cursed is he that brings up dogs and hogs, *בפני שהיון מרובה*, *because they do much hurt*." But the chief reason given by the Gemarists<sup>4</sup> for this prohibition, was the fact following: "When the Hasmonean family, or Maccabees, were at war with one another, Hyrcanus was within (Jerusalem), and Aristobulus without, and every day they let down to them money in a box; and they sent up to them the daily sacrifices: there was one old man who understood the wisdom of the Greeks, and he said unto them, as long as they employ themselves in the service (of God), they'll not be delivered into your hands: on the morrow they let down their money, and they sent them up a hog; and when it came to the middle of the wall, he fixed his hoofs in the wall, and the land of Israel shook, &c. at that time they said, cursed be the man *שיגדל חזירים*, *that breeds hogs*; and cursed is the man that teaches his son the learning of the Grecians." Before this time, it seems to have been lawful to bring them up, and trade with them: but now it was forbid, not only to breed them, but to receive any gain or profit by them; for this is another of their rules<sup>5</sup>. "It is forbidden to bring up a hog, in order to get any profit by his skin, or by his lard, or fat, to anoint with, or to light (lamps) with; yea, though it may fall to him by inheritance." And nothing was more infamous and

reproachful among them, than a keeper of these creatures: when therefore they had a mind to cast contempt upon a man, they would call him *מגדל חזיר*, *a breeder of hogs*, or *חזיריא*, *a hog-herd*. But after all, it was only an Israelite that was forbid this; a stranger might bring them up, for this is one of their canons<sup>6</sup>. "A man may sell fetches to give to a stranger that breeds hogs, but to an Israelite it is forbidden to breed them." Yea, they say<sup>7</sup>, "If others breed them to anoint skins with their lard, or to sell them to an Israelite to anoint with them, it was lawful: all fat may be sold, which is not for eating." And so some cities are supposed to have hogs in them, concerning which they observe<sup>8</sup>, that "a city that has hogs in it, is free from the *mezuzah*;" the schedules which were fastened to the posts of doors and gates: but now supposing this herd of swine belonged to Jews in these parts, it may easily be accounted for; for since they lived among Heathens, they might not have so great a regard to the directions of their Rabbins; and especially, since it was so much for their profit and advantage, they might make no scruple to break through these ordinances. Though this herd of swine may well enough be thought to belong to the Gentiles, that dwelt in this country; since Gadara was a Grecian city, and then inhabited more by Syrians, than by Jews, as Josephus relates<sup>9</sup>.

Ver. 31. *So the devils besought him, saying, &c.* All the devils, the whole legion of them, who perceiving that they must be obliged to go out of these men, and after they had earnestly entreated they might not be sent out of the country where they had long been, and had made themselves masters of the tempers, dispositions, and circumstances of the inhabitants, and so capable of doing the more mischief, begged hard, *if thou cast us out of these men, or from hence*, as the Vulgate Latin, the Ethiopic, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read, or *out of our place*, as the Persic; since we must depart, and can't be allowed to enter into other men, *suffer us to go away into the herd of swine*. This request shews the weakness of the infernal spirits, they are not able to do any thing without leave; and the superior power of Christ over them, and their acknowledgment of it; as well as the wretched malignity of their nature, who must be doing mischief, if not to the bodies and souls of men, yet to their property and goods; and if they can't vent their malice on rational creatures, are desirous of doing it on irrational ones. Many reasons have been thought of, why the devils should desire to go into the herd of swine; as because of the filthiness of these creatures, these impure spirits delighting in what is impure; or out of pure hatred to the inhabitants of this country, who, because they could no longer hurt their persons, would destroy their goods; or that by so doing, they might set the people against Christ, and

<sup>1</sup> Misn. Bava Kama, c. 7. sect. 7. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 77. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Baal Hatturim, in Deut. xiv. 7. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Maimon. Nezike Mammon, c. 5. sect. 9.

<sup>4</sup> T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 82. 2. Menachot, fol. 64. 2. Sota, fol. 49. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Tosaphot in Pesach, art. 62.

<sup>6</sup> T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 47. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Ib. Tramat, fol. 46. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Piske Tosaphot in Sabbat, art. 317.

<sup>9</sup> Yom. Tob. & Ez. Chayim, in Misn. Bava Kama, c. 7. sect. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Ib. art. 130.

<sup>11</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 33.

so prevent his usefulness among them; which last seems to be the truest reason, and which end was answered.

Ver. 32. *And he said unto them, go, &c.*] He gave them leave, as God did to *Satan*, in the case of Job; for without divine permission, these evil spirits cannot do any thing to the bodies, souls, or estates of men: they could not enter into the swine without leave, and much less do things of greater moment and consequence; and therefore are not to be feared, or dreaded by men, especially by the people of God. It may be asked, why did Christ suffer the devils to enter the herd of swine, and destroy them, which was a considerable loss to the proprietors? To which may be answered, that if the owners were Jews, and these creatures were brought up by them for food, it was a just punishment of their breach of the law of God; or if to be sold to others, for gain and filthy lucre's sake, it was a proper rebuke, both of the avarice and the contempt of the laws of their own country, which were made to be a hedge or fence for the law of God: or if they were Gentiles, this was suffered to shew the malice of the evil spirits, under whose influence they were, and who would, if they had but leave, serve them as they did the swine; and to display the power of Christ over the devils, and his sovereign right to, and disposal of the goods and properties of men; and to evince the truth of the dispossession, and the greatness of the mercy the dispossessed shared in; and to spread the fame of the miracle the more. *And when they were come out of the men that had been possessed by them, they went into the herd of swine;* which shews the real existence of these spirits, the truth of possessions and dispossessions; and that by these devils can't be meant the sins and corruptions of men's hearts, such as pride, covetousness, uncleanness, envy, malice, cruelty, &c. for these could never be said to enter into a herd of swine, or be the authors of their destruction: *and behold, the whole herd of swine,* and which was a very large one, consisting of about two thousand, *ran violently down a steep place;* a precipice of one of the rocks, by the sea-side, *into the sea of Tiberias,* or lake of Genesareth, which were the same, and over which Christ had just now passed; *and perished in the waters of the sea, or lake,* and not any other waters near Gadara, and afar off from hence.

Ver. 33. *And they that kept them fled, &c.*] The hog-herds, men of very low life, and whose employment was very infamous and reproachful, as has been observed. These, amazed at what they had seen, distressed with the loss of the swine, and so of their employment, and frightened also lest they should

incur the blame and displeasure of their masters, ran away in great haste, fear, and astonishment; *and went their way into the city;* either of Gergesa, or Gadara. Mark and Luke say, they *went and told it in the city, and in the country:* in their fright and distress, some ran one way, and some another; some went into the city, others into the country, and so spread the affair far and near, and the fame of Christ, which was designed by this miracle; *and told every thing they saw and heard;* how the devils entered into the swine, and they ran headlong into the sea, and were drowned: this they told first, as being done last, and with which they were most affected, and what chiefly concerned their employers; and after they had told every circumstance of the affair, next they gave a narrative of *what was befallen to the possessed of the devils,* and which was the occasion of the loss of their swine; how subject the devils, that were in them, were to Christ; how easily he dispossessed them by a word of command; how they entreated they might have leave to go into the herd of swine, which was granted; and how perfectly whole, and in health, both in body and mind, the men were.

Ver. 34. *And behold, the whole city, &c.*] The inhabitants of it, not every individual person, but the greater number of them, or, at least, a very great number of them. Luke says, *the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about:* for as the news was carried both into the city and country, great numbers flocked from all parts, *and came out to meet Jesus;* not out of any love and respect to him, and in order to invite him, and conduct him into their city, and there receive him kindly, and treat him with due honour and reverence; but either out of curiosity to see such an extraordinary person, which, doubtless, was the case of many; or, else being terrified at the report concerning him, and distressed with their present loss, which was the case of others, went out to prevent his coming any further, lest they should suffer something worse: accordingly, *when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts;* which was done not as though they thought themselves unworthy the presence of so great a person, as did the *centurion*, in the former part of this chapter, or, as Peter, when he said *depart from me, I am a sinful man;* but as fearing, lest some greater punishment should be inflicted on them for their sins, of which they were conscious; and therefore make no complaint of any injustice being done them by the loss of their swine; though these they preferred to the presence of Christ, and even to any cures wrought, or which might have been wrought, either upon the bodies, or souls of men.

## C H A P. IX.

Ver. 1. *AND he entered into a ship, &c.*] Or the ship, the self-same ship he came over in, with his disciples. The Gergesenes, or Gadarenes, or both, having desired him to depart their coasts, shewing an unwillingness to receive him, and an uneasiness at his company, he immediately turned his back upon

them, as an ungrateful people, being no better than their swine; and who, by their conduct, judged themselves unworthy of his presence, ministry, and miracles: he returned to the sea-side, took shipping, and passed over the sea of Tiberias again, and came into his own city; not Bethlehem, where he was born,

nor Nazareth, as Jerom thought, where he was educated, but Capernaum, as is clear from Mark ii. 1. where he much dwelt, frequently conversed, and his disciples: here he paid tribute as an inhabitant, or citizen of the place, which he was entitled to by only dwelling in it twelve months, according to the Jewish canons; where 'tis asked<sup>4</sup>, "how long shall a man be in a city ere he is as the men of the city?" 'Tis answered, "twelve months; but if he purchases a dwelling-house, he is as the men of the city immediately;" that is, he is a citizen, and obliged to all charges and offices, as they are: though they seem to make a distinction between an inhabitant and a citizen<sup>5</sup>. "A man is not reckoned כבני העיר, as the children of the city, or as one of the citizens, in less than twelve months, but he may be called, or accounted, מיושב העיר, as one of the inhabitants of the city, if he stays there thirty days." One or other of these Christ had done, which denominated this city to be his, and he to be either an inhabitant, or a citizen of it.

Ver. 2. *And behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, &c.*] That is, some of the inhabitants of Capernaum, four men of that city particularly; for Mark says, ch. ii. 3. he was borne of four: these brought him to Jesus, lying on a bed, or couch, he being so enfeebled by the disease upon him, his nerves so weak, and the members of his body in such a tremor, that he was not able to walk himself, nor even to be carried by others in any other way than this. *And Jesus seeing their faith;* the faith of the bearers of him, his friends, who brought out a man to be healed, who was otherwise incurable; and though they could not, for the multitude, bring him directly to Christ, they were not discouraged, but took the pains to carry him to the top of the house, and there let him down through the roof, or tiling; as both Mark and Luke say; and then set him down before him, believing he was able to cure him: moreover, Christ took notice not only of their faith, but of the sick man's too, who suffered himself to be brought out in this condition, and was contented to go through so much fatigue and trouble, to get at him; when he said unto the sick of the palsy, son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee. He calls him son, either meaning by it no more than man; see Luke v. 20. or using it as a kind, tender, and endearing appellation; or as considering him in the grace of adoption, as one that God had put among the children, had given to him as such, and whom he should bring to glory. He bids him be of good cheer, whose animal spirits were fainting through the disease that was upon him, and the fatigue he had underwent in being brought to him; and his soul more distressed and dejected, under a sense of his sins and transgressions; which Jesus knowing, very pertinently says, thy sins be forgiven thee; than which, nothing could be more cheering and reviving to him: or Christ says this to shew, that sin was the cause of the disease and affliction that were upon him, for און יסורין בלא עון, there are no chastise-

ments without sin, as the Jews say<sup>6</sup>; and that the cause being removed, the effects would cease; of both which he might be assured, and therefore had good reason to cheer up, and be of good heart: This was a wonderful instance of the grace of Christ, to bestow a blessing unasked, and that of the greatest moment and importance.

Ver. 3. *And behold, certain of the Scribes said within themselves, &c.*] And of the Pharisees also, as Luke says; for there were at this time Pharisees and doctors of the law, who were come out of every town of Galilee and Judea, and out of Jerusalem, sitting and hearing him teach, and observing what he said, and did; who upon hearing him pronounce the sentence of pardon, upon this paralytic man, reasoned and concluded in their own minds, though they did not care to speak it out, that this man blasphemeth: the reason was, because they thought he ascribed that to himself, which was peculiar to God: and so he did, and yet did not blaspheme; because he himself was God, of which he quickly gave convincing proofs.

Ver. 4. *And Jesus knowing their thoughts, &c.*] Which was a clear evidence, and full demonstration of his deity; for none knows the thoughts of the heart but God; and since he knew the thoughts of men's hearts, it could be no blasphemy in him to take that to himself which belonged to God, even to forgive sins. And this, one would think, would have been sufficient to have approved himself to them as the true Messiah; since this is one of the ways of knowing the Messiah, according to the Jews, and which they made use of to discover a false one. "Bar Coziba, (they say<sup>7</sup>), reigned two years and a half: he said to the Rabbins, I am the Messiah; they replied to him, it is written of the Messiah, that he is of quick understanding, and judges, (referring to Isa. xi. 3.) let us see whether this man is of quick understanding, and can make judgment, i. e. whether a man is wicked, or no, without any external proof; and when they saw he was not of quick understanding, and could not judge in this manner, they slew him." But now Christ needed not any testimony of men; he knew what was in the hearts of men, of which this instance is a glaring proof: hence he said, wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? it was no evil in them to think that God only could forgive sin; but the evil was, that they thought Christ was a mere man, and ought not to have took so much upon him; and that, for so doing, he was a wicked man, and a blasphemer.

Ver. 5. *For whether is easier to say, &c.*] Christ proceeds to clear himself of the charge of blasphemy, and to prove his power to forgive sins, by putting a case to them, of which he makes themselves judges, and is this: which is easiest to be said, thy sins are forgiven thee? or to say, arise and walk? Neither of them were easy to a mere creature, but both of them easy to God; and he that could say the one with power and efficacy going along with his word, could say the other as effectually: and whereas it was a plain case, and out of all question, that he could bid this paralytic man, though in this weak condition, arise

<sup>4</sup> Mian. Bava Bathra, c. 1. sect. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 112. 1.

<sup>6</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 55. 1. Midrash Hokelet, fol. 70. 4. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 99. 1.

<sup>7</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 93. 2.

from his bed, stand upon his feet, and go home of himself; and since he had already healed many that were sick of the palsy, and particularly the *centurion's* servant, by a word speaking, he must have equal power to forgive sin. For to heal the diseases of the body in such a wonderful manner, was a very sensible proof of his power to heal the maladies of the soul; and though these are greater than those of the body, yet since both require divine power, he that is able to do the one, is able to do the other. And that it might appear he did not say this in a boasting manner, he adds,

Ver. 6. *But that ye may know that the son of man, &c.*] That they might have a visible proof, an oculary demonstration, that though he was the son of man, truly and really man, yet not a mere man; but also as truly and properly God, God and man in one person, and so *hath power on earth to forgive sins*: not only ability as God, but even authority to do it as mediator, even whilst he was on earth, in a state of humiliation, in fashion as a man, in the form of a servant, conversing with sinful mortals. *Then saith he to the sick of the palsy*; turning himself from the Scribes, unto him, and without putting up any prayer to God, but by a mere word of command, says to him, *arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house*: he ordered him to *arise* from his bed, on which he was carried by four men, and *take up his bed*, and carry it himself; which would be not only an evidence that the disease had left him, but that he was in full strength, and perfect health; and to *go to his own house*, not only that the multitude might see that he could walk home himself, whom they had seen brought by others; but that those in the house, who had been eye-witnesses of his great disorder and weakness, might be also of his cure.

Ver. 7. *And he arose, and departed to his house.*] Immediately, at the command of Christ, believing he was able to heal him by a word speaking; and, upon his attempt to arise, found himself perfectly healed of his disease, and endued with such strength, that he could, not only with the greatest ease, arise from his bed, stand upon his feet, and walk alone, without any help; but, as the other evangelists declare, took up his bed, on which he lay, carried it home on his shoulders, in the sight of all the people, praising, and giving glory to God for this wonderful cure, which he had received.

Ver. 8. *But when the multitude saw it, &c.*] The miracle that was wrought; when they saw the man take up his bed, and carry it home, which was done by Christ, as a proof of his having power to forgive sin, they marvelled, and glorified God: they were struck with amazement and astonishment at the sight, it being what was strange and unusual; the like to which they had never seen before, nor heard of: and concluding it to be more than human; they ascribed it to God; they praised, and adored the divine goodness, which had given such power unto men; of working miracles, healing diseases, and delivering miserable mortals from such maladies, as were otherwise incurable; still looking upon Christ as a mere man, by whom God

did these things; not knowing yet the mystery of the incarnation, God manifest in the flesh.

Ver. 9. *And as Jesus passed forth from thence, &c.*] That is, from Capernaum to the sea-side; where, as Mark says, the multitude resorted, and he taught them; he saw a man named Matthew: the writer of this Gospel. The other evangelists call him Levi, who was the son of Alpheus: he went by two names; Mark and Luke call him by the name, which perhaps was the more honourable, or the least known, on purpose to conceal the former life of the apostle, which might expose him to the contempt of some; but he himself chooses to mention the name by which he was most known, as an apostle, and that the grace of God might appear the more illustrious in his calling and conversion. The Jews say<sup>b</sup>, that one of Christ's disciples was called מתתאי, Matthew, which, as Levi, is an Hebrew name; for though he was a publican, yet a Jew; for it was common with the Jews either to be employed by the Roman officers in collecting the toll or tribute, or to farm it of them. *Sitting at the receipt of custom, or at the custom-house, or toll-booth*; which both the Syriac version, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel, call מכס, or בית מוכסא, the publican's house. In the Talmud mention is made of it, in the following parable, upon citing Isa. lxi. 8. "it is like, (say the doctors,) to a king of flesh and blood, who passing by בית המכס, the toll-booth, or publican's house, says to his servants, give toll to the publicans: they reply to him, is not all the toll thine? he says to them, all that pass by the ways will learn of me, and will not avoid the toll; so says the holy blessed God, &c." The publicans had houses, or booths built for them, at the foot of bridges, at the mouth of rivers, and by the sea-shore, where they took toll of passengers that went to and fro: hence we read<sup>c</sup> of bridges being made to take toll at, and of publicans being at the water-side<sup>d</sup>, and of קישורי מוכס, the tickets, or seals of the publicans; which, when a man had paid toll on one side of a river, were given him by the publican, to shew to him that sat on the other side, that it might appear he had paid: in which were written two great letters, bigger than those in common use<sup>e</sup>. Thus Matthew was sitting in a toll-booth, near the sea-shore, to receive the toll of passengers that came, or went in ships or boats. *And he saith unto him, follow me*: notwithstanding the infamous employment he was in, as accounted by the Jews: this was no bar in the way of his call to be a disciple of Christ; and shews, that there was no merit and motive in him, which was the reason of this high honour bestowed upon him; but was entirely owing to the free, sovereign, and distinguishing grace of Christ, and which was powerful and efficacious: for without telling him what work he must do, or how he must live, and without his consulting with flesh and blood, at once, immediately he arose, and followed him: such a power went along with the call, that he directly left his employment, how profitable soever it might be to him, and became a disciple of Christ.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 43. 1.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Succa, fol. 30. 1.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 33. 2.

<sup>e</sup> Jarchi in Jud. v. 10.

<sup>b</sup> Misn. Sabbat, c. 8. sect. 2. T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 11. 2. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 78. 2. & Bechorot, fol. 30. 2. & Avoda Zara, fol. 39. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Jarchi, Maimonides, & Barneaora in Misn. Sabbat, c. 8. sect. 2. & Gloss. in T. Bab. Bechorot, fol. 26. 2.

Ver. 10. *And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, &c.*] That is, as the Arabic version reads it, in the house of Matthew, not in the toll-house, but in his own house; for he immediately quitted the toll-booth, and his office there, and followed Christ, and had him to his own house, where he made a great feast for him, as Luke says, to testify the sense he had of the wondrous grace which was bestowed on him; and also, that other publicans and sinners might have an opportunity of hearing Christ, and conversing with him, whom he invited to this feast; his bowels yearning towards them, and sincerely desiring their conversion, which is the nature of true grace: for, when a soul is made a partaker of the grace of God, it is earnestly desirous that this might be the case of others, especially its sinful relations, friends, or companions; and it takes every opportunity of using, or bringing them under the means; so did Matthew: hence it is said, *behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples*: not of their own accord, but by the invitation of Matthew, and with the good will, and full consent of Christ, who was far from being displeas'd with their company and freedom; but gladly embraced every opportunity of doing good to the souls of the worst of men; for such as these he came to call and save.

Ver. 11. *And when the Pharisees saw it, &c.*] The feast Matthew made, the guests that were invited, and particularly that Christ sat down to meat with such vile and wicked company; they and the Scribes, as Mark and Luke add, who generally were together, of the same complexion, equally enemies to Christ, and watchful observers of his conduct, and pretending to a more strict and religious way of life, were offended at all this; and said to his disciples, which they chose to do, rather than to Christ himself; partly, because they were afraid to engage in a dispute with him, who had just given them a full proof of his omniscience, that he knew the very thoughts and reasonings of their minds, and had so confounded them already, both by his arguments and miracles; and partly, because they might think themselves a match for the disciples, and might hope to stumble and ensnare them, and prevail upon them to quit their profession, and leave following him, whom they would suggest could not be a good man, that was guilty of so evil an action; which, with them, was very unlawful and abhorrent, as that for which they accuse and reprove him, *why eateth your master with publicans and sinners?* The publicans, or gatherers of the Roman tax, toll, or tribute of any sort, whether Jews or Gentiles, were persons of a very infamous character; and, as here, so often, in Jewish writings, are ranked with sinners, and those of the worst sort: so false swearing was allowed to be made *להורגים ולדורמין ולמוכסין*, to murderers, and to robbers, and to publicans<sup>o</sup>; and so publicans and thieves are joined together by Maimonides<sup>p</sup>, and a publican is said by him to be as a thief. And indeed this was not only the sense of the Jews, but also of other people, according to those words of

Zeno the poet, *παιδεις τολμαι παιδεις σινι αφραδεις*<sup>q</sup>, all publicans are all of them robbers: though this was not originally their character; for formerly the best of the Roman gentry were employed in this office, till by mal-practices it became scandalous, when the meaner sort of people, yea, even vassals, were put into it. Now, with such sort of men as these the Pharisees held it unlawful to have any sort of conversation; they expelled such their society, would not dwell with them in the same house, nor eat or drink with them; concerning which, their rules and methods are these; “a companion, or friend, who becomes the king’s collector, or a publican, or the like, they drive him from society with them: if he abstains from his evil works, then he is as any other man.” Again, “when the king’s collectors enter into a house to dwell, all that are in the house are defiled.” Moreover, ’tis said, that “the former saints ate their common food with purity, *i. e.* with their hands washed, and took care of all defilements every day; and these were called Pharisees; and this sect was exceedingly holy, and was the way of piety; for such a man was separated, and he abstained from the rest of the people, and he did not touch them, *למה יאכל וישתה עמם*, nor did he eat and drink with them.” It was a general rule with them, that a clean person ought not to eat with an unclean, as they judged the common people to be; nay, that a Pharisee, who was unclean himself, might not eat with another person that was so, and which they boast of, as a great degree of holiness. “Come and see, (say they), to what a pitch purity has arrived in Israel; for they not only teach, that a pure person may not eat with one that is defiled, but that one that has a gonorrhœa may not eat with another that has one, lest he should be used to transgress this way; and a Pharisee that has a gonorrhœa may not eat with a common person that has one, lest he should be used to do so.” Hence they looked upon Christ and his disciples as such, and would insinuate that they were evil men, who had no regard to purity of life and conversation.

Ver. 12. *But when Jesus heard that, &c.*] The charge the Pharisees brought against him, and the insinuations they had made of him to his disciples; which he either overheard himself, or his disciples related to him, *he said unto them*; the Pharisees, with an audible voice, not only to confute and convince them, but chiefly to establish his disciples, they were endeavouring to draw away from him: *they that be whole need not a physician*; by which he would signify that he was a physician: and so he is in a spiritual sense, and that a very skillful one; he knows the nature of all the diseases of the soul, without being told them by the patient; what are the true causes of them; what is proper to apply; when is the best time, and what the best manner; he is an universal one, with regard both to diseases and to persons, that apply to him; he heals all sorts of persons, and all sorts of diseases; such as are

<sup>o</sup> Mis. Nedarim, c. 3. sect. 4.

<sup>p</sup> Hilch. Gezela, c. 5. sect. 9. 11.

<sup>q</sup> Apud Fabricii Græc. Biblioth. l. 2. c. 22. p. 755.

<sup>r</sup> Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 29.

<sup>s</sup> Maimon. Mishcab & Moshab, c. 10. sect. 8.

<sup>t</sup> Ib. c. 12. sect. 12.

<sup>u</sup> Ib. Hilchoth Famaet Okelim. c. 16. sect. 12.

<sup>v</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 13. 1.



blind from their birth, are as deaf as the deaf adder, the halt, and the lame, such as have broken hearts, yea the plague in their hearts, and have stony ones, and all the relapses of his people; which he does by his stripes and wounds, by the application of his blood, by his word and Gospel, through sinners looking to him, and touching him: he is an infallible one, none ever went from him without a cure; none ever perished under his hands; the disease he heals never returns more to prevail, so as to bring on death and destruction; and he does all freely, without money, and without price. So Philo the Jew calls the Logos, or word, *ἰατρον κενον, an healer of diseases*<sup>2</sup>, and God our legislator, *τω τῆς ψυχῆς παρῶν ἀριστος ἰατρος, the best physician of the diseases of the soul*<sup>3</sup>. Now Christ argues from this his character, in vindication of himself; as that he was with these persons, not as a companion of their's, but as a physician to them; and as it is not unlawful, but highly proper and commendable, that a physician should be with the sick; so it was very lawful, fit, and proper, yea praiseworthy in him, to be among these publicans and sinners, for their spiritual good. He suggests indeed, that *they that be whole*, in perfect health and strength, as the Pharisees thought themselves to be, even free from all the maladies and diseases of sin, were strong, robust, and able to do any thing, and every thing of themselves; these truly stand in no need of him, as a physician, in their own apprehension; they saw no need of him; in principle they had no need of him, and in practice did not make use of him; and therefore it was to no purpose to attend them, but converse with others, who had need of him: *but they that are sick*; who are not only diseased and disordered in all the powers and faculties of their souls, as all Adam's posterity are, whether sensible of it or not; but who know themselves to be so, these see their need of Christ as a physician, apply to him as such, and to them he is exceeding precious, a physician of value; and such were these publicans and sinners. These words seem to be a proverbial expression, and there is something like it in the <sup>2</sup> Talmud, *דכתיב ליה כאיבא אויל לבי אסיא, he that is afflicted with any pain goes, or let him go to the physician's house*; that is, he that is attended with any sickness, or disease, does, or he ought to, consult a physician.

Ver. 13. *But go ye and learn what that meaneth, &c.* [צא ולמד, *go and learn*], is a phrase used by the Jews<sup>4</sup>, when they are about to explain a passage of Scripture, and fetch an argument from the connexion of the text. So the phrase *מהו זה, what that is, or what that meaneth*, is Talmudic, as, *מהו, what is it? מאי דכתיב, what is that which is written? מאי קרא, what is the Scripture?* that is, what is the meaning of it? Our Lord speaks in their own dialect, and tacitly reproves their ignorance of the Scriptures; and instead of finding fault with him, and his conduct, he intimates, it would better become them

to endeavour to find out the meaning of that passage in Hos. vi. 6. *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice*; which, if rightly understood, was sufficient to silence all their cavils and objections: and which words are to be taken, not in an absolute and unlimited sense; for sacrifices even of slain beasts, which were offered up in the faith of Christ's sacrifice, and were attended with other acts of religion and piety, were acceptable to God, being his own institutions and appointments; but in a comparative sense, as the following clause in the prophet shews; *and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings*; and so the sense is given in the Chaldee paraphrase, after this manner: *for in those that exercise mercy is my good will and pleasure, or delight, במרבה, more than in sacrifice*: and the meaning is, that God takes more delight and pleasure, either in shewing mercy himself to poor miserable sinners; or in acts of mercy, compassion, and beneficence done by men, to fallen creatures in distress, whether for the good of their bodies, or more especially for the welfare of their souls, than he does even in sacrifices, and in any of the rituals of the ceremonial law, though of his own appointing: and therefore must be supposed to have a less regard to sacrifices, which were offered, neither in a right manner, nor from a right principle, nor to a right end; and still less to human traditions, and customs, which were put upon a level, and even preferred to his institutions; such as these the Pharisees were so zealous of. The force of our Lord's reasoning is, that since his conversation, with publicans and sinners, was an act of mercy and compassion to their souls, and designed for their spiritual good; it must be much more pleasing to God, than had he attended to the traditions of the elders, they charge him with the breach of: besides, what he was now doing was the end of his coming into this world, and which was answered hereby; *for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance*. The phrase, *to repentance*, is not in the Vulgate Latin, nor in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, nor in the Syriac, Ethiopic, and Persic versions; but is in the Arabic, and in the ancient Greek copies, and is very justly retained. The *repentance* here designed, is not a legal, but an evangelical one: which is attended with faith in Christ, with views, at least hopes of pardon through his blood, and springs from a discovery and sense of his love: it lies in a true sense of sin, and the exceeding sinfulness of it, by the light of the spirit of God; in a godly sorrow for it, and hearty loathing of it; in real shame and blushing for it, ingenuous confession of it, and departing from it; all which is brought on, influenced, heightened, and increased, by displays of the love of God through Christ. The persons called to this are not the *righteous*; meaning either such who are really so, because these are already called to it, though, whilst in a state of imperfection, daily need the exercise of this grace; or rather such who are so in their own opinion, and in the sight of men only, not in

<sup>1</sup> Allegor. l. 2. p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> Quod Deus sit immutab. p. 303.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 46. 2.

<sup>4</sup> T. Bab. Succa, fol. 5. 1. & Sanhedrim, fol. 86. 1. Mases Kotsensij Mitzvot Tora pr. neg. 116. Vid. Maimon. Hithot Melachim, c. 5. sect. 11.

the sight of God, which was the case of the Scribes and Pharisees, and very few of these were called and brought to repentance; but *sinners*, even the worst, and chief of sinners, who, as they stand in need of this grace, and when thoroughly convinced, see they do; so Christ came into this world as a prophet and minister of the word to call them to it: which call of his does not suppose that they had a power to repent of themselves; for this man has not, he is naturally blind, and don't see his sin; his heart is hard and obdurate, and till his eyes are opened, and his stony heart taken away by a superior power to his own, he'll never repent; though he may have space, yet if he has not grace given him, he'll remain impenitent. No means will bring him to it of themselves, neither the most severe judgments, nor the greatest kindnesses, nor the most powerful ministry; repentance is entirely a free grace-gift: nor does the call of Christ imply the contrary; which may be considered either as external, as a preacher of the word, and as such was not always attended to, and effectual, but often slighted and rejected: or as internal, being by the power of his grace effectual; for he who called to repentance, as a minister of the word, as a prince and a saviour, was able to give it, and which none but a divine person is able to do. The Jews have a saying<sup>b</sup> of "shepherds, collectors of taxes and publicans, *תשובתו קשה*, that their repentance is difficult." Now, since this was the end of his coming into the world, his conduct in conversing with publicans and sinners was in all respects highly to be justified.

Ver. 14. *Then came to him the disciples of John, &c.*] Of John the Baptist, to whom they had addicted themselves, and by whom they abode: though their master was in prison, and the Messiah was known to be come, yet still they were attached to John, and particularly imitated him in the austerities of his life. These, either hearing of the great entertainment made at Matthew's house for Christ, and his disciples, at which they were offended; or else being moved, and set on by the Pharisees, with whom they were agreed in the business of fasting, came to Christ where he was, and put this question to him, *saying, why do we, and the Pharisees, fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?* Not that they wanted to know the reason why they and the Pharisees fasted; that they could account for themselves, but why Christ's disciples did not: and this is said not so much by way of inquiry, as reproof; and their sense is, that Christ's disciples ought to fast, as well as they and the Pharisees, and not eat, and drink, and feast in the manner they did. The fastings here referred to are not the public fasts enjoined by the law of Moses, or in any writings of the Old Testament; but private fasts, which were enjoined by John to his disciples, and by the Pharisees to their's; or which were, according to the traditions of the elders, or of their own appointing,

and which were very *often* indeed: for besides their fasting twice a week, on Monday and Thursday, Luke xviii. 12. they had a multitude of fasts upon divers occasions, particularly for rain. If the 17th of Marchesvan, or October, came, and there was no rain, private persons kept three days of fasting, *viz.* Monday, Thursday, and Monday again: and if the month of Cisleu, or November, came, and there was no rain, then the sanhedrim appointed three fast-days, which were on the same days as before, for the congregation; and if still there was no rain came, they added three more; and if yet there were none, they enjoined seven more, in all thirteen, which R. Acha and R. Barachiah kept themselves<sup>d</sup>. Fasts were kept also on account of many other evils, as pestilence, famine, war, sieges, inundations, or any other calamity; sometimes for trifling things, as for dreams<sup>e</sup>, that they might have good ones, or know how to interpret them, or avoid any ill omen by them; and it is almost incredible what frequent fastings some of the Rabbins exercised themselves with, on very insignificant occasions. They<sup>f</sup> say, "R. Jose *צום תמני צומין*, fasted fourscore fasts to see R. Chiyah Rubba; at last he saw, and his hands trembled, and his eyes grew dim.—R. Simeon *צום תלת מאה צומין*, fasted three hundred fastings to see R. Chiyah Rubba, and did not see him." Elsewhere it is said, that R. Ase fasted thirty days to see the same person, and saw him not<sup>g</sup>. Again<sup>h</sup>, "R. Jonathan fasted every eve of the new year, R. Abin fasted every eve of the feast of tabernacles, R. Zeura fasted three hundred fasts, and there are that say nine hundred fasts." This may serve to illustrate and prove the frequency of the Jewish fastings. Luke represents this question as put by the Pharisees, which is here put by the disciples of John: it was doubtless put by both agreeing in this matter; and which shews that John's disciples were instigated to it by the Pharisees, who sought to sow discord between them, and to bring Christ and his disciples into contempt with them.

Ver. 15. *And Jesus said unto them, &c.*] To the disciples of John, the Pharisees being present, who both have here a full answer; though it seems to be especially directed to the former: *can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them?* By the *bridegroom* Christ means himself, who stands in such a relation to his church, and to all believers; whom he secretly betrothed to himself from all eternity, in the covenant of grace; and openly espouses in effectual vocation; and will still do it in a more public manner at the last day. John, the master of those men, who put the question to Christ, had acknowledged him under this character, John iii. 29. and therefore they ought to own it as belonging to him; so that the argument upon it came with the greater force to them. By the *children of the bride-chamber* are meant the disciples, who were the friends of the bridegroom, as John also says he was; and therefore re-

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 94. 3.

<sup>c</sup> Misen. Taanith, c. 1. sect. 4. 5, 6. & c. 3. sect. 4. 5, 6, 7, 8; Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>d</sup> T. Hieros. Taanuth, fol. 65. 2. & 66. 4.

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 10. 1. Maimon' Taanith, c. 1. sect. 12—14.

<sup>f</sup> T. Hieros. Cilaim, fol. 39. 2. & Cetubot, fol. 35. 1.

<sup>g</sup> Midrash Kohelet, fol. 79. 1.

<sup>h</sup> Ib. Nedariim, fol. 40. 4. & Taanith, fol. 66. 1.

joined at hearing his voice, as these did, and ought to do; their present situation, having the presence of Christ the bridegroom with them, required mirth and not mourning, John, their master, being witness. The allusion is to a nuptial solemnity, which is a time of joy and feasting, and not of sorrow and fasting; when both bride and bridegroom have their friends attending them, who used to be called בְּנֵי הַדְּרוֹפָה, *the children of the bride-chamber*. The bride had her maidens waiting on her; and it is said <sup>1</sup>, "she did not go into the bride-chamber but with them; and these are called, בְּנֵי הַדְּרוֹמָא, *the children of the bride-chamber*." So the young men that were the friends of the bridegroom, which attended him, were called by the same name; and, according to the Jewish canons, were free from many things they were otherwise obliged to: thus it is said <sup>2</sup>: "the bridegroom, his friends, and all בְּנֵי הַדְּרוֹפָה, *the children of the bride-chamber*, are free from the "booth all the seven days;" that is, from dwelling in booths at the feast of tabernacles, which was too strait a place for such festival-solemnities. And again, "the "bridegroom, his friends, and all בְּנֵי הַדְּרוֹפָה, *the children of the bride-chamber*, are free from prayer and the "phylacteries;" that is, from observing the stated times of attending to these things, and much more then were they excused from fasting and mourning; so that the Pharisees had an answer sufficient to silence them, agreeably to their own traditions. Give me leave to transcribe one passage more, for the illustration of this text <sup>1</sup>. "When R. Lazar ben Arach opened, in "the business of Mercava, (the visions in the beginning "of Ezekiel,) Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai alighted "from his ass; for he said it is not fit I should hear "the glory of my Creator, and ride upon an ass; they "went, and sat under a certain tree, and fire came "down from heaven and surrounded them; and the "ministering angels leaped before them, וְכַבְּנֵי הַדְּרוֹפָה, *as the children of the bride-chamber* rejoice before the "bridegroom." The time of Christ's being with his disciples, between his entrance on his public ministry, and his death, is the time here referred to, during which the disciples had very little care and trouble: this was their rejoicing time, and there was a great deal of reason for it; they had no occasion to fast and mourn; and indeed the Jews themselves say <sup>2</sup>, that "all fasts shall cease in the days of the Messiah; and "there shall be no more but good days, and days of "joy and rejoicing, as it is said, Zech. viii. 19." *But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; in a forcible manner, and put to death, as he was; and then shall they fast and mourn, and be in great distress, as John's disciples now were, on account of their master being in prison.*

Ver. 16. *No man putteth a piece of new cloth, &c.*] These words are, by Luke, ch. v. 36. called a *parable*, as are those in the following verse; and both are commonly interpreted of the unreasonableness and danger of putting young disciples upon severe exercises of religion, as fasting, &c. and it is true, that young converts are to be tenderly dealt with, as they are by

Father, Son, and Spirit, as the disciples were by Christ, and the first Christians were by the apostles: and some things in these parables may seem to agree; as that these austerities should be represented as *new*, and as burdensome and troublesome, and the disciples as weak, and easily staggered: but then there are others that will not bear; as that the disciples should be compared to *old garments, and old bottles*; when they were *young* converts, and men *renewed* by the spirit and grace of God, and had on the beautiful robe of Christ's righteousness; and that such severe exercises, under the notion of religion, should be signified by *new wine*, which generally designs something pleasant and agreeable: nor were the disciples unable to bear such severities, who very probably had been trained up in them, and been used to them before their conversion; and could now as well have bore them as John's disciples, or the Pharisees, had they been proper and necessary; but the true reason why they were not required of them, was not their weakness, or danger of falling off, and perishing, of which there were none; but because it was unsuitable to their present situation, the bridegroom being with them. But our Lord, in this parable of putting a *piece of new, or undressed cloth*, such as has never passed through the fuller's hands, and so unfit to mend with, *unto an old garment*, refers not only to the fastings of the Pharisees, but to their other traditions of the elders, which they held; as such that respected their eating, drinking, and conversing with other persons mentioned in the context, and which observances they joined with their moral performances; on account of which, they looked upon themselves as very righteous persons, and all others as sinners: and to expose their folly, Christ delivers this parable. Wherefore, by the *old garment*, I apprehend, is meant their moral and legal righteousness, or their obedience to the moral and ceremonial laws, which was very imperfect, as well as impure, and might be rightly called *filthy rags*; or be compared to an old worn-out garment, filthy and lathsome, torn, and full of holes, which can't keep a person warm, nor screen him from the weather, and so old that it can't be mended. And by the *piece of new cloth, or garment*, put unto it, or sewed upon it, are intended the traditions of the elders, these men were so fond of, concerning eating, and drinking, and fasting, and hundreds of other things, very idle and trifling, and which were new and upstart notions. Now, by putting, or sewing the new cloth to their old garment, is designed, their joining their observance of these traditions to their other duties of religion, to make up a justifying righteousness before God; but in vain, and to no purpose. Their old garment of their own works, in obedience to the laws of God, moral and ceremonial, was full bad enough of itself; but became abundantly worse, by joining this new piece of men's own devising to it; *for that which is put in to fill it up, taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse*: their new obedience to the traditions of men, making void the law of God, instead of mending, marred their righteousness, and left them

<sup>1</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 6. 4.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Succa, fol. 25. 2. & Hieros. Succa, fol. 53. 1. Maimon. Succa, c. 6. sgct. 3.

<sup>1</sup> T. Hieros. Chagiga, fol. 77. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Maimon. Hilchot Taanot, c. 5. sect. 19.

in a worse condition than it found them : and besides, as it is in Luke, *the piece that was taken out of the new, agreeth not with the old* ; there being no more likeness between the observance of the commandments of men, and obedience to the laws of God, than there is between a piece of new undressed cloth, that has never been washed and worn, and an old worn-out garment. Much such a foolish part do those men under the Gospel-dispensation act, who join the righteousness of Christ, or a part of it, with their own, in order to make up a justifying righteousness before God ; for Christ's righteousness is the only justifying righteousness ; it is whole and perfect, and needs nothing to be added to it, nor can it be parted, any more than his seamless coat was ; nor a piece taken out of it : nor is there any justification by works, either in whole or in part ; the old garment of man's righteousness must be thrown away, in point of justification ; it can't be mended in such a manner ; and if any attempts are made in this way, the rent becomes worse : such persons, instead of being justified, are in a worse condition ; for they not only set up, and exalt their own righteousness, which is criminal, but disparage the righteousness of Christ as imperfect, by joining it to their's ; and whilst they fancy themselves in a good state, are in a most miserable one ; harlots and publicans being nearer the kingdom of heaven than these, and enter into it before them ; self-righteous persons are more hardly, and with greater difficulty convinced, than such sinners. Moreover, nothing is more disagreeable than such a patch-work ; Christ's righteousness and a man's own bear no likeness to one another ; and such a patched garment must ill become the character and dignity of a saint, a child of God, an heir of heaven.

Ver. 17. *Neither do men put new wine into old bottles, &c.*] As in the former parable, our Lord exposes the folly of the Scribes and Pharisees, in their zealous attachment to the traditions of the elders ; so in this, he gives a reason why he did not call these persons by his Gospel, who were settled upon the old principle of self-righteousness, but sinners, whom he renews by his spirit and grace : for by *old bottles* are meant, the Scribes and Pharisees. The allusion is to bottles, made of the skins of beasts, which in time decayed, waxed old, and became unfit for use : such were the wine-bottles, old and rent, the Gibeonites brought with them, and shewed to Joshua, Josh. ix. 4, 13. and to which the Psalmist compares himself, Psal. cxix. 83. and which the Misnic doctors call *קמיות*, and their commentators<sup>o</sup> say, were *גורת של עור*, *bottles made of skin, or leather*, and so might be rent. Of the use of new and old bottles, take the following hint out of the *Talmud*<sup>p</sup>. "The bottles of the Gentiles, if scraped " and *חדשים*, *new*, they are free for use ; if *ישנים*, *old*, " they are forbidden." Now the Scribes and Pharisees may be signified by these old bottles, being natural men, no other than as they were born ; having never been regenerated, and renewed in the spirit of their minds ; in whom the old man was predominant, were mere formal professors of religion, and self-righteous

persons : and by *new wine* is meant, either the love and favour of God compared to wine, that is neat and clean, because free from hypocrisy in him, or motives in the creature ; to generous wine, for its cheering and reviving effects ; and to new wine, not but that it is very ancient, even from everlasting, but, because newly manifested, in effectual vocation and conversion : or the Gospel is signified by wine, for its purity, good flavour, and pleasant taste ; for its generous effects, in reviving drooping spirits, refreshing weary persons, and comforting distressed minds ; and by new wine, not that it is a new doctrine, an upstart notion, for it is an ancient Gospel, but because newly and more clearly revealed by Christ and his apostles : or the blessings of grace which spring from the love of God, and are manifested in the Gospel, such as pardon of sin, reconciliation and atonement, justifying and sanctifying grace, spiritual joy and peace, and the like. Now as the new wine is not put into old bottles, *else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish* : so the love of God, the Gospel of the grace of God, and the blessings of it, are not received and retained, nor can they be, by natural men, by self-righteous persons : they don't suit and agree with their old carnal hearts and principles ; they slight and reject them, and let them run out, which proves their greater condemnation. *But they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.* By *new bottles* are meant sinners, whom Christ calls by his grace, and the spirit regenerates and renews, who are made new creatures in Christ ; who have new hearts, and new spirits, and new principles of light, life, love, faith, and holiness, implanted in them ; who have new eyes to see with, new ears to hear with, new feet to walk with, to and in Christ, new hands to work and handle with, and who live a new life and conversation. Now to such as these, the love of God is manifested and shed abroad in their hearts ; by these, the Gospel of Christ is truly received and valued, and these enjoy the spiritual blessings of it ; and so both the doctrine of the Gospel, and the grace of God, are preserved entire, and these persons saved in the day of Christ.

Ver. 18. *While he spake these things unto them, &c.*] To the Scribes and Pharisees, and to John's disciples, concerning, and in vindication of his, and his disciples, eating and drinking with publicans and sinners, and their not fasting as others did ; and while he spake these parables, to expose the folly of self-righteous persons, and justify his own conduct, in calling sinners to repentance, *behold, there came a certain ruler and worshipped him.* This man, as both Mark and Luke say, was named Jairus ; and was a ruler, not of the sanhedrim, or lesser consistory, but of the synagogue that was at Capernaum ; and whom the Jews call, *ראש הכנסת*, *the head of the synagogue*. Mark says, he was *one of the rulers* : not that there were more rulers than one, in one synagogue<sup>q</sup> : but as in great cities, so it is likely in Capernaum there were more synagogues than one, of which he was one of the rulers : so we read of *ראשי כנסיות*<sup>r</sup>, *heads, or rulers of synagogues.*

<sup>o</sup> Jarchi & Bartenora in Misn. Celim, c. 24. sect. 11. & Negaim, c. 11. sect. 11.

<sup>p</sup> T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 33. 1.

<sup>q</sup> Vid. Rhenfurd. de decem otiosis dissert. 2. c. 7.

<sup>r</sup> T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 60. 1.

As this is one mistake, so 'tis another to say, that Dr. Lightfoot speaks of this ruler, as the same with the *minister* of the congregation; when both here, and in the place referred to, he manifestly distinguishes them; as do the Jews: for, by this ruler, as their commentators' say, "the necessary affairs of the synagogue were determined, as who should dismiss with a prophet, who should divide the *shema*, and who should go before the ark." Whereas the business of *חזן הכבוד*, the *minister of the synagogue*, was to bring in and out the ark, or chest, in which was the book of the law; and particularly, when the high-priest read, or pronounced the blessings, he took the book, and gave it to the ruler of the synagogue; and the ruler of the synagogue gave it to the *sagan*, and the *sagan* to the high-priest. The doctor makes indeed *שליח הברור*, the messenger of the congregation, to be the same with the minister of the synagogue, and which is his mistake; for these were two different officers: the former was the lecturer, or preacher; and the latter, a sort of a sexton to keep the synagogue clean, open and shut the doors, and do other things before mentioned. This Jairus was a man of great power and significance; who in such a very humble manner prostrated himself at the feet of Jesus, and expressed such strong faith in him: saying, *my daughter is even now dead, but come and lay thine hand upon her, and she shall live.* Luke says, she was his only daughter; and Mark calls her his little daughter: though both he and Luke say, she was about twelve years of age, and that with strict propriety, according to the Jewish canons, which" say; that "a daughter, from the day of her birth until she is twelve years complete, is called *קטנה*, a little one— and when she is twelve years of age, and one day and upwards, she is called *נערה*, a young woman." Her case seems to be differently represented; Mark says, she was at the point of death, or in the last extremity; and Luke, that she lay a-dying: but Matthew here says, that she was even now dead, which may be easily reconciled: for not to observe, that *נערה* signifies near, and the phrase may be rendered, she is near dead, or just expiring, the case was this; when Jairus left his house, his daughter was in the agony of death, just ready to give up the ghost; so that he concluded, by the time he was with Jesus, she had made her exit; as it appears she had, by a messenger, who brought the account of her death, before they could get to the house. The ruler's address to Christ on this occasion, is a very considerable, though not so great an instance of faith as some others; that he, who was a ruler of a synagogue, should apply to Christ, which sort of men were generally most averse to him; that he should fall down and worship him, if not as God, since as yet he might be ignorant of his deity, yet behaved with the profoundest respect to him, as a great man, and a prophet; that he should come to him when his child was past all hope of recovery; yea, when he had reason to believe she was actually dead, as she was; that even

then, he should believe in hope against hope; he affirms, that he really believed, that if Christ would but come to his house, and lay his hand upon her, an action often used in grave and serious matters, as in blessing persons, in prayer, and in healing diseases, she would certainly be restored to life again.

Ver. 19. *And Jesus arose and followed him, &c.* Immediately, without delay, or any more ado: he did not upbraid him with the treatment he and his followers met with, from men of his profession; who cast out of their synagogues such, who confessed him to be the Messiah: nor does he take notice of any weakness in his faith; as that he thought it necessary he should go with him to his house, when he could as well have restored his daughter to life, absent, as present; and that he should prescribe a form of doing it, by laying his hands upon her. These things he overlooked, and at once got up from Matthew's table, and went along with him, and so did his disciples, to be witnesses of the miracle; and according to the other evangelists, a large multitude of people besides; even a throng of them, led by curiosity to see this wondrous performance.

Ver. 20. *And behold a woman which was diseased, &c.* This affair happened in the streets of Capernaum, as Christ was going from the house of Matthew the publican, to the house of Jairus the ruler of the synagogue, which were both in this city. This poor woman's case was a very distressed one; she had been attended with an issue of blood twelve years; it was an uncommon flux of a long standing, was inveterate, and become incurable; though she had not been negligent of herself, but had made use of means, applied herself to regular physicians, had took many a disagreeable medicine, and had spent all her substance in this way; but instead of being better, was worse, and was now given up by them, as past all cure. This woman might be truly called *זבה בודלה*, the greater profusious woman, in the language of the doctors; for if one that had a flux but three days was called so, much more one that had had it twelve years. She having heard of Jesus, and his miraculous cures, had faith given her to believe, that she also should receive one from him; wherefore she came behind him, through modesty, being ashamed to come before him, and tell him her case, especially before so many people; and fearing lest if her case was known, she should be thrust away, if not by Christ, yet by the company; she being according to the law an unclean person, and unfit for society: and touched the hem of his garment; which was the *ציצית*, or fringes, the Jews were obliged to wear upon the borders of their garments, and on it a ribband of blue; see Numb. xv. 38. Deut. xxii. 12. in both which places Onkelos uses the word *כרוספדין*, the same with *καρσισπιον*, used here, and in Mark vi. 56. and rendered hem. The Jews placed much sanctity in the wear and use of these fringes; and the Pharisees, who pretended to more holiness than others, enlarged them beyond their common size; but it was not on account of

\* Jarchi & Bartenora in Mian. Yoma, c. 7. sect. 1. & Sota, c. 7. sect. 7.

† Mian. Sota, c. 7. sect. 7. & Bartenora in ib.

‡ Vid. Rhenfurd, dissert. 1. p. 81, &c.

\* Maimon. Hilchot Ishot, c. 2. sect. 1. & Bartenora in Mian. Nidda, c. 5. sect. 6.

† Ib. Issure Bin, c. 6. sect. 7, 8. & in Mian. Nidda, c. 4. sect. 7.

any peculiar holiness in this part of Christ's garment, that induced this poor woman to touch it; but this being behind him, and more easy to be come at, she therefore laid hold on it; for it was his garment, any part of it she concluded, if she could but touch, she should have a cure. However, we learn from hence, that Christ complied with the rites of the ceremonial law in apparel, as well as in other things.

Ver. 21. *For she said within herself, &c.*] That is, she thought within herself, she reasoned the matter in her mind, she concluded upon it, and firmly believed it; being strongly impressed and influenced by the spirit of God, and encouraged by instances of cures she had heard were performed by persons only touching him; see Luke vi. 9. *if I may but touch his garment.* The Arabic version reads it, *the hem of his garment*, as before; but is not supported by any copy, nor by any other version: her faith was, that if she might be allowed, or if she could by any means come at him, to touch any part of his garment, she should have a cure: *I shall be whole, or I shall be saved*; that is, from her disease, from which she could have no deliverance, by the advice and prescriptions of all her former physicians, and by all the means she had made use of.

Ver. 22. *But Jesus turned him about, &c.*] Knowing what was done behind him, that virtue was gone out of him, that the woman had touched him, and was healed; which is a clear proof of his omniscience, and so of his deity: not that he was angry with her for touching him, though she was an impure woman; for though men and garments were defiled by the touch of a proffluous<sup>2</sup> person; yet such was the power and holiness of Christ, that as he could not be defiled by any such means, so hereby, at once, this woman's impurity was also removed: but Christ turned about to observe and point out the woman, and her cure, to the company; not for the sake of his own honour, but for the glory of God, the commendation of the woman's faith, and chiefly for the strengthening the faith of Jairus, with whom he was going to raise his daughter from the dead: *and when he saw her.* The other evangelists, Mark and Luke, record, that Jesus inquired who touched him, and what answer Peter and the disciples made to him; and how he looked around, and very likely fastened his eyes upon the woman; when she perceiving that she could not go off undiscovered, came trembling to him, fell down before him, and told him the whole matter; and then *he said, daughter be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole.* He addressed her in a kind and tender manner, calling her *daughter*; an affable, courteous way of speaking, used by the Jewish doctors<sup>3</sup>, when speaking to women: which shewed his affection, and bespoke his relation; and bidding her take heart and be of good cheer, since he meant not to blame her for what she had done, but to commend her faith in him, whereby she had received a cure: meaning, not that there was such virtue in her faith as to effect such a

cure; but that he, the object of her faith, had performed it for her: *and the woman was made whole from that hour*; her disease immediately left her, and from that time forward, was no more troubled with it: the cure was so effectual, and so perfect, that the disorder never returned more.

Ver. 23. *And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, &c.*] Both Mark and Luke relate, how that before this, whilst they were in the way, and just as Christ had done speaking to the poor woman, that news was brought to the ruler, that his daughter was actually dead, and therefore need not give Jesus any further trouble; when Christ encouraged him not to be cast down at the tidings, but believe, and she should be restored again; and that he suffered none to follow him, but Peter, James, and John: and *saw the minstrels, or pipers*; how many there were, is not known: 'tis certain there were more than one; and it was a rule with the<sup>2</sup> Jews that "the poorest man in Israel (when his wife died) had not less כושני חלילים, than "two pipes, and one mourning woman." And since this was a daughter of a ruler of the synagogue that was dead, there might be several of them. These instruments were made use of, not to remove the melancholy of surviving friends, or allay the grief of the afflicted family; but, on the contrary, to excite it: for the Jewish writers say<sup>3</sup>, these pipes were hollow instruments, with which they made a known sound, לעורר הבכיה והאבל, to stir up lamentation and mourning: and for the same purpose, they had their mourning women, who answered to the pipe; and by their dishevelled hair, and doleful tones, moved upon the affections, and drew tears from others; and very likely are the persons, that Mark says, *wept and wailed greatly.* Sometimes trumpets were made use of on these mournful occasions<sup>4</sup>; but whether these were used only for persons more advanced in years, and pipes for younger ones, as by the Heathens<sup>5</sup>, at least, at some times, is not certain. *And the people making a noise*: the people of the house, the relations of the deceased, the neighbours, who came in on this occasion; and others, in a sort of tumult and uproar, hurrying and running about; some speaking in the praise of the dead, others lamenting her death, and others preparing things proper for the funeral; all which shew, that she was really dead: among these also, might be the mourners that made a noise for the dead; "for since mourning was for the honour of the dead, therefore they obliged the heirs to hire mourning men, and mourning women, to mourn for the same<sup>6</sup>."

Ver. 24. *And he said unto them, give place, &c.*] Depart, be gone; for he put them out of the room, and suffered none to be with him, when he raised her from the dead, but Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the child, who were witnesses enough of this miracle. *For the maid is not dead, but sleepeth*: not but that she was really dead; and Christ signifies as much, when he says, she *sleepeth*; a phrase that is often used in<sup>7</sup> Talmudic writings,

<sup>2</sup> Mian. Oholot, c. 1. sect. 5. & Zabim, c. 2. sect. 4. & 3. 1. 2, 3. & 4, 5. & 5. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Mian. Yadaim, c. 3. sect. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Mian. Cetubot, c. 4. sect. 4. Maimon Isot, c. 14. sect. 23.

<sup>5</sup> Maimon & Bartenora in Mian. Sabbath, c. 23. sect. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Midrash Kohelet, fol. 77. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Vid. Kirchman. de funer. Roman. l. 2. c. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Ebel, c. 19. sect. 1.

<sup>9</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 6. 1. Avoda Zara, fol. 42. 3. Beresit Rabba Parash. 91. fol. 79. 3.

for one that is dead: but Christ's meaning is, that she was not so dead as the company thought; as always to remain in the state of the dead, and not to be restored to life again: whereas our Lord signifies, it would be seen in a very little time, that she should be raised again, just as a person is awaked out of sleep; so that there was no occasion to make such funeral preparations as they did. The Jews say<sup>1</sup> of some of their dead, that they are asleep, and not dead: it is said, Isa. xxvi. 19. *Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust.* "These, say they, are they that sleep and die not; and such are they that sleep in Hebron, for they" *לוא מרין אלמ דמוכין*, *do not die, but sleep*,—the four "couples in Hebron (Adam and Eve, &c.) they sleep, but are not dead." *And they laughed him to scorn; they mocked at his words, and had him in the utmost contempt, as a very weak silly man; taking him either to be a madman, or a fool; knowing that she was really dead, of which they had all the evidence they could have; and having no faith at all in him, and in his power to raise her from the dead.*

Ver. 25. *But when the people were put forth, &c.]* Either out of the house or room, by Christ, or, at least, by his orders: which was done, partly because he was desirous it might be kept a secret, as much as possible, and to shew, that he did not affect popular applause; and partly, because they were unworthy to be admitted spectators of such a wondrous action, who had treated him with so much scorn and contempt: *he went in; not alone, but with his three disciples, Peter, James, and John, who were taken in to be witnesses of this resurrection, and the parents of the child; who were so very solicitous for its life, under whose power she was, and to whom she was to be restored: and took her by the hand; just as one would do to awake another out of sleep; and, perhaps, in compliance with her father's request, to lay his hand upon her: and though the touch of a dead body, according to the law, Numb. xix. 16. was defiling; yet this did not defile him, any more than his touching the leper, or the profluvious woman's touching his clothes; for these actions produced supernatural effects, which came not under the cognizance of the law. His taking her by the hand, was not all that he did, but he called, as to a person asleep, and said unto her these words, *Talitha cumi*, as recorded by Mark, and are also in Munster's Hebrew Gospel of Matthew; and which, in the Syriac language, signify, *maiden, arise*; and immediately, directly, as soon as ever he had thus said, *the maid arose*, as out of sleep; she revived, her soul came to her again, and she got off the bed, and walked about house, and food was ordered to be given to her. All which most fully demonstrated that she was really restored to life, which was as clear a case, as that before she was really dead.*

Ver. 26. *And the same hereof went abroad into all that land.]* For though he strictly charged the parents, as the other evangelists say, that they should tell no man what was done, he not affecting the applause of men; yet it was not possible the thing should be entirely concealed; since there was such a number of

people, not only relations, but neighbours, who full well knew, and were assured she had been dead: when these saw her alive, walk about, eat and drink, and converse with them, they must be persuaded of the miracle, and relate it wherever they came; so that the fame of it could not but be spread all over the country in which Capernaum was.

Ver 27. *And when Jesus departed thence, &c.]* From the house of Jairus, to another in the same city; *two blind men followed him*: very closely, by the direction of others, having heard of the miracle just now performed by him; and from thence concluded he was able to restore them to their sight; *crying and saying*, with great faith and fervour, with much importunity, and frequently repeating the following words, *thou son of David, have mercy on us*. Whence it appears, that they firmly believed, and were fully persuaded, that he was the true Messiah; for the *son of David* was a known character of the Messiah among the Jews: nothing was more common than to call him by this title, without any other additional epithet; see the note on Matt. i. 1. and since it had been prophesied of the Messiah, that he should *open the eyes of the blind*, Isa. xxxv. 5. and xlii. 7. they might be greatly encouraged to hope and believe they should obtain mercy from him in this respect.

Ver. 28. *And when he was come into the house, &c.]* In which he dwelt, whilst at Capernaum: for he took no notice of them by the way; but though they followed him close, and cried vehemently, he did not stop to speak to them, or give them a cure, according to their request, but went on his way; which he did, partly to avoid the populace, and that he might not be seen by men, in what he did, and partly to try their faith, and the constancy of it. *The blind men came to him; being directed by others, into what house he went, and where he was, and very probably with the leave of Christ: and Jesus saith unto them, believe ye that I am able to do this?* That is, to have mercy on them, as they requested, by curing them of their blindness; which, though not expressed, is implied, and is the thing designed: this question is put, not as being ignorant of, or as doubting their faith in him, which they had expressed, in calling him the son of David; and had shewn the firmness and constancy of it, by following him, though he took no notice of them; but partly, for the further trial of their faith, and to bring them to a more open profession of it, as to this particular, his power to cure them of their blindness; and partly, for the sake of those that were in the house: *they said unto him, yea, Lord*. They firmly believed he had power to do it, they had not the least doubt and hesitation in their minds about it; for though their bodily eyes were at present dark, the eyes of their understandings were enlightened, to see and know Jesus to be the true Messiah, David's son, and Lord.

Ver. 29. *Then touched he their eyes, &c.]* Not but that he could have restored sight to them, without touching their eyes, by a word speaking, or by the secret communication of his power; but he might do this as a sign of his favour and kindness to them, and

<sup>1</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 69. 4.

of his will to cure them; as also in compliance with their weakness, who might expect some manual operation upon them; *saying, according to your faith be it unto you*: not that faith in his person and power, was the cause or condition of this cure, or the rule and measure according to which Christ proceeded; but the sense is, that as they had believed he was able to heal them, accordingly a cure should be effected; which, upon his so saying, they immediately found performed in them.

Ver. 30. *And their eyes were opened, &c.*] Some copies read, *immediately*; and so do the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions: and this was certainly the true and real matter of fact, that as soon as Christ had touched their eyes, and said the above words, their sight was perfectly restored to them; and they had a clear, full, and true sight of objects, as men have, whose visive faculty is in its full strength and vigour, and their eyes open: *and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, see that no man know it.* This was a very strict charge, and according to the signification of the word here used, it was given with great austerity of countenance, and severity of expression, in a very rough and threatening manner; which Christ might be the rather induced to, because he had given such like orders already, and they had not been observed: the reasons for concealing the miracle are not very obvious; it seems likely, that with the same view he took no notice of these blind men in the street, but went into an house, and cured them; which seems to be, to shun all appearance of vain glory, or seeking popular applause, that he gave these orders; or it may be, he did not choose to be made more known by this miracle, or at this time, or by these men; he might foresee that it would be attended with ill consequences; either the more to irritate the resentments of some persons against him; or to put others on doing things which were disagreeable to him; as setting him up for a temporal prince among them, being David's son.

Ver. 31. *But they, when they were departed, &c.*] That is, out of the house where they received their cure, and out of the city; for it appears, by what follows, they went into other parts, where it is probable they might originally belong; they *spread abroad his fame in all that country.* This they did, not in contempt of Christ and his orders; but rather out of gratitude to their benefactor, and through an honest zeal to spread his honour and glory: though they are not to be commended for disregarding the command of Christ; for, not our affection, but Christ's will, is to be the rule of our actions.

Ver. 32. *As they went out, &c.*] The Syriac version reads it, *when Jesus went out*; to which agrees the Arabic, against all the copies: for not he, but the men who had been blind, and now had their sight restored, went out from the house where Jesus was; which circumstance is mentioned, and by it the following account is introduced, partly to shew how busy Christ was, how he was continually employed in doing good, and that as soon as one work of mercy was over, another offered; and partly, to observe how closely and exactly the prophecies of the Old Testament were

fulfilled; in which, as it was foretold, that *the eyes of the blind should be opened*; so likewise, that *the tongue of the dumb should sing*, Isa. xxxv. 5, 6. *Behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.* The word signifies one that is deaf, as well as dumb; as does the Hebrew word דָּוָם, often used by the Jewish writers for a deaf and dumb man; one, they say †, that can neither hear nor speak, and is unfit for sacrifice, and excused many things: and indeed these two, deafness and dumbness, always go together in persons, who are deaf from their birth; for as they cannot hear, they cannot learn to speak: but this man seems to be dumb, not by nature, but through the possession of Satan, who had taken away, or restrained the use of his speech, out of pure malice and ill will, that he might not have the benefit of conversation with men, nor be able to say any thing to the glory of God. This man did not come of himself to Christ, perhaps being unwilling, through the power and influence the devil had over him; but his friends, who were concerned for his welfare, and who were thoroughly persuaded of the power of Christ to heal him, by the miracles they had seen, or heard performed by him, brought him to him; and, no doubt, expressed their desire that he would cast out the devil, and cure him, which he did.

Ver. 33. *And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake, &c.*] The cause of his dumbness being removed, the effect ceased, and the man spake as he did before, and as other men do; and this was done, according to the Persic version, *as soon as Christ saw him*; the devil not being able to bear his presence, much less withstand his power: but as soon as Christ had set his eyes upon the man possessed by him, and had given him orders to be gone, he immediately went out, and the man was restored to his speech again; *and the multitude marvelled, saying, it was never so seen in Israel.* The vast crowds of people, who were alarmed with the former miracles of Christ, and came along with the friends of the dumb man, when they heard him speak so suddenly and plainly, and with so much freedom, nothing being said or done to him, were surprised; and declared very frankly, that though many wonderful things had been done in Israel, in times past, by Moses, Elijah, Elisha, and others, yet never were such things seen, or heard, or known of, as were done by Christ: referring not to this miracle only, but to all the rest he had just wrought; as curing the woman of her bloody issue, raising Jairus's daughter from the dead, restoring sight to the two blind men, and now casting out a dumb devil.

Ver. 34. *But the Pharisees said, &c.*] Who were the sworn enemies of Christ, and were filled with envy at him, and malice against him: these men could not bear, that so much honour and glory should be given to Christ; and therefore said, *he casteth out the devils through the prince of the devils*: they could not deny matter of fact, that he had cast out a devil; nor could they say he had done an ill thing in so doing; they could not but own that it was a preternatural action, more than human; nor could they contradict what the multitude said, that no such thing had been ever seen,

† Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Trumot, c. 1. sect. 2. T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 2. 2.



or known, in Israel: but that Christ might not have the glory of the action, and to fix a mark of infamy upon him, foolishly impute it to a diabolical influence, as if one devil would eject another; and to Christ's familiarity with, and the assistance he had from, not a common devil, but the prince of them. In Beza's most ancient manuscript, and in some others, this whole verse is wanting; and were it not for the general consent of copies, one should be tempted to think these words were not said at this time, because Christ returns no answer to them; and what is observed by Luke, ch. xi. 15. as following this miracle, is the self-same as was spoken by Christ in Matt. xii. 24, 25. and where this passage is more thoroughly considered.

Ver. 35. *And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, &c.* He did not confine himself, and his acts of kindness and compassion, to his own city, Capernaum, but he took a circuit throughout all Galilee; and not only visited their larger and more principal cities and towns, but their villages also; doing good to the bodies and souls of men in every place, and of whatever state and condition. *Teaching in their synagogues*; which were places of public worship, where prayer was made, the law and the prophets were read, and a word of exhortation given to the people; and which, it seems, were in villages, as well as in cities and towns: and indeed it is a rule with the Jews<sup>h</sup>, that "in what place soever there are ten Israelites, they ought to build a house, to which they may go to prayer, at all times of prayer; and such a place is called *בית הכנסת*, a *synagogue*." And hence we often read of *בית הכנסת של כפרים*, the *synagogue of villages*, as distinct from the *synagogues of cities and walled towns*; which confutes a notion of the learned Dr. Lightfoot<sup>k</sup>, who thought there were no synagogues in villages. Now, wherever Christ found any of these, he entered into them, and taught the people publicly, *preaching the Gospel of the kingdom*: the good news and glad tidings of peace and pardon, reconciliation and salvation, by himself the Messiah; all things relating to the Gospel dispensation; the doctrines of grace, which concern both the kingdom of grace and glory; particularly the doctrine of regeneration, and the necessity of having a better righteousness than that of the Scribes and Pharisees; the one as a meetness, the other as a title to eternal happiness: *and healing every sickness, and every disease among the people*. As he preached wholesome doctrine for the good of their souls, for their spiritual health, and the cure of their spiritual maladies; so he healed all sorts of diseases the bodies of men were incident to, that were brought unto him; and by his miracles confirmed, as well as recommended, the doctrines he preached.

Ver. 36. *But when he saw the multitudes, &c.* As he took his circuit through the several cities, towns, and villages, he made his observations upon the large numbers that flocked to his ministry, and seemed to be desirous of spiritual instructions, in what an unhappy and melancholy situation they were; and he was moved with compassion on them: his bowels yearned

for them, he was touched with a feeling of their infirmities, as the merciful high-priest, the good shepherd, and faithful prophet; being heartily concerned for the souls of men, their comfort here, and everlasting happiness hereafter: *because they fainted*; being fatigued and tired, not in their bodies, through journeying from place to place, to hear the word, but in their minds; being burdened and wearied with the various traditions and doctrines of the Scribes and Pharisees: *and were scattered abroad*; thrown and tossed about, and divided through the different sects of religion among them; no due care was taken of them, to gather and keep them together, and feed them with wholesome doctrine; but were as abjects, outcasts, that no man regarded, and in great danger of the loss and ruin of their immortal souls: being *as sheep without a shepherd*: that was good for any thing, or did the office and duty of a shepherd to them: the Scribes and Pharisees were shepherds indeed, such as they were, but very bad ones; like the shepherds of Israel of old, who fed themselves, and not the flock; who strengthened not the diseased, nor healed the sick, nor bound up that which was broken; nor brought again that which was driven away, nor sought that which was lost: but on the contrary, caused them to go astray from mountain to hill; whereby they forgot their resting-place, in the Messiah promised them, and who was now come.

Ver. 37. *Then saith he unto his disciples, &c.* His heart being drawn out, and filled with pity to these poor people, upon observing the miserable and sad condition they were in; he turns himself to his disciples, whom he was about to call, and send forth in a more public manner to preach the Gospel, of which we read in the following chapter; and in order to quicken them to this service, and engage their hearts in it, says unto them, *the harvest truly is plenteous*; meaning the large number of God's elect, which were in these cities, towns, and villages, and in other places: not that these were maturely prepared by any thing in themselves, or done by them, for the grace of God; and much less ripe for the kingdom of glory, and therefore called an harvest: but as there are the appointed weeks of the harvest, or a set time for the harvest to be gathered in, so there is a certain fixed time, settled in the counsel, and by the purpose of God, for the effectual vocation and conversion of his elect; and this time being come, with respect to these in Galilee, and other parts, Christ calls them an *harvest*: and because of their number, a large, or *plenteous* one. *But the labourers are few*: Gospel ministers; whose calling is a laborious one; whose business is to labour in the word and doctrine; to be constant in prayer; to give up themselves to meditation and reading; to study to shew themselves workmen; to preach the word in season, and out of season; and diligently discharge the several duties of their office, to the glory of Christ, and the good of souls: but such painful and laborious ministers, who are willing to spend, and be spent for

<sup>h</sup> Maimon Hilchot Tephilla, c. 11. sect. 1.

<sup>i</sup> T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 26. 1. & Gloss. in ib. Maimon. & Bartenora

in Misn. Megilla, c. 3. sect. 1. & Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 11. sect. 16.

<sup>k</sup> In Mark i. 38. & Chorograph. ad Matt. c. 98.

Christ and immortal souls, have been but few in all ages; generally speaking, there are more loiterers than labourers.

Ver. 38. *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, &c.*] By the *Lord of the harvest* is either meant God the father, whose are all the elect, who has a hearty concern for them, and will have them all gathered in, not one of them shall be left; or the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who has the care and charge of the whole election of grace; and who as he must, he will bring them all in; and who has power of sending forth labourers, as the following chapter shews; and so this is a proof of prayer being made to Christ; *that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.* This is the petition the disciples of Christ were put upon making to the Lord of the harvest, on consideration of the present condition multitudes of souls were in: they could not make, qualify, and send out ministers themselves; this is not man's work, but God's: he only is able to furnish with ministerial gifts, to work upon, and powerfully incline the hearts of men to this service, to call and send them forth into it, and to assist and succeed them in it. The persons desired

to be sent are *labourers*; faithful, diligent, and industrious preachers of the Gospel; such as lay out themselves, their time, talents, and strength, in their master's service; and don't indulge themselves in sloth and idleness: the place they are desired to be sent into is, *into the harvest*; into the field of the world, where God's elect lie, and there labour in preaching the Gospel; hoping for a divine blessing, and an almighty power to attend their ministrations, for the conversion of sinners, and edification of saints. The request the disciples are directed to make, concerning these persons for this work, is, that the Lord of the harvest would *send, or thrust them forth*; implying power and efficacy, and authority, on the part of the sender; and backwardness on the part of those that are sent, through modesty: a sense of the greatness of the work, and of their own unworthiness and unfitness for it. Very opportunely did our Lord move his disciples to put up this petition, and was done, no question, with a view to, and to prepare for, his mission of the twelve to preach the Gospel, of which there is an account in the next chapter.

#### C H A P. X.

Ver. 1. *AND when he had called to him his twelve disciples, &c.*] These persons had been for some time called by the grace of God, and were already the disciples of Christ, and such as were more familiar and intimate with him, than others, that went by that name. They had sat down at his feet, and had received of his words; they had heard his doctrines, and had seen his miracles, and had been by him training up for public work; but as yet had not been called and sent forth to enter on such service: but now all things being ready, they being properly instructed, and the time for the conversion of a large number of souls being up, he called them together privately; and gave them a commission to preach the Gospel, ordained them ministers of the word, and installed them into the office of apostleship. The number *twelve*, is either in allusion to the twelve spies that were sent by Moses into the land of Canaan; or to the twelve stones in Aaron's breast-plate; or to the twelve fountains the Israelites found in the wilderness; or to the twelve oxen on which the molten sea stood in Solomon's temple; or to the twelve gates in Ezekiel's temple; or rather, to the twelve patriarchs, and the tribes which sprung from them; that as they were the fathers of the Jewish nation, which was typical of God's chosen people; so these were to be the instruments of spreading the Gospel, not only in Judea, but in all the world, and of planting Christian churches there. And that they might appear to come forth with authority, and that their doctrine might be confirmed, *he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out; or over all devils, as Luke ix. 1.* It was usual with the Jews to call a demon or devil *רוח טמאה*, an *unclean spirit*; especially such

as frequented burying-places: so in one place<sup>1</sup>, an unclean spirit is interpreted by the gloss, *רוח שדים*, *the spirit of the demons, or devils*; and in another<sup>2</sup> place, *רוח הקברות*, *the demon of the graves*; where necromancers sought to be, that these spirits might be their familiars, and assist them in their enchantments: accordingly the devils are here called, *unclean spirits*; being in themselves, in their own nature, unclean, and being the cause and means of defiling others, and delighting in impure persons, places, and things. There were many of these spirits, who, because of the great impiety of the Jews, the prevalence of magic arts among them, and by divine permission, had at this time taken possession of great numbers of persons; whereby Christ had an opportunity of giving proof of his deity, of his being the Messiah, the seed of the woman, that should bruise the serpent's head, by his ejecting them; and of confirming the mission of his disciples, and establishing the doctrine preached by them, by giving them power and authority over them, to cast them out also: and whereas various diseases frequently followed and attended such possessions; he likewise gave them power to *heal all manner of sicknesses, and all manner of diseases*, as he himself had done. The expressions are very full and strong, and include all sorts of maladies incident to human bodies, either of men or women; all distempers natural or preternatural, curable or incurable, by human methods: so that at the same time they were sent to preach the Gospel, for the cure of the souls of men, they were empowered to heal the diseases of their bodies; and which, one should think, could not fail of recommending them to men, and of ingratiating them into their affections.

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 3. 2.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 65. 2.

Ver. 2. *Now the names of the twelve apostles are these, &c.*] This is the first time these disciples are called *apostles*, they were learners before; now being instructed, they are sent forth to preach publicly, and therefore are called *apostles*, or messengers, persons that were sent: so the elders of the priesthood are called *שְׁלוּחֵי בֵּית דִין*, *the apostles*, or messengers of the *sanhedrim*, to whom the high-priest were delivered, before the day of atonement. So six months in the year, *שְׁלוּחֵי*, *apostles*, or messengers, were sent by the *sanhedrim*, throughout all the land of Israel, and to the captive Jews in other parts, to give notice of the new moon; in allusion to which, the disciples might be so called. It was proper to give the names of them, for the truth of the history, and confirmation of it; for the sake of the persons themselves, and the honour done them; and for the exclusion and detection of false apostles. *The first, Simon, who is called Peter*; his pure Hebrew name was *שִׁמְעוֹן*, Simeon, as he is called, Acts xv. 14. but in the then Jerusalem dialect, and in Rabbinical language, this name is frequently read and pronounced *סִימון*, *Simon*, as here: we often read of R. Simon, and of R. Juda bar Simon, in both Talmuds<sup>2</sup>. This apostle is also called Peter, to distinguish him from Simon the Canaanite, and which signifies a stone, or rock, in allusion to the object of his faith, and the steadiness of it. He is said to be the *first*; not that he was the head of the rest of the apostles, or had any primacy, dominion, and authority over them; but because he was first called, and was the first that was to open the door of faith to the Gentiles: but chiefly he is said to be so for order's sake; for, some one in the account must be named first, and he as proper as any: *and Andrew his brother*; who was called at the same time with him, and therefore are put together. This name is also to be met with in the Talmudic writings; see note on Matt. iv. 18. *James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother*; these two were called next and together, and therefore are placed in this order: the former is so called, to distinguish him from another James, the son of Alphaeus, after mentioned; and the latter is the beloved disciple; these were surnamed *Boanerges*, that is, *sons of thunder*.

Ver. 3. *Philip and Bartholomew, &c.*] The first of these was called next; his name is a Greek one, which his parents, though Jews, might take from the Greeks that dwelt among them, see John xii. 20, 21. mention is made of one R. Phelipi, and Phulipa, in the Jewish writings<sup>3</sup>. The latter of these, Bartholomew, is conjectured, by Dr. Lightfoot, to be the same with Nathanael, he being called next in order after Philip; and that his name was Nathanael, *נַתְנָאֵל*, *Bar Talmai*, or the son of *Talmai*, or *Ptolomy*: a name once common, to the kings of Egypt: so Talmai, king of Gesur, is called by the Septuagint, in 2 Sam. iii. 3. and xiii. 37. called Tholmi, and in 1

Chron. iii. 2. Tholmai: hence it appears, that Bartholomew is no other than Bartholmi, or the son of Tholmi. We read of one R. Jonathan, *בֶּן אֲבוֹלֵמוֹס*, *ben Abtolemus*, in the Talmud<sup>4</sup>, whether the same name with this, may be considered. *Thomas, and Matthew the publican*: by the other evangelists Matthew is mentioned first; but he being the writer of this Gospel, puts Thomas first, which is an instance of his modesty; and also calls himself the *publican*, which the other do not: this he mentions, to magnify the grace of God in his vocation. The Jews<sup>5</sup> speak of *מַטְתָּי*, *Matthai*, or *Matthew*, as a disciple of Jesus. Thomas was sometimes called Didymus; the one was his Hebrew, the other his Greek name, and both signify a *twin*, as it is very likely he was: mention is made of R. Thoma, or Thomas bar Papias, in a Jewish writer<sup>6</sup>. Next follow, *James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus*: the former of these is so called, to distinguish him from James, the son of Zebedee. This is the James, who was the brother of our Lord, Gal. i. 19. and is called *James the less*, Mark xv. 40. Alphaeus his father, is the same with Cleopas, Luke xxiv. 18, or Cleophas, John xix. 25. The Hebrew name, *הַלְפִי*, which often occurs among the Jews<sup>7</sup>, may be pronounced either Chlophi, or Alphi, or with the Greek termination Cleopas, or Alphaeus. The latter of this pair of apostles is the same person with Jude, the writer of the epistle, which bears that name, and was the brother of James, with whom he is coupled: he was called Lebbeus, either from the town of Lebba, a sea-coast town of Galilee, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks; or from the Hebrew word *לֵב*, *my heart*, as others, either for his prudence, or through the affections of his parents to him; as the Latins call one they love, *meum corculum, my little heart*; or from *לֵבִיא*, a *lion*, that being the motto of the tribe of Judah. His surname Thaddeus, is thought by some to be a deflexion of Jude; or Judas, and as coming from the same root, *יָדָה*, which signifies *to praise*, or *give thanks*; or from the Syriac word, *תָּר*, a *breast*, and may be so called for the same reason as he was Lebbeus. Frequent mention is made of this name, *תְּרַיָא*, *Thaddai*, or *Thaddeus*, among the Talmudic<sup>8</sup> doctors. The Jews themselves speak<sup>9</sup> of one *תְּרֻדָּה*, *Thodah*, as a disciple of Jesus, by whom no doubt they mean this same disciple. Eusebius<sup>10</sup> mentions one Thaddeus, as one of the seventy disciples, who was sent to Agbarus, king of Edessa, who was healed and converted by him. This Agbarus is reported to have wrote a letter to Jesus Christ, desiring him to come and cure him of his disease; to which Christ is said to return an answer, promising to send one of his disciples, who should do it; and that accordingly, after Christ's death, Thomas sent this Thaddeus to him.

Ver. 4. *Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, &c.*] This is the last couple, for they are all mentioned by

<sup>2</sup> Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Misn. Roshhasana, c. 1. sect. 3. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>4</sup> T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 46. 4. Bab. Sabbath, fol. 55. 1. & Bava Kama, fol. 47. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Massechet Sopherim, c. 21. sect. 7. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 71. fol. 63. 4.

<sup>6</sup> T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 19. 1.

<sup>7</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 43. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Juchasin, fol. 105. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Echa Rabbati, fol. 58. 4. Midrash Kobelet, fol. 60. 4. Juchasin, fol. 92. 1.

<sup>10</sup> T. Hieros. Celaim, fol. 27. 2. Sabbath, fol. 6. 1. Erubim, fol. 23. 3. Bab. Sabbath, fol. 123. 1. & Erubim, fol. 71. 2. Juchasin, fol. 81. 1. & 105. 2. & 108. 1.

<sup>11</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 43. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Eccl. Hist. l. 1. c. 12, 13.

pairs, because they were sent forth *by two and two*, as the Evangelist Mark says, chap. vi. 7. The former of these is called Simon the Canaanite, to distinguish him from Simon Peter, before mentioned; not that he was a Canaanite, that is, an inhabitant of the land of Canaan, a man of Canaan, as a certain woman is called a woman of Canaan, Matt. xv. 22. for all the disciples of Christ were Jews; though in Munster's Hebrew Gospel he is called שִׁמְעוֹן הַכְּנַעֲנִי, *Simeon the Canaanite*, or of Canaan, as if he belonged to that country; nor is he so called from Cana of Galilee, as Jerom and others have thought; but he was one of the קְנַאִים, *Kanaïm*, or *Zealots*; and therefore Luke styles him, *Simon called Zelotes*, chap. vi. 15. and Acts i. 13. The Kanaïtes, or Zelotes, were a set of men, who, in imitation of Phinehas, who slew Zimri and Cozbi in the very act of uncleanness, when they found any persons in the act of adultery, idolatry, blasphemy, or theft, would immediately kill them without any more ado: this they did, from a pretended zeal for the honour and glory of God: nor were they accountable to any court of judicature for it; yea, such an action was highly applauded, as a very laudable one<sup>2</sup>: under this specious name of Zealots, innumerable murders, and most horrible wickedness were committed, both before, and during the siege of Jerusalem, as Josephus<sup>4</sup> relates. Now Simon was one of this sect before his conversion, and still retained the name afterwards. Judas, the last of the twelve, is called Iscariot; concerning which name, the notation of it, and the reason of his being so called, many are the conjectures of learned men: some think that he belonged to the tribe of Issachar, and that he is called from thence, אִישׁ יִשָּׁשָׁר, *a man of Issachar*, as a certain man is, in Judges x. 1. others, that he takes his name from the place he belonged to, and that he was called אִישׁ קְרִיּוֹת, *a man of Keriouth*. A place of this name is mentioned, Josh. xv. 25. and some manuscripts and copies in some places read Judas אַרֹו קַאָרְיֹוֹט, of *Caryot*. Caryota is said<sup>b</sup> to be a plain of the city of Jericho, about eighteen miles from Jerusalem, which abounded in palm-trees, called קַרְיֹוֹת, *Caryotæ*, of which mention is made in the<sup>c</sup> Talmud, and other writers<sup>d</sup>. Others think he is so called, from the Syriac word, סַכְרִיּוֹת, *secariota*, which signifies a *purse*, or *bag*, because he carried the bag. Some copies read it, סַכְרִיּוֹת, *scariotes*: others are of opinion, that he is so called, from the manner of death he died, which was strangling: for אַסְכְרָא, *ascara*, a word often used in the<sup>e</sup> Talmudic writings, signifies *strangling*; and is accounted by the Jews the hardest of deaths, and an evil one; and which seems to bid fair for the true reason of his name: however, it is mentioned here, as elsewhere, to distinguish him from Jude, or Judas, the true and faithful apostle of Christ; for this was he, *who also betrayed him*: that is, Christ, as the Persic version reads it; and which is mentioned, not only for further distinction's sake, but to his great reproach. We learn from hence, that in the purest society on earth there has been an impure person; nor can it therefore be

expected it should be otherwise in the best of churches, in the present state of imperfection; yea, that a man may have the highest gifts and attainments, as Judas had, ministerial gifts, and power of performing miracles, and yet be a vile person.

Ver. 5. *These twelve Jesus sent forth, &c.*] And no other but them, under the character of apostles. These had been with him a considerable time, to whom he had been gradually communicating spiritual knowledge; and by the benefit of private conference with him, and the observation they had made upon his doctrine and conduct, were greatly qualified for public usefulness: wherefore he gives them a commission, furnishes them with power and authority; and sends them forth from him by pairs, that they might be assisting to one another, and bear a joint testimony to the Gospel they preached; but before he sent them forth from his presence, he gave them some directions where they should go, and to whom they should minister, and where not: *and he commanded them*, as their Lord and Master; he gave them strict orders, which he expected them to comply with, and closely enjoined them, as they must answer it to him again, *saying, go not into the way of the Gentiles*; meaning, not the customs' and manners of the Heathens, they were to avoid; but that they were not to steer their course, or take their journey towards them: they were not, as yet, to go among them, and preach the Gospel to them; the calling of the Gentiles was not a matter, as yet, so clearly revealed and known, nor was the time of their vocation come: besides it was the will of God, that the Gospel should be first preached to the Jews, to take off all excuse from them, and that their obstinacy and perverseness in rejecting Jesus as the Messiah, might manifestly appear; and since Christ himself was the minister of the circumcision, he would have his apostles, for the present, whilst he was on earth, act agreeably to the character he bore, that there might be an entire harmony in their conduct. *And into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not*: the word *any* is supplied, and that very rightly; for, not the city of Samaria, the metropolis of that country, as the Arabic version reads it, is only meant, but any, and every city of the Samaritans: not that it was strictly unlawful and criminal to go thither; for he himself went into one of their cities, and so did his apostles, John iv. 4, 5, 8. Luke ix. 52. and after his death preached the Gospel there; but he judged it not proper and expedient at this time, and as yet, to do it; that is, not before their preaching it to the Jews; for there was a very great hatred subsisting between the Jews and the Samaritans, insomuch that they had no conversation with each other in things civil or religious. The Samaritans, though they boasted of their descent from Jacob, were a mungrel sort of people, partly Jews, and partly Gentiles, a mixture of both; and therefore are distinguished from both: and though they had, and held the law, and five books of Moses, yet cor-

<sup>2</sup> Misp. Saubhedrim, c. 9. sect. 6. & Bartenora, in ib. T. Avoda Zara, fol. 36. 2. Maimon. Issure Bia, c. 12. sect. 4, 5, 6, 14. & Saubhedrim, c. 18. sect. 6. & Obede Cochabim, c. 2. sect. 9. Philo de Monarchia, l. 1. p. 318.  
<sup>3</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 1, 2. & 6. 1. Vid. Abot R. Nathan, c. 6. fol. 3. 2.

<sup>b</sup> Vid. Wolfii Heb. Bibl. p. 410.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Beraot, fol. 50. 2. & Avoda Zara, fol. 14. 2.

<sup>d</sup> Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 4.

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Beraot, fol. 8. 1. & Sabbath, fol. 33. 1. Sota, fol. 35. 1. Pesachim, fol. 105. 1. Taanith, fol. 19. 2. & 37. 2. Yebamot, fol. 62. 2.

rupted them in many places, to serve their purpose, and countenance their religion, particularly their worshipping at Mount Gerizzim; on which account they were looked upon by the Jews as apostates, idolaters, and even as Heathens<sup>f</sup>, and are therefore here joined with them; and to shun giving offence to the Jews, seems to be the reason of this prohibition; see the note on John iv. 20.

Ver. 6. *But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*] To whom he himself was sent, chap. xv. 24. By the *house of Israel* is meant the whole Jewish nation; for though this phrase, when distinguished from the house of Judah, designs only the ten tribes; yet here it intends all the Jews, then living in the land of Judea, among whom there were some of all the tribes: and by the *lost sheep* of this house, are meant either all the people of the Jews in general, who were wandering, and were lost in error and sin, and to whom the external ministry of the Gospel came; or rather the elect of God among them, for whose sake particularly the apostles were sent unto them. These are called *sheep*, because they were chosen of God, and given to Christ to be redeemed, looked up, sought out, and saved by him; and *lost* ones, not only because lost in Adam, and by their own transgressions, so that neither they themselves, nor any mere creature, could save them from eternal ruin and destruction; but also, because they were made to go astray, and were lost through the negligence and errors of their pastors, the Scribes and Pharisees: and this character is the rather given of them, partly to reflect upon the characters of the shepherds of Israel: and partly to magnify the grace of God, in having regard to such ruined and miserable creatures; and also to excite the compassion and diligence of the apostles, to preach the Gospel to them: respect seems to be had to Jer. l. 6.

Ver. 7. *And as ye go, &c.*] Through the cities of Judea, and the streets thereof, from one city to another, from place to place; for these were itinerant preachers, who were not to abide long in any place, but to move about, that the Gospel might be spread all over the land, and the lost sheep in every corner be sought out and found. *Preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* This was to be the subject-matter of their ministry, which they were to proclaim aloud in every place; and which is expressed in the same words with which John the Baptist, and Christ himself, began their ministry, Matt. iii. 2. and iv. 17. which shews the entire harmony, and strict agreement, there were between them: for the meaning of the phrase, see note on Matt. iii. 2. The Cambridge copy reads, *repent, for the kingdom, &c.*

Ver. 8. *Heal the sick; &c.*] For so he had given them power to do, and this both for the confirmation of their doctrine, and the recommendation of them to men; for nothing could more evidently prove their mission to be divine, and their doctrine from heaven, or be more acceptable to men, than to *heal* their sick friends and relations, who were given up by physicians, and incurable by the art of man; and to do

this without the use of medicines, either by a word speaking, or by laying on of their hands, or by anointing with oil, joined with prayer; and particularly to *cleanse the lepers*, of which there were many in Israel, who otherwise could not get rid of that disorder, and by the law were deprived of many privileges, and advantages, which others enjoyed: and especially to *raise the dead*, which had never been done before the times of Christ, since the days of Elijah and Elisha; and which must be allowed by all men to be more than human, and to require the arm of almighty power: and lastly, to *cast out devils*, the sworn enemies of mankind, and who had taken possession of the bodies, as well as souls of multitudes in the Jewish nation; all which they are ordered to do, without taking any thing of the people, for so doing: *freely ye have received, freely give*: which refers both to the working of miracles, and preaching of the Gospel. As they had these miraculous gifts freely imparted to them by Christ, they had them not of themselves, nor did they procure them at any charge, or expense of their's, or purchase them with their money, as Simon Magus impudently proposed to the apostles; so they were freely to make use of these wonderful powers, they were possessed of, for the relief of the distressed, without insisting upon, or receiving any thing for the same; a practice which was formerly disapproved and condemned in Gehazi, the servant of Elisha: and with respect to the Gospel, as the knowledge of it was freely communicated to them by Christ, and gifts qualifying them for the preaching of it, were of his mere grace and goodness bestowed upon them, so they were to dispense it without making a gain of godliness, or discovering in the least an avaricious disposition. Our Lord seems to have respect to a rule frequently inculcated by the Jews concerning teaching their oral law<sup>g</sup>; which is this; "in the place where they teach the written law for a reward, it is lawful to teach it for a reward; but it is forbidden to teach the oral law for a reward, as it is said, *behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, &c.* Deut. iv. 5. As I have *בָּחַנְתִּי*, *freely* learned, and ye have also *בָּחַנְתִּי*, *freely* learnt of me; so when ye learn posterity, *לְמַדוּ בְּחִנּוֹת כְּמוֹ שֶׁלְמַדְתִּי מִמֶּנִּי*, *teach them freely, as ye have learnt of me.*" Now what the Jews say of their traditions, Christ applies to the Gospel; in dispensing of which he would not have his disciples come behind them; but as they had freely received the Gospel from his lips; so they would as freely, as well as faithfully, make it known to others; and which no ways contradicts the maintenance of the Gospel ministers by the people; only forbids amassing wealth and riches by it, or preaching for sordid gain, or filthy lucre's sake: for otherwise it is Christ's own ordinance, that the preachers of the Gospel should live by it; and which is confirmed in the following verses.

Ver. 9. *Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass, &c.*] That is, not any sort of *money*, as both Mark and Luke express it: for money was then coined, as

<sup>f</sup> T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 46. 2. Bartenora in Misn. Taharot, c. 5. sect. 8.

<sup>g</sup> Maimon. Talmud Tora, c. 1. sect. 7. T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 36. 2.

& 37. 1. & Becorat, fol. 29. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Nedarim, c. 4. sect. 3. & in Pirke Abot. c. 4. sect. 5.

now, of these three sorts of metals, and which include all kind of money; so that they were not to provide, get, prepare, or take along with them for their journey, as not gold, nor silver, or any parcel of this sort of money, which might be of considerable importance, and lasting consequence to them; so neither brass money, as, halfpence, and farthings, the least, and most inconsiderable: they were forbidden to carry any of either sort *in their purses*; or, as it may be rendered, *in, or within your girdles*; in which travellers, among the Jews, used to carry their money; and who, in their travelling dress, might not go into the temple, and are thus described<sup>b</sup>; "a man may not go into the mountain of the house with his staff, or with his shoes on, nor בפנירתו, *with his girdle*." The פנירת, *phunda*, Maimonides says<sup>c</sup>, is an inner garment, wore to keep off sweat from other garments, to which were sewed hollow things like purses, in which a man put what he pleased; though other<sup>k</sup> interpreters say it is חלול שונתנין בו מעת, *a hollow girdle, in which they put their money*; and so the Romans<sup>l</sup> had used to do; and so do<sup>m</sup> the Turks<sup>m</sup> to this day; to which practice the allusion is here.

Ver. 10. *Nor scrip for your journey, &c.*] This the Jews call תרמיל, *tarmil*: and which their commentators<sup>n</sup> say, is a large leathern bag, in which shepherds and travellers put their food, and other things, and carried with them, hanging it about their necks; so that the disciples were neither to carry money with them, nor any provisions for their journey: *neither two coats*; one to travel in, and another to put on, when they came to their quarters: they were not allowed change of raiment; either because superfluous, or too magnificent to appear in, or too troublesome to carry: *nor shoes*, only sandals, as Mark says; for there was a difference between shoes and sandals, as appears from the case of the plucking off the shoe, when a man refused his brother's wife<sup>o</sup>: if the shoe was plucked off it was regarded; but if the *sandal*, it was not minded: this was the old tradition, though custom went against it. Sandals were made of harder leather than shoes<sup>p</sup>, and sometimes of wood covered with leather, and stuck with nails, to make them more durable<sup>q</sup>; though sometimes of bulrushes, and bark of palm-trees, and of cork<sup>r</sup>, which were light to walk with. "Says R. Bar bar Chanah<sup>s</sup>, I saw R. Eleazar of Nineveh go out on a fast-day of the congregation, בסנדל שעם, *with a sandal of cork*." Of what sort these were, the disciples were allowed to travel with, is not certain: *nor yet with staves*; that is, with more than one staff, which was sufficient to assist them, and lean upon in journeying: for, according to Mark, one was allowed; as though they might take a travelling-staff, yet not staves for defence, or to fight with; see Matt. xxvi. 55. Now these several things were forbidden them, partly because they would

be burdensome to them in travelling; and partly because they were not to be out any long time, but were quickly to return again; and chiefly to teach them to live and depend upon divine providence. Now, since they were to take neither money, nor provisions with them, and were also to preach the Gospel freely, they might reasonably ask how they should be provided for, and supported: when our Lord suggests, that they should not be anxiously concerned about that, he would take care that they had a suitable supply; and would so influence and dispose the minds of such, to whom they should minister, as that they should have all necessary provisions made for them, without any care or expense of their's: *for the workman is worthy of his meat*; which seems to be a proverbial expression, and by which Christ intimates, that they were workmen, or labourers in his vineyard, and they, discharging their duty aright, were entitled to food and raiment, and all the necessaries of life: this to have, was their due; and it was but a piece of justice to give it to them, and on which they might depend. So that this whole context is so far from militating against a minister's maintenance by the people, that it most strongly establishes it; for if the apostles were not to take any money or provisions with them, to support themselves with, it clearly follows, that it was the will of Christ, that they should live by the Gospel, upon those to whom they preached, as the following words shew: and though they were not to make gain of the Gospel, or preach it for filthy lucre's sake; yet they might expect a comfortable subsistence, at the charge of the people, to whom they ministered, and which was their duty to provide for them.

Ver. 11. *And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, &c.*] As Christ had instructed them in what manner they were to travel, so he directs them where to go, and who to ask for, and take up their abode with, in the several towns and villages to which they should come; that as soon as they had entered any town or village, they should, in the first place, *inquire, who in it is worthy*; not of them, as the Arabic version reads, nor of the Gospel they preached, or of the grace of God, of which no man is worthy: and besides, who could answer to such a question when asked? Who in any town, or city, could tell who in it were worthy of Christ, of his Gospel, and ministers, to which they were all equally strangers before they came among them? Nor does it mean a man famous for piety and religion, or one that feared God, and was a worshipper of him, but an hospitable man; one that was very liberal; who was willing and ready to entertain strangers; for such a man they would want, having neither money nor food: and so the same word, זכר, in the Hebrew language, signifies *to be worthy*, and *to give alms*, because an eleemosynary man, or a man given to alms, was reckoned by the Jews a very worthy

<sup>b</sup> Mism. Beracot, c. 9. sect. 5.

<sup>c</sup> In ib. & Celim. c. 29. 1. & Sabbat, c. 10. 3.

<sup>d</sup> Bartenora & Yom Tob in ib. Gloss in T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 62. 2. & in Sabbat, fol. 92. 1. & 113. 1. & 120. 1. & Nedarim, fol. 55. 2.

<sup>e</sup> Gracchus apud A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 15. c. 12. Sueton. in Vita Vitellii, c. 16.

<sup>f</sup> Bobovius de Peregr. Meccan. p. 14.

<sup>g</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in Mism. Sheviith, c. 9. sect. 8. & in Celim. c. 16. 4. & 24. 11. & Negaim. c. 11. sect. 11.

<sup>h</sup> T. Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 12. 3. T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 102. 1. & Menachot, fol. 32. 1.

<sup>i</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 101. 1. & Bartenora in Mism. Yebamot, c. 12. sect. 1.

<sup>j</sup> Mism. Yebamot, c. 12. sect. 2. Maimon. Bartenora in Sabbat, c. 6. sect. 2. & Edayot, c. 2. sect. 8.

<sup>k</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 78. 2. Gloss. in ib. Maimon. Hilch. Shebitat. Ashur, c. 3. sect. 7.

<sup>l</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 78. 2. Juchasin, fol. 81. 1.

man: they thought giving of alms to be a matter of merit. Christ here speaks in the language of the masters of Israel; take an instance or two: "saith R. Jona, blessed is the man that giveth to the poor; it is not written so, but *blessed is he that considereth the poor*: he looks upon him, how he may לִיכֹרֵת עִנִי, give alms to him." And a little after, "God hath set one against the other, that when evil comes to thy friend, thou may'st see how לִיכֹרֵת בו, to do thine alms to him, and nourish him, so that thou may'st receive the gift of its reward." Again, so a man says to his neighbour, וְכִי בִי, give alms unto me: and afterwards, in the same place, 'tis said, וְכִי בְדוּדָיָא, give alms unto that woman'. Now, it was such a worthy generous man, that was beneficent to the poor, and kind to strangers, that the apostles were to inquire out, wherever they came; and having found such a person, they were to continue with him: and there abide till ye go out: of that city or town, to another city or town: for to be often changing houses would bring upon them an ill character, as if they were difficult to be pleased, not content with the provision made for them; and would look as if they sought to serve their own bellies, and gratify their appetites, more than to do good to the souls of men; and besides, moving from the house of a bountiful man, might bring some reproach upon his character, as if he had not used them well, and therefore left him. In short, Christ's meaning is, that he would not have his disciples be difficult, and dainty, or fickle, and inconstant, but be content with such things they should have provided for them; and not seek for other, and better quarters, nor fear being troublesome where they were.

Ver. 12. *And when ye come into an house, &c.*] Or the house: that is, the house of an hospitable man, when, upon inquiry, found out: salute it; meaning the inhabitants of it; or, as the Persic version reads, those of the household, especially the master of the family. Some copies add, saying, peace be to this house, as in Luke x. 5. and so read the Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel; and is a very just, and proper explanation of saluting: for the usual form of salutation among the Jews was in such words; of which see the note on Matt. v. 47. by which is meant all kind of happiness, and prosperity, temporal, spiritual, and eternal.

Ver. 13. *And if the house be worthy, &c.*] If the family, and particularly the master of it, appeared to be civil, courteous, friendly, and hospitable, upon such a salutation, and ready to receive and embrace them, and provide for them, let your peace come upon it, or it shall come upon it: the imperative for the future, which is not unusual; and so read the Syriac and Vulgate Latin. The sense is, the peace the apostles wished for, in their form of salutation, should come, and abide on the family; for not the Gospel of peace, and the preaching of it, are here meant, but the salutation itself, or the things desired in it, which should be granted, and the house be blessed for their sake, and as a reward of their generosity, and hospitality: but if it be not worthy: does not prove to be what it was said to be, and they expected; namely,

to be generous, liberal, and beneficent; but, on the contrary, uncivil and churlish, should neglect their salutation, discover an unwillingness to receive them, and turn their backs upon them: let your peace return to you, or it shall return to you: the happiness wished for shall not come upon them, and the prayers and good wishes of the apostles shall be void, and of none effect, with respect to that family, but should be made good to themselves; and they should be directed to another house, where they should find persons more generous and free to entertain them.

Ver. 14. *And whosoever shall not receive you, &c.*] Into their houses, and refuse to entertain them and provide for them in a friendly manner; nor hear your words, slight their salutations, make no account of, but despise their good wishes for their welfare; and also treat with contempt the doctrines of the Gospel preached by them; and either would not attend on their ministry, or if they did, give no credit to what they should say, but deride and reject them. When ye depart out of that house, or city: to another house, or to another city, being obliged to remove, through their contemptuous rejection of them: shake off the dust of your feet. So Paul and Barnabas did at Antioch in Pisidia, when the Jews contradicted and blasphemed the Gospel preached by them, raised a persecution against them, and expelled them out of their coasts, Acts xiii. 51. which ceremony was ordered by Christ to be observed even to the cities of Judea, that should despise and reject the ministry of his apostles; and that either to shew that they did not come to them with worldly views, with any design to amass riches and wealth to themselves, for they would not so much as carry away with them the dust on their feet, but it was purely with a view to their welfare, both spiritual and temporal; or to testify that they had been among them, and that that very dust they shook off their feet would rise up in judgment against them, and declare that the Gospel had been preached among them, and they had rejected it, which will be an aggravation of their condemnation; or rather to observe to them, that such was their wickedness, that even the dust of their country was infected thereby, and therefore they shook it off, as though it defiled them, as the dust of an Heathen country was thought by the Jews to do; so that by this action they signified that they would have nothing more to do with them, or say to them, and that they looked upon them as impure and unholy, as any Heathen city or country. There seems to be an allusion to some maxims and customs of the Jews, with respect to the dust of Heathen countries. "On account of six doubts, they say", they burn the first offering, for a doubt of a field in which a grave might be, and for a doubt עֶפֶר הַבָּנָה מֵאֶרֶץ הַגֵּוֹיִם, of the dust which comes from the land of the Gentiles, &c." On which Bartenora has this note; "all dust which comes from the land of the Gentiles, is reckoned by us as the rottenness of a dead carcass; and of these two, the land of the Gentiles, and a field in which is a grave, it is decreed that they defile by touching, and by carrying."

<sup>1</sup> Vajikra Rabba, sect. 34. fol. 173. 3, 4. & 174. 4. Midrash Kohelet c. 11. 1. fol. 92. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Misn. Tahrat, c. 4. sect. 5. Vid. c. 5. 1. & Maimon & Bartenora in ib.

Again", "the dust of a field in which is a grave, and the dust without the land (of Israel) which comes along with an herb, are unclean." Upon which Maimonides makes this remark, "that the dust of a field that has a grave in it, and the dust which is without the land of Israel, defile by touching and carrying; or if, when it hangs at the end of an herb, when they root it out of the dust of such a field, it is unclean." Hence they would not suffer herbs to be brought out of an Heathen country into the land of Israel, lest dust should be brought along with them. "A Misnic doctor teaches", that they don't bring herbs from without the land (of Israel into it), but our Rabbins permit it; what difference is there between them? Says R. Jeremiah, they take care of their dust; that is the difference between them." On that clause, *they take care of their dust*, the gloss is, "lest there should be brought with it מְנוּשׁ אֶרֶץ הַעֲמִיּוֹת, any of the dust of the land of the Gentiles, which defiles in the tent, and pollutes the purity of the land of Israel."

Ver. 15. *Verily, I say unto you, &c.*] This was not all the punishment that should be inflicted on such despisers of the Gospel of Christ, and the ministers of it; as not to enjoy that peace and prosperity wished for by the apostles, and to be declared to be on an equal foot with Heathen cities and countries: but they were to suffer everlasting punishment in the world to come; which is here asserted by Christ in the strongest manner, saying: *it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha, in the day of judgment, than for that city.* The inhabitants of the land of Sodom and Gomorrha are the rather mentioned, because, as they were very notorious and abominable sinners, so their temporal punishment was well known, exemplary and awful, though not that, but their future damnation is here regarded, of which the Jews made no doubt; for they say, "the men of Sodom have no part in the world to come; as it is said, Gen. xiii. 13. *the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners, before the Lord exceedingly: they were wicked in this world, and sinners in the world to come;*" meaning, that by this passage is designed their double punishment in this, and the other world. But though their punishment was very tremendous, and they will suffer also *the vengeance of eternal fire*, as Jude says; yet, their punishment will be milder, and more tolerable, than that of the inhabitants of such a city, that rejects the Gospel of the grace of God: as there are degrees in sinning, for all sins are not alike, as the Stoics say; so there will be degrees in suffering; the sins of those that are favoured with the Gospel, are greater than those who only have had the light of nature, and so their torments will be greater. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha, though they sinned against the light of nature, despised the advice and admonitions of Lot, and ill treated the angels, yet will be more mildly punished than the wicked Jews, who rejected Christ, and his Gospel, and despised his apostles, and ministers; because they sinned not against so much light, and such means of grace, and knowledge, as

these did; see Lam. iv. 6. which is thus paraphrased by the Targumist, and may be aptly applied to the Jews in Christ's time: "the sin of the congregation of my people is greater than the sin of Sodom, which was overturned in a moment; and there dwelt no prophets in it to prophesy, and turn it to repentance." The time referred to, signified by *the day of judgment*, respects not the destruction of Jerusalem, which was a very severe judgment on that people, but the general judgment, at the end of the world, which is appointed and fixed by God, though unknown to angels and men. The phrase is Jewish, and often to be met with in their writings, who use it in the same sense; particularly in the book of Zohar<sup>2</sup>, mention is made of יוֹמַא דְּדִינָא, *the day of judgment*, when there will be no pollution in the sanctuary.

Ver. 16. *Behold, I send you forth, as sheep among wolves, &c.*] This, and the following verses, chiefly respect the troubles, afflictions, persecutions, and sufferings which should befall the apostles after the death and resurrection of Christ; when their commission was enlarged, and they afresh sent out by Christ to preach his Gospel; of which he gives a faithful account before-hand, that they might be prepared for them, and not be surprised when they came upon them. He compares them to *sheep*, because they were meek and humble in their spirits, harmless, and inoffensive, in their lives and conversations; were weak, and unable to protect themselves, and were sent out by him unarmed and defenceless; and their oppressors and persecutors to *wolves*, because fierce and furious, voracious and ravenous, cruel and hurtful, as these creatures are, especially to sheep; wherefore Christ gives them this wholesome advice, *be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.* Much such an expression as this God is represented as saying of Israel\*: "Says R. Judah, in the name of R. Simon, the holy blessed God said, concerning Israel, with me they are תְּמִימִים כְּיוֹנִים, *harmless as doves*; but among the nations of the world, they are עֲרוּמִים כְּנָחָשִׁים, *subtle as serpents.*" The serpent is a very sharp-sighted, cunning creature, and uses various arts and stratagems for its own preservation, and especially of its head; and is so far to be imitated by the followers of Christ, as to make use of all proper methods to preserve themselves from the insults and rage of men, and not expose themselves to unnecessary dangers; and, as much as in them lies, they should be careful to give no just occasion of offence, or irritate, and provoke them to use them ill, and to avoid all snares and traps that are laid for them; and, at the same time, maintain the innocence and harmlessness of the dove, being free from all wicked cunning and craftiness, without rancour, malice, and wrath; not meditating and seeking revenge, but meek and humble in their deportment, leading inoffensive lives, and proceeding in the course of their vocation, though liable to many insults, and much oppression.

Ver. 17. *But beware of men, &c.*] Of these men, comparable to wolves, before spoken of: the phrase is somewhat uncommon and emphatical, and designs not

\* Min. Oholot, c. 17. sect. 5.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 12. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Min. Sanhedrim, c. 11. sect. 3. Hieros. Sanhedrim, fol. 99. 3.

<sup>2</sup> In Gen. fol. 13. 3. & 16. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Eibirhashirim Rabba, c. 2. 14. fol. 12. 1.



merely wicked men in common, the men of the world, and enemies of the Gospel; but chiefly such of them as were men of note and authority, ecclesiastical and civil governors of the people, the Scribes, Pharisees, elders, and chief priests, and other rulers; and the advice to the apostles is, to take care how they came into their company, and put them elves into their hands; who would seek all opportunities and occasions against them, and use their power and interest to do them hurt: *for they will deliver you up to the councils, or sanhedrim, of which there were three sorts; the greater, which consisted of seventy-one persons, and was only held in Jerusalem; the lesser one, which was made up of twenty-three members, and was kept in every place where there were an hundred and twenty Israelites; and the third, where there was not that number, and was a triumvirate, or a bench of three judges only<sup>b</sup>. And they will scourge you in their synagogues; where the triumvirate, or bench of three judges kept their court; under whose cognizance were pecuniary judgments, and such as related to thefts, damages, restitutions, ravishing, and enticing of virgins, and defamation; also to plucking off of the shoe, and refusing a brother's wife, to the plant of the fourth year, second tithes whose price is unknown, holy things, and the estimations of goods; to these belonged also laying on of hands, the beheading of the heifer, and, among the rest, *מכרת בשלשה*, *scourging was by the bench of three<sup>c</sup>*. The manner of performing it was this<sup>d</sup>: "they bind both his hands to a pillar, here and there; and the minister of the synagogue takes hold of his clothes, and if they are rent, they are rent; and if they are ripped in the seam, they are ripped till his breast is uncovered; for he is not to beat him on his clothes, as it is said, *he shall beat him, but not his clothes: and a stone is placed behind him, on which the minister that scourges stands, and a white leather whip in his hand, doubled two and two with four, and two lashes of an ass's hide, going up and down: the breadth of the whip was an hand's breadth, and the length of it, so as to reach to the navel, and the handle of the whip, by which he took hold, was the length of an hand; and he lifts up the whip with both his hands, and strikes with one hand, with all his might; and gives him the third part of his stripes before, upon his breast, between his paps, and two thirds behind him; one third upon this shoulder, and the other upon the other shoulder. He that scourges neither stands, nor sits, but bows; as it is said, *the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face*; for the eyes of the judge shall be upon him, that he don't look upon any thing else, and smite him from thence; for no two strokes are as one; the greatest of the judges reads all the time he is scourging, viz. these passages; *if thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law, &c. and the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, &c.* and he intends to finish the verses with the stripes; but if he does not finish, he returns to the beginning of the Scripture, and reads,**

"and returns, and reads until the whole scourging is over: and the second of the judges numbers the stripes; and the third says to the minister strike: every time he strikes, 'tis at his orders he strikes." Now, as this punishment was inflicted by the chazan, or minister of the synagogue, who was a sort of sexton, so it was done in the synagogue itself: and according to our Lord's predictions here, and in Matt. xxiii. 34, as the former of these, delivering up to councils, had its accomplishment in part, in the apostles, Acts iv. and v. so the latter, scourging in their synagogues, was fulfilled both by Paul, Acts xxii. 19. and xxvi. 11. and upon him, 2 Cor. xi. 24. Epiphanius tells<sup>e</sup> us of one Joseph, a Jew, who was caught by the Jews reading the Gospels in his own house; upon which they dragged him away, and had him to the synagogue, and there scourged him. Now as these things did not befall the apostles till after the death of Christ, it is clear that the context refers not to their first, but to an after mission.

Ver. 18. *And ye shall be brought before governors, &c.*] Meaning Roman governors; so Paul was had before Gallio, Felix, and Festus; for judgments relating to life and death were to be taken away, and were taken away from the Jewish sanhedrim; and as they themselves say<sup>f</sup>, forty years before the destruction of the second temple, which was much about the time of Christ's death: so that what power they had, was only with regard to lesser matters, and to inflict lesser punishments, as beating and scourging: if they sought to take away life, they were obliged to bring the cause before the governors of the Roman provinces, who are here intended: *and kings for my sake*; as Herod, Agrippa, Nero, Domitian, and others, before whom one or other of the apostles were brought; not as thieves, or murderers, or traitors, and seditious persons, or for having done any wrong or injury to any man's person or property; but purely for the sake of Christ, for the profession of their faith in him, and for preaching his Gospel; of all which they had no reason to be ashamed, nor were they: *for a testimony against, or to them, and the Gentiles*; that is, that thereby they might have an opportunity of bearing a testimony to the truths of the Gospel, which would be either to the conviction and conversion of many Gentiles, as well as Jews; or would be a testimony which would stand against them another day, both against the Jews, who charged, and accused them, and brought them before the Heathen kings and governors, to punish them with death; and against those Gentile magistrates, and others, who should join with them in rejecting the Gospel, and putting them to death for preaching it: so that they should have no pretext or excuse; since the Gospel had been faithfully and clearly preached to them, and they had despised it, and evil-treated the ministers of it. This confirms what is before observed, that this passage refers to an after mission.

Ver. 19. *But when they deliver you up, &c.*] The apostles hearing that they should be delivered up to coun-

<sup>b</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrim, c. 1. sect. 3, 4.

<sup>c</sup> Misn. Sanhedrim, c. 1. sect. 1, 2, 3.

<sup>d</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrim, c. 16. sect. 8, 9, 10, 11. Misn. Maccot, c. 3. sect. 12, 13, 14.

<sup>e</sup> Contra Hæres. l. 1. Hæres. 20.

<sup>f</sup> Hieros. Sanhedrim, fol. 18. 1. & 24. 2. Juchasin, fol. 26. 2. & 51. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrim, c. 14. sect. 13.

cils, and brought before governors and kings, might be under some concern how they should behave, and what they should be able to say in vindication of themselves and truth, before such great persons; they not being used to converse with men in such high stations: they were illiterate men, and of no elocution; men of mean birth, low life, most of them poor fishermen; and might fear, on these accounts, that the Gospel would suffer for want of able persons to defend it before the great ones of the earth. Now, in order to remove these their fears and objections, and to strengthen and comfort their minds, our Lord bids them, when this would be their case, that the Jews would deliver them to the Roman magistrates, to *take no thought how, or what ye shall speak*; not to be anxiously concerned, neither as to the matter, or manner of what they should say in their defence: they should have no occasion, as orators do, to take pains, and rack their thoughts, to prepare a studied, elaborate oration, dressed with all the flowers of rhetoric, filled with the most moving and powerful arguments, and clothed with diction of the strictest propriety and elegance; for they should want neither words, nor things; they should have arguments put into their mouths, and helped to proper language to express them in: *for it shall be given you in the same hour, what ye shall speak*; immediate assistance should be afforded them either by his father, or himself; or rather, the blessed spirit, who would suggest unto them, at once, things, the most proper to be said, and help them to deliver them in the most proper manner: and these are the most convincing arguments, and that the best elocution, which the spirit of God helps men to; these vastly exceed all the art of men, and strength of nature. This was greatly verified in Peter and John, two poor fishermen, when before the council, and in Stephen the protomartyr.

Ver. 20. *For it is not ye that speak, &c.*] Not but that they were to speak the words, and did; but then both the things they spoke, and the very words in which they spoke them, were not of themselves, but were suggested and dictated by the spirit of God; for as *the preparation of the heart in them, so the answer of the tongue by them, were both from the Lord*: the spirit, he was the efficient cause, they were only instruments; for not they of themselves spoke; or not so much they, *but the spirit of your father, which speaketh in you, or by you*: what they should say was not to be dictated by their own spirit or natural understanding, nor by an angel, but by the spirit of God; called the *spirit of their father*, because he proceeds from him, is of the same nature with him, and is the reason of his being given to them: and this character of him might serve to strengthen their faith in the expectation of him, and in the assistance promised, and to be had by him; since he was the spirit of him, who stood in the relation of a father to them, and bore a paternal affection for them.

Ver. 21. *And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, &c.*] Christ having fortified the minds of his disciples by the foregoing promises of divine influence and assistance, proceeds to open more largely

and particularly the sorrows, troubles, and afflictions they must expect would attend the faithful ministration of his Gospel; as, that the true followers of Christ should not only be persecuted and betrayed, and delivered up into the hands of the civil magistrate, by persons that were strangers to them; but even by their nearest relations, brethren, whom the nearness of blood should oblige to the tenderest regards to each other, to the securing of property and preserving of life: these should deliver up those that were so nearly related to them in the bonds of consanguinity, into the hands of persecuting men in power, in order to be put to death; than which scarce any thing can be more barbarous and unnatural, though the next instances exceed it: *and the father the child, and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.* The father laying aside his natural affection for his child, whom he has begotten, and brought up, and has took so much care of, and delight in, and perhaps his only one, his son and heir; and yet, professing a faith different from his, such is his blind zeal and bigotry, that, breaking through all the ties of parental relation and affection, he delivers him up into the hands of wicked magistrates, to put him to death: and, on the other hand, children, forgetting the bonds they are in, and the obligations they lie under to their aged parents, rise up against them, and either with their own hands murder them, or appear as witnesses against them, and give their hearty consent to the taking away of their lives; even of them who have been the means and instruments of bringing them into the world, and of bringing them up in it. This shews the sad corruption of human nature, its enmity to the Gospel of Christ, and the inveterate malice and hatred of Satan against Christ, and his interest. Something like this is said by the Jews themselves, as what shall be in the times of the Messiah; for a little before his coming, or in the age in which the son of David comes, they say, “the son shall deal basely by his father, the daughter shall rise up against her mother—a man’s enemies shall be of his own household; the face of that generation shall be as the face of a dog; and the son shall not reverence his father.”

Ver. 22. *And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake, &c.*] This is more particularly directed to the apostles themselves, as what is said before regards the followers of Christ in general; for this was to be the lot of the apostles, that they should not only be ill treated in common with others, by their near friends and relations, whose love would be turned into hatred to them, but should be the butt and mark of the malice and wrath of all men; that is, of most men, or of the far greater part of the Jews, even of all wicked men who disbelieved and rejected the Messiah: for that the words are not to be understood in the utmost latitude, without any restriction, is certain; since there would be some who would be converted; and believe in Christ through their ministry, and consequently would love, esteem, and honour them as their spiritual fathers and guides, and as the disciples and apostles of Christ. This hatred they should be exposed to, would not be on account of any ill will to

their persons; or because of any evil or immorality committed by them; but purely, and alone, for the name of Christ, in whom they believed, by which they were called, of which they made a profession, and zealously preached: which consideration, as it must needs secure peace and tranquillity in their breasts; so for their further encouragement, 'tis added, *but he that endureth to the end, shall be saved*: which words suggest, that the tribulations and persecutions of the disciples of Christ, through the hatred of wicked men against them, shall not last always; there will be an end to them; respecting either the end of time and life, or the destruction of Jerusalem, when these their enemies would be cut off, or removed, and be capable of giving them no further trouble; and that such persons are happy, who patiently endure the hatred of men, and all manner of persecution, for Christ's sake; who are not moved by the afflictions they suffer, but stand fast in the faith, hold fast the profession of it, go on in their Christian course, and hold out to the end; for such shall be saved, not only with a temporal salvation, as the Christians were at the destruction of Jerusalem, but with an eternal one.

Ver. 23. *But when they persecute you in this city, &c.*] Or any city into which they went, and preached the Gospel; and would not suffer them to go on in their work, they were not to desist, but to go elsewhere, where they might hope for a better reception, and a longer continuance, and so of doing more good: *flee ye into another*; not so much for their own safety, though this, according to the circumstances of things, is lawful, but for the further spreading of the Gospel. The exhortation is not to take methods to avoid persecution, or to make an escape from it, but to perseverance under it: the sense is, they were not to be discouraged, and to leave off, because of persecution in one place, but to persist in the ministration of the Gospel, by carrying it to other cities; and it seems to be a spur to them to make haste, and fulfil their office of preaching the Gospel, in the land of Judea: nor need they fear going on too fast, lest they should have no places to preach in; *for verily I say unto you, this is a certain and indisputable truth not to be called in question, being strongly affirmed by truth itself, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, or finished them*; that is, their tour through them, and their ministry, or the preaching of the Gospel in them, *till the son of man be come*; which is not to be understood of his second coming to judgment, but either of his resurrection from the dead; when he was declared to be the son of God, and when his glorification began; or of the pouring forth of the spirit at the day of Pentecost, when his kingdom began more visibly to take place, and he was made, or manifested to be the Lord and Christ; or of his coming to take vengeance on his enemies, that would not have him to rule over them, and the persecutors of his ministers, at the destruction of Jerusalem.

Ver. 24. *The disciple is not above his master, &c.*] So far from it, that he is inferior to him; as in knowledge, so in reputation and character; and can't ex-

pect the same honour to be given him, and the same respect shewn to him, as to his master; and therefore if his master is not used with that decency, and in that becoming manner he ought to be, he must not think it any hardship if he is treated in the same way. Our Lord hereby intends to fortify the minds of his disciples against all the reproach and persecution they were to meet with from the world, by observing to them the treatment he himself met with; wherefore, if he who was their master, a teacher that came from God, and taught as never man did, and was worthy of the utmost deference that could be paid, was maligned and evilly treated by men, it became them who were his disciples, to look for, and patiently bear such indignities; since they could expect no better usage than he himself had: the same doctrine is suggested in the next clause, *nor the servant above his Lord*; and both seem to be proverbial expressions. The Jews have a saying<sup>b</sup> much like unto them, *אין העבד זכה מרבו, no servant is worthier than his master*; and Christ might make use of such common, well-known expressions, that he might be the more easily understood, and in the most familiar manner convey what he intended, into the minds of his disciples; as, that since he was their Lord, and they were his servants, if his superior character and dignity did not secure him from the obloquy and insults of men, it could not be thought by them, who were inferior to him, that they should escape them.

Ver. 25. *It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, &c.*] A disciple should think himself very well off, be entirely satisfied, yea, abundantly thankful, if he meets with no worse treatment than his master; if he has the same honour done him his master has, this is more than could be expected by him; and if he has the same ill usage with his master, he need not wonder at it, but should solace himself with this consideration, that it is no other, nor worse than his master had before him: and the same is equally true in the other case, *and the servant as his Lord*: these expressions, as before, were proverbs, or common sayings among the Jews, which our Lord chose to make use of, and adapt to his present purpose; *לדיית מרבו, vel דיין לעבד שיהא, it is enough for the servant, that he be as his master*, is a saying often to be met with in their writings<sup>c</sup>; which our Lord applies, and reasons upon, in the following manner: *if they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of the household?* By the master of the household, he means himself, who is master of the family both in heaven and in earth; who is son over his own house, the high-priest over the house of God, the lord and governor of all the household of faith; who takes care of, provides for, and protects all that are of God's household: and yet, though in such an high office, and of such great usefulness, he did not escape the severest lashes of the tongues of the wicked Jews; who called him by the most opprobrious names they could think of, and among the rest Beelzebub; see Matt. xii. 24. Luke xi. 15. This was the god of the Ekronites, 2 Kings i. 2. The word signifies a master-

<sup>b</sup> T. Hieros. Maaser Sheni, fol. 55. 1.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Beraot, fol. 58. 2. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 43. 2. Ju-

chasin, fol. 93. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 64. 2. Aben Ezra in Hos. i. 2.

fly, or the lord of a fly; and so the Septuagint there call him *Baal μύων*, *Baal the fly*, the god of the Ekronites. And this idol was so called, either because it was in the form of a fly: or else from the abundance of flies about it, by reason of the sacrifices, which it was not able to drive away; and therefore the Jews contemptuously gave it this name. They observe<sup>k</sup>, that in the temple, notwithstanding the multitude of sacrifices offered up there, there never was seen a fly in the slaughter-house: or else this deity was so called from its being invoked to drive away flies, and the same with Myiodes, the god of flies, mentioned by Pliny<sup>l</sup>, or Myagros, which the same author<sup>m</sup> speaks of; so Jupiter was called *απομυιος*, a driver away of flies; as was also Hercules<sup>n</sup>; and were worshipped by some nations on this account. In most copies, and so in the Arabic version, it is read Beelzebul; that is, as it is commonly rendered, the lord of dung, or a dunghill god; and it is generally thought the Jews called the god of the Ekronites so, by way of contempt; as it was usual with them to call an idol's temple זבול, *zebul*, dung, and worshipping of idols מוֹבֵל, *dunging*: but I must own, that I should rather think, that as Beelsamin, the god of the Phœnicians, is the same with Beelzebul, the god of the Ekronites, so it signifies the same thing: now בעל שמיך, *Beelsamin*, is the lord of the heavens, and so is Beelzebul; for זבול, *Zebul*, signifies heaven; so the word is used in Hab. iii. 11. the sun and the moon stood still, זבולה, *in their habitation*; by which, as a Jewish<sup>p</sup> writer observes, הַרְצוֹן בִּי הַשָּׁמַיִם, *is meant the heavens*; for they are the habitation of the sun and moon: see also Isa. lxiii. 15. and so among the seven names of the heavens, reckoned up by them, this is accounted one<sup>q</sup>. Now as the Jews looked upon all the deities of the Gentiles as demons, or devils; and since Beelzebub was the chief of them, they thought they could not fix upon a more reproachful name, to give to Christ, than this: and our Lord suggests, that since the great master of the family was called in such an abusive manner, it should be no cause of stumbling and offence, if those of a lower class in the family should be so stigmatized; if Christians are called by ever such hard names, even devils, they should not be disturbed at it; since their lord and master was called the prince of them.

Ver. 26. *Fear them not, therefore, &c.*] That is, be not afraid of men, and of their reproaches and revilings; which our Lord intimates would do them no more hurt, than they did him, and which in a little while would be all wiped away: time would bring all things to light, when the wickedness of these men would be discovered, their evil designs seen through; which were now covered with the specious pretences of sanctity, and zeal for religion, and the glory of God; and the innocence and integrity of him and his disciples would be made manifest. There is no need to refer this to the great day of account, when every secret thing shall be brought to light; but it chiefly regards the times when the Gospel should be more

publicly known, and embraced, and should prevail against all the opposition made unto it; and then all these reproachful names and characters would be seen plainly to arise from spite and malice: to which may be applied those proverbial sayings in common use, *for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed, and hid, that shall not be known*. Men may cover their malice and wickedness, for a while, under the best of names, but ere long it will all be revealed to their great shame and reproach: the innocence of the followers of Christ may, for some time, lie out of sight, and they may be traduced as the worst of men; but in process of time things take another turn, and their characters appear in quite another light: and so it is with the Gospel preached and professed by them, which, though sometimes it is little known, lies hid, and is covered with disgrace; yet in the Lord's own time its light breaks forth, power attends it, and it is made manifest to the consciences of men.

Ver. 27. *What I tell you in darkness, &c.*] Hence Christ proceeds to encourage his disciples to an open, plain, and faithful ministration of the Gospel, not fearing the faces and frowns of men. For with respect to the Gospel, his meaning is, that what was hid and covered should not remain so, but should be revealed, and made known, and they were the persons who were to do it; and it was with that view that he had communicated it to them: and whereas he had told them it *in darkness*; not in a dark and obscure manner; for though he spoke in parables to others, yet to them he made known the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven: and if at any time he delivered parables, or dark sayings, to them, he would afterwards, or when alone, explain them to them; but his meaning chiefly is, that what he communicated to them in private houses, when they were by themselves, and no one saw, or heard them, and so were in darkness with respect to others, *that speak ye in light*; openly and publicly in the synagogues and temple, in the high places of the city, streets, or fields, wherever there is a concourse of people; hide and conceal nothing, but speak out all clearly, distinctly, fully, without the least reserve, or throwing any obscurity on it, which may cover the true sense of it from the view of the people. *And what ye hear in the ear*, or is whispered to you by me, as your master. Christ alludes to the custom of the Jewish doctors, who had each an interpreter, into whose ear he used to whisper his doctrine, and then the interpreter delivered it to the people: so it is said<sup>r</sup>, "Rab came to the place of R. Shilla, and he had no speaker to stand by him; wherefore Rab stood by him, and explained." The gloss upon it is, "an interpreter stands before a doctor whilst he is preaching, and the doctor לִי שֹׁמֵר, *whispers to him* in the Hebrew tongue, and he interprets it to the multitude in a tongue they understand." Again<sup>s</sup>, "they said to Judah bar Nachmani, the interpreter of Resh Lekish, stand for a

<sup>k</sup> Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 5.

<sup>l</sup> Nat. Hist. l. 29. sect. 6.

<sup>m</sup> Ib. l. 10. c. 28.

<sup>n</sup> Pausanias, l. 5. p. 313. & l. 6. p. 497. Clement. Alex. ad Gentes, p. 24.

<sup>o</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 13. 2.

<sup>p</sup> R. Sol. Urbina in Ohel Moed, fol. 100. 1.

<sup>q</sup> T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 12. 2.

<sup>r</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 20. 2.

<sup>s</sup> T. Bab. Sanhed. fol. 7. 2.

“speaker for him.” The gloss upon it is, “to cause his exposition to be heard by the congregation, שִׁלְרוֹשׁ לָךְ, *which he shall whisper to thee.*” Now it was absolutely requisite, that the speaker, or interpreter, should faithfully relate what the doctor said; sometimes, it seems, he did not: ’tis said in commendation of the meekness of R. Aba, “that he delivered one sense, and his speaker said another, and he was not angry.” The gloss says, “his speaker was, he that interpreted to the multitude what he לָךְ לוֹחֵשׁ, *whispered to him in the time of preaching.*” Sometimes one doctor is said to whisper in the ear of another, when he instructed him, or informed him of any thing. R. Jochanan<sup>v</sup> whispered R. Joshua בְּאָזְנוֹהוּ, *in his ear.* The Jews have a notion that the law was given this way; so they interpret *the eloquent orator* in Isa. iii. 3. <sup>2</sup> this is he to whom it is fit to deliver the words of the law, שְׁנוֹתָה בְּלִחָשׁ, *which was given by whispering:* and so, it seems, the Gospel was in like manner delivered by Christ to his disciples. It was reckoned a very great honour, and a token of magisterial dignity, to have one to whisper in the ear to, and speak for them. So to one that related his dream, that he saw an ass standing at his pillow, and braying, answer is made, thou shalt be a king, that is, the head of a school; and a speaker or an interpreter shall stand by thee<sup>γ</sup>. Our Lord very justly takes upon him the character of a doctor, master, and dictator, and solemnly charges his disciples, clearly, loudly, and faithfully to declare what he suggested to them. *That preach ye, says he, upon the house-tops; for the roofs of their houses were not ridged, but plain, and flat, upon which they could stand or walk; and battlements were made about them to prevent their falling off, according to the law in Deut. xii. 8. Here many religious actions were performed: here Peter went up to pray, Acts x. 9. and here persons sometimes sat and read: hence that passage in the Misna<sup>z</sup>, if any one קָרָא בְּרֹאשׁ הַגָּבַי, was reading on the top of a roof, and the book is rolled out of his hand, &c. and sometimes they made their proclamations from hence of their festivals and solemn days, and particularly of their sabbath; which was done by the sound of a trumpet, that the people might cease from work in the fields, and shut up their shops in the city, and light up their lamps. This proclamation, by the sound of a trumpet, was made six times by the chazan, or minister of the congregation, from an house-top; and, ’tis said, that there was, גַּב מְיוֹדֵד בְּנוֹבָה דְעֵיר, a peculiar roof in the highest part of the city, and from the middle of it he blew the trumpet<sup>2</sup>. In allusion to this, our Lord orders his disciples to blow the trumpet of the everlasting Gospel; and loudly proclaim to all the truths and mysteries of grace, which he had made known to them.*

Ver. 28. *And fear not them which kill the body, &c.*] This is a periphrasis of bloody persecutors, who, not content to revile, scourge, and imprison, put the faithful ministers of Christ to death, in the most cruel

and torturing manner; and yet are not so to be feared and dreaded by them, as to discourage and divert them from the performance of their important work and office; for, as Luke says, ch. xii. 9. *after that they have no more than they can do.* This is all they are capable of doing, even by divine permission, when they are suffered to run the greatest lengths in violence against the saints; this is the utmost of their efforts, which Satan, and their own wicked hearts, can put them upon, or is in the power of their hands to perform: and the taking away of the lives of good men is of no disadvantage to them; but sends them the sooner out of this troublesome world to their father’s house, to partake of those joys that will never end; so that they have nothing to fear from their most implacable enemies; but should boldly and bravely go on in their master’s service, openly, freely, faithfully, and fully discharging the work they were called unto: for, the loss of a corporal life is no loss to them, their souls live after death, in eternal happiness; and in a little time God will raise up their bodies, and reunite them to their souls, and be for ever happy together. A noble argument this, which our Lord makes use of, to engage his disciples to a public and diligent ministration of the Gospel, in spite of all opposers; who, when they have vented all their malice, can only take away a poor, frail, mortal life; and which, if they did not, in a little time would cease in course: *but are not able to kill the soul:* which is immortal, and can’t be touched by the sword, by fire and faggot, or any instruments of violence: it is immortal, it survives the body, and lives in a separate state, enjoying happiness and bliss, whilst the body is in a state of death: *but rather fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.* This is a description of God, and of his power, who is able to do that which men are not: all that they can do, by divine permission, is to kill the body; but he is able to destroy, that is, to torment and punish both body and soul in hell, in everlasting burnings; for neither soul nor body will be annihilated; though this he is able to do. As the former clause expresses the immortality of the soul, this supposes the resurrection of the body; for how otherwise should it be destroyed, or punished with the soul in hell? Now this awful being which is able to hurl, and will hurl all wicked and slothful, unfaithful and unprofitable, cowardly and temporising servants and ministers, soul and body, into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, is to be feared and dreaded; yea, indeed, he only is to be feared, and to be obeyed: cruel and persecuting men are not to be feared at all; God alone should be our fear and dread; though the argument seems to be formed from the lesser to the greater; yet this is the sense of the word *rather*, that God is to be feared, not chiefly and principally only, but solely; and in some versions that word is left out, as in the Arabic, and Ethiopic, and in Munster’s Hebrew Gospel.

Ver. 29. *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?*

<sup>v</sup> T. Bab. Sota, fol. 40. 1.

<sup>γ</sup> T. Hieros Kiddushin, fol. 65. 4.

<sup>z</sup> T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 14. 1.

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 56. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Erubin, c. 10. sect. 3.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 35. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

&c.] A farthing, with the Jews, was a very small coin; according to them it contained four grains of silver<sup>b</sup>; was the ninety-sixth part of a *sela*, or shilling<sup>c</sup>; and sometimes they make it to be of the same value with an Italian farthing: for they say<sup>d</sup>, it is of the value of eight *prutahs*: and a *prutah* is the eighth part of an Italian farthing: it is used proverbially to signify a very little thing in the Misna<sup>e</sup>; "if of a command, which is light כְּמֵיֶסֶר, as a far-thing, which Bartenora explains a very little thing, "the law says, that it may be well with thee, much more of the weighty commands in the law." Hence, in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, it is rendered by טַרְטוּץ, a little piece of money; and this was the common price of two sparrows. Our Lord appeals to his disciples, for the truth of it, as a thing well known: according to the question in Luke, five sparrows were sold for two farthings, which makes them somewhat cheaper still. This shews they were of little account. *And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your father*: some copies add, *which is in heaven*; meaning, that one of them should not be shot, or be killed, without the knowledge, will, and pleasure of God. The design of Christ is to assert the doctrine of providence, as reaching to all creatures and things, even the most minute and worthless: he instances not in men, nor in the beasts of the field, but in the fowls of the air, and in those of the inferior sort, and more useless, in sparrows, yea in little sparrows; as the word may be rendered; whose price was so low, that two are obliged to be put together to fetch the least sum of money current: and yet the providence of God is concerned with each of these; so that not one of them is taken in a snare, or killed with a stone, or shot flying, or sitting, but by the will of God: from whence it may be strongly concluded, that nothing comes by chance; that there is no such thing as contingency with respect to God, though there is to men, with respect to second causes; that all things are firmly ordained by the purpose of God, and are wisely ordered by his providence: and our Lord's further view is, from this consideration, to animate his disciples to a free, open, and constant preaching of his Gospel, not regarding their lives for his sake; for since their heavenly father, in his providence, takes care of the meanest, even of the most irrational creatures, so that the life of one of them is not taken away without his will, much more will he take care of them; nor could their valuable lives be lost without his will and pleasure. Much such a way of arguing is used by the Jews, who<sup>f</sup> say, צִפּוֹר מְבֹלְעֵדִי שְׂמִיָּא לֹא יִרְמָא כֹּל שֶׁנָּן בְּרַ נְשָׂא, a bird without God does not perish, much less a man; or, as it is elsewhere<sup>g</sup> expressed, "a bird without God is not hunted, or taken, how much less does the soul of a man go out of him?" And again<sup>h</sup>, "a bird without God does not fly away, much less the soul of a man." Two birds, or sparrows, as the word may

be rendered, in Lev. xiv. 4. were used in cleansing the leper; one was killed, and the other let loose into the open field: and though it might be a contingent thing with men which was killed, and which preserved, yet not with God; and some think the allusion is here to that case.

Ver. 30. *But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*] A proverbial expression, shewing the perfect knowledge God has, and the exquisite care he takes, in providence, of all his creatures, particularly men, and especially his dear children and faithful ministers; as not a sparrow, so not a single hair of a man's head falls to the ground without the knowledge, and will of God: a way of speaking sometimes used to signify, that not the least hurt or damage should befall a person; see 1 Sam. xiv. 45. 2 Sam. 14. 11. Acts xxvii. 34. and the phraseology of the text was in use, and very well known by the Jews; for so they represent God speaking<sup>i</sup>; "do not "I number all the hairs of every creature?" As our Lord applies this particularly to his disciples, his sense is, that they had no reason to be afraid of men, or fear any thing that should befall them, for their bearing a faithful testimony to him; for, their valuable lives were under the special and peculiar care of divine providence; not only the days, months, and years of their lives were with God, and put down in his book of purposes and decrees, which could neither be shortened nor lengthened; and not only the more principal, and even all the members of their bodies were written in his book of providence, and a singular care taken of them; but even their very excrescences, the more minute parts, and which were of no great account with them, the *hairs* of their head, even all of them, were not only known, but numbered, taken account of; yea, the thing was done already, it was not to be done; a very strong way of setting forth the doctrine of divine providence: a doctrine which the Jews were not unacquainted with, who say<sup>k</sup>; "that the events of man, and accidents "which come upon him, הַכֹּל בְּיַד שָׁמַיִם, are all by, "or in the hands of God;" and<sup>l</sup> that "nothing is by chance, but all things are בְּכוֹנָתָא, with design:" or, as they elsewhere say<sup>m</sup>, "a man does not hurt his "finger below, but they proclaim concerning it above;" that is, as the gloss explains it, גִּזְרוּר עֲלָיו, it is decreed concerning it: which comes very near to the phrase here used.

Ver. 31. *Fear ye not therefore, &c.*] Neither be afraid of men, nor distrust the providence of God; for if that reaches to the meanest of creatures, sparrows, and to that which is of the least account with men, the single hair of a man's head; much more must it regard the lives of men, and still more such useful lives as those of the disciples were, who were called to, and employed in preaching the everlasting Gospel; a work which so much concerned the glory of God, the interest of Christ, and the good of im-

<sup>b</sup> Maimon. in Misn. Peah, c. 8. sect. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Maaser Sheni, c. 4. sect. 3.

<sup>d</sup> Ib. in Misn. Eracin, c. 8. sect. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Cholin, c. 12. sect. 5.

<sup>f</sup> T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 38. 4.

<sup>g</sup> Beresheit Rabba, fol. 69. 3.

<sup>h</sup> Midrash Kohelet, fol. 81. 2. & Midrash Esther, fol. 89. 3.

<sup>i</sup> Pesikta, fol. 18. 4. apud Drusium in loc.

<sup>k</sup> Piske Tosaphot ad Cetubot, art. 119.

<sup>l</sup> Kimchi in Ps. civ. 4.

<sup>m</sup> T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 7. 2.

mortal souls: *ye are of more value than many sparrows.* Two of them were worth no more than a farthing; there must be a great multitude of them to be mentioned with any man: and indeed there is no comparison between the whole species of them, and the life of a single man, and much less between them, and the apostles of the Lamb. Any man is more valuable, as a man, than many sparrows, and much more a Christian man, and still more an apostle: the argument then is, that if God takes care of sparrows, and is concerned for their lives, much more will he take care of his faithful ministers, and not suffer their lives to be taken away, till they have done the will and work of their Lord.

Ver. 32. *Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, &c.*] The confession of Christ here, more especially designed, does not so much intend, though it may include, that which is less public, and is necessary to be made by every believer in Christ: for it is not enough to believe in him, with the heart, but confession of him must also be made with the mouth; and which lies in ascribing their whole salvation to him, giving him the glory of it; declaring their faith in him to others, and what he has done for their souls; and subjecting themselves to his ordinances, and joining in fellowship with his church and people: which confession, as it ought to be both by words and deeds, and to be hearty and sincere, so likewise visible, open, and before men. This, I say, may be included in the sense of these words; but what they chiefly relate to, is a confession of Christ by his ministers, in the public preaching of the Gospel; who ought openly, and boldly, to acknowledge, and declare, that Christ is truly and properly God, the eternal son of God, the only mediator between God and men, the Saviour and Redeemer of lost sinners; through whose blood alone is the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of grace; by whose righteousness only men can be justified before God; and by whose sacrifice and satisfaction sin is only expiated; that he died for, and in the room and stead of his people, rose again for their justification, ascended to heaven in their name, is set down at the right hand of God, and ever lives to make intercession for them, and will come again, and judge both quick and dead: such a free and open confession of Christ ought to be made by all his ministers before men, and in spite of all the rage and opposition of earth and hell; and such shall not fail of being taken notice of, and requited by Christ; for he himself says, *him will I confess also before my father which is in heaven:* as he has a perfect knowledge of them, and bears an affectionate love to them; so he'll openly own, and acknowledge them, as his ministers, and speak in the praise and commendation of their works and labours; though they have been performed through the gifts, grace, and strength, which he has communicated to them: he'll introduce them into his father's presence, and recommend them to him, to be honoured, blessed, and glorified by him.

Ver. 33. *But whosoever shall deny me before men, &c.*] Deny that he is a disciple of Christ, and that

Christ is his Lord and master, act contrary to him, deliver things repugnant to his mind and will; which for a disciple to do to his master, was a very heinous crime with the Jews: "if (say they") Rabbi Jochanan, כּוּפֵר, deny Rabbi Eleazar, his disciple, he "will not deny Rabbi Jannai, his master." Some regard may be had here to Peter's after-denial of Christ; and this proviso be supposed, *except he repent*, as he did. Moreover, to deny Christ, is to drop, or oppose any of those truths which regard his person, office, and grace; or to hide and conceal them from men, through fear, shame, or cowardice of mind: and even not to confess him, through fear of men, is interpreted, by Christ, a denial of him; and such who deny him in any form and shape, either by words or deeds, *him*, says he, *will I also deny before my father which is in heaven*; he'll deny them to be disciples, or that they belong to him; he'll deny that he ever knew them, loved, or approved of them; he'll declare, in the presence of his father, his disapprobation of them, his indignation against them, that they are workers of iniquity; yea, he'll do more, he'll banish them from his presence, and send them into everlasting burnings.

Ver. 34. *Think not ye that I am come to send peace on earth, &c.*] The Jews had a notion of great outward peace and prosperity in the days of the Messiah; which was grounded on several prophecies of the Old Testament, not rightly understood by them; and the disciples of Christ had imbibed the same notion: wherefore our Lord thought fit to let them know the contrary; and that they must not expect outward ease, and quiet, and worldly tranquillity would attend their ministry; for though he came to be a peace-maker between God and sinners, by the blood of his cross; and was both the author and donor of spiritual peace to his people; and the Gospel he brought with him, and sent them to preach, was the Gospel of peace; which, accompanied with his power, would produce peace in the consciences of men, and be the means of cultivating and maintaining peace among the saints; yet *peace on earth*, in a temporal sense, whether in the world in general, or in Judea particular, must not be expected as the consequence of his coming; so far from it, that he subjoins, *I came, not to send peace, but a sword.* By the *sword* may be meant the Gospel, which is the means of dividing and separating the people of Christ from the men of the world, and from their principles and practices, and one relation from another; as also of divisions, discords, and persecutions arising from it: not that it was the intention and design of Christ, in coming into the world, to foment and encourage such things; but this, through the malice and wickedness of men, was eventually the effect and consequence of his coming; see Luke xii. 51. where, instead of a *sword*, it is *division*; because the sword divides asunder, as does the sword of the spirit, the word of God.

Ver. 35. *For I am come to set a man at variance against, &c.*] Or *to divide a man from his father.* Here our Lord opens and explains what he means by the sword, intestine divisions, domestic broils, family differences, as well as such as appear in towns,

cities, and kingdoms, which are exemplified by other instances following; *and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law*: the case is this, a father believing in Christ, embracing his Gospel, and submitting to his institutions, is contradicted, opposed, and persecuted by his own son, and a mother by her own daughter; in both which relations, natural affection knit them together; and the mother-in-law by her daughter-in-law, who before lived together in the most peaceable, kind, and tender manner: which must be imputed, not to Christ, and the doctrines of Christ, and the natural tendency of them, embraced by the father, the mother, and mother-in-law; but to the natural enmity of the son, the daughter, and the daughter-in-law, to every thing divine, spiritual, and evangelical, or vice versa.

Ver. 36. *And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.*] His children, and his servants, such that he has either begotten and brought up, or are daily fed at his table, and maintained by him. This, with the former instances, are borrowed from Micah vii. 6. and the times of the Gospel are set forth in the same dismal and black characters, as those in which the prophet lived; and much such a description do the Jews themselves give, of the times of their expected Messiah; which agreeing in words, as well as things, I can't forbear transcribing. "The government shall be turned to heresy (Sadducism), and there will be no reproof; the synagogue shall become a brothel-house, Galilee shall be destroyed, and Gablan shall be laid waste, and the men of the border shall wander from city to city, and shall obtain no mercy; the wisdom of the Scribes shall stink, and they that fear to sin shall be despised, and truth shall fail; young men shall turn pale, or put to shame, the faces of old men, and old men shall stand before young men; the son shall deal basely with his father, the daughter shall rise up against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and the enemies of a man shall be they of his own house: the face of that generation shall be as the face of a dog, and the son shall not reverence his father." All which characters, how exactly they agree with the generation in which Christ lived, is easy to observe.

Ver. 37. *He that loveth father or mother more than me, &c.*] The design of these words, is not at all to lessen the due affection of children to their parents; or to detract from the respect and esteem, in which they ought to be had by them: it is the duty of children, to love, honour, and obey them; who have been the means of bringing them into the world, and of bringing them up in it; nor do any of the doctrines of Christ break in upon the ties and obligations of nature, or in the least set aside any of the duties of natural religion: but the intent of this passage is, to shew, that as Christ is infinitely above all creatures, he is to be loved above the nearest and dearest relations and friends; being God over all blessed for ever, and also the Saviour and Redeemer; which itself, makes him more amiable and lovely than

a common parent. That man therefore, that prefers father and mother to Christ, and their instructions, and orders, to the truths and ordinances of Christ; who, to please them, breaks the commands of Christ, rejects his Gospel, and either denies him, or does not confess him, our Lord says, *is not worthy of me*; or, as in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, he is not ראוי לאחי, *fit for me*: it is not fit and proper, that such a person should name the name of Christ, or be called by his name, and should be reckoned one of his disciples; he is not fit to be a member of the church of Christ on earth, nor for the kingdom of heaven, but deserves to be rejected by him, and everlastingly banished his presence: for otherwise no man, let him behave ever so well, is worthy of relation to Christ, and interest in him; or of his grace, righteousness, presence, kingdom and glory. The same is the sense of the following clause, *and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me*: whoever, to gratify a child, drops the profession of Christ, renounces his Gospel, and neglects his commands, it is not proper and convenient that he should bear the name of Christ, be accounted one of his, or be treated as such, but all the reverse.

Ver. 38. *And he that taketh not his cross, &c.*] By the cross, which was a Roman punishment, whereby malefactors were put to death, are meant all sorts of afflictions, reproaches, persecutions, and death itself; and particularly the ill will, hatred, and persecution, of near relations and friends, which must be expected by such, who bear a faithful testimony for Christ. Every minister of Christ, or professor of his name, has his own cross, his own particular afflictions, appointed by God, and laid on him by Christ, and which he should cheerfully take up, and patiently bear, for his sake. The allusion is to the custom of persons sentenced to be crucified, to carry their own cross, as Christ did his, and Simon the Cyrenian for him; and which our Lord here may have a respect unto, as well knowing what death he was to die, and that some of his disciples also would die the same death: wherefore Christ says, *and followeth after me*; led on by his example, to preach or profess the Gospel, submit to the ordinances of it, and cheerfully suffer for the sake of it, when called to it. If a man, who would be thought to be a disciple of Christ, is not willing to do all this, but, in order to avoid it, complies with his friends, conforms to the world, and turns his back on Christ; of such an one he may well say, he *is not worthy of me*; it is not convenient that he should stand among his disciples and followers.

Ver. 39. *He that findeth his life shall lose it, &c.*] That man that seeks to preserve his life, and the temporal enjoyments of it, by a sinful compliance with his friends and the world, and by a denial of Christ, or non-confession of him; if he is not, by the providence of God, deprived of the good things of life, and dies a shameful death, both which are sometimes the case of such persons; yet he is sure to lose the happy and eternal life of his soul and body, in the world to come: so that the present finding

\* Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 15. T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 97. 1. Zohar in

Num. fol. 102. 5. & Raya Mehimms in ib. in Lev. fol. 28. 9. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 11. 4. Derech Eretz Zuta, fol. 19. 4.



of life, or the possession of it, on such sinful terms, will in the issue prove an infinite and irreparable loss unto him. On the other hand, Christ observes, *he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it.* That man that is willing to forego the present advantages of life, to suffer reproach and persecution, and lay down his life cheerfully for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, for the profession of his name, rather than drop, deny, conceal, or neglect any truth and ordinance of his, shall find his soul possessed of eternal life, as soon as separated from his body; and shall find his corporal life again, in the resurrection morn, to great advantage; and shall live with Christ in soul and body, in the utmost happiness, to all eternity.

Ver. 40. *He that receiveth you, receiveth me, &c.*] This is said to comfort the disciples, lest they should conclude from this account of the sorrows, afflictions, and persecutions they were to meet with, that there would be none that would receive them and their message; Christ therefore suggests, that there would be some that would embrace the Gospel preached by them, and receive them kindly into their houses, and entertain them in a very hospitable manner: and, for the encouragement of such persons, who would risk their own goods and lives by so doing, he lets them know, that receiving of his disciples, was interpreted by him, a receiving of himself; and what they did to them, would be taken as kindly, as if done to him personally; and, in like manner, would it be understood and accepted by his father: *and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.* To which agrees, what the Jews say<sup>p</sup> of the angel, in Exod. xxiii. 22. *If thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I shall speak: who observe, that it is not written, that he shall speak, but that I shall speak; intimating, that אם מקבלין אתם הימנו כאלו לי אתם מקבליים, if ye receive him, it is all one as if you received me:* and the whole of this accords with a common saying among<sup>q</sup> them, *ששלוהו של אדם כמותי, that a man's messenger is as himself.* The Jew<sup>r</sup>, therefore, has no reason to reproach Christ and his followers as he does, as if it was the sense of these words of Christ, and which the Christians give of them, that Christ and his twelve apostles were but one person.

Ver. 41. *He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, &c.*] By a *prophet* is meant, not one that foretells things to come, but a preacher of the Gospel; for as prophesying sometimes signifies preaching, so a prophet designs a minister of the word: and to receive him, is not only to embrace his doctrine, but to entertain him in a kind, and generous manner; and he that does this, *in the name of a prophet,* not as coming in the name of another prophet, but upon this account, and for this consideration, because he himself is a prophet; so the phrase, *לשם, in the name,* or on the account of any thing, is often used in the Misnic writings<sup>s</sup>: he that regards such a person, and shews him respect, by an hospitable entertainment of him; not because he may be related to him after the flesh; or

because he may be a man of good behaviour, of a singular disposition and temper, of much learning and eloquence, of great natural parts and abilities; but because he is a faithful minister of the Gospel; he shall receive a prophet's reward: either a reward from the prophet himself, who shall interpret the Scriptures to him, preach the Gospel to him, lead him more fully into the truths of it, and guide him to the true, and more clear and distinct sense of the sacred writings; which is an ample reward for his kind entertainment of him: or else, that reward which God has appointed, prepared, and promised, to them who receive his prophets; and which indeed is no other, than what the prophets themselves shall receive, even the reward of the inheritance, the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world, a reward of grace, and not of debt; since both, in their way, serve the Lord Christ. *And he that receiveth a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man.* He that is kind and liberal to any good man, whether he is a minister of the Gospel or not, who appears to have the work of grace upon his soul, and is justified by the righteousness of Christ, and expects eternal life on that account; if he shews respect to him, purely because he has the image of Christ enstamped on him, and the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and not on any natural, worldly, or civil accounts, *he shall receive a righteous man's reward:* either from the good man himself, who will not fail to pray for his benefactor, to wish him well, and give him all the assistance he can in his Christian course; to exhort, comfort, instruct him as much, and as far as his Christian experience will furnish him with; or else the same reward of grace the righteous man himself shall have, namely, eternal life, as God's gift, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ver. 42. *And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, &c.*] Our Lord gradually descends from prophets to righteous men, and from righteous men, to those of the lowest form and class among them; who have the least measure of grace, and share of spiritual light, and knowledge; who are outwardly the poorest, meanest, and most contemptible in the eyes of the world; and are little, even the least of saints, in their own esteem and account: whosoever takes notice but of one of these, receives him into his house, and gives him a cup of cold water only, is regarded, a phrase used to express the least favour, or benefit whatever. "So says<sup>t</sup> Maimonides, one that calls to his friend to dine with him, and he refuses, and swears, or vows, that he shall not enter into his house, nor will he give him to drink, *נפשת צונן, a drop of cold water, &c.*" Moreover, this is said to prevent any objection, on account of the mean and low condition persons may be in, to their relieving necessitous objects; for every one is capable of doing this, and if they can do no more, 'tis accepted. Now whosoever takes notice of, and shews favour to the meanest of Christ's people, though it be but bestowing so small a benefit as a cup of cold water; yet, if it is done *in the name of a disciple,* or because that poor person is a

<sup>p</sup> Shemot Rabba Parash. 32. fol. 135. 3.

<sup>q</sup> T. Bab. Baracot, fol. 34. 2. Kiddushin, fol. 41. 2. 42. 1. & 43. 1. Bava Metzia, fol. 96. 1.

<sup>r</sup> R. Isaac Chizuk Emuna, par 2. sect. 14. p. 404.

<sup>s</sup> Misn. Zebachim, c. 1. sect. 1. 2, 3, 4. & 4. 6. & 6. 7. & 7. 1, 2, 3, 4.

<sup>t</sup> Hilchot Nedarim, c. 8. sect. 10.

disciple of Christ, *verily*, says Christ, *I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward*: it will be observed another day by Christ, who takes what is done to the least of his brethren, as done to himself. The Jews say many things in praise of hospitality, to תלמיד חכם, *a disciple of a wise man*; and observe<sup>u</sup>, that he that

hospitably entertains such an one in his house, and causes him to eat and drink, and partake of the goods of his house, there is reason to believe, he shall be much more blessed than the house of Obed Edom was for the ark's sake, which neither eat nor drank with him; and which may be compared with this passage.

## C H A P. XI.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, &c.*] In the course of things, and as before determined and resolved on, that when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples; when he had given them a commission to preach the Gospel, had finished all his instructions he thought fit to give them, and orders he enjoined them, relating to that work; as where they should go, what they should say, how they should behave, and what treatment they should meet with; and had given them all proper advice and encouragement, *he departed thence*, from the place where he then was: he did not desist either from the ministry of the word, or from working of miracles, but went out into other parts of the country, *to teach and to preach in their cities*: meaning either in the cities of the Jews, or in the cities of his disciples; and these, either the cities they belonged to, from whence they came, namely, the cities of Galilee; for the disciples were Galileans, and in which parts Christ now was; or else the cities where he sent them to preach first, and then came himself, and confirmed their doctrine by his own ministry and miracles.

Ver. 2. *Now when John had heard in the prison, &c.*] The person here spoken of is John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, who was now in the prison of Máchærus; being put there by Herod, for his reproving him for taking Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; and whilst he was there, an account was brought him by his own disciples, see Luke vii. 18. of the works of Christ, the miracles he wrought; as the healing of the centurion's servant, the raising from the dead the widow's son of Naim, and the like; upon hearing of which, *he sent two of his disciples*, who might be the most prejudiced against Christ, because of the increase of his followers, and the decrease of their master's; and because he did not live such an austere life as John did; and who, notwithstanding all that they had heard, and their master had told them of Jesus, were not easily persuaded that he was the true Messiah. Moreover, two of them were sent, both because it was more honourable to Christ, and that they might be proper witnesses of what they saw and heard; and since it was not so much for himself, as for the sake of his disciples, that these messengers were sent.

Ver. 3. *And said unto him, &c.*] By the disciples he sent; this was the message they came with, and this the question they were to ask, and did, *art thou he that should come?* A periphrasis of the Messiah, well known to the Jews; for he had been spoken of frequently in the prophecies of the Old Testament, as the Shiloh, the Redeemer, the Prophet, and King that should

come; particularly, by this circumlocution, reference seems to be had to Hab. ii. 3. *It shall surely come, כי בא יבא*, which may be rendered, *for he that cometh, or is to come, shall come*. So that the question in plain terms is, whether he was the Messiah? John could not be ignorant of this, who had seen the spirit of God descending on him at his baptism, heard a voice from heaven, declaring him the son of God; and had so often pointed him out to others, and had borne frequent testimonies that he was the Lamb of God, and bridegroom of his church: wherefore this question was put, not upon his own account, but his disciples, that they might have from the mouth of Christ a full and satisfactory answer, which would remove all their doubts and scruples, and attach them to Christ, now he was about to die, and leave them, than which nothing was more desirable to him. Though some have thought, that John's faith was somewhat slackened; and through his long imprisonment, he began to doubt whether he was the Messiah or no: and others have been of opinion, as particularly Dr. Lightfoot, that the reason of this message was, neither the ignorance and unbelief of John, or his disciples; but that John, with the rest of the Jews, having a notion of a temporal kingdom, and hearing of the mighty works of Christ, wonders that he himself was not delivered out of prison by him, grows impatient upon it, and asks, if he was the Messiah? And if he was, why did he suffer his forerunner and chief minister to lie in prison? or do we look for another, to release me, and set up this kingdom?

Ver. 4. *Jesus answered and said unto them, &c.*] Not by an express declaration, that he was the Messiah that was to come, and they were not to look for any other; but he bids them go, and shew John again, those things which ye do hear and see. Christ would have them go back to John in prison, and relate to him the doctrines which they had heard preached by him to the poor; and the miracles which they had seen with their own eyes, then wrought by him; as well as many others, which were attested to them by credible witnesses; for there were at that time about Christ, that had infirmities, plagues, and evil spirits, and that were blind, and he instantly cured them in their presence; see Luke vii. 21.

Ver. 5. *The blind receive their sight, &c.*] Our Lord here, has reference to several prophecies concerning the Messiah, in Isa. xxxv. 6. and lxi. 1. and which having their accomplishment in him, John and his disciples might easily and strongly conclude, that he was he that was to come, and that they should not

look for another. The several things here mentioned, were not all done at this time, but were what these disciples had sufficient and authentic evidence of; sight was restored to the blind before them then; and no doubt they were informed of the two blind men, that had their eyes opened, Matt. ix. 30. *and the lame walk*; as did the man sick of the palsy, who was brought to him on a bed, carried by four men, but went away himself, with his bed upon his shoulders, Matt. ix. 2, 6, 7. *the lepers are cleansed*: as the poor man was, that was full of leprosy, and who was cured by Christ, by touching him, Matt. viii. 3. *and the deaf hear*: as did the man, into whose ears Christ put his fingers and said, Ephphatha, be opened, Mark vii. 33, 34, 35. *and the dead are raised*: as were Jairus's daughter, Matt. ix. 18. and the widow's son of Naim, Luke vii. 15. *and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them*: by the poor are meant, either the preachers of the Gospel; for so the words may be rendered, *the poor preach the Gospel*: and such were the apostles of Christ; they were poor with respect to the things of this world; they were chiefly fishermen; and, with respect to human literature, they were unlearned men, had no stock or furniture of acquired learning, and were mean, abject, and contemptible, in the sight and opinion of men; and yet Christ called, qualified, and sent them forth to preach the Gospel. Or else, the hearers of it are designed; who were also the poor of this world, made a very low figure in life, and had but a small share of knowledge and understanding, and so were despised, and reckoned as cursed by the Scribes and Pharisees: or they were such, who were poor in spirit, or spiritually poor; who saw their spiritual poverty, bewailed and acknowledged it, and sought after the true riches of grace, and glory in Christ. Now these, as they had the Gospel preached to them more fully and clearly, with more power and authority, and so as it never was before or since, so they received it, as Tremellius from the Syriac reads the text, readily and willingly, joyfully and gladly, with faith and love; and were, as it may be also rendered, *evangelized* by it, or thrown into a gospel mould and frame: which may be said to be done, when a man has a spirit of liberty, in opposition to a spirit of bondage; when he lives by faith on Christ alone; when his comforts don't spring from his works, but from Christ; when the love and grace of God influence his repentance and obedience; when a man has a spirit of meekness and of love to the saints, is of a forbearing and forgiving spirit: when he is desirous of performing all duties both to God and man, and yet depends upon none of them, but upon Christ alone, for salvation.

Ver. 6. *And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.*] The Jews were offended at Christ's parentage and birth, at the poverty of his parents, and at the manner of his birth, by a virgin; and at the place of his birth, which they thought to be Galilee; at his education, because he had not learnt letters, and was brought up to a mechanical employment; at his mean appearance in his public ministry, in his own person, and in his attendants: his company and audience being the poorer sort, the more ignorant, and who had been loose and scandalous persons, publicans and sinners; at the doctrines he preached, par-

ticularly, which respected his own deity and eternity, the distinguished grace of God, and living by faith upon his flesh and blood. The disciples of John also were offended in him, because he and his disciples did not fast, and lead such an austere life as they and their master did; because of the meanness and obscurity of Christ's kingdom; the imprisonment of John, and the many reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, which did, and were likely to attend a profession of Christ: this our Lord knew, and had a peculiar respect to them in these words; but happy are those persons, who, notwithstanding all these difficulties and discouragements, are so far from stumbling at Christ, and falling from him, that they heartily receive him and believe in him, make a profession of him, and hold it fast; greatly love, highly value, and esteem him, and are willing to part with all, and bear all for his sake: these are blessed, notwithstanding all their sufferings for him even now; for they have spiritual peace, joy, and comfort in their souls, and shall be happy in the full enjoyment of him to all eternity.

Ver. 7. *And as they departed, &c.*] That is, the messengers of John, Luke vii. 24. when they returned to their master, to give an account to him of what they had heard and seen, *Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John*; he took this opportunity before the whole company, who had heard what passed in conversation between him and the disciples of John, to say some things concerning his character and ministry: and which he did, partly to rectify and remove any wrong opinion they might have conceived of him, from this message of his, as if he had retracted his former sentiments concerning Christ, at least was wavering and doubtful about him; and partly, to put them in mind of their former zeal and attachment to John's ministry, when they went out in large bodies to attend upon it, and to revive a good opinion of him; and signifies, that they would do well to ask themselves, what views they had in attending on him, and how they came to grow indifferent to so great a man: and Christ, by giving an account of his character and office, confirms his own Messiahship; and this commendation of John, he chose to enter into, after the departure of his messengers, lest what he said of him should be interpreted as mere flattery: *what went ye out in the wilderness to see?* This refers to Matt. iii. 5. where we read, that great numbers from Jerusalem, Judea, and the country round about Jordan, went out into the wilderness of Judæa, where John came preaching, to hear him, and be baptized by him; and our Lord asks, what was it that led such multitudes of them into the wilderness? What did they expect to see there? *A reed shaken with the wind?* This may either refer to John's gesture in preaching, who might wave to and fro as a reed does, when shaken by the wind; and Christ's question is, did ye go out only to see and observe the preacher's gesture, to see him move his body to and fro? Was it not to hear his doctrine, and receive benefit for your souls? And did you not? Wherefore, you ought still to retain a valuable respect for him. Or this may regard their opinion of him; and the sense of the interrogation is, when

you first went out to him, did you take him to be an unstable, inconstant man? Like a reed shaken with every wind! If you did, you were mistaken; he was firm and stable in his sentiments and ministry, his preaching was not yea and nay, his doctrine was all of a piece; he stood to it, that he was not the Messiah, but his forerunner; the testimony he bore was always alike, consistent with himself, and he is the same man now he ever was. The Jews use this comparison of a man to a reed, in a sense just the reverse, and make it to signify constancy, and not inconstancy, as well as tenderness, in opposition to roughness, severity, and stubbornness. "Let a man (say they)" be always "רֵד בְּקֶדֶד, *tender as a reed*, and let him not be hard and stubborn as a cedar: when the four winds of the world go out, the reed goes and comes with them; and when the winds are still, the reed stands in its place." So they observe\*, that it is said, that the Lord shall smite Israel, as a reed shaken in the water, 1 Kings xiv. 15. which they interpret by way of blessing. "As a reed (say they) stands in a place of water, its body waves about, and its roots are many; and though all the winds in the world come and blow upon it, they can't move it out of its place, but it goes and comes with them; and when the winds are still, the reed stands in its place."

Ver. 8. *But what went ye out for to see? &c.*] Since it can't be thought it was to see the reeds in the wilderness blow to and fro by the wind, or a man like one of them, either in gesture or doctrine; was it to see a man clothed in soft raiment? In raiment made of soft materials, as fine wool, cotton, silk, &c. such as Mæcenas wore, and who was therefore called Malacianus<sup>7</sup>: one finely dressed, and richly appareled, draws the eyes of persons to him; but such an one is not to be expected in a wilderness: and if the Jews went to see such a person, they were greatly disappointed; for John's raiment was of camel's hair, undressed, and he had a leathern girdle about his loins; and as for his diet, it was locusts and wild honey: no, behold they that wear soft clothing, or, as Luke says, are gorgeously appareled: to which he adds, and live delicately, are in kings' houses, or courts; not in a desert, where John came preaching, nor in a prison, where he now was: he was no light, inconstant, flattering person, as generally courtiers are; had he, he would not have been in a prison; it was for his uprightness and faithfulness, in reproving Herod the king, that he was in such a place and condition. Thus from his very garb and diet, his character is vindicated from the charge of levity and change.

Ver. 9. *But what went ye out for to see? &c.*] Since it was not any thing so mean as a shaking reed, or so grand as a man in gay clothing, pray what was it you went out to see? A prophet? This was the truth of the matter, they expected to see a prophet, and they believed he was one; this was the common voice of the people; all held John to be a prophet. This made Herod afraid to put him to death, and the Pharisees to speak against his baptism: now, though this was giving him a great character, to believe and own him

to be a prophet, yet it did not come up to his full character. *Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet*: when they saw him, they saw not only a prophet, but one that was greater, and more excellent than any of the prophets that went before him: they prophesied of the Messiah at a distance, and in words not so clear, and easy to be understood; they spoke of him as to come, but he pointed him out with his finger, and declared that he was come; he saw him himself, and shewed him to others; he saw the spirit of God descending on him, and he himself baptized him; his office, as the harbinger of Christ, and the administrator of the ordinance of baptism to him, gave him a preference to all the prophets; and was such an one, as never any man was vested with but himself.

Ver. 10. *For this is he of whom it is written, &c.*] Mal. iii. 1. *Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.* That these words belong לעולם הבא, to the world to come, or the times of the Messiah, that is, the Gospel dispensation, the Jews<sup>2</sup> themselves own; but as to the particular person meant by the messenger, or angel, because they are not willing to acknowledge the right person, are at the utmost loss. Jarchi makes him to be the angel of death, who is to destroy the wicked; Aben Ezra conjectures it may be Messiah the son of Joseph, who they fancy will come before Messiah the son of David. Kimchi thinks an angel from heaven is designed; and Abarbinel Malachi himself: but the more ancient sense of the synagogue was, that the same person is meant, as in ch. ix. 5. under the name of Elijah the prophet; and some have thought, that Elijah the 'Ishbite himself, is intended; though others think, that some great prophet of equal degree with him, and who is called by his name, is what the prophecy has regard unto<sup>3</sup>; which last is the true sense of the passage: nor should it be once called in question, when our Lord himself has applied it to John the Baptist; to whom the things said in it perfectly agree. He was an angel, not by nature, but by office; a messenger sent by God, before the face of the Messiah; six months before him: such a space of time he was born before him; and such a space of time he entered on his public ministry before him; and prepared his way before him, by preaching the doctrine of repentance, administering the ordinance of baptism, pointing at the Messiah, and exhorting persons to believe on him. All which proves him to be, what Christ says he was, more than a prophet.

Ver. 11. *Verily I say unto you, &c.*] What Christ had before said, he proved from a testimony of Scripture; what he was about to say depending on his word, he asseverates in the most solemn manner: among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist. The phrase, them that are born of women, is a periphrasis, of men born into the world by ordinary generation; see Job xiv. 1. and the sense is, that of all the prophets that have been in the world, since the beginning of it, Moses himself not excepted, there has not been raised up by God a greater prophet than John, the first administrator of

<sup>2</sup> Derech Eretz, fol. 18. 1.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 20. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 219. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Vid. Pocock in Mal. iii. 1.

baptism; were but considered, the uncommonness of his birth, his being filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, his exemplary life, the excellency of his doctrine; and especially, his work and office, as the harbinger of Christ, and the preparer of his ways. *Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he*; which is to be understood, not of Christ, who was younger in age, and a junior preacher, and less in the esteem of the Pharisees, being greater than he, in nature and office, nor of the saints in heaven, where he that was least, the meanest, and most abject, when on earth, is more happy than John, who was then in prison; nor of all the believers under the Gospel dispensation; but of the apostles of Christ, and the least among them, who were then the kingdom of heaven, or the visible Gospel church state. These had a better opportunity of conversing with Christ, and of seeing and hearing the things they did, than John had; they had the power of performing miracles, which John had not; were immediately sent forth by Christ, to preach the Gospel, and had a clearer insight into the truths of it, than John; especially, after the Holy Ghost was in such an extraordinary manner poured forth upon them, on the day of Pentecost; particularly after the death and resurrection of Christ, they were able to preach him, not only as come in the flesh, but as having suffered and died, and obtained eternal redemption: they could speak of his blood being shed, of his righteousness being wrought out, and of his sacrifice and satisfaction as made, which John could not; and besides, were more successful in the conversion of sinners, both Jews and Gentiles, than ever he was. The comparison does not lie so much between their persons, as their several different degrees of light and doctrine.

Ver. 12. *And from the days of John the Baptist until now, &c.*] From the time that he began to preach, to the then present time, *the kingdom of heaven*, the Gospel, and the ministry of it, first by John, then by Christ and his apostles, *suffereth violence*; or *comes with force*, and power upon the souls of men: it was attended with the demonstration of the spirit, and of power; as appeared by its being the means of quickening persons that were dead in trespasses and sins; enlightening the blind; causing the deaf to hear; melting and softening hearts of stone; making, of enemies, friends to God and Christ; turning men from the power of Satan unto God; setting at liberty such as were slaves and vassals to their own corruptions; and, in a word, in being the power of God unto salvation, to many souls: and which was further seen, in the manner it did all this; suddenly, secretly, powerfully, and effectually, and yet not against the wills of men; and by such instruments as the apostles were, poor, sinful, mortal men; despised by the world, and attended with opposition and persecution: or *suffers violence*; which may be understood, either of the vast numbers, that pressed and crowded to hear the Gospel preached: great numbers followed John, when he first began to preach, and baptize: still a greater number followed Christ, some to hear his doctrine,

others to see his miracles, others to behold his person, others out of selfish ends; and some behaved rudely and indecently: or of the ardour and fervency of spirit, which appeared in some, to the ministry of John and Christ, and in their desires and expectations of the kingdom of the Messiah: or of the Gospel's suffering violence by the persecutions of its enemies opposing and contradicting it, reproaching it, intimidating the professors of it, and seeking to take away the life of Christ, the great subject of it: *and the violent take it by force*; meaning either publicans, and harlots, and Gentile sinners; who might be thought to be a sort of intruders: or rather the same persons, as being powerfully wrought upon under the ministry of the Gospel; who were under violent apprehensions of wrath and vengeance, of their lost and undone state and condition by nature; were violently in love with Christ, and eagerly desirous of salvation by him, and communion with him; and had their affections set upon the things of another world: these having the Gospel preached to them, which is a declaration of God's love to sinners, a proclamation of peace and pardon, and a publication of righteousness and life by Christ, they greedily caught at it, and embraced it.

Ver. 13. *For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.*] These words are to be considered in connexion with ver. 11. and are a further proof of John's being greater than any of the prophets; because all the inspired writers and prophets, who were before him, prophesied of the Messiah as to come; and either spoke of him in obscure terms, or represented him under dark shadows and figures: whereas John spake of him as already come, and in plain terms, and directed to his very person; and since his time, there have been no prophecies concerning the Messiah and his kingdom; vision and prophecy are now sealed up; all which are acknowledged by the Jews themselves, who<sup>b</sup> say, *כל הנביאים כולו לא נתנבא אלא לימות המשיח*, *all the prophets did not prophesy but to, or of the days of the Messiah*. This was the subject, and these the limits of their prophecies; for they own<sup>c</sup>, that "from the day that the temple was destroyed, *בשילה* " *נבואה כון הנביא*, *prophecy was taken away from the " prophets."* Since that time, they confess they have had no prophet<sup>d</sup>, and that they are not able to observe their signs.

Ver. 14. *And if ye will receive it, &c.*] The words carry in them some suspicion of unbelief and hardness of heart, as though they would not receive it: however, whether they would or no, it was a certain truth, that this same person, *John the Baptist, is Elias, which was for to come*; who was appointed by God to come, and was prophesied of, Mal. iv. 5. that he should come; and even according to the doctrine of the Scribes and Rabbins, he was expected to come before the Messiah; only they in general thought that Elijah the Tishbite, in person, was meant; though some, as before observed<sup>e</sup>, were of opinion, that some great prophet equal to Elijah, and endued with the same spirit, is intended; and which is true of John the Baptist, who came *in the spirit and power of Elias*,

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Beraicot, fol. 34. 2. Sabbat, fol. 69. 1. Sanhedrim, fol. 99. 1.  
<sup>c</sup> T. Bava Bathra, fol. 12. 1.

<sup>d</sup> Abarbanel in Dan. fol. 69. 4.  
<sup>e</sup> Vid. Pocock. not. in porta Mosis, p. 219.

Luke i. 17. And, as it was usual with the Jews<sup>f</sup>, to call Phinehas by the name of Elias, and Elias Phinehas, because of his zeal for the Lord of hosts; for the same reason may John be called by the same name, there being a great resemblance between Elias and him; in their temper and disposition; in their manner of clothing, and austere way of living; in their very great piety and holiness; in their courage and integrity, in reproving vice; and in their zeal and usefulness in the cause of God, and true religion: in respect to which, Christ must be here understood, when he affirms John to be Elias; not Elias in person, but he that was intended by Elias, that was said should come: hence here is no contradiction to the words of the Baptist, in John i. 21. when he says, that he was not Elias; for the Jews, who put the question to him, whether he was Elias, or no<sup>g</sup> meant whether he was Elias in person, Elias the Tishbite, or no; and so John understood them, and very honestly and sincerely replies, he was not: but he does not deny that he was intended by this Elias, that was prophesied should come; yea, he says such things as might induce them to believe he was that person; hence, Christ, and he, say nothing contrary to, and irreconcilable, as the Jew<sup>h</sup> suggests, with each other.

Ver. 15. *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*] A way of speaking used by Christ, when any thing serious, and of great importance, was delivered; and which required attention, and was not easily understood: and such were the several things he had mentioned in this context; as that John was more than a prophet, more excellent than all the prophets; that the law and prophets were now at an end, and that John was Elias; which things, if rightly understood, would serve greatly to settle their judgment, with respect to himself as the Messiah: but his words imply, that every one had not spiritual ears and understandings, to hear and take in things of such an high nature, and excellent use; none but those to whom they were given; and such ought to attend to them, and seriously weigh and consider the importance of them. The phrase is to be met with in Jewish writings, where it is thus expressed<sup>i</sup>; "*He that hears let him hear, and he that understandeth let him understand;*" see Matt. xxiv. 14.

Ver. 16. *But whereunto shall I liken this generation?* The men of that age, the stubborn and perverse Jews; who were pleased with nothing, with no man's ministry, neither with John's, nor with Christ's, but found fault with whatever they heard, or saw done: *it is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling to their fellows:* that is, the case of such persons may be fitly represented by children in a public market, calling to their companions, to pipe or mourn with them, and who are so morose and sullen as to do neither: for the men of that generation, are not the good-natured children, that called to their fellows, and were willing to join in innocent diversions and exercises; but rather John the Baptist, Christ and his disciples, who may be compared to *children*, for their harmlessness and

simplicity; and are represented as *sitting in markets*, places of concourse, where much people met together; which may intend the synagogues and temple, and other public places, which they made use of to publish their doctrines in, to preach to, and exhort the people; and as *calling to their fellows*, to their cotemporaries, to those of their own nation, by the external ministry of the word.

Ver. 17. *And saying, we have piped unto you, and ye have not danced, &c.*] The allusion is to Jewish children, who having seen their parents and friends at their festivals and weddings, some play upon the pipe, and others dance to them, mimicked the same in their diversions; and also having observed, at funerals, the mourning women, making their doleful ditties, and others answering to them, acted the part of these persons, expecting their fellows would make their responses, but did not: hence the complaint, *we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.* The different characters of John and Christ, are here set forth, by *piping* and *mourning*. The character and ministry of Christ and his disciples, by *piping*: by which is meant, the clear, comfortable, and joyful ministry of the Gospel; which is delightful music to a sensible sinner; and may be compared to it, for distinction of sounds, harmony, and agreement, being charming and delightful; its notes are all grace, mercy, love, liberty, peace, pardon, righteousness, and free salvation; and it is very powerful and engaging, it quickens and animates, attracts, allures and charms. The character and ministry of John is signified by *mourning*: his life was a very austere one; he and his disciples fasted oft; he appeared in a very coarse habit; his speech was rough, his voice thundering: his doctrine was the doctrine of repentance, and he used very severe threatenings, in case of impenitence: on the other hand, by the *fellows* to whom they piped, or ministered, in their different ministrations, are meant, the Scribes and Pharisees; who were neither affected to, nor with, either of them: as for John, he was too austere for them; they did not like his garb, nor his diet; nor did his doctrine or baptism please them; nor were they wrought upon, or brought to repentance by his ministry; they did not lament, weep, or shed one tear, but sat unmoved, like stocks and stones, under those awful striking discourses, on mournful subjects, delivered by him: nor were they pleased with the free conduct, and pleasant conversation of Christ; nor did they dance, or rejoice, at the good news and glad tidings of grace and salvation, which were brought by him: of such froward, peevish spirits they were, that neither John, nor Christ, could please them: they were a true picture and emblem of many persons, who like neither law nor Gospel, but are morose, sullen, and quarrelsome, let them hear what they will; as Solomon says, *If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest*, Prov. xxix. 9. Upon which the Talmudists' comment, and illustrate it in this manner, and produce a proverbial

<sup>f</sup> Baal Hatturim, in Num. xxv. 19. Kimchi in 1 Chron. ix. 20. Fargum Jon. in Exod. vi. 18.

<sup>g</sup> R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 1. c. 39. & par. 2. c. 15.

<sup>h</sup> Zohar in Num. fol. 60. 3.

<sup>i</sup> T. Bab. Sauehdrim, fol. 103. 1.

saying, much like this in the text. "Says God, I was angry with Ahaz, and I delivered him into the hands of the kings of Damascus; he sacrificed and burnt incense to their gods, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. I played with Amaziah, and I gave the king of Edom into his hands; he brought their gods and worshipped them, 2 Chron. xxv. 14. Says R. Papa, this is what men say, or it is a common proverb, *בכי ליה למר דלא ידע*, *they weep to a man who takes no notice of it, they laugh to a man who does not observe it*; woe to that man, who knows not the difference between good and evil."

Ver. 18. *For John came neither eating nor drinking, &c.*] This and the following verse are an explanation of the foregoing *parable*; and this shews, that John and his disciples are the persons that mourned, of which his austere life was a proof: for when he came, being sent of God, and appeared as a public preacher, he was *neither eating nor drinking*; not that he did not eat or drink at all, otherwise he could not have lived, and discharged his office: but he ate sparingly, very little; and what he did eat and drink, was not the common food and drink of men; he neither ate bread, nor drank wine, but lived upon locusts and wild honey; he excused all invitations to people's houses, and shunned all feasts and entertainments; he abstained from all free and sociable conversation with men, in eating and drinking: and though the Scribes and Pharisees pretended to much abstinence and frequent fastings, yet they did not care to follow his very severe way of living, and lament, in answer to his mournful ditty; but in a calumniating way, *they say he hath a devil*; is a demoniac, a madman, one that is unsociable and melancholy; under a delusion of Satan, and influenced by him to abstain from proper food and company of men, under a pretence of religion.

Ver. 19. *The son of man came eating and drinking, &c.*] Meaning himself, who ate and drank as men usually do, lived in the common way of life, was free and sociable, went to feasts, entertainments, and weddings, when he was invited; and was affable, courteous, and friendly in his deportment, to all men; and *they say, behold a man gluttonous*, a voracious man, an epicurean, one that indulges his appetite to a very great degree, and in a scandalous manner; *a wine-bibber*, a common tippler, one that drinks to excess; whom the Rabbins call *גורגור*, who is one, they say, that drinks up his cup at one draught; one that is given to wine, and is greedy of it: *a friend of publicans and sinners*; such as are openly and notoriously wicked; and loves their company, for the sake of tipping with them; and encourages them in their revelling and drunkenness; a very black charge this! *But wisdom is justified of her children*; either the wisdom of God, in making use of ministers of a different disposition and deportment, whereby some are gained, and others left inexcusable: or the Gospel, in which there is such a display of divine wisdom, which is vindicated from the charge of licentiousness, by the agreeable lives and conversations of the children of God: or rather Christ himself, who is the wisdom of God; and in whom are hid all

the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; who, however he may be traduced by ignorant and malicious men, yet will be acquitted from all such charges, as here insinuated, by all the true sons of wisdom; or by such, who are made wise unto salvation. We may learn from hence, that no sort of preachers and preaching will please some men; that the best of Gospel ministers may be reproached as libertines, or madmen; and that they will be sooner, or later, justified and cleared from all such aspersions.

Ver. 20. *Then began he to upbraid the cities, &c.*] When he had sent forth his disciples to preach, and had been in these several cities hereafter mentioned himself, and had taught and preached in them, and confirmed his doctrine by many wonderful works; when he had observed how ill they had used both John and himself, representing the one as having a devil, and the other as a licentious person; when they could not be pleased with the ministry of the one, nor of the other, he very seasonably and righteously began to reproach them with their ungenerous treatment of him, their ingratitude to him, their unbelief in him, the hardness and impenitence of their hearts; which could not be moved to repent of their evil ways, and believe in him, and acknowledge him as the Messiah, by all the instructions he gave them, and miracles he wrought among them: for the cities he has a view to, were such, *wherein most of his mighty works were done*; the most for number, and the greatest in their kind; as particularly at Capernaum; where he cured the centurion's servant, recovered Peter's wife's mother from a fever, healed the man sick of a palsy, raised Jairus's daughter from the dead, made whole the woman that had a bloody issue, opened the eyes of two blind men, and cast out a devil from a dumb man; possessed with one: all these, and more, he did in this one city, and therefore he might justly upbraid them, *because they repented not*: not because they did not commend him, and speak well of his works, for he sought not his own glory, but their good: all he did was, in order to bring men to repentance of their sins, and faith in himself, that they might be saved.

Ver. 21. *Woe unto thee, Chorazin! &c.*] Though many of Christ's mighty works were done in this place, yet mention is made of it no where else, but here; to determine: the word *חורזין*, *Chorazin*, signifying *woody places*, Dr. Lightfoot<sup>1</sup> conjectures it might include Cana, in which Christ wrought his first miracle, and a small adjacent country, situated in a wood, and be so called from thence; and Origen<sup>m</sup> reads it, *Χωρα Ζιν*, *the region of Zin*: *woe unto thee, Bethsaida!* This was the city of Andrew and Peter, John i. 44. see the note there; so that as bad as it was, some persons were called out of it by the grace of God, and to the high office of apostleship; and which makes that grace in such the more distinguishing: *for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes*. These words are to be understood in a popular sense, as Grotius observes, and express what was probable,

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 86. 2. Betza, fol. 95. 2.

<sup>m</sup> Choroq. Cent. in Matth. p. 54. Vol. 2.

<sup>m</sup> Philocalia, p. 109.

according to an human judgment of things; and the meaning is, that if the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon had had the advantages of Christ's ministry, and of seeing his miracles, as the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida had, it looks very likely, or one would be ready to conclude, especially from many coming out of these parts, to attend on Christ's ministry, Mark iii. 8. and from the conversion of some of them in after times, Acts xxi. 3, 4. they would have repented of their sins; at least, in an external way, signified by *sackcloth and ashes*, which were outward signs of repentance; see Isa. lviii. 5. Jer. vi. 26. And which, if it had been only performed in such a manner by the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida, would have saved them from temporal judgments, which their sins now called for. The words are an hyperbolic exaggeration of the wickedness of those cities, like to Ezek. iii. 5, 6, 7. shewing, that they were worse than the Tyrians and Sidonians; an Heathenish and idolatrous people, who lived very profligate and dissolute lives, in all intemperance, luxury, and impiety; and therefore would be punished in a severer way: neither this passage, nor what follows, can be any proof of God's giving sufficient grace to all men alike, which in some is effectual to conversion, and in others not, but of the contrary; since the men of Tyre and Sidon had not the same means, or the same grace, as the inhabitants of the other cities, if the mighty works done among them are to be called so; or that man has a power to repent of himself, in a spiritual and evangelical way; or that outward means, as doctrines and miracles, are sufficient to produce such a repentance, without efficacious and unfrustrable grace; since only an outward repentance is here supposed, such as that of Ahab, and of the Ninevites.

Ver. 22. *But I say unto you, &c.*] What may be depended upon as true, and which shall certainly come to pass, however the inhabitants of these cities might flatter themselves; or in whatsoever light they might look upon their neighbours, the Tyrians and Sidonians; and fancy themselves to be the favourites of heaven, and these as the most execrable of creatures; *it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.* Their punishment in another world will be more mild and moderate; they will not have such severe stings of conscience, nor have reason to make such bitter reflections on themselves, as those will who have had the advantages of a Gospel revelation: all sins are not alike, nor will the punishment of them be the same; there will be degrees of torments in hell, and which the justice of God requires. These words suppose, that the men of Tyre and Sidon will be punished for their many abominable sins, committed against the law and light of nature; but that the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida, having rejected the Messiah, and the doctrines of the Gospel, against all the evidence of miracles, and convictions of their own minds, and probably sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost; as their sins are aggravated, their condemnation will be the greater, and their punishment the more intolerable.

Ver. 23. *And thou Capernaum, &c.*] This city is singled out from all the rest, and spoken to particularly, because of its peculiar advantages: *which art exalted unto heaven*; which has respect to the very great privileges this place enjoyed, it being the city where Christ chose to dwell, and for a time fixed his abode in; where he first began to preach, and where such a train of miracles were done; a particular enumeration of which has been before given: as also it may refer to the situation of the place, which was very high and lofty, so that it seemed to reach unto heaven; for the account that R. Benjamin Tudelensis<sup>a</sup> gives of it is, that "Capernaum, which is, by interpretation, the *village of comfort*, at first sight looks to be מְקוֹם עֵל, כַּרְמֶלִי, a place higher than Mount Carmel." And Nonnus on John vi. 59. calls it, Βαδουρηϊοῦ καθ' ἑσπεραν, which the interpreter renders, the land of Capernaum founded on high. But notwithstanding all this, *shall be brought down to hell*; meaning, it should be attended with very humbling providences, be reduced to a very low condition, see Isa. xiv. 15. be destroyed and laid waste, as a city, as it was in the times of Vespasian; and the inhabitants of it not only punished with temporal, but everlasting destruction; *for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.* The sense of these words is the same with that of ver. 22. only this may be observed, that whereas Capernaum was superior in privileges and advantages than the other cities, and yet acted the vile and ungrateful part it did; so that its impotence and unbelief were the more aggravated; hence a still viler set of men are pitched upon, even the men of Sodom, to make the comparison of them with: for as wicked as the men of that place were, who were so infamous for their unnatural lusts; yet if they had enjoyed such a ministry as Christ's, and had had such miracles wrought among them, for the attestation of the doctrines taught them, in all human probability they would have repented of their flagitious crimes; at least in an external way, in such a manner as to have escaped that dreadful judgment, which laid their city, and several adjacent ones, in ashes; and so would have continued a city until this day. The phrase *remained* is Jewish, and is used of Sodom by the Rabbins, who say, that "Abraham was ninety-nine years of age when he was circumcised, and then was the overthrow of Sodom; which was fifty-one years, after the generation of the division (of the people and languages), and near fifty-two years; but Zoar remained one year, אֵדֶן יִשָׁב טַוּוֹם, after Sodom remained." According to the Jews, it stood but fifty-two years at most<sup>b</sup>; and they have a notion, that Sodom and Gomorrhah will be built again in the future state<sup>c</sup>, or world to come, the times of the Messiah.

Ver. 24. *But I say unto you, &c.*] Capernaum, and the inhabitants thereof, as before, to Chorazin and Bethsaida. *It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee*: though the punishment of the men of Sodom will be very great, their iniquities being horribly dreadful and enor-

<sup>a</sup> Itinerarium, p. 37.  
<sup>b</sup> Juchasin, fol. 8. 1.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 11. 2. & Gloss. in ib. Jarchi in Gen. xix. 20.  
<sup>d</sup> Shemot Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 101. 3.



mous, yet more easy to be borne than the vengeance, which, in the last and general judgment, will fall upon such, who have had the means of grace, and have despised them; especially such as had the personal presence, ministry, and miracles of Christ among them, as the Capernaïtes had. Such a way of expressing and setting forth the severer punishment of others, by that of Sodom, is not unusual in the Old Testament; see Lam. iv. 6. nor in Jewish writers, who say<sup>1</sup>, that "the Israelites were fit for, or deserved, לעניש יותר, *a far more heavy punishment than the punishment of Sodom*: because they abounded "with prophets, rising early, and sending them, but "they did not hearken; whereas Sodom had no hands "stayed on her, or prophets to warn them."

Ver. 25. *At that time Jesus answered, and said, &c.*] The time referred to is, when the disciples returned to him, and gave him an account of the success of their ministry, Luke x. 21. who say nothing of the conversion of sinners, but of the spirits being subject to them; and may also refer to the several things spoken of in the context: it was at that time when Christ spoke to the multitude about John, and the excellency of his ministry, which yet was ineffectual to great numbers, who for a while attended on it; and when he took notice to the people, how he himself, as well as John, was rejected and vilified by the Pharisees, and received by publicans and sinners; and when he upbraided Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, for their impenitence and unbelief: taking occasion from hence, he answered and said; an Hebrew way of speaking, used when nothing goes before, to which what is said can be an answer; see Job iii. 2. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth.* This is an address to God, by way of thanksgiving; glorifying and praising him, confessing and acknowledging his wisdom, power, grace, and goodness, discovered in the things he after mentions: so far was he from being discouraged and dejected at the poor success of the Seventy: at his ill treatment by the Pharisees; and at the general impenitence and unbelief of the cities, where he preached and wrought his miracles; that he is abundantly thankful, and admires the distinguishing grace of God in the calling of a few in those places. This address is made to God as a *father*, as his father, his own father; for he was the only-begotten of him, and dearly beloved by him: this epithet he makes use of, to shew the near relation he stood in to him, and the freedom he could use with him: he also addresses him as *the Lord of heaven and earth*; he being the maker, upholder, and governor of both, and which he fills with his presence; the one is his throne, and the other is his footstool. This he mentions to shew the sovereignty of his father, in the conversion of men; and that it was not for want of power in him, that there were no more wrought upon under the ministry of John, himself, and his disciples. The things he expresses his thankfulness for, follow; *because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent.* The things he means are the doctrines of the Gospel; such as respect him-

self, his person, as God, and the son of God; his office, as Messiah, Redeemer, and Saviour; and the blessings of grace, righteousness, and salvation by him. The persons from whom these things were hid, are *the wise and prudent*: in things worldly, natural, and civil; men of great parts and learning, of a large compass of knowledge, having a considerable share of sagacity, penetration, and wisdom; or, at least, who were wise and prudent in their own conceits, as were the Scribes and Pharisees, and the schools of Hillel and Shammai, the two famous doctors of that day: and indeed the people of the Jews in common were so; who thus applaud themselves at the eating of the passover every year, and say, כלנו חכמים כלנו נבונים כלנו יודעים את התורה, *we are all wise, we are all prudent, we all understand the law*<sup>2</sup>; the same is elsewhere<sup>3</sup> said of all Israel; in their opinion they were so, yet the things of the Gospel are hidden from them. God may be said to *hide* these things, when either he does not afford the outward revelation of the Gospel; or, if he does, it is given forth in parables; or he does not give along with it the light of his spirit and grace, but leaves men to their own darkness and blindness; so that they cannot see, perceive, and understand the beauty, glory, excellency, and suitableness of the doctrines of it. Now, when Christ confesses this, or gives thanks to God for it, it is a declaration that God has done so, and denotes his acquiescence in it; and is not properly a thanksgiving for that; but rather, that forasmuch as he has thought fit, in his infinite wisdom, to take such a method, he has been pleased to make a revelation of these things to others; and *hast revealed them unto babes*: foolish ones, comparatively speaking, who have not those natural parts, learning, and knowledge others have, that wisdom and prudence in worldly and civil things; and are so in their own account, and in the esteem of the world; and who are as babes, helpless, defenceless, and impotent of themselves, to do or say any thing that is spiritually good, and are sensible of the same: now to such souls God reveals the covenant of his grace, Christ, and all the blessings of grace in him, the mysteries of the Gospel, and the unseen glories of another world. The veil of darkness and ignorance is removed from them; spiritual sight is given them; these things are set before them; they see a glory and suitableness in them; their desires are raised after them; their affections are set on them; their hearts are impressed with them; and they are helped to view their interest in them. The Jews themselves have a notion, that in the days of the Messiah, children and babes shall have knowledge of divine things. "Says Simeon ben Jochai", it is not the pleasure of God that wisdom should be so revealed to "the world; but when it is near the days of the Messiah, even רבוי דעלמא, *little children*, or the "babes that are in the world, shall find out the hidden "things of wisdom, and know thereby the ends, and "the computations of times; and at that time it shall "be revealed to all:" and there is more truth in what they own elsewhere<sup>4</sup>, than they themselves are aware

<sup>1</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 89. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Haggada Shel Pesach, p 5. Ed. Ritangel.

<sup>3</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 135. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 74. 1.

<sup>5</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 12. 2.

of, when they say, that "from the day that the temple was destroyed, prophecy has been taken away from the prophets, and given לְשׁוֹמְרֵי וְלַחֲנוּקוֹת, to fools and babes."

Ver. 26. *Even so, father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.*] Or, *so is the good will, or pleasure before thee*: thus, יְדִי רְצוֹן מִלִּפְנֵיךְ, *let it be the good will before thee, or in thy sight, O Lord*, is a phrase often to be met with in the Jews' forms of prayer\*. Here the word designs the sovereign counsel and purpose of God, to which, and to which only, our Lord refers the different dispensations of God towards the sons of men: this is a reason which ought to satisfy every one, and is better than ten thousand others that can be thought of, or devised by men. This difference among men, with respect to the Gospel revelation, cannot be owing to natural sagacity, prudence, and penetration; for these things are with those from whom it is hid; nor to any worthiness in those to whom it is revealed; for they are the poor, the base, the foolish things of this world, and even things that are not; nor to any foresight of their making a better use and improvement of such a revelation, but to the good will and pleasure of God only.

Ver. 27. *All things are delivered unto me of my father, &c.*] This is to be understood of Christ, as mediator; for, as God, nothing was delivered to him; he had all things, all perfections, power, and glory his father has; and is to be considered in the utmost extent: all persons are delivered to him, angels and men; good angels are delivered to him, to be confirmed in him, as their head, and to be made use of by him; spirits, evil spirits, which were subject to his disciples, are under him, and at his command and disposal; and their subjection to his disciples is owing to his power over them, which he communicated to them; all the elect of God are delivered to him, to be kept and saved by him; all the babes and little ones, to whom it was the father's will to reveal the mysteries of grace, were his care and charge; all power in heaven, and in earth, are given unto him; and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid with him, which are distributed to any of the sons of men; all the blessings of grace, and the promises of the everlasting covenant, and all the glory and happiness of his people, are put into his hands: *and no man knoweth the son, but the father*; the transcendent glories and perfections of his nature, as the son of God; nor the whole of his work and office, as mediator: or all that is committed to his charge, as such: all that he was to do, and suffer, for his people; all that he had done for them, and should communicate to, and bestow upon them. *Neither knoweth any man the father, save the son*; his essence and glory, his mind and will, his purposes and decrees, his counsels and covenant; the grace and love of his heart to his chosen people; what he has prepared and laid up for them, and will make them partakers of to all eternity; *and he to whomsoever the son will reveal him*; both himself, and his father, and the grace and glory of each, which he does by his spirit; who is a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of

him; and which entirely depends on his own sovereign will and pleasure.

Ver. 28. *Come unto me, &c.*] Christ having signified, that the knowledge of God, and the mysteries of grace, are only to be come at through him; and that he has all things relating to the peace, comfort, happiness, and salvation of men in his hands, kindly invites and encourages souls to come unto him for the same: by which is meant, not a local coming, or a coming to hear him preach; for so his hearers, to whom he more immediately directed his speech, were come already; and many of them did, as multitudes may, and do, in this sense, come to Christ, who never knew him, nor receive any spiritual benefit by him: nor is it a bare coming under the ordinances of Christ, submission to baptism, or an attendance at the Lord's supper, the latter of which was not yet instituted; and both may be performed by men, who are not yet come to Christ: but it is to be understood of believing in Christ, the going of the soul to him, in the exercise of grace on him, of desire after him, love to him, faith and hope in him: believing in Christ, and coming to him, are terms synonymous, John vi. 35. Those who come to Christ aright, come as sinners, to a full, suitable, able, and willing Saviour; venture their souls upon him, and trust in him for righteousness, life, and salvation, which they are encouraged to do, by this kind invitation; which shews his willingness to save, and his readiness to give relief to distressed minds. The persons invited, are not all the individuals of mankind, but with a restriction, *all ye that labour, and are heavy laden*; meaning, not these who are labouring in the service of sin and Satan, are laden with iniquity, and insensible of it: these are not weary of sin, nor burdened with it; nor do they want or desire any rest for their souls; but such who groan, being burdened with the guilt of sin upon their consciences, and are pressed down with the unsupportable yoke of the law, and the load of human traditions; and have been labouring till they are weary, in order to obtain peace of conscience, and rest for their souls, by the observance of these things, but in vain. These are encouraged to come to him, lay down their burdens at his feet, look to, and lay hold by faith on his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; when they should enjoy that true spiritual consolation, which could never be attained to by the works of the law. *And I will give you rest*; spiritual rest here, peace of conscience, ease of mind, tranquillity of soul, through an application of pardoning grace, a view of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, and full atonement of sin by his sacrifice; and eternal rest hereafter, in Abraham's bosom, in the arms of Jesus, in perfect and uninterrupted communion with father, son, and spirit. The Jews say<sup>7</sup>, that מְנוּחַת תּוֹרָה, *the law is rest*; and so explain Gen. xlix. 15. Psal. xxiii. 2. Dan. xii. 13. of it: but a truly sensible sinner enjoys no rest, but in Christ; it is like Noah's dove, which could find no rest for the soles of its feet, until it returned to the ark; and they themselves ex-

\* Seder Tephillot, fol. 4. 2. & 5. 1. & passim. Ed. Amsterdam.

<sup>7</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 39. 3.

pect perfect rest in the days of the Messiah, and call his world מנוחה, *rest*².

Ver. 29. *Take my yoke upon you, &c.*] The phrase is Rabbinical. The Jewish doctors often speak \* of עול מלכות שמים, *the yoke of the kingdom of heaven*, and of persons taking it upon them; and which they exhort to, and express in much such language as here³; קבילו עלייכו עול מלכותא קדישא, *take upon you the yoke of the holy kingdom*, every day. They distinguish this from the yoke of the law, and say⁴ “ a man must first take upon him the *yoke of the kingdom of heaven*, and after that take upon him the *“ yoke of the commandment.”* Their sense I take to be this, that a man must first make a profession of his faith in the God of Israel, and then live conformably to his law: agreeably to this, Christ exhorts such persons who come to him for rest and happiness, to profess their faith in him, to embrace the doctrines of the Gospel, to submit to his ordinances, and to walk according to those laws, commands, and orders, which he, as king of saints, has made, and requires obedience to: so those who come to him for life, and believe in him, as the Saviour of their souls, though they are not to trust in, and depend upon any duties performed by them; yet they are not to sit still, or lay aside the performance of good works, or live a licentious course of life, but are always to be doing the will and work of their Lord. And this he calls *his yoke*, in distinction from the yoke of the law of Moses, and of the traditions of the elders. *And learn of me, for I am meek, and lowly in heart:* respect seems to be had to Zech. ix. 9. where such characters as these are given of the Messiah. The meekness, humility, and lowliness of Christ appear in his assumption of human nature; in his subjection to his father; in the whole of his deportment and conversation among men; in his submission to the ordinance of baptism; in the whole course of his obedience to God, and in his sufferings and death: and he is to be imitated herein, by all his followers, who may learn many excellent things from his example, as well as from his doctrine; and particularly, that whereas, though he was so great a person, yet condescended to perform every duty with readiness and cheerfulness, his disciples should not think it below them to con-

form to every ordinance of his, to every branch of his will; for he has set them an example, that they should tread in his steps, and walk even as he has walked. There never was such an instance of humility, and lowliness of mind, as Christ; nor is there any example so worthy of our imitation as his. The Jews have a saying⁵, “ for ever let a man ענוותן כדוילל, *be meek as Hillel*, and let him not be wrathful as “ *Shammai:*” which two men were presidents of their universities about the times of Christ. But our Lord says, *learn of me*, not of *Hillel*, or any of your doctors, *and ye shall find rest unto your souls*: referring to Jer. vi. 16. and which shews the rest he speaks of, in the preceding verse, to be not a corporal, but a spiritual one; and which is to be enjoyed *in*, though not for the observance of Christ’s commands; whose *ways are ways of pleasantness, and all whose paths are peace.*

Ver. 30. *For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*] Christ calls a profession of faith in him, and subjection to his ordinances, a *yoke*, in allusion to the law of Moses, and in distinction from it; and a *burden*, with respect to the very heavy ones the Scribes and Pharisees laid upon the shoulders of the people, obliging them to a strict observance of them; though of a different nature from either of them; *for his commandments are not grievous*, hard and heavy to be borne, as their’s were, but *easy and light*: not that they are so to unregenerate men, or are easily performed by the strength of nature, and power of men’s free will: but they are good and amiable, and lovely in their own nature, and are cheerfully complied with, and abundance of spiritual pleasure and delight is enjoyed in them by believers, when they have the presence of God, the assistance of his spirit, and the discoveries of his love. Moreover, the commands of Christ, and the ordinances of the Gospel, are so in comparison of the law of Moses; which required perfect obedience, but gave no strength to perform, and threatened with condemnation and death, in case of the least failure; and of the numerous, and some very severe rites and usages of the ceremonial law; and of the bulky and heavy traditions of the elders, and ordinances of men.

## C H A P. XII.

Ver. 1. *AT that time Jesus went on the sabbath-day through the corn, &c.*] That is, the corn-fields, as the other evangelists express it. It being on a sabbath-day, it is very probable, that Christ and his disciples were going to some public place of worship, the way to which lay through some fields of corn, which were now ripe: for Luke says, it was on the *second sabbath after the first*, or rather *the first sabbath after the second*: that is, the first sabbath after the second day of the passover, when the sheaf of the first-fruit was offered,

and harvest was begun. *And his disciples were an hungered*; it being in the morning before they had broke their fast; and this circumstance is mentioned to shew the reason of the following action, and to excuse it: at which the Pharisees were so much offended, and of which they accused them, as having done what was very criminal: *and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat*; Luke adds, *rubbing them in their hands*; and so here in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, ‘tis rendered, *they began to rub*: as

² Tzeror Hammor, fol. 150. 2.

³ T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 4. 1. Bab. Beracot, fol. 61. 2. Zohar in Lev. fol. 46. 4. Caphtor, fol. 44. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 2. 2.

⁴ Zohar in Num. fol. 51. 2. Caphtor, fol. 48. 2.

⁵ Minn. Beracot, c. 2. sect. 2. T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 4. 2.

⁶ T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 30. 2.

they passed along, they plucked off the ears of corn, either barley or wheat, and rubbed them in their hands, to get the grain clear of the husk, or beard, and eat them; contenting themselves with such mean and unprepared food, when the Jews on that day fed on the best of dainties\*.

Ver. 2. *But when the Pharisees saw it, &c.*] Who went along with him, or followed him, being employed to make observation on his words and actions, *they said unto him*: Luke says, *unto them*, the disciples: it seems, they took notice of this action both to Christ and his disciples, and first spoke of it to the one, and then to the other, or to both together: *behold thy disciples do that which it is not lawful to do upon the sabbath-day!* they mention it with astonishment, and indignation. What they refer to, is not their walking on the sabbath-day: this they might do, according to their canons, provided they did not exceed two thousand cubits, which were a sabbath-day's journey<sup>1</sup>: nor was it their passing through the corn-fields; though, according to them<sup>2</sup>, "it was not lawful for a man to visit his gardens, *וְשׂוּתָיו*, or his fields, "on the sabbath-day, to see what they want, or how the fruits grow; for such walking is to do his own "pleasure." But this they knew was not the case of Christ, and his disciples, who were not proprietors of these fields: nor was it merely their plucking the ears of corn, and rubbing and eating them, which were not their own, but another man's; for this, according to the law, in Deut. xxii. 25. was lawful to be done: but what offended the Pharisees was, that it was done on a sabbath-day, it being, as they interpret it, a servile work, and all one as reaping; though, in the law just mentioned, it is manifestly distinguished from it. Their rule is<sup>3</sup>, "he that reaps " (on the sabbath-day) ever so little, is guilty (of "stoning), *וְתוֹלֵשׁ תְּלוּדָה קוֹצֵר דָּוָא*, and *plucking of ears "of corn is a derivative of reaping:*" and is all one as its primitive, and punishable with the same kind of death, if done presumptuously: so Philo the Jew observes<sup>4</sup>, that the rest of the sabbath not only reached to men, bond and free, and to beasts, but even to trees, and plants; and that *ἡ εὐχὴ ἢ ἐργασίᾳ, ἢ ἄλλῃ* *ἐν τῷ πάλαιον φησὶν ὅτι μὴ ἐπιτελεῖται, ἢ ἐν τῷ πάλαιον φησὶν ὅτι μὴ ἐπιτελεῖται, ἢ ἐν τῷ πάλαιον φησὶν ὅτι μὴ ἐπιτελεῖται*, *it was not lawful to cut a plant, or branch, or so much as a leaf, on a sabbath-day:* and it may be what might make this offence of the disciples the more heinous was, that they plucked these ears, and ate them, and so broke their fast before morning-prayer; for a man might not eat any thing on a sabbath-day until morning-prayers were ended in the synagogue, nor indeed on any other day; for they used not to eat bread till after they had offered the daily sacrifice, which was about the third hour of the day, or nine o'clock in the morning; nor did they eat till the fourth hour, or ten o'clock<sup>5</sup>.

Ver. 3. *But he said unto them, have ye not read, &c.*] If they had not read the Scriptures, they were very

unfit persons either to be teachers, or censurers of others, and must have been very slothful and negligent; and if they had, they could not but have observed the case of David, which Christ produces in vindication of his disciples: *what David did when he was an hungred*: which was the case of the disciples, and is therefore mentioned; it being also the circumstance which could, and did excuse what was done by David and his men: and the Jews themselves own, that in case of hunger the shew-bread might be eaten, by those that were not priests; not only that which was removed from the table, but that which was upon it; yea, even when there was none to put in its room<sup>1</sup>; and that David was in the utmost distress, and therefore desired it, and it was granted him on that account. They represent him as thus saying to the priest<sup>2</sup>, "when he found there was none but "shew-bread, give it me, that we may not die with "hunger; *שֶׁפֶק נַפְשׁוֹ דְּרוּחַ שְׁבַת*, *for danger of life "drives away the sabbath:*" which perfectly agrees with our Lord's argument, and justifies the apostles conduct: and this was not a single fact of David's, but of others also; and *they that were with him*; for though in 1 Sam. xxi. 1. he is said to be alone, and *no man with him*; yet this must be understood either comparatively, having but very few with him, and which were as none, considering his dignity; or thus, though none came with him to Ahimelech, pretending to the priest he had a secret affair of the king's to transact; and therefore had left his servants in a certain place, and desires bread for himself and them; concerning whom the priest and he discourses, as may be seen in the place referred to: so that though no man was with him at the priest's house, yet there were some with him, and who partook with him in eating of the shew-bread.

Ver. 4. *How he entered into the house of God, &c.*] Not the temple, which was not then built; but the tabernacle, which was then at Nob, the city of the priest's, and which probably adjoined to Ahimelech's house: *and did eat the shew-bread*; for that this is meant by the hallowed bread, in 1 Sam. xxi. 6. is certain; though R. Joseph Kimchi<sup>3</sup> thinks it was the bread of the thank-offering; to which R. Levi ben Gerson<sup>4</sup> seems to incline: but the general sense of the Jewish doctors<sup>5</sup> is, that it was the shew-bread; and which is very clear from that text, and is rightly affirmed by Christ; *which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests*: see Lev. xxiv. 9. and so the Jews say that this bread *אִסוּר לְזָרִים*, *is forbidden to strangers*<sup>6</sup>; that is, to any but the priests, which, after the burning of the frankincense, was divided equally among them: that course of priests that came into the service had six cakes, and that which went out six; though the high-priest had a right to half himself, but he did not use to take it, it being

\* Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat, c. 30. sect. 7, 8, 9, 10.

<sup>1</sup> Ib. c. 27. sect. 1.

<sup>2</sup> R. Moses Kotzensis Mitzvot Tora prec. neg. 65.

<sup>3</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat, c. 8. sect. 3. & 7. 1.

<sup>4</sup> De Vita Mosi, l. 2. p. 657.

<sup>5</sup> Vid. Targum in Eccl. x. 17. Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 6. sect. 4.

<sup>1</sup> R. David Kimchi in 1 Sam. xxi. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Laniado Cii Jaker, fol. 227. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Apud R. David Kimchi in 1 Sam. xxi. 6.

<sup>4</sup> In ib.

<sup>5</sup> T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 95. 2. R. David Kimchi, Abarbanel & Laniado in 1 Sam. xxi. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Laniado & Abarbanel in ib.

judged not to his honour to do so'. No hint is here given, nor in the history, in 1 Sam. xxi. that it was on the sabbath-day that David came to Ahimelech, and ate the shew-bread; but this is observed, and disputed, by the Jewish writers. Some indeed are in a doubt about it; but others<sup>1</sup> readily give into it, that it was on the sabbath-day, which he chose to flee in, for the greater safety and preservation of his life: and indeed it seems reasonable it should be on that day; since on that day only the shew-bread was removed from the table, and other loaves put in the room. One of their writers<sup>2</sup> says, "that shew-bread was not to be eaten, but on the day, and night of the sabbath-day; and on the going out of the sabbath-day; and on the going out of the sabbath David came there." Now our Lord's argument stands thus, that if David, a holy, good man, and the men that were with him, who were men of religion and conscience, when in great distress, through hunger, ate of the shew-bread, which was unlawful for any to eat of but priests, the high-priest himself assenting to it; then it could not be criminal in his disciples, when an hungred, to pluck, rub, and eat a few ears of corn, which were lawful for any man to eat, even though it was on the sabbath-day: and for the further vindication of them, he adds,

Ver. 5. *Or have ye not read in the law, &c.*] Numb. xxviii. 9. by which law the priests were obliged, every sabbath-day, to offer up two lambs for a burnt offering; to which were annexed many servile works, as killing the sacrifice, flaying it, cutting it in pieces, and laying it on the altar, cutting of wood, and putting that in order, and kindling the fire: from all which, it might be observed, *how that on the sabbath-days, the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless.* There were many things, which, according to the Jewish canons, the priests might do on the sabbath-day; particularly they might slay the sacrifice: it was a rule with them, *דרדתה שדושה את שבת, that slaying drives away the sabbath*.<sup>3</sup> They might also knead, make, and bake the shew-bread on the sabbath-day: their general rule was, as R. Akiba says, that what was possible to be done on the evening of the sabbath, did not drive away the sabbath; but what was not possible to be done on the sabbath-eve, did drive away the sabbath<sup>4</sup>: so they might kill the passover, sprinkle its blood, wipe its inwards, and burn the fat on the sabbath-day<sup>5</sup>, with many other things. What exculpated these men was, that what they did was done *in the temple*, and for the service of it, upon which an emphasis is put; and agrees with their canons, which say, that there is no prohibition in the sanctuary; *איסור שבות במקדש הותר הוא, that which is forbidden to be done on the sabbath, is lawful to be done in the sanctuary*<sup>6</sup>: and whereas it might be objected to the disciples of Christ, that they were not priests; and what they did was not in the temple, but in the fields; to this it is replied, in the following words:

Ver. 6. *But I say unto you, &c.*] Who Christ knew

would be ready to object, as above, and therefore prevents them, by saying, *that in this place is one greater than the temple*; meaning himself, who was the Lord and Proprietor of the temple, and in his human nature the antitype of it; see John ii. 19. and was infinitely more sacred than that. Some copies read *μικρον, something greater*; referring either to the human nature of Christ, in which the Godhead dwells bodily, and so infinitely greater than the temple; or to the health of his disciples, which was in danger, through hunger: or to the ministry of the apostles, which, by satisfying nature, they were more capable of performing; either of which was of more moment than the sacrifices and service of the temple. Christ's argument is, that if the temple, and the service of it, excused the priests from blame, in doing things in it on the sabbath-day, which otherwise might not be done; then much more might his presence, who was greater than the temple, excuse his disciples from blame in this action of rubbing and eating the ears of corn; which was done to satisfy hunger, and to render them the more capable of performing their ministerial function; and which was of more importance than the service of the priests.

Ver. 7. *But if ye had known what this meaneth, &c.*] The passage of Scripture in Hos. vi. 6. *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice*; of the sense of which, see the note on ch. ix. 13. *ye would not have condemned the guiltless.* Our Lord taxes the Pharisees both with ignorance of the Scriptures, in which they pretended to be very knowing, and took upon them to be the interpreters of; and with inhumanity, for condemning innocent persons, the apostles, for rubbing a few ears of corn, for the refreshment of nature; which they would never have done, had they understood the word, and will of God; who prefers acts of humanity, compassion, and mercy, to the observance of rites and ceremonies; or had they the common affections of human nature, and those bowels of compassion which one man ought to shew to another.

Ver. 8. *For the son of man is Lord even of the sabbath-day.*] *By the son of man* is meant, not any man, as some have thought; for no mere man is lord of any law, moral or ritual, natural or positive; or has a power of disposing of it, and dispensing with it at pleasure; but Christ himself; which is the constant sense of this phrase in the New Testament, and is a character of the Messiah in the Old, Dan. vii. 13. who, as he was the institutor of the sabbath among the Jews, that being a ritual, and of mere positive institution, could dispense with it, and even abrogate it at his pleasure. The Jews so far agree to this, that he that commanded the law of the sabbath, could dispense with it; they say<sup>7</sup>, that "the day on which Jericho was taken was the sabbath-day; and that though they slew and burnt on the sabbath-day, *כי שצוה על השבת צוה לרובל שבת, he that commanded the observation of the sabbath, commanded the profanation of it.*"<sup>8</sup> And since Christ is greater than the

<sup>1</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Tamidin, c. 4. sect. 12. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Bemidbar Rabba Parash. 23. fol. 231. 9. Laniado Cli Jaker, fol. 226. 4. & 227. 2, 3, 4. & Jelammedenu in ib.

<sup>3</sup> R. Isaiah in 1 Sam. xxi. 5.

<sup>4</sup> T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 72. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Mian. Menachot, c. 11. sect. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Mian. Pesachim, c. 6. sect. 1. Maimon. Pesach. c. 1. sect. 18.

<sup>7</sup> Ib. sect. 16. & Hilchot Sabbat, c. 21. sect. 27.

<sup>8</sup> R. David Kimchi in Josh. vi. 11.

temple, and has all the perfections of the divine nature in him, is equal to the father in power and glory; and even as mediator, has all power in heaven and earth given him; so as he is Lord of all other things, he is of the sabbath, and has a power of dispensing with it, and even of abolishing it; see Col. ii. 16, 17. and since the Lord of the sabbath had a power of dispensing with it, and made use of it in the cases of David and his men, and of the priests in the temple formerly; the Pharisees ought not to think it strange, that the son of man, who is equally Lord of the sabbath, dispensed with it in his disciples now.

Ver. 9. *And when he was departed thence, &c.*] From the corn-fields, where the disciples had plucked the ears of corn, and this conversation passed between Christ and the Pharisees about the violation of the sabbath, he went into their synagogue; not on the same sabbath-day, as one might be led to conclude from the account of this evangelist, but on another sabbath, as Luke expresses it, ch. vi. 6. He might indeed directly go into one of their synagogues the same day, where he and his disciples seem to have been going, and stay in the city the week following; and then, as it is said in Mark iii. 1. he entered again into the synagogue; not being afraid of the Pharisees, who sought an advantage against him; nor deterred by them from doing good to men; and willing to take another opportunity of exposing their ignorance and malice.

Ver. 10. *And behold, there was a man which had his hand withered, &c.*] Or dry: the juices were dried up, the nerves and sinews contracted, so that it was of no manner of use to him: Luke says, it was his right hand, which was so much the worse; and means not only his hand, but the whole arm. Such a case is mentioned in the Talmud<sup>a</sup>, "it happened to one, שיבשה ידו, that his arm was dry, or withered." Jerom says<sup>b</sup>, in the Gospel which the Nazarenes and Hebrionites used, this man is said to be a plasterer, and so might possibly come by his misfortune through his business; and being a man that got his bread by his hand-labour, the case was the more affecting. This account is introduced with a *behold!* it being remarkable that such a case should offer so opportunely, of shewing his divine power in healing such a disorder; and of his authority, as the son of man, over the sabbath; and of putting to silence his enemies, the Pharisees: and who, upon seeing such an object, put the following question to him; and they asked him, saying, is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-day? and which was put, not for information-sake, as willing to be instructed in this point; for their determinations were, that healing was not lawful on such a day; nor were any means to be made use of for that purpose: if a man received a cure accidentally, it was very well; but no methods were to be taken with intention: as for instance<sup>c</sup>; "if a man had an ailment in his throat, he might not gargle it with oil, but he might swallow a large quantity of oil, ואם נתרפא נתרפא, and if he was healed, he was healed (i. e. it was very well,

it was no breach of the sabbath); they may not chew mastic, nor rub the teeth with spice, on the sabbath-day, בומן שמתכוין לרפואה, when it is intended for healing; but if it is intended for the savour of his mouth, it is free." There are several things they allowed might be done on the sabbath; but then they did not reckon them to come under the notion of healing. "Three things R. Ishmael bar Jose said he had heard from R. Matthia ben Charash; they might let blood for the stranguary on the sabbath-day; one that was bit by a mad dog, they might give him hog's liver to eat; and he that had an ailment in his mouth, they might put spice to it on the sabbath-day: but the wise men say of these, that there is not in them רפואה, any thing of medicine." Indeed, in case of extreme danger of life they did admit of the use of medicine, by the prescription of a physician. "Danger of life drives away the sabbath; wherefore, if there is any danger in a sick person, it is lawful to kindle a fire for him, &c. and they may kill, and bake, and boil: and though there may be no apparent danger, only a doubt of danger; as when one physician says there is a necessity, and another physician says there's none, they may profane the sabbath for him." Hence it is very clear with what view the Pharisees asked Christ this question; and that it was, as the evangelist says, that they might accuse him: either of cruelty and weakness, should he answer in the negative, that either he was not able to heal the poor man before him, or wanted compassion; or should he answer in the affirmative, as they expected, and act upon it, then they might have wherewith to charge him before the sanhedrim as a violator of the sabbath, and of their canons concerning it.

Ver. 11. *And he said unto them, &c.*] Well knowing their intentions, and also their usages and customs, which he was able to produce and object to them; in which, through covetousness, they shewed more regard to their beasts, than they did humanity to their fellow-creatures: what man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? Christ appeals to them in a case which was usually done among them, and which, without delay, no man would scruple to do; though their present rule of direction, in such a case, is this<sup>d</sup>: "if a beast fall into a ditch, or a pool of water, if food can be given it, where it is, they feed it till the going out of the sabbath; but if not, bolsters and pillows may be brought, and put under it, and if it can come out, it may come out:" and which is elsewhere<sup>e</sup> a little differently expressed; "if a beast fall into a ditch, or pool of water, it is forbidden a man to bring it out with his hand; but if he can give it food where it is, it may be fed till the going out of the sabbath:" which seems to have been made since the times of Christ, and in opposition to this observation of his.

Ver. 12. *How much then is a man better than a sheep?*

<sup>a</sup> T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 40. 1.

<sup>b</sup> In loc.

<sup>c</sup> Maimon. Hilchot Sabbat, c. 21. sect. 24.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 84. 1. Vid. Misn. Yoma, c. 8. sect. 7.

<sup>e</sup> Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora pr. neg. 65. Maimon. in Misn. Sabbat, c. 18. sect. 3.

<sup>f</sup> Maimon. Hilchot Sabbat, c. 25. sect. 26.

<sup>g</sup> Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora pr. neg. 65.

&c.] As a rational creature must be better, and more excellent, than an irrational one, more care is to be taken of, and more mercy shewn unto, the one, than the other: even the health of a man is preferable to the life of a beast; and if it is lawful to give food to a beast, and make use of means for its relief, and for the lifting it up out of a ditch, when fallen into it on the sabbath-day; *wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath-days*, to men; to do acts of beneficence and humanity to them, among which must be reckoned healing of diseases and infirmities: and particularly, if it is lawful to take a sheep out of a ditch on the sabbath-day, it must be right to restore to a man the use of his hand on such a day; and especially to one that gets his bread by his hand-labour, as it is very likely this man did. This was such a strong way of arguing, that the Jews could not well object to it; and it appears, that they were confounded and put to silence; for, as Mark observes, *they held their peace*: and indeed they allow of every thing to be done where life is in danger, though not otherwise: they say <sup>b</sup>, “they may take care of the preservation of life on the sabbath; and if he is prepared for it, lo! this is praiseworthy, and there’s no need to take a licence from the sanhedrim: as when a man sees a child fallen into the sea, he may spread a net, and bring him out; and if he is prepared for it, lo! this is praiseworthy, and there is no need to take a licence from the sanhedrim, though he was fishing: if he sees a child fallen into a ditch, he may rake into the mud and bring him out; and if he is prepared for it, lo! this is praiseworthy, and there is no need to take a licence from the sanhedrim, though he had set a ladder ready.” It is said of Hillel<sup>1</sup>, that “he sat by a window to hear the words of the living God, from the mouth of Shemaia and Abtalion; and they say that that day was the evening of the sabbath, and the winter solstice, and the snow descended from heaven; and when the pillar of the morning ascended, (when it was day-light,) Shemaia said to Abtalion, brother Abtalion, all other days the house is light, but to-day it is dark, perhaps ’tis a cloudy day: they lift up their eyes, and saw the form of a man at the window; they went up, and found upon him snow the height of three cubits; they broke through and delivered him; and they washed him, and anointed him, and set him over against his dwelling, and said, very worthy is this man *לְהַלֵּל עֲלָיו אֶת שְׁבֹת*, to *praise the sabbath for him*.” And if it was lawful to dig a man out of the snow, and do these several things for him on the sabbath-day, why not cure a man of a withered hand, and especially when done by a word speaking, and without any labour?

Ver. 13. *Then saith he to the man, &c.*] That is, after he had looked round about upon them, to observe their countenances; and what answer they would make to his arguments; and with anger for their inhumanity and cruelty; being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, i. e. their unmercifulness to their fellow-creatures, and the stupidity and blindness of their minds, being ignorant of the Scriptures, and of the sabbath, the nature, use, and Lord of it; which things are ob-

served by the Evangelist Mark; then, in a commanding authoritative way, almighty power going along with his word, he says to the man who stood forth before him, and the Pharisees, *stretch forth thine hand*, which was before contracted and shrivelled up; and he stretched it forth with all the ease imaginable, and was not only able to do this, but to make use of it any way; for it was restored whole like as the other; his left hand, which had never been damaged. This was an instance of Christ’s power; a proof of the lawfulness of healing on the sabbath-day; and a rebuke to the Pharisees for their cruelty and uncharitableness. This man was an emblem of the inability of men to do any thing that is spiritually good, and of the power and efficacy of divine grace to enable persons to stretch out their hands, and do things which they of themselves are not equal to.

Ver. 14. *Then the Pharisees went out, &c.*] Of the synagogue, being, as Luke says, filled with madness, at the unanswerableness of his arguments; and because of the violation of the sabbath, as they thought; and most of all, because of the miracle wrought by him; and which was so glaringly a proof of his being Lord of the sabbath, and could not fail of creating him esteem among the people: and held a council against him, how they might destroy him. Mark says, the council was held by them with the Herodians; of whom, see the note on Matt. xxii. 16. who, though they differed from them both in religion and politics, yet might be thought very proper persons to advise with about this matter; and especially, as they might have a greater interest at court, than they had. Nor did they scruple to enter into such a consultation, though on the sabbath-day, and about the taking away of the life of an innocent person; which shews what seared consciences, and hard hearts they had, and how full of hypocrisy they were.

Ver. 15. *But when Jesus knew it, &c.*] Their consultation against him, as he did, not by any discovery made to him by men, but as the omniscient God; he withdrew himself from thence; from the synagogue and city, where he was, to the sea of Galilee, and his disciples with him, as Mark observes; not through fear, but because his time was not yet come, that he must suffer and die for his people; he had some other work to do first, and therefore rightly and wisely provides for his safety. And great multitudes followed him; from Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and from beyond Jordan; and were joined by another multitude of people, who came from about Tyre and Sidon, as Mark relates: so that his departure was not so very private; nor was he forsaken by the common people, though the Pharisees were so offended with him. And he healed them all; that stood in need of healing, as many as had plagues and unclean spirits; practising agreeably to his doctrine, that it was lawful to do good on the sabbath-day, and to heal the bodies, as well as the souls of men.

Ver. 16. *And charged them that they should not make him known.*] This charge was given, either to the multitude that followed him, and were healed by him, that when they returned to the respective places from

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 84. 2.  
VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 35. 2.

whence they came, they would not make it known to his enemies where he was, and what he had done to them; being neither desirous of popular applause and glory, nor willing to provoke them more, nor to fall into their hands as yet; or else, as Mark seems to intimate, to the unclean spirits, that they would not declare who he was, the son of God, they confessed him to be: and very likely it was given to both, and that they should neither tell where he was, nor who he was; and this charge was a very severe one; for the word signifies a charge with threatenings, should they not observe his orders.

Ver. 17. *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying.*] Is. xlii. 1, 2, 3, 4. not that Christ gave the above charge with this view, that this passage in Isaiah might have its accomplishment: but this is an observation of the evangelist, that what was now done by Christ, by his private departure from the Pharisees, being unwilling to irritate them more; by his preaching to the Idumeans, Tyrians, and Sidonians; by healing their diseases, and shunning all ostentation and popular applause; and prohibiting to tell who and where he was, was a fulfilling of this prophecy; in which the holy spirit foreknowing the disposition and actions of Christ, predicted them: which, when considered, must be looked upon as a very large proof of the truth of his being the Messiah. For that this prophecy belongs to the Messiah, is owned by the Jews themselves <sup>k</sup>.

Ver. 18. *Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, &c.*] These are the words of God the father, speaking to the church, concerning Christ, as mediator; who, as such, is God's *servant*, employed by him, and obedient to him, in the work of man's salvation; and is a righteous, faithful, prudent, and diligent one; whom he, from all eternity, had *chosen* to this service, and in the fulness of time sent him to do it, and supported and upheld him in it; for 'tis *whom I uphold*, in the Hebrew text. *My beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased*: who always was the object of his love, not only as his own and only-begotten son, but as in his office-capacity, as mediator; in regard to which he was his *elect*, as it is in Isaiah; and, as such, he was always delighted in his person, well-pleased with his office, and the discharge of it; and which he declared more than once by a voice from heaven, as at his baptism, and at his transfiguration on the mount: *I will put my spirit upon him*; as he did without measure, whereby he was abundantly qualified for his whole work, and particularly for preaching the Gospel, being richly anointed with gifts and graces, above his fellows; of which the descent of the holy spirit upon him, as a dove, at his baptism, which immediately preceded his public ministry, was a symbol. *And he shall shew judgment unto the Gentiles*; meaning, not the general judgment, at the last day, which is committed to him; nor the laws of justice and equity; but the Gospel, which is the produce of the God of judgment; best informs the judgment of men about the business of salvation; gives an account of the righteous procedure of God in justifying sinners, by the righteousness of his son; and teaches men to

live soberly, righteously, and godly; this Christ brought forth, and shewed, at this time, to the Heathens, the Idumeans, Tyrians, and Sidonians; who flocked unto him; whereby this part of the prophecy had its fulfilment: in the Hebrew 'tis, *he shall bring forth*; that is, out of his heart and mouth, and is the same as *shew* here.

Ver. 19. *He shall not strive, &c.*] Or *contend* in a wrangling way, as the disputers of this world do about words to no profit, and for the sake of victory only, and popular applause, but shall choose rather to withdraw, than to carry on a controversy to a great length, to little purpose; or, as men litigate a point in a court of judicature, where one is plaintiff, and the other defendant. In the Hebrew text it is, *he shall not cry*; he shall not act the part of a plaintiff; he shall not complain, or bring in any charge, or accusation against any, but choose rather to suffer wrong, than to contend: thus קָרָע signifies such a cry, as is a complaint of injustice, Isa. v. 7. and פָּנָה, a plaintiff, one that brings an action against another <sup>l</sup>: but Christ did not so, he would not accuse to the father, nor complain against his most implacable enemies, but left that to Moses, in whom they trusted; *nor cry*, or, as in the Hebrew text, *lift up*; that is, his voice, in a clamorous way, using reviling and opprobrious language, or menaces and threatenings; but, on the contrary, he silently put up all abuses, and patiently bore every affront, and behaved peaceably, quietly, committing himself and cause to a righteous God. *Neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets*; or, as in the Hebrew text, *nor cause his voice to be heard in the street*: the sense is the same, and the meaning is, that he sought not worldly honour, popular applause, and to be seen of men; he did nothing in an ostentatious way, said nothing in his own commendation, was never heard to praise himself, and chose that others should be silent concerning him: for this does not so much regard the lowness of his voice, as if that was not so sonorous as to be heard without doors, when he preached within, as his modest mein and suitable deportment; nor the places where he usually ministered, which was sometimes in the street, as well as in an house, or on a mountain, or by the sea-side, or in the temple, and the synagogues. The Ethiopic version here is very wrong, *no man shall hear his voice in the synagogues*; for his voice was often heard there.

Ver. 20. *A bruised reed shall he not break, &c.*] Various are the thoughts of interpreters, about what is meant by this, and by *the smacking flax shall he not quench*. Some think the Scribes and Pharisees are designed, whose power Christ could easily crush, and their wrath and fury restrain, but would not, till the time of his vengeance was come. Others that the publicans and sinners are intended, of whose conversion and salvation there were more hope than of the Scribes and Pharisees; and which Christ greatly sought after, and therefore cherished and encouraged them in his ministry and conversation. Some are of opinion, that such who have fallen into sin, and are under great decays of grace, are meant, whom Christ has com-

<sup>k</sup> Targum & Kimchi in loc. Abarbinel Mashmia Jeshua, fol. g. 1, 2. & 10. 1, 2. & 21. 2 & in Is. fol. 64. 3, 4. R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, p. 299.

<sup>l</sup> Vid. Cocc. Heb. Lex. in rad. קָרָע.



passion on, succours, and restores: but rather young converts, such as are under first awakenings, are here pointed at; who, like to a *bruised reed*, or *broken one*, one that is in some measure broke, near being broken to pieces, are wounded in their spirits, have their hearts broken and contrite, under a sense of their sinfulness, vileness, weakness, and unworthiness; whom Christ is so far from breaking and destroying, that he binds up their broken hearts, heals their wounds, and restores comforts to them: and who are like to *smoking flax*, or, as the Syriac reads it, שרנא דכטפנא, a *smoking lamp*: to which the Arabic and Persic versions agree; meaning the wick of the lamp, which being just lighted, seems ready to go out, having scarce any light, only a little fire in it, which makes it smoke: so these have but little light of knowledge, faith, and comfort, and a great deal of darkness and infirmity; only there's some warmth in their affections, which go upwards like *pillars of smoke, perfumed with frankincense*; and such Christ is so far from neglecting, and putting out, that he blows up the sparks of grace into a flame, and never utterly leaves the work, till he sends forth judgment into victory; that is, till he sends forth the Gospel into their hearts, accompanied with his mighty power, in the light and comfort of it; which informs their judgments, enlightens their understandings, bows their wills, raises their affections, sanctifies their souls, works effectually in them, under the influence of his spirit and grace, to the carrying on of the work of grace in them to the end; and making them victorious over all their enemies, and more than conquerors, through him that has loved them. The Targum of Jonathan paraphrases the words thus; "the meek, who are as a bruised reed, he will not break; and the poor, who are as an obscure lamp, he will not quench."

Ver. 21. *And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.*] The former part of the text is omitted, *he shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth*; but is inserted in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; and which some understand of the bruised reed, and smoking flax, and others of Christ; the latter sense is to be preferred. The passage, here cited, is somewhat different in Isaiah: for there it is, *and the isles shall wait for his law*; but the difference, at least, in sense, is not so great as it may appear at first sight: for, א"מ, as Grotius observes, does not always signify *islands*, but *nations*, and *countries*, that are upon the continent, Gen. x. 5. and so might be rightly rendered here, the *Gentiles*, or *nations*; and by the *name of Christ* is meant his Gospel: see Acts ix. 15. which Isaiah calls his *law*: that is, his doctrine, the doctrine of righteousness, life, and salvation by him, which is the ground and foundation of hope, and trust in him; and they that wait for it, may be truly said to hope, or trust in it. This began to have its accomplishment in the Idumeans, Tyrians, and Sidonians, now attending on the ministry of Christ; and has had a greater accomplishment since: the Gospel having been preached in the Gentile world, both upon the main land, and in the isles afar off; whereby multitudes have been brought to hope, and believe in Christ, as their Saviour and Redeemer.

<sup>m</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Trumot, c. 1. sect. 2.

Ver. 22. *Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, &c.*] About this time, or some little time after, when he was returned from the sea of Galilee, and was come into a certain house; see Mark iii. 19. Matt xii. 46. and xiii. 1. some persons brought him a demoniac, in compassion to the possessed man, and being persuaded of the power of Christ to heal him by the late cures he had performed. A like instance we have in chap. ix. 32, 33, 34. and Luke xi. 14, 15. which had a like effect upon the people, and was cavilled at by the Pharisees in much the same way; and which cavils were answered in much the same words; and yet the case is not the same; for that man was only dumb, but this both *blind and dumb*; not by birth, or through the defect of nature, or by any natural distemper that had attended him, but through the malice of Satan, by divine permission; his blindness, and dumbness, were the effects of his being possessed with a devil, who had deprived him of his sight, and speech. The word rendered *dumb*, signifies both deaf and dumb, and answers to the Hebrew word חרש, which sometimes<sup>n</sup> is used of a deaf man only, who can speak, but not hear; and often of one that can neither speak, nor hear; which is the case of such as are born deaf: it seems as if this man could hear, though he could not speak; since no mention is made of his want of hearing, or of Christ's restoring it to him; for it follows, *and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb, both spake and saw.* This he did, not by making use of medicines, but by a word speaking, dispossessing Satan; so that the cause of blindness and dumbness being removed, the effects ceased, and the man was restored to his sight, and speech, as before. He had his sight to behold his Saviour, and a tongue to praise his name: so when men are turned from Satan unto God, and are delivered from his thralldom and bondage, they are brought into marvellous light, and put into a capacity of shewing forth the praises of God.

Ver. 23. *And all the people were amazed, &c.*] At the cure; it was such an instance of divine power, and so glaring a proof, that the person who wrought it was more than a man, and must be the Messiah. This is to be understood of the greater part of the people, not of every individual, and of the common people only; for it had a different effect upon the Pharisees, as hereafter appears; but in these it not only produced admiration, but conviction, faith, and confession: *and said, is not this the son of David?* or the Messiah; for בן דוד, the *son of David*, is a character of the Messiah, well known among the Jews; see the note on Matt. i. 1. because he was promised to David, was to be raised up of his seed, and to spring from his loins. This question they put, not as doubting of it, but as inclining, at least, to believe it, if not as expressing their certainty of it: and is, as if they had said, who can this person be but the true Messiah, that has wrought such a miracle as this? for from his miracles they rightly concluded who he was; though the Jews since, in order to deprive Jesus of this true characteristic of the Messiah, deny that miracles are to be performed by him<sup>a</sup>.

Ver. 24. *But when the Pharisees heard it, &c.*] Very probably not the same that went out, and held a

<sup>n</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Melacim, c. 11. sect. 2.

council against Christ to destroy him, ver. 14. but others that were come from Judea and Jerusalem, and were with him in the house, and saw the miracle: these, when they heard what the people said, and how ready they were to believe, and own Jesus to be the Messiah, in order to prevent it, being filled with envy and malice, *they said, this fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of devils.* They could not deny the miracle, or that it was one; but to deprive him of the glory of it, and even reproach him for it, and to bring him into contempt with the people, they not only speak of him in a scornful manner, *εως, this sorry man, this vile fellow*; but ascribe the miracle he wrought to familiarity with the devil, to diabolical influence and skill in magic art: they pretended he was in confederacy with Satan, and was carrying on his interest: and therefore, that he might gain credit and reputation, the prince of devils suffered the inferior ones to remove at his word: and of these their ancestors, the Jews have learnt to fix this vile imputation, and blasphemous piece of slander upon Christ; who, they say<sup>†</sup>, brought enchantments, or witchcrafts, out of Egypt, in the cuttings of his flesh, whereby he performed the things he did. Concerning Beelzebub, see the note on chap. x. 25. here called *the prince of devils*: it being a prevailing notion among the Jews, that there is one devil who is the head of all the rest, and who is by them sometimes called Asmodeus: they say<sup>‡</sup>, when Solomon sinned against the Lord, he sent to him *אשמואי מלכא דשרי, Asmodeus the king of the devils*, and drove him from his throne, and so elsewhere<sup>§</sup>: and sometimes Samael, who is styled<sup>¶</sup> Samael the prince, *מלכא דשרים, the king of devils*; and the angel Samael, the wicked, *ראש כל השטנים, the head of all the Satans, or devils*<sup>‡</sup>: and we often read<sup>¶</sup> of *שר היהנום, the prince of hell*; by whom the same is meant, as here, by Beelzebub; for if any one devil is more wicked, odious, and execrable than the rest, the chief of them may be thought to be so; for which reason he is here mentioned.

Ver. 25. *And Jesus knew their thoughts, &c.*] He not only heard their blasphemous words, but was privy to their secret thoughts; he knew their vile malicious intentions and designs, with what view they expressed themselves in this manner, on purpose to reproach him, and set the people against him, contrary to the inward light of their minds, and dictates of their consciences; who must, and did know the contrary of what they said: and regarding the inward frame of their minds, as well as their words, and which is a proof of his omniscience, and so of his deity, and consequently of his Messiahship, *said unto them the following parables, as Mark calls them, chap. iii. 23. or proverbial expressions: every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation*: a government, in which there is a disagreement between the chiefs of it, and the body of the people, or where one part is opposed to the other, or in which a civil and intestine war is begun and prosecuted, cannot continue in any comfortable

situation, and flourishing state, but must come to nothing: this is a maxim that has been so often fatally verified, that no one will doubt the truth of it; and the same holds true of lesser communities, of cities, and families: *and every city, or house, divided against itself, shall not stand.* If citizens fall out with their magistrates, or one with another, and turn out, and disfranchise each other; and if the heads of families, and the respective branches thereof, quarrel with, and divide from one another, a dissolution of the whole must ensue; and the same may be said of the kingdom and government of Satan. These, 'tis very likely, were common sayings among the Jews, and they might be very easily understood by them; and are very appositely produced by Christ to illustrate the present case, and confute the vile and blasphemous suggestions of the Pharisees: a proverbial expression, much like to these, is to be read in the writings of the Jews, *כל בית שש בו מלוקות סופו ליהרב, every house, in which there is a division, at the end shall come to desolation*<sup>¶</sup>.

Ver. 26. *And if Satan cast out Satan, &c.*] That is, if Satan, the same with Beelzebub, casts out the rest of the Satans, or other devils, of which he is the prince and head, *he is divided against himself*; he acts contrary to his own interest, which is to keep possession of the bodies and souls of men; and consequently it must, in course, be subversive of his power and dominion: *how shall then his kingdom stand?* he'll never be able to maintain his authority, and keep up the shew of a government, as he does: for these words suggest, that there is a form of government among the devils, who are united in one body, under one head; and whose unity and concord are their greatest strength, as in all other governments. Our Lord's argument, and which is his first, for others follow, is, that since Satan, who is so cunning and crafty, can never be thought to act such an opposite part to himself, so subversive of his kingdom and government; and which would give so much credit to Christ, and serve so much to strengthen his interest, as to assist him in the casting out of devils; the weakness, and maliciousness of such a suggestion, must be clear and evident to all.

Ver. 27. *And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, &c.*] As the Pharisees asserted, and would have the people believe; for this is not allowed, only for argument-sake supposed: *by whom do your children cast them out?* meaning not the apostles and disciples of Christ, the children of the Jews, to whom Christ gave a power of casting out devils, and who had exercised it in his name; and therefore argues, if they in his name cast out devils, why could he not do it himself, without the help of Satan? wherefore these would be judges against them: but, no doubt, the Pharisees had no better opinion of the disciples, and of their ejection of devils, than of Christ; wherefore, it is not likely, that our Lord should argue with them from hence: but rather, he means, some among themselves, who pretended to have a power of exorcising and ejecting of devils, either in the name

<sup>†</sup> T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 13. 4. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 104. 2.

<sup>‡</sup> Targum in Eccl. i. 12.

<sup>§</sup> T. Bab. Pesach, fol. 110. 1. Gittin, fol. 68. 1. & Raziel, fol. 41. 2.

<sup>¶</sup> Zohar in Deut. fol. 120. 3.

<sup>†</sup> Debarim Rabba, fol. 245. 3.

<sup>‡</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 52. 1. Imre Binah in Zohar in Gen. fol. 22. 3.

<sup>¶</sup> Derech Eretz, c. 5.

of Jesus, as some of them did, Mark ix. 38. Acts xix. 13, 14. or in the name of their kings, righteous men, prophets and patriarchs, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob"; and which practice, perhaps, they took up and made pretensions to, in imitation of Christ and his apostles; so as Christ healed men possessed of devils, they also affected to do the same. A story is reported\*, "concerning Ben Talmion, that a miracle was wrought by R. Eleazar bar Jose, who healed a king's daughter at Rome, in whose body the devil entered, whose name was Ben Talmion; and they brought him (the Jew) to the king's treasury, to take what he would, but he would take nothing from thence, but letters, in which were written the decrees they had decreed against Israel; and when he found them, he tore them to pieces, and there he saw the vessels of the house of the sanctuary, in the treasury." Now since the Jews pretended to do these things, Christ asks them, by whom they cast out devils? Whether by the spirit of God, or by Beelzebub? They would doubtless say by the former, and not the latter, which would shew their great partiality; for admitting that the like actions were done by them, as by him, why not by the same power? Why should their ejection of devils be ascribed to God, and his to Beelzebub? *Therefore they shall be your judges; who will rise up against you, and condemn you one day, for this unequal judgment you now pass; and which was just the reverse of the true state of the case: for he cast out devils by the spirit of God, which they imputed to the assistance of Beelzebub; their children cast out devils, or pretended to do so, and it was by the help of Satan; and yet they ascribed it to a divine power, even though they made use of the name of Satan, under that of Beelzebub, or Asmodeus, in their exorcising, of which take the following form.* "By the authority of the glorious and fearful name, I adjure thee Asmodeus, king of the devils, and all thy company, &c. that ye hurt not, nor put in fear, nor trouble such an one, the son of such an one; but that ye help him, and sustain him (or deliver him) out of every distress and anguish, and from every evil thing, and from all diseases, that enter into the two hundred and forty-eight members, &c."

Ver. 28. *But if I cast out devils by the spirit of God, &c.]* As it was certain he did, from the nature, use, and design of such miracles; and it could not be reasonably thought, that Satan would assist in what was so very opposite to his kingdom and interest, and was so serviceable to the cause and glory of Christ. All the three persons had an hand in the miracles of the Messiah; they were done by Christ, in his father's name, and by the power of the spirit of God; from which the following inference may be justly deduced, *then the kingdom of God is come unto you:* meaning, either the Messiah himself; or rather, his kingdom, the Gospel dispensation, which both Christ and John had declared to be at hand; of which the performing of miracles, particularly the casting out of devils, whereby the kingdom of Satan was so much weakened, was a clear proof.

Ver. 29. *Or else, how can any one enter into a strong man's house, &c.]* This is another argument of Christ's proving that his casting out of devils could not be by Satan, but by the spirit of God; for if he did not act by any superior power to Satan's, and such by which he was able to master, overcome, and bind him, he could never *spoil his goods*, as he did; or dispossess devils out of the bodies or souls of men: just as if a man should enter into another man's house, who is strong and robust, with a design to spoil his goods, who would never make use of the man himself to do it, and can never be thought to effect it, unless he has a power superior to his, and uses it; *except he first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house:* by the *strong man*, is meant the devil, see Isa. xlix. 24, 25, who is powerful and mighty, as appears from his nature, being an angel, though a fallen one, excelling in strength human creatures; from his names, such as the roaring lion, the great red dragon, leviathan, &c. from the extent of his dominion, here called *his house*; which reaches to the whole posse of devils, and world of men; whence he is called the prince of the power of the air, and the prince of this world, and the god of it; and from his works and actions, in and over the bodies and estates of men, by divine permission; which might be exemplified in the case of Job, and the demoniacs in the time of Christ; and in and over the souls of men, not only over wicked men, but men under a shew of religion, as antichrist and his followers; yea, saints themselves, and even over Adam in a state of innocence; but Christ is stronger than he, and attacked him, and dispossessed him of the bodies of men; and restraining him from doing them any hurt, enters into the souls of men, dethrone him, and leads him captive, who led others; and keeps him from doing them any damage; as he will in the latter day *bind* him and shut him up in prison a thousand years; and also *spoil his goods, or vessels, and his house*; the palace of Satan, by taking bodies and souls out of his possession; by awakening the conscience, enlightening the mind, working upon the affections, subduing the will, and implanting principles of grace and holiness in the heart; and so making it a fit habitation for God, which spoils it for the devil: in all which, Satan can never be thought to have any hand; and therefore the suggestion that Christ casts out devils by his assistance, even out of the bodies of men, has no shew of reason in it.

Ver. 30. *He that is not with me, is against me, &c.]* These words chiefly refer to Satan, and are a further proof, that Christ did not cast out devils by him; since they two are as much opposites, as can possibly be; Satan is not on the side of Christ, but an adversary to him; there is an original, and implacable enmity, between the serpent and the seed of the woman; there's an open war between them, and therefore one can't be thought to lend assistance to the other. They were concerned in different things, had different views and interests, and so took different methods; *and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth:* Christ is the good shepherd, that gathers his sheep to himself, and into his

\* Justin Martyr, adv. Tryphon. p. 311.

† In Gloss. in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 57. 1. Meilah, fol. 17. 2.

‡ Raziel, fol. 41. 2.

fold, by the external ministry of the word, and internal efficacy of his grace; Satan is the wolf, that catches and scatters the sheep, and seeks to kill and destroy them: and since there is such an open war proclaimed and carried on between Christ and the devil, none ought to be neutral; whoever is not on the side of Christ, is reckoned as an enemy; and whoever is not concerned by prayer or preaching, or other means to gather souls to his word and ordinances, and to his church, and to himself, is deemed by him a scatterer of them.

Ver. 31. *Wherefore I say unto you, &c.*] This shews, that what follows is occasioned by what the Pharisees had said, concerning the miracles of Christ; imputing them to diabolical influence and assistance, when they were done by the spirit of God, of which they themselves were conscious; *all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men*: not unto all men, for there are some, who, as they are never truly convinced of sin, and brought to repentance for it, so they never have the remission of it; but to such to whom God of his free grace has promised, and for whom he has provided this blessing, in the covenant of his grace; for whom the blood of Christ was shed, for the remission of their sins; and who, by the spirit of God, are made sensible of them, and have repentance unto life given them, and faith in Christ, by which they receive the forgiveness of them: the sense is, that all kind of sin, whether committed more immediately against God, or man, the first or second table of the law, or against any of the divine precepts; be they sins small or great, secret or open, sins of heart, lip, or life, or attended with whatsoever aggravating circumstances; and all kind of blasphemy, or evil speaking of men, or of angels, or of the name of God, but what is hereafter excepted, there is forgiveness of in the grace of God, through the blood of Christ, even for all sorts of men and sinners whatever. The Jews have a saying<sup>a</sup>, that God pardons all sins, "רוחן מן הומו", *except lasciviousness*." But this is not excepted by Christ, only what follows, *but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, shall not be forgiven unto men*: by which is meant, not every ignorant denial of, and opposition to his deity and personality; nor all resistance of him in the external ministry of the word; nor every sin that is knowingly and wilfully committed; but it is a spiteful usage of the spirit of grace, an opposing, contradicting, and denying the operations wrought, or doctrines revealed by him, against a man's own light and conscience, out of wilful and obstinate malice, on purpose to lessen the glory of God, and gratify his own lusts: such was the sin of the Scribes and Pharisees; who, though they knew the miracles of Christ were wrought by the spirit of God, yet maliciously and obstinately imputed them to the devil, with a view to obscure the glory of Christ, and indulge their own wicked passions and resentments against him; which sin was unpardonable at that present time, as well as under that dispensation then to come, when the spirit of God was poured down in a more plenteous manner.

Ver. 32. *And whosoever speaketh a word against the son of man, &c.*] By whom is meant, not any man,

as Grotius thought, but the Lord Jesus Christ, so often called *the son of man*, on account of his human nature, in which he appeared in great meanness and obscurity. Now many might, through ignorance of him, thinking him to be a mere man, and taking up with common fame, speak evil of him, deny him to be the Messiah, reproach him for the meanness of his parentage and education, and for the freedom of his conversation with publicans and sinners; and do many things contrary to his name, as Saul, whilst a Pharisee did, and thought he ought to do; and yet be afterwards convinced of their mistakes, and be brought to a sense and acknowledgment of them, and obtain pardoning grace and mercy, as Saul did, though a blasphemer; and who is an instance of what is here promised, *it shall be forgiven him*. through the grace of God, the blood and mediation of Christ, under the application of the blessed spirit. *But whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, in the sense before declared, it shall not be forgiven him*: not because the Holy Ghost is greater than Christ; or for want of efficacy in the blood of Christ; or because God cannot pardon it; but because such persons wilfully, maliciously, and obstinately oppose the spirit of God, without whom there can be no application of pardon made; and remain in hardness of heart, are given up to a reprobate mind, and die in impentence and unbelief, and so there's no forgiveness for them, *neither in this world, nor in the world to come*; that is, they shall never be forgiven, see Mark iii. 29. The distinction here used, does not refer to a common one among the Jews, of the Jewish state and the times of the Messiah; but to the present state of life, and that which will be after, or upon death: and it does not suppose there may be forgiveness of other sins, though not of this, in the other world; but strikes at a notion the Jews had, that there are some sins, which repentance and the day of atonement expiate in this life; but there are others, which repentance and the day of atonement do not expiate; and these a man's death expiates, or makes atonement for<sup>b</sup>. The form of confession used by sick persons is the following<sup>b</sup>; "I confess before thee, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, that my cure is in thy hands, and my death is in thy hands; if it be thy good pleasure, heal me with a perfect healing: but if I die, תהא מיתתי סליחה, *let my death be for the pardon*, forgiveness, and atonement of all the sins, iniquities, and transgressions, which I have sinned, acted perversely in, and transgressed before thee; and give me my portion in paradise, and justify me *in the world to come*, which is hidden for the righteous." But the sin against the Holy Ghost is such, as is not forgiven, neither before, nor at, nor after death, nor by it: all sins that are forgiven, are forgiven in this world, and that perfectly and at once; and all that are forgiven in this world, there will be a manifestation and declaration of the pardon of them in another; but such sins as are not forgiven here, there will be no declaration of the pardon of them hereafter. In short, the sense is, that the sin against the Holy Ghost never has forgive-

<sup>a</sup> Tanchuma apud Buxtorf. Heb. Florileg. p. 126.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 86. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Seder Tephillot, fol. 333. 2. Ed. Basil. Vid. T. Bab. Beracet, fol. 60. 1.

ness; it is not pardoned now, and consequently there will be no declaration of the pardon of it hereafter. The Jews use the phrase in the same sense<sup>c</sup>; a certain sick man said to his son, "give me water, and such certain food; but if not, I'll not forgive thee, neither in this world, nor in the world to come." That is, I'll never forgive thee.

Ver. 33. *Either make the tree good, and his fruit good, &c.*] That is, either assert them both good, or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: say they are both evil, for the contrary cannot be affirmed with any consistency and propriety: the matter is easy to be determined, for the tree is known by his fruit; fruit will discover what a tree is, and accordingly judgment may be made. No man will say a tree is good, and its fruit corrupt; or say, that a tree is corrupt, and its fruit good: these are glaring contradictions, and can never be reconciled. The case Christ here puts, is a very easy and familiar one, and is obvious to common sense: the application of it may be made, either to the foregoing instance of Christ's casting out devils, which the Jews ascribed to the help of Satan; and then the sense is, either say I am a good man, and do good works, or that I am an evil man, and do evil works: to say that I do good works, as the casting out of devils must be allowed to be, and yet am an evil man, and do this under satanical influence, is as great an inconsistency, as to say that a corrupt tree brings forth good fruit; either therefore condemn these miracles as evil actions, done by confederacy with Satan; or if you will allow them to be good ones, as you do, ascribe them to the Spirit of God; for these things may as easily be determined, as the cause by its effect, or as a tree is known by its fruit: or else this may be applied unto the Pharisees, who, though wicked men, pretended to do good works; and though they set up for men of religion and holiness, yet did evil things, as their words and actions testified; particularly the blasphemy just uttered by them, charging the miracles of Christ as done by the assistance of the devil, which discovered the malignity and rottenness of their hearts: and the meaning of Christ is, that they would either both say, and do, that which is right and good; or relinquish their pretensions to the character of good and religious men: nothing can be concluded from hence in favour of free will, or a power in the creature to make himself good; for the word *make*, here signifies to say, affirm, assert, and the like; see John v. 18. and viii. 53. and x. 33. Though it may be fairly inferred from hence, that a man must first be a good man, e'er he can perform good works, truly and properly so called; and that these are fruits and evidences of the inward real goodness of a man; which must be understood not of a few single actions, but of the common, constant series and course of life.

Ver. 34. *O generation of vipers, &c.*] Though they boasted of their being the seed of Abraham, yet their immediate ancestors were no other than vipers, deceitful, hurtful, poisonous creatures; and they were exactly like them: for though they made a fair shew in the flesh, and outwardly appeared

righteous, yet were inwardly full of the poison of wickedness, envy and malice; and which their pestilential breath, their blasphemy against the Spirit, fully discovered; and gave just cause and reason for so severe a reproof, and such resentment, as here made by Christ. *How can ye, being evil, speak good things?* This is not to be expected, nor is it commonly and constantly done; an evil man may sometimes speak good things, or which seem to be so; but these are not his common talk; as he is, so, for the most part, is his language; his speech bewrays him: and since these men were by nature evil, were destitute of the spirit and grace of God, had no good thing in them, how should any good thing come out of them? And since they were so full of wickedness, spite and malice, it is no wonder that they belched out such blasphemous expressions concerning the miracles of Christ; *for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*: a phrase much like this is used by the Septuagint, in Eccles. ii. 15. *I spoke abundance, or much in my heart*; δὲν ο ἀρετῶν ἐκ περισσεύματος λαλῶν, *for the fool out of his abundance speaketh*: as there is abundance of folly in him, there is much delivered out by him; and where there is abundance of wickedness in the heart, if the grace of God is wanting to restrain it, much of it will come out by the lips; as is a man's heart, ordinarily is his language.

Ver. 35. *A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, &c.*] *A good man*, is a regenerated man, one that is renewed by the spirit of God, a believer in Christ, a sincere lover of him, and one that follows him, wheresoever he goes, and who has the grace of God implanted in him: for the good treasure of the heart, is not what he is naturally possessed of, but what is put into him: and is no other than the superabundant grace of God, or that grace for grace, which he has received out of Christ's fulness, and the rich experience of it he is blessed with: and may well be called a *treasure*; for as a treasure is a collection of riches, so this consists of various graces, each of which is more precious than gold, silver, and precious stones; a good one, both from the quality and quantity of it; and of the heart, though this is left out in many copies, from the seat and subject of it; and out of this the gracious man bringeth forth good things; tells his experience, speaks of what God has done for his soul; says many things to the glory of the grace of God; of the person, offices, blood, righteousness, and fulness of Christ; and of the operations and influences of the blessed spirit; and which are pleasant, profitable, useful, and edifying to the saints: and an evil man, out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. The evil man, is a man as he was born; who is wholly flesh, carnal, and in a state of nature; destitute of the spirit, and having no principle of grace in him: the evil treasure, is the corruption of his nature, the desperate wickedness of his heart, and those swarms of lusts, and all manner of sin that dwell there; from whence are continually proceeding evil and corrupt communications, which not only defile himself, but others; and among

<sup>c</sup> Sæpher Chasidim, num. 234.

the rest, not only vain words and unprofitable talk, but blasphemies against God, Christ, and the blessed Spirit; all which men will be accountable for another day.

Ver. 36. *But I say unto you, &c.*] This form of speaking is used, the more strongly to asseverate the truth of what is after said; and the rather, because men are apt to indulge a liberty with their tongues; fancying no great crime is committed, when only words are spoken, and no facts done; that every idle word that a man shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. By an idle word is meant, what the Jews call, שיחה קלה, light conversation, and דבר במל, vain discourse, as the Hebrew Gospel of Munster reads it here; frothy language, unprofitable talk, which, though it does not directly hurt God or man, yet is of no use to speaker or hearer; and yet even this, in the last general and awful judgment, if not forgiven, and repented of, must be accounted for; and much more such horrid blasphemies the Pharisees had vented against Christ, and the spirit of Christ. The Jews<sup>d</sup> have a saying pretty much like this, "That even על שיחה קלה, for any light conversation, which passes between a man and his wife, he shall be brought to judgment."

Ver. 37. *For by thy words thou shalt be justified, &c.*] Theophylact seems to take these words to be a passage of Scripture cited by Christ, in proof of what he had said, but does not point to any; nor is any such Scripture to be found. They are rather proverbial expressions, in common use among the Jews; or refer to the usual methods of proceeding in courts of judicature, upon the acknowledgments and confessions of persons. "Says Resh Lakish<sup>e</sup>, such an one and such an one, they justify; and such an one and such an one, they condemn. R. Eliezer replies, מברידון נזרכה פלוגי, by their words such an one and such an one are justified." The gloss upon it is, "upon hearing the difference there is between them, and between their words, they are justified." Our Lord's meaning is, that not only works and actions, but words of all sorts, will come into account in the day of judgment, and will be evidences for, or against a man, to acquit or condemn him: and by thy words thou shalt be condemned: according to these, the sentence of justification, or of condemnation, will be pronounced; as these will appear to be evidences for, or against a man's being in a state of grace and righteousness: thus for instance, a man that has spoken for Christ, and has freely confessed that all his hope of justification before God, and acceptance with him, is solely upon the account of the righteousness of Christ imputed; such a man will be declared a justified man according to the tenour of his own words: on the other hand, a man that has spoken hard speeches against Christ, and his righteousness; declaring he has no dependence on it, expects no justification by it; he'll be convinced of these ungodly sayings, and out of his own mouth will be condemned. Some have thought, that Christ here strikes at a notion which obtained among the

Jews, that little or no account would be taken of a man's words in the day of judgment; provided his life and actions were good, and regular; but whatever were the sentiments of the Pharisees, or of any of Christ's present hearers, it is certain, that it is the opinion of Jewish writers, that words, as well as actions, will be accounted for hereafter: they say<sup>f</sup>, "When a man dies, he lifts up his eyes and sees two come to him, and write before him all that he has done in this world, וכל מזה דאפיק מן פומיה, and all that has proceeded out of his mouth, וידוב, דינא על כלא, and he gives an account for all; and a little after, מלין, כל אינון מלין, all the words of a man in this world, are prepared before him, and not one of them lost; and in the hour he goes to his grave, they are all set before him."

Ver. 38. *Then certain of the Scribes and Pharisees answered, &c.*] Not the same that charged him with casting out devils, by the prince of devils; but others, that were present, as appears from Luke xi. 16. and who do not take upon them to make a proper reply to what he had said, or return an answer to that, but address him on another account; being willing to divert the discourse, and try what they could do with him in another, and more gentle and crafty way; saying, master, not fellow, magician, Samaritan, thou that hast a devil, and casts out devils by Beelzebub, and art a devil, and Beelzebub himself; but doctor, teacher, allowing him, at least, in a flattering way, that he was an instructor of mankind, though they would not own him to be a prophet, unless he would give such signs, as would make it appear he was one; hence they say, we would see a sign from thee: that is, a sign from heaven, as they desired at another time, Matt. xvi. 1. and, as Luke says, they did now, ch. xi. 16. they had seen a sign from him on earth, in the cure of the man that had a withered hand; and another, in dispossessing the devil out of the man, that was blind and dumb; but these they looked upon rather as signs from hell, and done by confederacy with the devil; and therefore desire, or rather, in an imperious way, demand one from heaven, where they thought Satan had not such power, as on earth; and where there could not be such collusion and deception, as they wickedly imagined were in this last action: they seem to require some such things to be done, as were on Mount Sinai, at the giving of the law, when there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud, and the voice of a trumpet, and some visible appearances of the divine majesty; and intimate, that if something of this kind was done, if there was any visible and miraculous appearance in the heavens, produced by him, they should believe him to be the prophet that was spoken of, and the true Messiah; but if not, should give no credit to him: however, this is to be learned from hence, that the Jews, in Christ's time, expected signs and wonders to be wrought by the Messiah, in proof of his being so, though now they reject them as needless<sup>g</sup>.

Ver. 39. *But he answered and said unto them, &c.*]

<sup>d</sup> R. Jonah apud L. Capell. in loc.  
<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 30. 1.

<sup>f</sup> Zohar in Num. fol. 53. 2.

<sup>g</sup> Maimou. Hilch. Melachim. c. 11. sect. 3.

Not to the Pharisees, who were unworthy of an answer from him; having, in such an imperious manner, and with a sole view to tempt him, and after such miracles were wrought by him, required of him a sign from heaven; but to the multitude, the throng of people gathered thick together on this occasion, see ver. 45. and Luke xi. 29. he turns himself from the Scribes and Pharisees, to the common people, and says to them concerning the former, *an evil and adulterous generation*; not only in a spiritual sense, being degenerated from the faith, religion, and piety of their ancestors; but literally, which appeared not only in their polygamy, and frequent divorces on trivial occasions, but by criminal conversation with other women; see John viii. 9. and this, with the Jews themselves, is a character of the generation in which the Messiah comes: for they say<sup>b</sup>, “that just when the Messiah comes, or in the age the son of David comes, *impudence shall be increased*, corn and wine shall be dear, the government shall be heretics, *בית וועס ידיר לונת*, and the *synagogue shall become a brothel-house*.” Their meaning is, that the chief magistrates should be Sadducees, and those that pretended to religion and holiness would be adulterers, which was now the case. Their writings<sup>c</sup> frequently speak of the increase and abounding of adulteries, under the second temple, and about this time; which obliged Jochanan ben Zaccai and the sanhedrim, to leave off the use of the bitter waters. *Seeketh after a sign*; this is perfectly Talmudic language, the language of the Jews<sup>k</sup>. “The disciples of R. Jose ben Kismai, asked him, when the Son of David came? He replied, I am afraid, lest *תבקש ממני אות*, *ye should seek of me a sign*; they say unto him, we will not seek of thee a sign.” This the Jews sought of Christ, time after time; not content with one, sought another, though such wonderful ones were wrought, which most fully demonstrated him to be the Messiah; and therefore he would not indulge this temper in them; but declared, that *there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas*. Not that no miracles should afterwards be wrought amongst them; for, after this, many wondrous works were done by Christ; but no such signs should be given they desired, not one from heaven; but one particularly should be given them, out of the earth, and should be, not for their conviction, but condemnation; and would seem very much like that which was done to the prophet Jonas, or Jonah; for so is his name in the Hebrew language, the other being the Greek termination of it.

Ver. 40. *For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, &c.] Or in the belly of a great fish*, as is said, *Jonah i. 17.* for that it was a whale, is not there said, nor is it certain it was; nor from the smallness of its swallow, is it thought probable it should; nor does the word here used, necessarily imply one, but some large fish; nor are there whales in the Phe-

nician Sea: it might be a kind of a sea-dog, called Carcharias, and sometimes Lamia, or Lamna, from its vast swallow; in which whole men; even in coats of mail, have been found. However, be it what it will, Jonas was three days and three nights in the belly of it; which agrees with the account in the above-mentioned place, and is the sign Christ speaks of in the foregoing verse; and a very great sign and miracle it was, that being swallowed down by such a fish, he should remain in the belly of it three days and three nights, as one dead; for, without a miracle, he could not have lived an hour; and on the third day, as one raised from the dead, be cast out of it upon the dry land; which was a very eminent type of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, as appears by what follows. The Jews reckon up several wonders or miracles in this case of Jonas's; as that a fish was prepared to swallow him up, and he not drowned in the sea; and that this was prepared for him from the creation of the world; that he should be three days and three nights in the fish's belly, and be alive; and that he should retain his senses and his understanding, so as to be able to pray: they represent him also as if he was in the state of the dead<sup>l</sup>, and that the fish itself was dead, and was quickened again. According to Josephus, after he had been carried 250 miles in the Hellespont of the Euxine Sea, he was cast ashore<sup>m</sup>. *So shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*. That Christ means himself by the *son of man*, there is no reason to doubt; and his being laid in a tomb, dug out of a rock, is sufficient to answer this phrase, *the heart of the earth*, in distinction from the surface of it; but some difficulty arises about the time of his continuing there, and the prediction here made agreeable to the type: for it was on the sixth day of the week, we commonly call *Friday*, towards the close, on the day of the preparation for the sabbath, and when the sabbath drew on, that the body of Christ was laid in the sepulchre; where it lay all the next day, which was the sabbath of the Jews, and what we commonly call *Saturday*; and early on the first of the week, usually called *Sunday*, or the Lord's day, he rose from the dead; so that he was but one whole day, and part of two, in the grave. To solve this difficulty, and set the matter in a clear light, let it be observed, that the three days and three nights, mean three natural days, consisting of day and night, or twenty-four hours, and are what the Greeks call *νυκθημερα*, *night-days*; but the Jews have no other way of expressing them, but as here; and with them it is a well known rule, and used on all occasions, as in the computation of their feasts and times of mourning, in the observance of the passover, circumcision, and divers purifications, that *מקצת דיום ככולו*, *a part of a day is as the whole*<sup>n</sup>: and so, whatever was done before sun-setting, or after, if but an hour, or ever so small a time, before or after it, it was reckoned as the whole preceding, or following day; and whether this

<sup>b</sup> Misn. Sota c. 9. sect. 15. T. Bab. Sanhed. fol. 97. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 9. & Maimon. Hilch. Sota, c. 3. sect. 19.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 98. 1. so *מבקש סימן*, *seeketh a sign*, Shemoth Rabba, Parash. 9. fol. 97. 2.

<sup>e</sup> R. David Kimchi & Jarchi, in *Jonah i. 17.* & ii. 1. *Zohar* in *Exod. fol. 20. 3. & 78. 3.*

<sup>f</sup> Antiq. l. 9. c. 18.

<sup>g</sup> T. Hieros. Pesach. fol. 31. 2. T. Bab. Moed. Katon, fol. 16. 2. 17. 2. 19. 2. & 20. 2. Bechorot, fol. 80. 2. & 21. 1, Nidda, fol. 33. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Ebel, c. 7. sect. 1, 2, 3. *Aben Ezra* in *Lev. xii. 3.*

was in the night-part, or day-part of the night-day, or natural day, it mattered not, it was accounted as the whole night-day: by this rule, the case here is easily adjusted; Christ was laid in the grave towards the close of the sixth day, a little before sun-setting, and this being a part of the night-day preceding, is reckoned as the whole; he continued there the whole night-day following, being the seventh day; and rose again early on the first day, which being after sun-setting, though it might be even before sun-rising, yet being a part of the night-day following, is to be esteemed as the whole; and thus the son of man was to be, and was three days and three nights in the grave; and which was very easy to be understood by the Jews; and it is a question whether Jonas was longer in the belly of the fish.

Ver. 41. *The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment, &c.*] Alluding either to the custom and practice of witnesses, who rise up from their seats, and stand, when they give in their testimonies in a court of judicature; or else, referring to the time of the general resurrection from the dead, at the last day, when these men shall rise from the dead, and stand in judgment *with this generation*; shall rise when they do, and stand before the judgment-seat together, and be against them, and shall condemn them: not as judges of them, but by their example and practices, which will be brought above-board, and observed as an aggravation of the guilt and condemnation of the Jews: so the lives and conversations of the saints condemn the wicked now, and will do hereafter: in this sense the word is used in the Talmud<sup>o</sup>; where having related how Hillel, though a poor man, and R. Eleazar, though a rich man, studied in the law, and Joseph, though youthful, gay, and beautiful, withstood the importunities of his mistress, 'tis observed, that Hillel כדוּיב, *condemned* the poor; and R. Eleazar ben Harsum condemned the rich; and Joseph condemned the wicked: in like manner, the Ninevites will condemn the Jews, *because they repented at the preaching of Jonas*; a mere man, a single prophet, a stranger to these men, who only preached, and wrought no miracle among them, and his stay with them was very short; whereas the men of this generation had the son of God sent to them, had the ministry of his apostles, and of John the Baptist, and a variety of miracles wrought among them; and all this for a series and course of years, and yet remained impenitent: the chief aggravation of their impenitence, and what made it the more astonishing was, that so great a person was in the midst of them; and behold, a greater than Jonas is here; meaning himself, who was greater in person, office, doctrine, miracles, life, obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead. The Ninevites, though a Heathenish people, having but forty days allowed them to repent in, upon Jonas's preaching, repented immediately; whereas the Jews, though God's professing people, and having forty years, from Christ's resurrection, allowed them to repent in,

yet did not at all; and though the repentance of the Ninevites was but an external one, in dust and ashes, yet it was what secured them from temporal ruin; as the Jews would have been saved from the destruction that came upon their temple, city, and nation, had they repented but as they did.

Ver. 42. *The queen of the south, &c.*] Called the queen of Sheba, 1 Kings x. 1. Sheba was one of the sons of Joktan, a grand-child of Arphaxad, who settled in the southern parts of Arabia: hence this queen is called the queen of the south. Sheba is by the Targumist<sup>p</sup> called Zemargad: and this queen the queen of Zemargad: she goes by different names. According to some, her name was Maqueda<sup>q</sup>, and, as others say, Balkis<sup>r</sup>: a Jewish chronologer<sup>s</sup> tells us, that the queen of Sheba, who is called Nicolaa, of the kingdom of Jaman, or the south, came to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, and gave him much riches: and Josephus<sup>t</sup> calls her Nicaulis, queen of Egypt and Ethiopia; of whom it is here said, that she shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: the meaning is, as before; that she shall rise from the dead, and stand as a witness against that generation at the day of judgment, and, by her example and practices, which will then be produced, condemn them, or aggravate their condemnation: *for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth*; an hyperbolical expression, meaning a great way off, from a far country, a very distant part of the world from Jerusalem, *לשמע חכמת שלמה*, to hear the wisdom of Solomon; the very phrase used by the above Jewish<sup>u</sup> writer. And behold, a greater than Solomon is here; one that was infinitely greater than Solomon was, in every thing; so particularly in that, in which he excelled others, and on the account of which the queen of the south came unto him, namely, wisdom: for he is the wisdom of God, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. The Jews themselves<sup>v</sup> own, that the king, meaning the Messiah, that shall be raised up of the seed of David, בעל חכמה יתר משלמה, shall be a greater master of wisdom, or wiser than Solomon. Now what an aggravation of the condemnation of the Jews will this be another day, that a Gentile woman, living in a foreign and distant land, should, upon the fame of the wisdom of Solomon, leave her own kingdom and country, and come to Jerusalem, to hear his wise discourses about things natural, civil, and moral; and yet the Jews, who had a greater than Solomon in the midst of them, and had no need to take much pains to come to the sight and hearing of him, yet rejected him as the Messiah, blasphemed his miracles, and despised his ministry; though it was concerned about things of a spiritual and evangelic nature, and the eternal welfare of immortal souls.

Ver. 43. *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, &c.*] By the unclean spirit, is meant Satan, the old serpent, the devil; who by the Jews, is wont to be called as here, רוח מטמא, the unclean spirit<sup>w</sup>; and that, because he is by sin become so, though he was not so originally; is the cause of uncleanness in men,

<sup>o</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 35. 2.

<sup>p</sup> In 1 Chron. i. 9. & 2 Chron. ix. 1.

<sup>q</sup> Ludolph. Hist. Æthiop. l. 2. c. 3. & not. in Claud. Confess. sect. 1.

<sup>r</sup> Pocock. Specimen Hist. Arab. p. 59.

<sup>s</sup> Juchasin, fol. 136. 1.

<sup>t</sup> Antiqu. l. 8. c. 2.

<sup>u</sup> Juchasin, fol. 136. 1.

<sup>v</sup> Maimon. Hilchot. Teshuba, c. 9. sect. 2.

<sup>w</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 77. 2.



and delights in unclean persons, places, and things: his *going out of a man*, is not to be understood of his being dispossessed of the bodies of men; nor of the ejection of him, and his going by force, through the power of divine grace, out of the souls of men; but either of his leaving the Jews for a while, in some sort, whilst Christ and the Gospel continued among them; and of his going out of the Scribes and Pharisees; not really, but putting on another form, appearing as an angel of light, and under the guise of holiness and righteousness: and so he may be said to go out of men, when any outward reformation is made in them; and they take up a profession of religion, though destitute of the grace of God: *he walketh through dry places*; referring to a prevailing notion, that unclean spirits walk in, and haunt, desert and desolate places; and may have regard to the Gentiles, among whom Satan might go, seeking rest and satisfaction among them, in their idolatries and other wickedness, till he was there also disturbed by the Gospel sent among them: or by these *dry places* may be meant the saints, whom he takes his walks among, in order, by tempting, to distress them, being secure of pharisaical persons: and these may be so called, not for what they are in themselves; not because the sun of righteousness shines upon them: or because thirsty and desirous of divine and spiritual things; much less as if they had no moisture, since they have a well of living water in them, and are watered by the Lord; or were unfruitful, as dry places usually are; but for what they were to the unclean spirit, there being nothing in their grace, and the exercise of it, and in their spiritual performances, grateful to him; nothing to quench his thirst, and satisfy his sinful appetite; nor were there in them the mire and dirt of iniquity to roll in, as in unregenerate persons: wherefore he is represented as *seeking rest, and findeth none*: his view in walking in these places, or among such persons, is rest; not the rest of the saints, he seeks their disturbance, but his own rest; which is to do all the mischief he can, by stirring up corruption, tempting to sin, and discouraging the exercise of grace; but is not able to do so much mischief as he would, and so can't find the rest he seeks for, nor satisfy his envious, spiteful, and malicious temper: and this being the case, it follows,

Ver. 44. *Then he said, I will return into my house, &c.*] Into the land of Judea, particularly into the Scribes and Pharisees, outward professors of religion; who, notwithstanding their outward reformation, and great pretensions to holiness, are Satan's house still: he has a property in them, a claim upon them; and though he says, *from whence I came out*, yet he never really and properly quitted it, only seemingly, and in appearance; and therefore his returning is only throwing off the guise, and reassuming his former character, as a vicious and unclean spirit. *And when he is come, he findeth it empty*: not empty of sin: this puts me in mind of a passage in the Misna<sup>7</sup>, where it is said, that on a fast-day, "when they stand in prayer, they cause "to descend, or go before the ark, an old man, who "is used (to prayer,) whose children, *וביתו ריקים*, and "his house, are empty, so that his heart is perfect in

"prayer," or entirely at leisure for it. The commentators<sup>8</sup> on that phrase, *his house is empty*, note, that he was empty of sin, and free from it, and one concerning whom an evil report had not gone forth from his youth: but such was not this house; it was empty of God, of the true knowledge of him, of the fear of him, and love to him; of Christ, of faith in him, affection for him, and hope on him; of the spirit of God, and of his graces, and of spiritual, internal religion, and powerful godliness. *Swept*; not with the spirit of grace convincing of sin, righteousness, and judgment; but with the besom of an outward reformation: *and garnished*; not with internal grace, which makes saints all glorious within; but with secret lusts and corruptions, which rendered it an agreeable habitation for this unclean spirit; and at most, with some shew of morality, a little negative holiness, or abstinence from outward acts of sin, an observance of some external rites and ceremonies, and a few hypocritical performances of fasting and prayer; which Satan can very well bear with, so long as the heart is empty of spiritual grace, and till an opportunity offers of throwing off all appearance of good.

Ver. 45. *Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits, &c.*] This is said in allusion to, and in imitation of the seven spirits before the throne; or may denote a large number of devils, seven being a number of perfection; or else the various corruptions of a man's heart, the swarms of internal lusts which are there stirred up by Satan; *more wicked than himself*, as these are more pernicious to man, than the devil himself: *and they enter in and dwell there*; that is, though they were there before, now they exert and shew themselves, and such men appear to be under the power and government of them; when leaving their seeming religion and holiness, they return like the dog to the vomit, and the swine to the wallowing in the mire. *And the last state of that man is worse than the first*: he becomes more wicked than ever he was, before he made pretensions to religion; as such apostates generally are more extravagant in sinning, and are seldom or ever recovered by repentance, and their last end is eternal damnation; see 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21, 22. *even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation*. This parable fitly suited them, the Scribes and Pharisees, and the men of that generation, from whom in some measure the unclean spirit might be said to depart through the doctrine, and miracles of Christ, to go into the Gentile world; but being followed there with the preaching of the Gospel by the apostles, returns to the Jews, and fills them with more malice, blasphemy, and blindness, than ever, which issued in their utter ruin and destruction; of which this parable may be justly thought to be prophetical.

Ver. 46. *While he yet talked to the people, &c.*] Upon these subjects, which so nearly concerned the Scribes and Pharisees, and which could not fail of drawing upon him their resentment and ill will. *Behold his mother and his brethren*: by his mother is meant Mary; but who are his brethren, is not so easy to say: some are of opinion, that Joseph had children by Mary, who are here meant; but it is more generally believed, that

<sup>7</sup> Taanith, c. 2. sect. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in lib.

these were either the sons of Joseph by a former wife, whose name is said to be Escha; or rather, Mary's sister's sons, the wife of Cleophas, the cousin-germans of Christ, it being usual with the Jews to call such kindred brethren; and so they might be James, Josés, Simon, and Judas: these stood without; for Christ was within doors, not in a synagogue, as Piscator thought, but in an house; see ch. xiii. 1. and his mother and brethren stood without doors, either because they could not get in for the throng of the people; or because they would not, it not being proper to make all within acquainted with what they had to say to him: *desiring to speak with him*; not with a pure view to interrupt him in his work, or to divert him from it, lest he should over-spend himself; nor from a principle of ambition and vain glory, to shew that they were related to him, and that he was at their beck and command; but rather, to observe unto him the danger he exposed himself to, by the freedom he took with the Pharisees in his discourses, and probably to acquaint him with some conspiracies formed against him.

Ver. 47. *Then one said unto him, &c.*] Either one of his auditors, or, as the Ethiopic version has it, one of his disciples: the other evangelists intimate, that more than one acquainted him with it; which is easily reconciled: for, upon his mother and brethren calling to him, as Mark says they did; first one and then another, and more, might apprise him of it, and especially as he did not immediately go out unto them. *Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee*: whether this message was carried at the request of the mother and brethren of Christ, and delivered in a simple manner, and with an honest intention; or whether it was officiously done, and with a design to interrupt him, and to try him, whether he would prefer his natural relations, and their society and conversation, to the spiritual work in which he was engaged, in doing good to the souls of men, is not certain; the latter seems probable, from the following words, and conduct of Christ. Some copies read, *desiring to see thee*.

Ver. 48. *But he answered and said unto him that told him, &c.*] Of his mother and brethren being without doors, desiring, and waiting to speak to him, *Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?* These questions are put, not as if he himself was ignorant who were his mother or his brethren; or as suggesting as if he had none; or as denying that these were in such a relation to him; or as casting any slight upon them; or as intending to teach men disrespect to parents and kindred, according to the flesh; but as displeased with the man, or men, for interrupting him in his work; and to let them know, that the business of his heavenly

father was preferred by him to any his natural relations could have with him; and that he might have an opportunity of pointing out who were his relations in a spiritual sense.

Ver. 49. *And he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, &c.*] By whom are meant, not only the twelve, but all others present, who truly believed in him, both men and women; and who might sit near him and together, and whom, by this motion of his hand, he pointed out as his spiritual relations, to the multitude that sat round him: *and said, behold my mother, and my brethren*; in whose hearts he was formed, and who were the children of God by adopting grace, and so his brethren; and were as dear to him as his mother and brethren. It is reasonable to suppose, that when he said, *behold my mother*, and, as in the following verse, *sister*; he might stretch forth his hand particularly, toward the pious and religious women that believed in him, and ministered to him of their substance, who might be now present; such as Mary Magdalene, Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and others; since these are mentioned by Luke in the same chapter in which this passage stands in his Gospel; and when he said *behold my brethren*, he might point directly to the twelve, and the rest of the men that believed in him, and followed him.

Ver. 50. *For whosoever shall do the will of my father, &c.*] This is not to be understood of a perfect obedience to the will of God, revealed in his righteous law; for since this cannot be performed by any mere man, no one could be in such a spiritual relation to Christ: but of the obedience of faith to the will of God, revealed in the Gospel; which is to believe in Christ, and have everlasting life; see John vi. 40. This is the will of Christ's father, *which is in heaven*, and which is good news from heaven, to sinners on earth; and which Christ came down from heaven to do, and to declare to the children of men: such as *hear the word of God and do it*, as Luke says, ch. viii. 21. that is, hear the Gospel, understand and believe it, and become obedient to the faith of it; these are in this near manner related to Christ, evidentially and openly, as well as those who were now present: *the same is my brother, and sister, and mother*; as dear to me, as such are to those, to whom they stood thus related in the flesh; and these natural relations serve to convey some ideas of that relation, union, nearness, and communion, there are between Christ and his people; all these relative characters may be observed in the book of Solomon's Song, to which our Lord may be reasonably thought to have respect; see Cant. iii. 11. and iv. 9. 10, 12. and v. 1, 2. and viii. 1.

## CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1. *THE same day Jesus went out of the house, &c.*] Where he had been preaching, and working miracles: where this house was, is not certain; it seems to have been in one of the cities of Galilee, probably Capernaum, since that was by the sea-coast: the reason of his going out of the house was, either to con-

verse with his mother and brethren, as they desired; or to withdraw himself from company, and take some refreshment by the sea-side; or because it would not hold the people, and therefore he quitted it for a more convenient place. The time he went out of it, was the same day he had cast the devil out of the man blind

and dumb, and had delivered himself so freely concerning the Scribes and Pharisees, who had blasphemously ascribed that miracle to the assistance of Satan; and the same day his mother and brethren came to see him, and speak to him. *And sat by the sea-side*; either as weary, and for his refreshment, or in order to preach to the people; for, Mark says, *he began again to teach by the sea-side*, ch. iv. 1. This was the sea of Galilee, sometimes called the sea of Tiberias.

Ver. 2. *And great multitudes were gathered unto him, &c.*] Some on one account, and some on another; some to see his person, others his miracles; some for healing for their bodies, and others for their souls; some for the loaves, and others to hear him preach; and of these there were several sorts, as the following parable shews. *So that he went into a ship*; both for his own advantage, that he might not be crowded, and pressed by the people, and have more room, and a freer air to speak in, and for their's, that they might both see and hear him better. *And sat, and the whole multitude stood on the shore*; as was the then custom of the Jewish doctors and hearers, the one to sit, and the other to stand. See the note on ch. v. 1. Christ sat upon the deck of the ship; or perhaps this ship was no other than an open boat, which was put to sea, some little distance from the shore; upon which the people stood in great numbers, with much convenience and attention.

Ver. 3. *And he spake many things unto them in parables, &c.*] For the parables of the sower, and the different sorts of ground the seed fell in, of the wheat and tares, of the grain of mustard-seed, of the leaven in three measures of meal, of the treasure hid in a field, of the pearl of great price, of the net cast into the sea, and of the householder, were all delivered at this time. This way of speaking by parables was much in use among the eastern nations, and particularly the Jews. R. Meir was very famous among them for this way of teaching: they say <sup>a</sup>, "that when R. Meir died, *בטלו מרשלי משלים*, they that were skilled in, "and used parables, ceased." The commentators <sup>b</sup> on this passage say, "that he preached a third part tradition, and a third part mystical discourse, *ותלתת*, "מתלי, and a third part parables:" which method of discoursing was judged both pleasant and profitable, and what served to raise the attention of the hearer, and to fix what was delivered the more firmly in their minds: what was our Lord's reason for using them, may be seen in ver. 13. he begins with the parable of the sower. The design of which is to set forth the nature of the word of God, the work and business of the ministers of it, the different success of the preaching of it, and the fruitfulness of it; and to shew when it is truly received, and the various degrees of fruit it produces; that the efficacy of it depends on the grace of God, which makes the heart good, and fit to receive it; and how few they be which hear the word to any spiritual advantage and benefit; and how far persons may go in hearing, and yet fall short of the grace of God; and therefore no dependence is to be had on the external hearing of the word. *Behold, a sower went forth to sow*; Luke adds, *his seed*; as does also Mun-

ster's Hebrew Gospel here; and Mark introduces the parable thus, *hearken, behold!* it being a matter of great importance and concern, which is expressed by this parable, it deserves the most diligent attention. By *the sower*, is meant the son of man, as may be learnt from the explanation of another parable, ver. 37. which is Jesus Christ himself, who is often so called on account of his human nature; and may the rather be thought to be intended here, since the seed he sowed is called *his seed*; meaning the Gospel, of which he is the author, publisher, sum and substance; and since he is, by way of eminence, called *ὁ σαρῆωρ*, the sower; which must be understood of him as a prophet, or preacher of the word, who was eminently sent of God, and richly qualified for such an office, and was most diligent in it, and yet his success was but small. Indeed, every minister of the Gospel may be called a sower, who bears precious seed, sows spiritual things, and though in tears, he shall not return empty, but shall reap in joy, and bring his sheaves with him. This sower *went forth* from his own house to his field; which, as applied to Christ, may intend his incarnation, his coming into this world by the assumption of human nature, his appearance in the public ministry, in the land of Judea, and his going forth still in his ministers, and by his spirit, in the preaching of the Gospel; and, as applied to the preachers of the word, may be explained of their commission, of their being sent, and of their going forth into the field of the world, preaching the Gospel every where. The end of the sower's going forth is *to sow his seed*: by his seed is meant the word, the word of God; see Mark. iv. 14. Luke viii. 11. so called, because of the choiceness and excellency of it in itself, that grain which is reserved for seed being usually the best of the kind; and because of its smallness, it being mean and contemptible in the eyes of those, who know not the nature of it; and because of the generative virtue it has, though not without a divine influence. Nor does it bring forth fruit, unless it is sown in the heart, as seed in the earth; where its operation is secret, its growth and increase gradual, and its fruitfulness different. By *sowing*, is meant preaching; which, as sowing, requires knowledge and skill, and an open and liberal hand; keeping back nothing that is profitable, a declaring the same doctrine in one place as another; and designs a constant ministration of it, notwithstanding all discouragements, and a patient waiting for success.

Ver. 4. *And when he sowed, &c.*] Or, *as he sowed*, as the other evangelists; that is, *whilst he was sowing, some seeds fell*; either out of his hand, or out of the cart drawn by oxen; hence the "Talmudists distinguish between *בפולת יד*, the falling of the hand, or what falls out of the hand; and *בפולת שוריים*, the falling of the oxen, or what falls from them; where the gloss is, "in some places they sow the grain with the hand; and in other places they put the seed on a cart full of holes, and oxen draw the cart on the ploughed land, and it falls upon it." By *the way-side*; by the common road, or private paths, which led through corn-fields, in which Christ and his dis-

<sup>a</sup> Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 15.

<sup>b</sup> Jarchi & Bartenora in ib. e Talmud. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 38. 2.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Bava Metzta, fol. 105. 2.

cupies walked, ch. xii. 1. and which being beaten and trodden hard, the seed must lie open on it, and so be liable to be trampled upon by men, or devoured by the fowls of the air; and designs such hearers as are careless, negligent, and inattentive, who hear without understanding, judgment, and affection; see ver. 19. *and the fowls came and devoured them*: the other evangelists say, *the fowls of the air*: and so the Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and some copies; and mean the devils; so called, because their habitation is in the air; hence they are said to be *the power of the air*: and because of their ravenous and devouring nature, their swiftness to do mischief, and their flocking in multitudes, where the word is preached, to hinder its usefulness, as fowls do, where seed is sowing. Satan, and his principalities, and powers, rove about in the air, come down on earth, and seek whom they may devour, and often mix themselves in religious assemblies, to do what mischief they can; see Job i. 6, 7.

Ver. 5. *Some fell upon stony places, &c.*] Such a place as the Jews call *דולסית*, a barren, stony place, a place from whence, they say, they take stones, and *בית סלע*, and which *ראוי לרועה*, *is not fit for sowing*<sup>4</sup>; and such were those places and spots of ground, that some of these seeds fell upon; and design such hearers, in whom the natural hardness of their hearts continues, and who remain unbroken by the word, and are without any true sense of sin, and repentance for it. *Where they had not much earth*. to cover them and take root in: this is expressive of such persons who have slight convictions of sin, and awakenings of the natural conscience; some little, light, and speculative notions of the word, in the understanding and judgment; some flashes of natural affection for it, and outward expressions of delight and pleasure in it; some shew of grace, and a form of godliness, but no real heart-work. *And forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth*; to strike their roots downwards: and through the reflection of the heat, upon the rocks and stones, they quickly broke through the thin surface of the earth over them, and appeared above ground before the usual time of the springing up of seed: which may not only denote the immediate reception of the word by these hearers, and their quick assent to it; but their sudden and hasty profession of it, without taking due time to consider the nature and importance thereof; and the seeming cheerfulness in which they did both receive and profess it; though it was only outward and hypocritical, and more on account of the manner of preaching it, than the word itself, and through a selfish principle in them; and did not arise from any real experience of the power of it on their souls, or true spiritual pleasure in it: nor could it be otherwise, since their stony hearts were not taken away, nor hearts of flesh given them; wherefore the word had no place in them, and made no real impression on them; they remained dead in trespasses and sins; the word was not the savour of life unto life unto them, or the spirit that giveth life; they did not become living and lively stones; they

continued as insensible as ever of their state and condition by nature, of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, of the danger they were in, and of their need of Christ, and salvation by him; they were as hard, and obdurate, and as inflexible, as ever, without any real contrition for sin, or meltings of soul through the influence of the love and grace of God; and as backward as ever to submit to the righteousness of Christ, being stout-hearted, and far from it; and being no more cordially willing to be subject to the sceptre of his kingdom, or to serve him in righteousness and holiness, than they ever were; for the word falling upon them, made no change in them; their hearts were as hard as ever, notwithstanding the seeming and hasty reception of it; though they did not refuse to hearken to the word externally, did not put away the shoulder, or stop their ears, yet their hearts were still like an adamant stone: nothing but the mighty power of God, and his efficacious grace, can break the rocky heart in pieces; or give an heart of flesh, a sensible, soft, and flexible one, with which a man truly repents of sin, believes in Christ, and becomes subject to him.

Ver. 6. *And when the sun was up, &c.*] Some time, and its heat was increasing, and it began to shine out hot, and beat with some vehemency and strength; which may denote some sore temptation, or severe affliction, or fiery trial of persecution and tribulation; see ver. 21. for this is not to be understood of the glorious light of the Gospel, which, though very comfortable and refreshing, as well as illuminating to good men, is very distressing and tormenting to carnal minds; they cannot bear its truths and doctrines; this is the fire which comes out of the mouth of God's faithful witnesses, and torments them that dwell on the earth, and devours their enemies, Rev. xi. 5—10. And it, moreover, like the sun, has different effects on different objects; as the sun hardens clay, and melts wax, so the Gospel is to the hardening of some, and softening of others; to the one it is the savour of life unto life, and to the other the savour of death unto death; but this cannot be intended, because the word by these hearers is first received with joy. Nor is Christ the sun of righteousness meant, who arises with healing in his wings, and gives grace and glory to his people; but the sun of persecution and affliction, in which sense the metaphor is used, in Cant. i. 6. the heat of which the church patiently bore, though she was made black with it: but these hearers think it strange that such a fiery trial should befall them; wherefore, as they take up their profession in haste, they as quickly drop it; see Rev. vii. 16. *They were scorched, and because they had not root, they withered away*: they were offended with what they met with, for the sake of Christ, and the profession of his word; and therefore, not being rooted in him, nor in the love of God, nor having the root of the matter, true grace, in themselves, or, as Luke says, *lacked moisture*, of divine grace, of the dews and waterings of it, fell away finally and totally. This is no instance of the apostasy of real saints, or any proof of true believers

<sup>4</sup> T. Bab. Erachin, fol. 32. 1. & Gloss. in ib. & Bava Bathra, fol. 156. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

falling away finally and totally; since these were not rooted, and grounded in the everlasting and unchangeable love of God, were not interested in it, or were partakers of the effects of it; had they been so, they could never have been separated from it; tribulation, distress, and persecution could never have done it; none of these would ever have moved them; had they had the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, they would have gloried in tribulation: nor were they united to Christ, rooted and built up in him; had they, they would have continued to have derived life and nourishment from him; in him the life of believers is hid, and because he lives they live also; as long as there is life in the root, the branches will not die; he is the root that bears the branches, the root of the righteous that yields fruit, and is never moved: nor had these the truth of grace, which is an incorruptible seed, a well of living water springing up to everlasting life; had they, they could never have withered away; to such God gives more grace, he himself is as the dew unto them, and he waters them every moment.

Ver. 7. *And some fell among thorns, &c.*] On a spot of ground which was full of the roots of thorns, and briars, which was not cleared of them as it should be. We often read <sup>e</sup> of שְׂתִיקְצָה שָׂדֵה, a field cleared of thorns; but such was not this piece of ground, it was over-run with them, not on the surface of the earth, but within it: for it follows, and the thorns sprang up: naturally, being neither sown nor planted; either before the seed, or, at least, as soon; and however grew faster, and higher, and choked them; so that they came to nothing; hence the advice, sow not among thorns, Jer. iv. 3. and a lost kindness, or what is bestowed in vain, is expressed in this proverbial manner <sup>f</sup>, שְׂקוּלָה שִׁיבֹתֶיךָ וְשָׂדֵי אֲדוּמִי, thy beneficence is taken away, and cast among thorns: these point out such hearers who seemed to be contrite, to have the fallow ground of their hearts broken up, their consciences tender, and to have a true sense of sin, as well as to be outwardly reformed; and yet inwardly were full of the thorns of sinful lusts, particularly of the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, the lusts of other things, and the pleasures of this life, which rendered the word useless and unfruitful; see ver. 22. all which are comparable to thorns; it is hardly possible to be in the midst of, and meddle with these, without being scratched by them; they pierce, afflict, and wound, even where they have not their greatest power and influence; and where they do prevail, and get the ascendant, as they are fruitless themselves, they make others so too; they choke the word, and make that, and all ordinances, and opportunities, useless, and unserviceable. Thorns are a part of the earth's curse for the sin of man; and such persons in whom thorny cares and lusts prevail, as they are like unto the thorny which beareth thorns, so, as that, they are rejected, and nigh to cursing, whose end is to be burned in everlasting flames of divine wrath and fury, Heb. vi. 8.

Ver. 8. *But others fell into good ground, &c.*] Not beaten and trodden by the feet of men, nor stony, nor thorny, but well broke up, manured, and tilled; which designs good, honest-hearted hearers, who become so by the spirit and grace of God; who hear with a spiritual understanding, experience, savour, and relish, what they hear; see ver. 23. and brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty fold, some thirty fold: some seeds produced an hundred, others sixty, and others thirty. The first of these especially was a large increase, but what was sometimes had, and which Isaac received in Gerar, in the land of the Philistines, Gen. xxvi. 12. and is what Pliny says <sup>g</sup> of Byzacium, a country of the Lybiphœnicians, that it yielded an hundred fold to its husbandmen; and of such fruitfulness was the land of Israel, of which the Jewish doctors say some things incredible: they tell us a story <sup>h</sup> of "one that sowed a measure of vetches, or pease, וְנִשְׂאָה שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת סֵאִין, and it produced three hundred measures; they say unto him, the Lord hath begun to bless thee, &c." Here, in the parable, these various increases intend the different degrees of fruitfulness in gracious souls; for though the fruits of grace, in believers, are of the same quality, yet not of the same quantity. Some believers are grown to a greater maturity than others; some are but little children, some are young men, some are fathers.

Ver. 9. *Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*] Not externally only, but internally; he that has ears given him to hear, so as to understand, let him make use of them, and seriously consider of, and diligently attend to the use and importance of this parable. It is a way of speaking used by Christ, when any thing of moment was delivered, and not so easy to be understood, on purpose to quicken the attention of his auditors, and stir up in them a desire of understanding what was said; which effect this had upon his disciples; see Mark iv. 10. Luke viii. 9.

Ver. 10. *And the disciples came, and said unto him, &c.*] Not the twelve only, but others that were about him, as Mark says, who also were his disciples, and believed in him: these, when he was alone, came nearer to him, who, whilst he was preaching to the people, were at some little distance from him, either in the ship, or on the shore, though within the hearing of him, and addressed him after this manner; why speakest thou unto them in parables? not that this way of speaking was new and surprising to them; but because it was not easily understood, especially not by the common people, without an explanation, which, as yet, Christ had not given: and indeed the parable was not understood by the disciples themselves; who put this question, not only for the sake of the multitude, but for their own also, hoping to be favoured with the meaning of it.

Ver. 11. *He answered, and said unto them, &c.*] Christ was always ready to give an answer to his inquiring disciples, concerning his ministry, and his conduct in it; which shews great respect to them,

<sup>e</sup> Misn. Sheviith, c. 4. sect. 2. T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 34. 3. & 35. 1. T. Bab. Bechorot, fol. 34. 2.  
<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Sabbath, fol. 69. 2. Bava Kama, fol. 83. 1. Cetubot, fol. 53. 2. & Betza, fol. 29. 2.

<sup>g</sup> Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 4.

<sup>h</sup> T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 20. 2.

and condescension in him: *because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*: by the *kingdom of heaven*, is meant the Gospel, which treats of the kingdom of heaven, and of things pertaining to it; of the saints' meetness for it, which is the regenerating and sanctifying grace of the spirit; and of their right to it, which lies in the justifying righteousness of Christ. The *mysteries* of it intend the sublime doctrines thereof; such as relate to the Trinity of persons in the Godhead, to the incarnation of Christ, and the union of the two natures, human and divine, in him, eternal predestination, redemption by Christ, satisfaction by his sacrifice, justification by his righteousness, and pardon through his blood, the resurrection from the dead, &c. things, though clearly revealed, yet may have difficulties attending them, and which are not very easily solved: now to know and understand the great truths of the Gospel, spiritually, savingly, and experimentally, is not from nature, or to be acquired by men's industry, but is the gift of God's grace, flowing from his sovereign will and pleasure; a favour which the disciples of Christ, as a chosen people, receive from the Lord, and which is denied others: *but to them it is not given*: to the wise and prudent, to the Scribes and Pharisees, to the multitude, to the bulk and generality of the people, to the rest that were blinded. Mark calls them *them that are without*; who are not in the number of God's elect; nor within the covenant of grace, nor among the disciples of Christ; referring to a common way of speaking among the Jews, who used to call the Gentiles, all without their land, *they that are without*; and indeed all within themselves that despised the rules and judgment of the wise men<sup>1</sup>: but Christ here calls the wise men themselves such. Now our Lord, who was privy to the secret and sovereign dispensation of God, who, of his own will and pleasure, had determined to give a spiritual and saving knowledge of divine things to some, and deny it to others, made this the rule of his conduct in his ministry; that is to say, he preached in parables to some without an explication, whilst he spoke plainly to others; and, if in parables, yet gave them an interpretation, and an understanding of them.

Ver. 12. *For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, &c.*] Whoever has the true grace of God implanted in him, has a saving knowledge of Christ, and a spiritual acquaintance with the doctrines of the Gospel, shall have more grace given him; he shall grow in the knowledge of Christ, and the spirit of truth shall lead him into all truth: *and he shall have more abundance*: of grace, light, knowledge, and experience: all grace shall be made to abound towards him; he shall be filled with all the fulness of God, and shall arrive to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; and his light shall shine more and more unto the perfect day. *But whosoever hath not*: the truth of grace, nor a spiritual knowledge of Christ, nor any experience of the doctrines of the Gospel, *from him shall be taken away, even that he hath, or that which he seemed to have*, as Luke expresses it; for every thing besides true grace is a mere shew, and has no solidity

in it; as natural parts, human learning, and a form of knowledge and of truth in the law, the national church-state of the Jews, with all the outward privileges appertaining thereunto, all which may be here meant; and even speculative notions of the Gospel, the external gifts of the spirit, the means of grace, the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and the ministry of it, which in process of time were wholly taken from these people.

Ver. 13. *Therefore speak I to them in parables, &c.*] Because it was the will and pleasure of his father to give the knowledge of divine mysteries to some, and not to others; and because even the outward good things they had, being wrongly used or abused by them, would be taken away from them: *and because they seeing, see not*: they saw Christ with their bodily eyes, but not with an eye of faith; they saw the miracles he did, but did not discern, at least did not acknowledge the evidence of them, proving him to be the true Messiah. *And hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand*: they heard externally, but not internally; they heard the sound of Christ's voice, but did not understand his words, even when he spake in the plainest and most intelligible manner; nor were they concerned to know the meaning of them: wherefore he spoke to them in this abstruse and parabolical way, that they might be what they really were, seers and not seers, hearers and not hearers, at least not understanding ones; and that what he said might remain sealed and hidden to them, as the things contained in the sealed book were to the Jews of old; the reason of which was, as a writer of their<sup>2</sup> says, and which agrees with our Lord's reason and conduct here, *שדורו במשל חזרה, because they were in parable and riddle.*

Ver. 14. *And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, &c.*] In ch. vi. 9, 10. which saith, which runs, or may be read thus, *by hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive.* The words are a prophecy concerning the people of the Jews, which began to be accomplished in the times of Isaiah; and were again fulfilled in the times of some after-prophets; and had been in part fulfilled under the more plain and easy ministry of Christ; and was to have a further accomplishment under this parabolical way of preaching; as it also was to have, and had, a yet further completion under the ministry of the apostles; see Acts xxviii. 26, 27. Rom. xi. 8. and the judicial blindness here predicted was to go on among them, until the land of Judea was utterly destroyed by the Romans, and the cities and houses thereof left without any inhabitants; all which accordingly came to pass: for that this prophecy refers to the times of the Messiah, and to the people of the Jews, is clear from this one observation made by Christ himself, that Esaias foretold those things when he saw the glory of the Messiah, and spake of him, John xii. 40, 41. and because it was to have, and had, its accomplishment over and over again in that people, therefore the word *ἀνανεώθησαι*, which may be rendered *is fulfilled again*, is made use of. The sense of the prophecy is, with respect to the times of the Messiah, that the Jews, whilst hearing the sermons preached by

<sup>1</sup> Vid. T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 24. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

<sup>2</sup> Abarbinel in Isa. 29. 11.

him, whether with, or without parables, should hear his voice, and the sound of it, but not understand his words internally, spiritually, and experimentally; and whilst they saw, with the eyes of their bodies, the miracles he wrought, they should see the facts done, which could not be denied and gainsayed by them, but should not take in the clear evidence, full proof, and certain demonstration given thereby, of his Messiahship. In the prophecy of Isaiah, the words run in the imperative, *hear ye, see ye, &c.* but are here rendered in the future, *shall hear, shall see, &c.* which rendering of the words is supported and established by the version of the Septuagint, by the Chaldee paraphrase, and by many Jewish commentators<sup>1</sup>; who allow, that the words in Isaiah may be so understood, which is sufficient to vindicate the citation of them, by the evangelist, in this form of them.

Ver. 15. *For this people's heart is waxed gross, &c.]* Or *fat*, become stupid and sottish, and without understanding; and so incapable of taking in the true sense and meaning of what they saw with their eyes, and heard with their ears; for they had their outward senses of hearing and seeing, and yet their intellectual powers were stupified. *And their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed;* which is expressive of the blindness and hardness, which were partly brought upon themselves by their own wilfulness and obstinacy, against such clear evidence as arose from the doctrine and miracles of Christ; and partly from the righteous judgment of God, giving them up, for their perverseness, to judicial blindness and obduracy; see John xii. 40. and are in the prophet ascribed to the ministry of the word; that being despised, was in righteous judgment, the savour of death unto death, unto them; and they under it, as clay, under the influence of the sun, grew harder and harder by it, stopping their ears, and shutting their eyes against it: *lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart;* which may be understood either of God's intention, and view, in giving them up to judicial blindness, and hardness of heart, under such miracles, and such a ministry, as a punishment for their wilful contempt of them; that so they might never have any true sight, hearing, and understanding of these things, and be turned from the evil of their ways, have repentance unto life, and remission of sins; which seems to be the sense of the other evangelists, Mark iv. 12. Luke viii. 10. John xii. 40. or, as if these people purposely stupified themselves, stopped their ears, and pulled away the shoulder, and wilfully shut their eyes; fearing they should receive some conviction, light, and knowledge, *and be converted by the power and grace of God: and I should heal them;* or, as in Mark, *and their sins should be forgiven them;* for healing of diseases, and forgiveness of sins, are, in Scripture language, one and the same thing; and this sense of the phrase here, is justified by the Chaldee paraphrase, which renders it, *וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח לְדָוִן, and they be forgiven, or it be forgiven them,* and by a Jewish commentator on the place; who interprets healing, of the healing

of the soul, and adds *וְהָיָה הַסְּלִיחָה, and this is pardon*<sup>m</sup>.

Ver. 16. *But blessed are your eyes, for they see, &c.]* Which is to be understood both of corporal and intellectual sight: it was their happiness to see Christ in the flesh, and converse with him in person, be eye-witnesses of his majesty, and see with their own eyes the miracles performed by him, the proofs and attestations of those doctrines they were to publish to all the world; and it was still their greater happiness, that they saw his glory, as the glory of the only-begotten of the father, full of grace and truth: many saw him in the flesh, as they did, with their bodily eyes, but saw no beauty, nor comeliness in him, nothing amiable and desirable in him; but these saw his personal and transcendent glories, as the son of God, his fulness as mediator, his suitableness as a Saviour and Redeemer, and all the characters of the Messiah in him; and so believed, and were sure that he was the Christ, the son of the living God: they saw Christ, not in the promise, as Abraham, and other patriarchs did; nor through types and shadows, as the saints of the Old Testament did; to them it was given to know and understand the mysteries of grace, respecting the person, offices, obedience, sufferings, and death of Christ. *And your ears, for they hear.* This also must be understood of corporal and intellectual hearing, another branch of their present happiness. They heard the words of truth from the lips of that great prophet Moses said should rise up among them, like unto him, whom they should hear: they heard, with their own ears, a voice from heaven, declaring him to be the beloved son of God, in whom he was well pleased. They heard the Gospel preached by him, not only so as to be affected with it, and give their assent to it, but also to understand it spiritually, and experimentally, and to bring forth the fruit of it; and so were that sort of hearers, signified by the good ground in the parable Christ had just delivered. The forms of speech, in which the happiness of the disciples is here expressed, seem to be in common use with the Jews; when they would extol the peculiar attainments of a man, especially in matters of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. Thus, it being told R. Jochanan ben Zaccai of some persons that had expounded the work of Mercavah, that is, the beginning of Ezekiel's prophecy, and the mysterious passages in it, and what befel them, expressed himself thus concerning them; "blessed are you, and "blessed are your children, *אֲשֶׁר עֵינֵי שֶׁכֶּךָ רָאוּ, and "blessed are the eyes that so see."* And elsewhere<sup>o</sup> mention being made of a book of secrets delivered to Solomon, and which he had understanding of, 'tis said, "אֲשֶׁר עֵין שִׂימְהוּ וְאוֹחַן שִׁשְׁבֻעַ, blessed is the eye "that sees, and the ear that hears, and the heart that understands, and causes to understand, the wisdom of it."

Ver. 17. *For verily I say unto you, &c.]* This is added for the further confirmation of what is before said, concerning the happiness of the disciples, in seeing and hearing what they did: *that many prophets, and righteous men;* Luke says, ch. x. 24. *kings have desired*

<sup>1</sup> In R. David Kimchi in Isa. vi. 9.

<sup>m</sup> R. David Kimchi in loc.

<sup>o</sup> T. Bab. Chagigah, fol. 14. 2.

<sup>o</sup> Sepher Raziel, fol. 34. 1.

to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. To see Christ in the flesh, and have a clearer insight into the knowledge of the mysteries of grace, were things very desirable to men of the highest class in church and state, and of the best characters, such as Abraham, John viii. 56. Jacob, Gen. xlix. 18. David, Psal. xiv. 7. Solomon, and the church in his time, Cant. viii. 1. Isaiah, and the saints with him, Isa. xxv. 9. with many others. These indeed had a sight of Christ, but a very distant one; they saw him afar off in the promises and prophecies of him; and not very clearly, but through dark types and cloudy sacrifices; whereas the disciples saw him in person, heard him preach, took in the evidence of his miracles, and felt the power of his doctrines, and spiritually and savingly understood them. A way of speaking, somewhat like this, stands in the Talmud<sup>9</sup>; "Many have watched to expound in Mercavah (the beginning of Ezekiel's prophecy), *למא ראו אותה מימיהם*, and have not seen it all their days."

Ver. 18. *Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.*] That is, the interpretation of the parable; for they had heard the parable before, and had desired an explanation of it; which, though not mentioned by Matthew, is, by the other evangelists, Mark iv. 10. Luke viii. 9. and since it was given to them to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, therefore Christ calls upon them to attend unto, and hear, so as to understand the spiritual meaning of this parable. Mark relates, that he moreover said to his disciples at this time, *know ye not this parable?* Do ye not understand the meaning of it, so easy to be taken in? them as it were reproving for their dulness of hearing, notwithstanding the grace given them, and the advantages they enjoyed: *how then will ye know all parables?* all that he had delivered, or was about to deliver at this time, or should hereafter; which were of more difficult interpretation, and not so easy to be understood as this.

Ver. 19. *When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, &c.*] Hence it appears, that by the seed in the parable is meant the Gospel, called *the word of the kingdom*: because it treats of the king Messiah, of his person, office, and grace; and of his kingdom, and the administration of it by him, under the present dispensation; of the kingdom of grace saints enjoy now, and of the kingdom of heaven they shall enter into hereafter, through the grace and righteousness of Christ. Now such a hearer of this word is here described, who hears it accidentally, and only externally; hears the sound of it with his ears, and understandeth it not with his heart. He is one that is careless and inattentive, negligent and forgetful; has some slight notions of things as he hears, but these pass away as they come; his affections are not at all touched, nor his judgment informed by them, but remains as stupid, and as unconcerned as ever; his heart is not opened to attend to, and receive the word, but continues hard and obdurate; and is like the common and beaten road, that is

trodden down by every one, and is not susceptible of the seed, that falls upon it. *Then cometh the wicked one*, Satan, the devil, Mark iv. 15. Luke viii. 12. who is, by way of eminency, so called, being the first creature that became wicked, and the worst that is so; who is entirely and immutably wicked; whose whole work and employment lies in wickedness; and who was the original cause of the wickedness that is among men, and which he is continually instigating and promoting: so the Jews frequently call<sup>9</sup> Samael, by whom they mean the devil, Samael, *סמאל, the wicked*. This evil spirit, as soon as ever he observes one hearing the word, especially that has not been used to attend, comes immediately, and, as he is hearing, catcheth away that which is sown in his heart; not the grace of God, which being once implanted in the heart, can never be taken away by Satan; but the word which was sown, not in his understanding, in a spiritual sense, nor even in his affections, so as to love it, delight, and take pleasure in it; much less in his heart, so as to become the engrafted word able to save, or so as to believe in it, and in Christ revealed by it; but in his memory, and that but very slightly neither; for the heart sometimes means the memory; see Luke ii. 51. Besides, the word only fell upon, not into his heart, as into the good ground, as the metaphor in the parable shews; and it made no impression, nor was it inwardly received, but as soon as ever dropped, was caught away by the enemy; not by frightening him out of it, by persecution, as the stony ground hearer; nor by filling the mind with worldly cares, as the thorny ground hearer; but by various suggestions and temptations, darting in thoughts, presenting objects, and so diverted his mind from the word, and fixed his attention elsewhere; which is done at once, at an unawares, secretly, and without any notice of the person himself; so that the word is entirely lost to him, and he does not so much as remember the least thing he has been hearing: *this is he which receiveth the seed by the way-side*; such an hearer is comparable to such ground, on whom the word has no more effect, than seed sown upon a common beaten path.

Ver. 20. *But he that receiveth the seed into stony places, &c.*] Such a hearer, who is like to the stony ground on which the seed fell, is one that is not an accidental hearer of the word, as the former, but a settled constant hearer of it; and not one that is careless and negligent, but diligent and attentive, and has some understanding of what he hears; *the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it*: he is one that not only constantly attends upon it, but he receives it; he gives an assent to it, he believes in it historically, makes a profession of his faith in it, and holds it for a while, being under some convictions of the truth of it: and having some speculative notions of it, and light in his understanding and judgment in it, he has some flashes of natural affection for it, and delivers some outward expressions of pleasure and delight in it, like Herod, and the hearers of John the Baptist;

<sup>9</sup> T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 24. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Sopher Bahir apud Zohar in Gen. fol. 27. 2. Debarim Rabba, fol. 145. 3.



but has no heart-work, and so is like to the rock in stony ground; the natural hardness of his heart continues, it remains unbroken by the word, without any true sense of sin, and repentance for it, and destitute of spiritual life, and of true faith, love, and joy: hence, as his profession is taken up in haste, immediately, upon a flash of affection, and a little head-knowledge, it does not last long, nor prove honourable.

Ver. 21. *Yet hath he not root in himself, &c.*] Nor in Christ; the word is not rooted in him, nor has he the root of the matter, or the truth of grace in him: *but dureth for a while*; a hearer of the word, a professor of religion, shewing some outward respect to the word, and to the preachers of it: *for when tribulation or persecution ariseth, because of the word*; which is often the case, and must be expected by those who embrace the Gospel, profess the name of Christ, and are willing to live godly in him. *Tribulation* may intend some lesser and lighter troubles for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel; such as the revilings and reproaches of men, loss of character, and trade, &c. and *persecution* may design something more public and vehement; such as confiscation of goods, imprisonment, and danger of life, the most exquisite tortures, and death in the most cruel form and shape; things very disagreeable to flesh and blood, and which can't be endured, and submitted to, by persons without a principle of grace, by one that has no root in himself. Luke calls this a time of *temptation*, or trial, as it is either way, both by private troubles, and more public persecutions: these try men's principles and professions, and whether the truth of grace is in them or no; and where it is not in any person, *by and by he is offended*; at the cross; he shrinks back from it, does not care to take it up, and follow Christ; but drops his religion, and the profession of it; apostatises, falls away, and comes to nothing.

Ver. 22. *He also that receiveth seed among the thorns, &c.*] The hearer that is like to the thorny ground, on which the seed fell, *is he that heareth the word*; not a profane sinner, nor a reviler of religion, or a persecutor of the saints; but one that not only shews a love to the word, but who seems to have his heart broken under it, and by it, his conscience tender, and his life outwardly reformed; one, who besides his being a settled, diligent, understanding, and affectionate hearer of the word, and a believing receiver and professor of it, seems to have a thorough work of grace upon him, to have the fallow ground of his heart ploughed up, and to be truly contrite; the thorns being under ground, and not yet to be seen, but afterwards appear: *and the care of this world*; not the care of another world, nor a care about spiritual things in this world, nor even a proper, laudable care of the things of this present life, but an anxious and immoderate care of them; which, as *thorns*, is very perplexing and distressing to the persons themselves, and is what is vain and fruitless. *And the deceitfulness of riches*: in opposition to some riches, the riches of grace and glory, which have no deceit in

them; and not riches themselves, bare worldly riches' but the deceitfulness of them, is here taken notice of; for riches often delude, and lead persons out of the right way, out of God's way; cause them to err from the faith; they don't give the satisfaction they promise, and often don't continue, as is expected: and are as *thorns*, pungent to the owners of them, who pierce themselves through with many sorrows in acquiring and keeping them; and are frequently injurious to others, their fellow-creatures; and in the issue are useless and unprofitable, especially with respect to the concerns of another world. Mark adds, *and the lusts of other things*; besides riches; and Luke adds, and *pleasures of this life*; meaning divers other worldly lusts and pleasures, such as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life: which also, like *thorns*, are distracting and afflicting, sooner or later; are vain, and unprofitable, and lead to destruction: and these are called *the pleasures of this life*, in opposition to, and distinction from the pleasures of that which is to come, which are real and lasting: the phrase is Jewish; "says R. Judah, the prince, whoever takes upon him, תענוגי העולם הזה, *the pleasures of this world*, to him are denied the pleasures of the world to come: and whoever does not take upon him *the pleasures of this world*, to him are given the pleasures of the world to come." Now these, all, and each of them, *choke the word*: by overspreading all the powers and faculties of the soul, as thorns do a field; by overtopping the seed of the word, and by hiding it from the influences of the sun of righteousness, and rain of grace; and by attracting every thing in the heart to themselves; and by bearing and pressing down all thought, concern, and care for the use, fruitfulness, and increase of the word. *And he becometh unfruitful*: as in such circumstances he must needs be; or if there be any shew of fruit in outward respect to the word, in an historical faith of it, in an external profession, and outward reformation, yet *brings not fruit to perfection*, as Luke says; these in process of time shrivel up, wither away, and come to nothing.

Ver. 23. *But he that received seed into the good ground, &c.*] The hearer compared to good ground into which the seed fell, *is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it*; has a new and spiritual understanding given him, feels the power of it on his heart, enlightening and quickening him; has an application of it made to him by the spirit of God, and can discern the worth and excellency of it, and distinguish it from all others; and, as Mark says, *receives it*; as the word of God in faith, and with the love of it, and with all readiness and meekness; and, as Luke observes, *keeps it*; holds it fast against all opposition with great struggling; will not part with it at any rate, nor depart from it in the least, nor entertain any doubt about it; but abides by it, stands fast in it, and is valiant for it: and this he does in and with an *honest and good heart*; which no man naturally has; nor can any man make his heart so: this is the work of God, and is owing to his effi

\* Abot R. Nathan, c. 98. Vid. Kinchi & Ben Melech in Psal. xvi. 5. & Eben Ezra in Psal. xix. 10.

acious grace. This is an heart of flesh, a new and right heart, and spirit; an heart to fear God, to love him, and to trust in him; in which Christ dwells by faith; in which the spirit of God has his temple; and in which every grace is implanted: and such an one, as he hears with a strict, and an honest intention, and in the exercise of grace; so he holds fast the word he hears, understands and receives, with all faithfulness and honesty: *which also beareth fruit and bringeth forth, some an hundred fold, some sixty, and some thirty*: the fruit bore, and brought forth by such an hearer, is the true fruit of grace and righteousness, and is all from Christ, under the influences of the spirit, through the word and ordinances, as means, and issues in the glory of God; and though not brought forth in the same quantity in all, yet is of the same quality; and is brought forth, as Luke says, *with patience*: constantly, and continually, in all seasons, in old age, and even unto death; and is at last brought to *perfection*, holds, and remains unto the end.

Ver. 24. *Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, &c.*] Somewhat like the former, but with a different view: for whereas the design of the former was to shew the different sorts of hearers that attend upon the ministry of the word, three parts in four being bad; this is to shew the difference of members in churches, some being comparable to good seed, and others to tares. *The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field*: by the *kingdom of heaven*, is not meant the ultimate glory of the saints in heaven, or the state of happiness in the other world; for there will be no tares there; nor the Gospel, and the ministrations of it, but the Gospel dispensation, and times, and kingdom of the Messiah; or rather the Gospel visible church-state on earth, called a *kingdom*, of which Christ is king, and in which the saints are subject to him; where proper laws are made for the orderly government of it, and proper officers appointed to explain, and put those laws in execution; and which consists of various persons, united under one head, and independent of any other government: and it is styled the *kingdom of heaven*, in distinction from the kingdoms of this world; the subjects of it are, or should be, heaven-born souls; the word, laws, and ordinances of it are from heaven; and there is some resemblance between a Gospel church-state and heaven, and it is very near unto it, and is even the suburbs of it: or else the king Messiah himself is intended, who is compared to a man, a sower; and so it is explained, ver. 37. *he that soweth the good seed is the son of man*: which is a name and title of the Messiah, by which he is called both in the Old and New Testament; who, though the seed of the woman, yet was the son of man, as of Abraham, and David; and which denotes the truth, and yet the infirmity of his human nature: he is the sower that went about preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, in the Jewish world, or throughout Judea and Galilee, in his own person: and who also, by the ministry of his apostles, sowed the seed of the word in the several parts of the world, which was made effectual for the beginning of a good work of grace on the souls of

many; for by *his field* is meant *the world*, as appears from ver. 38. and means either the whole world, in which both good and bad men live and dwell; and is the field Christ is the proprietor of, both by creation, as God, and by gift, as mediator: or the church, the visible Gospel church-state throughout the world; which is as a field well tilled and manured; and is Christ's by gift, purchase, and grace: and by the *good seed* sown in it, are meant *the children of the kingdom*; as is said, ver. 38. such as have a good work begun in them, and bring forth good fruit in their lives and conversations.

Ver. 25. *But while men slept, &c.*] Good men, ministers, and churches; whose case this sometimes is to be asleep in a spiritual sense: and which sleepiness lies in a non-exercise of grace; in a sluggishness to and in duty; in a contentment in external exercises of religion; in lukewarmness about the cause of Christ; in an unconcernedness about sins of omission and commission; and in a willingness to continue in such a state; and which arises from a body of sin and death; from worldly cares; weariness in spiritual duties; a cessation from spiritual exercises; an absenting from spiritual company; oftentimes from outward ease, peace, and plenty sometimes from a long expectation of the bridegroom's coming, and the delay of it; and from its being a night season, a time of darkness and security: such a case with the church, and good men, is very dangerous, as it exposes to every sin and snare; renders them liable to lose the presence of Christ, their liveliness and comfort; and tends to poverty and leanness of soul: such are in danger of being surprised with the midnight cry; and the churches are likely to be filled with hypocrites and heretics: *his enemy came*; by whom is meant the devil, ver. 39. who is an enemy to Christ personal, and shewed himself to be so in his infancy, by stirring up Herod to seek his life: and, when grown up, by instigating the Jews to contrive his death; which they attempted by various methods, and which, at last, he compassed by Judas, and the Scribes and Pharisees; and also to Christ mystical, to the church, and all true believers; whose adversary he is, going about, like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour: the same came into the field, the world, and church in it; *and sowed tares among the wheat*; by the *wheat*, is meant the same with the *good seed*, the children of God, true believers in Christ; who are comparable to wheat, for the choiceness of it, that being the choicest grain, so they are the chosen of God, and precious, and the excellent in the earth: and because it dies before it rises and springs up; so the saints do, and will do, both in a spiritual and corporal sense; and because of the purity and whiteness of it, so they are pure and white, being sanctioned by the spirit, washed in the blood of Christ, and justified by his righteousness; and because of its substance, fulness, weight, and permanence, so they are filled from Christ's fulness, and with the fulness of God, and fruits of righteousness, and remain, and can't be driven as the chaff is, but continue to live, because Christ their head lives; and because of its gradual increase, so they increase in spiritual light,

grace, and experience; and because of the chaff that adheres to it, so sin and corruption cleave to the saints in this life; and lastly, because it needs both the flail and the fan, so believers need chastisements, afflictions, and corrections: by the *tares* sown among them, are meant the *children of the wicked one*; Satan, the enemy and adversary, as in ver. 38. who are to be understood, not of profane sinners; though these are the children of the devil; but of professors of religion, men either of bad principles, or of bad lives and conversations; whom Satan, by some means or another, gets into churches, and they become members thereof: at first they look like wheat, like true believers, have a shew of religion, a form of godliness, an appearance of grace, but are destitute of it; and prove tares, unfruitful, unprofitable, and of no account, yea hurtful, and whose end is to be burned. *And went his way*; somewhere else, to do more mischief; and having done all he could at present here, undiscovered, not taken notice of by ministers and churches; they being all asleep, and having lost, in a great measure, the spirit of discerning. The word *ξζανα*, we render *tares*, and the Ethiopic version *thistles*, probably means the same the Jewish doctors call *זונין*, *Zunin*; and which, they say, is a sort of wheat, and not of a different kind from it; that when it is sown it looks like wheat, and is sown for it, but is changed in the earth, both as to its nature and form, and brings forth this kind. In the generation in which the flood was, they say, they sowed wheat, and the earth brought forth *זונין*, *ξζανα*, what we render *tares*, and bids fair to be what is here meant; and fitly expresses false professors, nominal Christians, men of degenerate principles and practices: for not what we call *tares*, or *vetches*, can be meant, which may be removed from the wheat without danger, but rather this degenerate wheat; or that wheat which is blasted, and which may be observed sometimes to grow upon the same root, and therefore can't be taken away, without rooting up the wheat also.

Ver. 26. *But when the blade was sprung up, &c.*] That is, the blade of the wheat; which designs the taking up a profession of religion on principles of grace, called a profession of faith; and when right, it springs up from, and proceeds upon a work begun in the heart: and such a profession ought to be made by all that are partakers of the grace of God; and ought to be made both verbally, by a confession of the mouth, and a declaration of the work of God upon the heart, and by deeds, by submitting to the ordinances of the Gospel; and should be sincere, and from the heart, and be visible to men, and be held fast unto the end, without wavering. *And brought forth fruit*; which intends not the conversion of sinners, nor the performance of duties, nor the perfection of grace, but the first appearances of grace under a profession; such as sorrow for sin, after a godly sort, fear and reverence of God, great humility, much self-denial, ardent love to Christ, pantings and breathings after him, and communion

with him, strong affection for the people of God, some exercise of faith on Christ, zeal for his cause and interest, and a concern to honour and glorify God. *Then appeared the tares also*. They were not discernible for some time when they were first sown; they looked like good seed when they first appeared among the people of God; they seemed to have the truth of grace, as others had; their blade of profession, when it sprung up, looked like that of true wheat; but were now discernible both by their unfruitfulness in their lives and conversations, and by their bad principles, which they now endeavoured to spread, to the hurt of the churches where they were: they always appeared to be what they were to God the searcher of hearts; but now, through the zeal of true converts, to which these opposed themselves, and the fruitfulness of their lives, from which they were so very different, they became manifest to ministers and churches.

Ver. 27. *So the servants of the householder came, &c.*] Christ is the *householder*; the house of which he is master is the church, called the household of God, the household of faith, the family in heaven, and in earth; in which house he bears and sustains many relations, as those of a son, a priest, a master, or governor. By the *servants* that came to him, are meant, not civil magistrates, who have nothing to do in the affairs of churches; nor the angels, though these are ministering servants to Christ, and will be employed by him, in the close of time, to gather up the tares, bind them in bundles, and cast them into the fire; but the ministers of the Gospel, the servants of Christ, and of the most high God, who are made use of in planting, and sowing, and weeding his field, the church: these observing the tares, and fearing the danger the wheat was in by them, as well as troubled and surprised at the appearance and growth of them, came to him, and spread the case before him in prayer; and said unto him, *Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?* Their manner of address, calling him *Sir*, or *Lord*, is expressive of their reverence of him, and obedience to him; and which is said, not in word only, but in the sincerity of their hearts, and under the influence of the spirit of God. They ascribe the field, the church, the good seed, converts that sprung up in it, and the sowing, or making of them such, all to Christ, and not any of this kind, or any part of it to themselves; though they were employed by him in tilling this field, in sowing spiritual things to the saints, and were useful to them in their profession of religion. Moreover, they intimate, that nothing but good could come from Christ; no bad seed, no tares could be of his sowing; and declare their ignorance of the rise of them; which ignorance was owing to their being asleep, when the enemy sowed them.

Ver. 28. *He said unto them, an enemy has done this, &c.*] This is the answer of the householder to the question of his servants. In the Greek text it is, *an enemy man*; and is so rendered in the several ver-

<sup>1</sup> Misn. Kilaim, c. 1. sect. 1. & Trumot, c. 2. sect. 6. & Maimon. in ib. T. Hieros. Kilaim, fol. 26. 4. Maimon. Hilch. Kilaim, c. 3. sect. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 28. fol. 23. 4.

sions ; meaning, not that the enemy was a man ; for he was the devil, as in ver. 39. but it is an Hebraism ; such as in Esth. vii. 6. *אִישׁ צַר וְרָמַיִב*, *the man adversary and enemy* is this wicked Haman ; and signifies a certain enemy, and one indeed that is an implacable enemy to man. *The servants said unto him, wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?* which words express the concern of the ministers of Christ for the true members of the church, comparable to wheat, lest they should receive any damage by the ill examples, and pernicious principles of evil men among them ; also their detestation and abhorrence of men of wicked lives and erroneous principles ; they can't bear them which are evil ; likewise, they shew great regard to the glory of God, and interest of religion, and their readiness to execute any orders Christ should give them ; but not willing to proceed of themselves, ask counsel and advice of him.

Ver. 29. *But he said, nay, &c.*] The answer is in the negative ; and which, if spoken to angels, is to be understood, that they should not inflict punishments, or pour out their vials, as yet, on formal professors, lest the righteous should share in them ; and if to magistrates, the sense of it is, that they should not persecute with the sword, or put men to death for heretical opinions ; but if to ministers of the word, which sense I choose, the meaning is, that not every one suspected to be a tare, or a nominal professor, is to be removed from the communion of the church, because there is often danger in so doing : *lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them* : not that men of openly scandalous lives are to be tolerated in churches ; they are to be withdrawn from, and put away ; nor men of known, avowed, heretical principles ; such, after the first and second admonition, are to be rejected : yet there may be such in churches, not altogether agreeable in principle and practice, whose character and situation may be such, that there is no removing them without offending some truly gracious, useful persons, in whose affections they stand, who may be tempted, by such a step, to leave their communion ; and so can't be done without a considerable prejudice to the church. The scope of the parable, and the design of our Lord in it, are chiefly to be attended to ; which are to shew, that a pure and perfect church can't be expected in the present state of things ; and that saints should not be immoderately uneasy, but patiently bear such exercises, until Christ's time is come to relieve them, when the tares and chaff shall be separated from the wheat ; when sinners shall not stand in the congregation of the righteous, and there shall be no more a pricking briar, nor a grieving thorn in the house of Israel.

Ver. 30. *Let both grow together until the harvest, &c.*] *By the harvest*, is meant *the end of the world*, ver. 39. either of the Jewish world, the dissolution of their church and state, which was near ; or of a man's life, which is the end of the world to him ; or rather of this present world, the system of the universe, of the material world, as to its present form and use, and of the inhabitants of it, and of time in it. Now the end of the world is compared to harvest, because the time of it is fixed and settled ;

though it is not known when it will be, yet it is as certain as the time of harvest ; and because as that is in the summer season, in hot weather, so this will be a time of wrath, when the day of the Lord will burn like an oven ; and as the harvest-time is a time of hurry and labour, so will it be in the end of the world, especially with the angels, who will be gathering the elect from the four winds, and all men, to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ ; and as at harvest the corn is cut down, the fields cleared, and all brought home, so it will be at the end of the world ; the sickle will be thrust in, and the earth reaped, the tares bound in bundles, and cast into the fire, and the wheat gathered into the garner ; and as the harvest, as it falls out to be good or bad, is matter of joy or sorrow, so will the end of the world be joy to saints, who will then enter into the joy of their Lord, and be for ever with him, and sorrow to the wicked, who will then go into everlasting punishment. 'Till this time, wheat and tares are to grow together. *The wheat*, or true believers, *grow* in the exercise of grace, as of faith, hope, love, humility, &c. and in spiritual knowledge of the will of God, of the doctrines of grace, and of Christ ; which growth is owing to the dews of divine grace, to the sun of righteousness shining upon them, to the gracious influences of the blessed spirit, and to the word and ordinances as means. *The tares*, or nominal professors, may *grow* in riches, in credit, and reputation among men, and in speculative knowledge ; and oftentimes so it is, that they grow worse and worse, both in doctrinal and practical wickedness : when they are ordered to *grow together*, the meaning is, not that their growth is equal, or of the same kind, nor in the same way, nor in the same things ; but this only notes the time and duration of their growth : nor is this suffered and permitted, because of any love God has unto them, or any delight in, or approbation of them ; but either because they are not fully ripe for ruin ; or for the exercise of the saints, and for their temporal and spiritual good ; for it is entirely a tender regard to the wheat, and not to the tares, that they are ordered to grow together. *And in the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, the angels, ver. 39. gather ye together first the tares* ; that is, formal professors, hypocrites, and heretics ; whom he will have removed out of his kingdom, his church, his field, in the world : and this order shews, that the angels will have a perfect and exact knowledge of these persons ; and that their work will be to separate them from the righteous ; when the churches will be pure, and without spot, or wrinkle : and this will be done first ; that is, these wicked men will be first removed out of the church, before their more severe punishment takes place : *and bind them in bundles to burn them* : which denotes the power of angels over these persons, the certainty and inevitableness of their ruin, their association together, and their destruction in company with one another ; which will be an aggravation of their misery, which is expressed by *burning* with fire ; not material, but metaphorical ; the wrath of God, which will be a consuming fire, and be everlasting and unquenchable. *But gather the wheat into my barn* ; meaning the kingdom of heaven,

which is as a garner or repository, in which none but wheat is put, and where it is safe, and lies together: so none but righteous, pure, and undefiled persons, are admitted into heaven; and being there, they are safe, and out of the reach of all enemies; and what adds to their happiness is, that they are together, enjoying all satiety and fulness; and are in Christ's barn, or garner, which he has made, and prepared for their reception. The gathering of them into it designs the introduction of the saints into heaven by angels, as their souls at death, and both souls and bodies, at the last day, when their happiness will be perfect and complete.

Ver. 31. *Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, &c.*] As the former parable sets forth the condition of the Gospel church-state until the end of the world; this expresses the small beginnings of it, and the large increase and growth of it, and its great usefulness to the saints. *The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: by the kingdom of heaven is meant, as before, the Gospel dispensation, or the Gospel church-state, and the ministry of the word, and the administration of ordinances in it: by the grain of mustard-seed, either the Gospel, or the people of God, or the grace of God in them; and by the man that took and sowed it, the Lord Jesus Christ; and by his field, in which he sowed it, the world, or his church throughout the world.*

Ver. 32. *Which indeed is the least of all seeds, &c.*] So mustard with the Jews<sup>1</sup>, is called *בין זרעם*, a kind of seeds; and being very small, hence *בחרדל*, as a grain of mustard, is often used, proverbially<sup>2</sup>, for the least thing, as it is by Christ, Matt. xvii. 20. Luke xvii. 6. Not but there are seeds lesser than this; but the meaning is, that this is one of the least of all seeds; or was the least of seeds, which were commonly known in Judea; or the very least which grew to the bigness this sometimes did, and as here related. Now this is designed to express the small beginnings of the Gospel dispensation, of the ministry of the word, of the grace of God in the hearts of his people, and of the small number of them at first. The Gospel, and the ministry of it were like a grain of mustard-seed, little, mean, and contemptible; the author of it, Christ, was so to the Jews, in his birth, parentage, education, and outward appearance; the subject of it a crucified Christ, and salvation by him; and the doctrines out of the reach, and contrary to carnal reason; the preachers of it, were persons of very mean and low life, few in number, weak, illiterate, and despicable, and the whole world against them; the circumstances which attended the Gospel were very discouraging; it was charged with novelty, represented as contrary to common sense, and the reason of mankind, and as opening a door to licentiousness; and was followed with violent opposition and persecution, wherever it went. The grace of God, which under the ministry of the word is implanted in the hearts of the Lord's people, is at first very small, like a grain of mustard-seed; it is a day

small things; faith in Christ is very weak and low, spiritual strength small, comfort little, experience of the love of God not large, light and knowledge in the doctrines of grace but very obscure and glimmering; the church of God, which sprung up under the ministry of the word, and through the work of grace, upon the hearts of particular persons, was like the small grain of mustard-seed; the persons of which it consisted were but few in number in Christ's time, and at his ascension into heaven, and when the Gospel was first preached among the Gentiles; and those persons which laid the foundation, and were at the beginning of the Gospel church-state, made a very contemptible figure, by reason of their outward poverty, and mean circumstances in the world; and on account of the severe persecutions which every where attended them; and also through the errors and heresies introduced by evil men, that crept in among them. *But when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree.* Luke says, *a great tree*, ch. xiii. 19. for to such a bigness did the mustard-tree grow in the land of Judea, of which take the following instances<sup>3</sup>. "At Shichin there was a mustard-stalk, which had three branches, and one of them was cut down, and they covered a potter's booth with it; and found in it *שלוש קבין של חרדל*, three kabs of mustard-seed" (elsewhere<sup>4</sup> it is said, nine kabs). Says R. Simeon "ben Chelphetha, I have one stalk of mustard seed in my field, and I go up to it, *בעולה בראש התאנה*, as one goes up to the top of a fig-tree." And though the mustard-tree grew to this height and bigness, it was reckoned among herbs, as here by Christ; for they say<sup>2</sup>, "they don't put mustard in a field of fruits, but in a field of herbs." All which serve to illustrate and confirm the account here given by Christ, and alluded to; and which expresses the very large growth and increase of the Gospel, and the ministry of it; of the grace of God in the heart, and of the church of Christ, and his interest in the world: of the Gospel, and the ministry of it, as to its large spread in the world; which at first was confined to the Jews, but was afterwards published to the Gentiles, and carried through the whole world; and, in ages since, has made a considerable progress, particularly at the Reformation; and will make a much greater one, towards the end of time: and of the grace of God in the heart, which gradually increases to a full assurance of understanding of hope, and of faith, and to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: and of the church of Christ, and his interest in the world; both as to the large numbers it did consist of in the times of the apostles, and since, and will more especially hereafter; for the church will fill the earth, and the kingdoms of the world will become the church, and all nations of the earth will flock unto it; the people of the Jews in general will be converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles will be brought in: as also with respect to the figure it will make through the great personages, the kings and princes of the earth, that will be in it; the great power and authority the saints will then have;

<sup>1</sup> Misn. Kilaim, c. 2. sect. 2.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 31. 1. Megilla, fol. 98. 2. Nidda, fol. 66. 1.

<sup>3</sup> T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 20. 2.

<sup>4</sup> T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 111. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Misn. Kilaim, c. 2. sect. 2.

the peace and prosperity that will be enjoyed by them; the spirituality, holiness, righteousness, love, and unity, there will be among them; as also the presence of God and of the Lamb, they will be favoured with; all which glory and happiness will be brought about by a plentiful effusion of the spirit, and by the glorious appearance of Christ. *So that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof: by the birds of the air, some think angels are meant, compared to birds for their harmlessness and innocence; for their readiness and swiftness to do the will of God; and for their warbling notes and tuneful songs of praise; and who may be called birds of the air, or heaven, because of their habitation: now these delight to be in the church, to be under the shadow of the Gospel ministry, and to look into the mysteries of it. Though rather, the saints and people of God are intended, who, in Scripture, are sometimes compared to particular birds; as to the eagle, the dove, and sparrow; and to birds in general, because timorous, weak, and defenceless, are exposed to danger, and wonderfully delivered, and are very subject to wander and go astray; and because of their chirpings, and singing songs of praise to their God and Redeemer; and to birds of the air or heaven, because they are heaven-born souls, are partakers of the heavenly calling, and are pressing for, and soaring aloft towards the high calling of God in Christ: now the Gospel ministry, and the Gospel church-state, are very useful to these; they come thereunto willingly, and cheerfully, deliberately, and with dependence on the grace and strength of Christ; humbly, under a sense of their own unworthiness, and yet with joy and thankfulness; heartily, and with their faces thitherwards, and they also lodge therein. This is what they desire, and their hearts are set upon; here they determine to be, and it is their happiness to be here; the shadow of Gospel ordinances is very delightful, very refreshing, and very fruitful to them, and under which saints dwell with great safety; and what a coming of these birds will there be hither, and a tabernacling of them herein, at the latter day! which are greatly designed in this part of the parable.*

Ver. 33. *Another parable spake he unto them, &c.]* To the disciples and the multitude, and which was of the same kind, to the same purpose, and relating to the same subject as the former; the spread of the Gospel, and the increase of it in the world. *The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven.* The word *leaven* is every where else used in a bad sense; and either designs immorality, as malice and wickedness, or false doctrine, such as that of the Pharisees and Sadducees: but here it seems to be taken in a good sense, and the Gospel to be compared unto it; nor for its disagreeable qualities, but on account of its small quantity; 'tis a little leaven that leavens the whole lump, and may express, as the grain of mustard-seed does, the small beginnings of the Gospel, and its meanness in the eyes of men; and on account of its piercing, penetrating, and spreading nature: so the Gospel reaches the conscience, pierces the heart, enlightens the understanding, informs the judgment, raises and sets the affec-

tions on right objects, subdues the will, and brings down all towering thoughts, to the obedience of Christ, in particular persons; and has penetrated and made its way, under divine influence, through towns, cities, kingdoms, and nations: also on account of its heating, swelling, and assimilating nature; so the Gospel, where it takes place, warms the affections, causes the heart to burn within, inspires with zeal for God, and Christ, and the Gospel; it swells and fills churches with such as shall be saved, and assimilates the several persons it operates in, makes them like one another, one bread, one body, having like precious faith, knowledge, and experience, though in a different degree. *Which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal.* By the *three measures of meal*, are meant the elect of God; who, because of their nature and quality, are compared to *meal*, or fine flour; and that because of that of which it is made, wheat, to a corn of which Christ is compared, John xii. 24. and by whose grace the saints are what they are, justified, regenerated, and sanctified; and on account of the manner it becomes so, as by grinding the wheat, sifting it when ground, and separating it from the bran; all which may express the first convictions in the conscience of awakened sinners, the grace of God in conversion, and the separation of them from the rest of the world, in effectual vocation; as also by reason of its choiceness, purity, and goodness, the saints being chosen of God and precious, and being pure and spotless, through the grace and righteousness of Christ, and being highly valued, and had in great esteem by him; and because of their quantity, are compared to *three measures of meal*. The measure here designed, is the Hebrew seah, which held a gallon and an half, and three of these made an ephah; and which is often rendered by the <sup>a</sup>Targumists, תלת סאה, *three seahs*, or *measures*, the very phrase here used; and the reason why *three* are particularly mentioned is, because such a quantity used to be fermented and kneaded by women at one time; see Gen. xviii. 6. and for the further illustration of this, take the following passage out of the Talmud<sup>b</sup>, "The wise men say, that three women may be employed in one lump of dough; one may knead it, another may make it into loaves, and another may bake it—and it is a tradition, ברושין שלשת, קבין, *that in wheat they use three kabs, or measures, and in barley four kabs.*" These measures, <sup>as</sup> here used parabolically, may design the small number of God's elect; and, as some have thought, may have respect to the three then known parts of the world, where they were, or should be: by the *woman* that took and hid the leaven in these measures, is meant, either the church, sometimes compared to a woman in Scripture, Rev. xii. 1. or the ministers of the Gospel, wisdom's maidens; or rather, Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God; see Prov. ix. 1, 2, 3. and the reason why a woman is mentioned is, because it was, with the Jews, the work of women to ferment the flour, knead the dough, and make the bread: and this action of taking and covering the leaven in the meal, may denote the power of Christ, in opening the heart, and

<sup>a</sup> Targum Onkelos & Jarchi, in Exod. xvi. 36. & Targum Jon. in Ruth ii. 17.

<sup>b</sup> T. Hieros. Pesachim, fol. 30. 2.

putting in the Gospel, which unless he takes in hand, and uses, is ineffectual; as also the passiveness of men, under the first workings of the spirit of Christ upon their souls, by the Gospel; and likewise, the secret and invisible power of divine grace, operating by the ministry of the word, upon the heart. *'Till the whole was leavened*: to be leavened by the Gospel, is to be evangelized by it, to be brought into the life and liberty of it, to a Gospel way of living by faith on Christ; to derive all peace, joy, and comfort from him, and not from any works of righteousness; and to have a man's obedience influenced by the love of God, so as to do it cheerfully, and without dependence on it. Now the Gospel, where it has entrance and takes place, powerfully and effectually, continues to operate more or less, as the leaven in the meal, until the whole man, soul and body, all the faculties of the soul, and members of the body, are influenced by it; and will continue with power and efficacy in the world, and church, until all the elect of God are wrought upon by it, and are brought in. There is a late ingenious interpretation<sup>c</sup> of this parable, which, since the word *leaven* is elsewhere always used in a bad sense, deserves consideration; according to which, this parable expresses not the spread of truth, but of error; by the *woman* is thought to be meant, the Apocalyptic woman, the woman spoken of in the Revelations, the whore of Rome, the mother of harlots; and the *leaven* which she took, the leaven of false doctrine and discipline; by her *hiding it*, the private, secret, artful methods, false doctrines, and bad discipline were introduced, and the gradual progress thereof; and by the *three measures of meal*, the bishops and doctors of the church, among whom this leaven was spread, and who were fermented with it; particularly those three bishops of Rome at first, Sosymus, John the faster, and Boniface the third; which by degrees spread itself, until the whole Christian world was affected with it; and for a long time lay hid and undiscovered, till the Lord raised up Wicief, John Huss, Jerom of Prague, Luther, and other reformers. The reader may choose which interpretation he likes best.

Ver. 34. *All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude, &c.*] In the hearing of his disciples, whilst in the ship, the multitude being on the shore, *in parables*; in the four foregoing ones; and *without a parable spake he not unto them*: not that he never had preached but in a parabolical way unto them, or that he never did afterwards use any other way of speaking; for it is certain, that both before and after, he delivered himself plainly, and without figures: but the meaning is, that in that sermon, and at that time, he thought fit to make use of no other method, as appears from the many other parables he afterwards delivered; and though he explained the meaning of some of them to his disciples, at their request, yet he dismissed the multitude without any explication of them.

Ver. 35. *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, &c.*] Not Isaiah, as some copies in the times of Jerom read, but Asaph, who is called Asaph the seer, 2 Chron. xxix. 30. which is all one as

a prophet; vision is one sort of prophecy<sup>d</sup>; and there was such a thing as prophesying with harps, psalteries and cymbals, as well as in other ways, and with which Asaph and his sons are said to prophesy, 1 Chron. xxv. 1, 2, 3. so that he is very rightly called a prophet by the evangelist, who is cited, as *saying*, Psal. lxxviii. 2. *I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world*: which Psalm, though a history of the dealings of God with the people of Israel, and of the many deliverances wrought for them, yet as the Jewish writers observe, contain many things in it, expressed in a parabolical and enigmatical way; such as God's furnishing a table in the wilderness, kindling a fire against Jacob, opening the doors of heaven, giving the corn of heaven, and angels' food, and delivering his strength into captivity; and besides, the very historical facts recorded of the people of Israel, were types of things future under the Gospel dispensation: now as Asaph, by divine inspiration, delivered these parables and dark sayings, so Christ expressed the Gospel, and the mysteries of it, in a parabolical way, which were hid in God, and under the shadows of the law; and so were kept secret from the beginning of the world, and from the multitude, though now made known to the apostles, and by them to others, according to the will of God.

Ver. 36. *Then Jesus sent the multitude away, &c.*] That his disciples might have the opportunity of conversing with him alone, about the sense of the parables he had delivered; and that he might instruct them by some others hereafter mentioned. *And went into the house*: left the ship in which he had been preaching to the multitude, came on shore, and returned to the house he came out of, ver. 1. *and his disciples came to him*; and being alone, make a humble request to him, *saying, declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field*: by which they mean, not a rehearsal of it, but an explication of the sense and meaning of it: they ask nothing about the parables of the mustard-seed and leaven, either because they better understood them; or because there were some things very remarkable and striking in this, which made them very desirous to be particularly informed of the several parts of it, and their meaning.

Ver. 37. *He answered and said unto them, &c.*] Being very ready to answer their request, and willing to communicate spiritual knowledge to them; thereby shewing great condescension, and humility in himself, and great affection to them: *he that soweth the good seed, is the son of man*; he that is signified by the man that sowed good seed in his field, is the son of man; by whom he means himself, the seed of the woman; and the son of David; who being anointed with the Holy Ghost without measure, went about Judea and Galilee, preaching the everlasting Gospel, to the conversion of sinners, thereby making them good seed; though this may be understood of him, as including his apostles and ministers, whom he makes use of as instruments for the good of souls, by preaching the Gospel.

Ver. 38. *The field is the world, &c.*] That which is

<sup>c</sup> Vid. Teelman. Specimen Explic. Parabolarum, p. 64, 65, 66, 67, 68  
<sup>d</sup> R. David Kimchi, Shorash. rad. 7117.

<sup>e</sup> Aben Ezra & Kimchi in loc.

represented by *the field*, in which the good seed is sown, is not only the land of Judea, where Christ preached in person, but the whole world, into which the apostles were afterwards sent; or the church of Christ, in the several parts of the world: *the good seed are the children of the kingdom*; they which are designed by *the good seed*, are such, for whom the kingdom of heaven is prepared, to whom it is bequeathed, and who are appointed to it; who are possessed of the kingdom of grace here, and are heirs of the kingdom of glory; and have both a meetness for it, and a right unto it, being the children of God by adoption, and that appearing by regeneration: *but the tares are the children of the wicked one*: the persons intended by *the tares*, are such professors of religion, as both by their principles and practices, manifestly shew that they are of their father the devil; they resemble and imitate him, and do his works; and plainly declare, that they were never born of God, and are in no better state, though under a profession, than openly profane and immoral persons; and are more hurtful and scandalous to the interest of Christ, than such are.

Ver. 39. *The enemy that sowed them is the devil, &c.*] He that is designed by *the enemy*, who sowed the tares in the field among the wheat, is no other than *the devil*; the enemy of Christ, of mankind in general, of God's elect in particular, and the accuser of the brethren; and his getting of hypocrites and heretics into churches, is no small proof of his implacable enmity to Christ and his interest; and shews what an adversary he is to the peace, comfort, and fruitfulness of the churches of Christ. *The harvest is the end of the world*; that which is meant by *the harvest*, until which time wheat and tares, good and bad men, under a profession of religion, are to be together, is *the end of the world*; meaning either the day of wrath and vengeance upon the Jewish nation; when those that truly believed in Christ were separated from the rest, and that hypocritical generation of men were utterly destroyed; or else the day of judgment, the great and last day, when the heavens and the earth, and all that is therein, shall be burnt up; when the righteous will enter into life, and the wicked go into everlasting punishment: *and the reapers are the angels*; the persons signified by *the reapers*, who shall put in the sickle, cut down the tares, bind them in bundles, and cast them into the fire, and who shall gather the wheat into the barn; that is, who shall be the executors of God's wrath, upon wicked professors of religion, and who shall be the means of introducing the saints into the heavenly kingdom, are *the angels*; the holy and elect angels, who are the ministers of Christ, and ministering servants to them, who are the heirs of salvation; and are opposite to all secret and open enemies of Christ, and his people; and will be employed in the end of time, against the wicked, and for the righteous.

Ver. 40. *As therefore the tares are gathered, &c.*] As it is represented in the parable, that in the time of harvest, the tares shall be gathered out from the wheat first; and being bound in bundles, shall be burnt in the fire, prepared for that purpose, so shall it be in the end of this world; hypocritical and heretical men, and

all formal professors, shall be gathered out from among the saints, and the several churches, among whom they have been; and shall be together cast into everlasting burnings, prepared for the devil and his angels, whose children they are.

Ver. 41. *The son of man shall send forth his angels, &c.*] Meaning himself, whose ministers the angels are; who wait upon him, and are at his beck and command; even the thousand thousands that minister unto him; these will be sent forth by his orders, into the several parts of the world, where he has any churches, or an interest; and they shall gather out of his kingdom; the Gospel church, over which Christ is king, where he rules and governs in the hearts of his people; and who are cheerfully and willingly obedient to his laws, under the influence of his spirit and grace: but all who are in the visible Gospel church-state, are not such; some are wicked and rebellious, and though they are suffered to continue, yet not always; for if not removed by censures and excommunications, they will be at last by angels; who will separate them from the saints: *even all things that offend*; who are scandals to Christ, his church, and Gospel, by their wicked principles, or infamous practices; and who give offence, not only to God, and his righteous law, but lay stumbling-blocks in the way of the children of God, and are the authors of divisions and offences among them: *and them that do iniquity*; that do nothing else but iniquity; and who, though they profess to be religious persons, are secretly, or openly, workers of iniquity; and are even doing iniquity, in and whilst they are professing religion.

Ver. 42. *And shall cast them into a furnace of fire, &c.*] Not a material, but a metaphorical one; denoting the wrath of God, which shall fall upon wicked men, and abide upon them to all eternity: which is sometimes called hell-fire, sometimes a lake which burns with fire and brimstone; and here a furnace of fire, expressing the vehemency and intensesness of divine wrath, which will be intolerable; in allusion either to Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, or as some think, to the custom of burning persons alive in some countries; or rather, to the burning of chaff and stubble, and the stalks of any unprofitable things that grew in the field, for the heating of furnaces, and is the very language of the Jews, who used to compare hell to a furnace; so Gen. xv. 17. is paraphrased by them. "And behold the sun set, and there was darkness; and lo! Abraham saw until the seats were set, and the thrones cast down; and lo! hell, which is prepared for the wicked in the world to come, כַּתְּנוּרָה, *as a furnace*, which sparks and flames of fire surrounded; דְּבַרְתָּה, *in the midst of which*, the wicked fell, because they rebelled against the law, in their life-time." Which is expressed in much the same language, and conveys the same ideas as here; and no wonder is it that it follows, *there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth*; declaring the remorse of conscience, the tortures of mind, the sense of inexpressible pain, and punishment, the wicked shall feel; also their furious rage and black despair.

Ver. 43. *Then shall the righteous shine forth as the*

† Mism. Sabbat. c. 3. sect. 1. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

‡ Hieros. Targum in Gen. xv. 17.



sun, &c.] The time referred to is, when the tares shall be separated from the wheat: when they that offend and do iniquity, shall be gathered out of Christ's kingdom; when the wicked shall be cast into hell: then the *righteous*, not who are so merely in their own apprehensions, and in the judgment of others; nor by their obedience, legal or evangelical; but who are made so, by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them: these, though they have been in this world loaded with reproaches, and attended with many afflictions and persecutions; and have been despised for their poverty and meanness, and want of outward glory, honour, riches, and prosperity; shall now *shine forth* in the robe of Christ's righteousness, in perfect holiness of nature, in all felicity and prosperity of soul; and in the shining dazzling robes of glory, incorruption, and immortality, on their bodies; even as *the sun*, having no spot in them, or upon them, and without any clouds of darkness: they will be as Christ himself, the sun of righteousness, with whom, and in whose glory they shall appear, both in soul and body, *in the kingdom of their father*; meaning either the same with the kingdom of Christ, the father's and his, being one and the same; or as distinct from Christ's, see ver. 41. the church, and the government of it in this world, in all ages of time, and especially in the latter day, and during the thousand years, Christ and his saints shall reign together, may be peculiarly called the kingdom of Christ; when it will be delivered to the father, and God shall be all in all: so that the ultimate glory may, though not to the exclusion of the son, be styled the kingdom of the father; of God, who is the father of Christ and of his people; and which is observed, to assure the saints of their interest in it, right unto it, and certain enjoyment of it. Some copies read, *the kingdom of heaven*. Much the same images, here made use of, to set forth the glory of the saints, both in soul and body, in the world to come, are expressed by the Jews. "The faces of the *righteous*, they say, <sup>h</sup> in time to come, shall be דְּרוֹמָת לְחֹמָה, *like to the sun*, and moon, to the stars and planets, and lightnings, and lilies, and to the lamp of the sanctuary." And elsewhere<sup>1</sup> they observe, that "God, in time to come, will beautify the body of the *righteous*, as the beauty of the first man, when he entered into paradise, according to Isa. l. viii. 11. and that the soul, whilst in its dignity, shall be sustained with the superior light, and be clothed with it; and when it shall enter into the body hereafter, it shall enter with that light; and then shall the body *shine*, כְּבוֹד וְדִרְקָע, *as the brightness of the firmament*: as is said in Dan. xii. 3." And a little after<sup>2</sup> 'tis said, that when "the soul goes out, the body is left, which shall be there built again, בְּנוּרָא דְשֶׁמֶשׁ, *as the light of the sun*, and as the brightness of the firmament." *Who hath ears to hear, let him hear*; and seriously consider of the several things said in this parable, concerning the wheat and tares, the righteous and the wicked, as being matters of the greatest moment and importance.

Ver. 44. *Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure, &c.*] By which is meant, not eternal life, the incorruptible inheritance, riches of glory, treasure in heaven; nor Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and all the riches of grace and glory; but the Gospel, which is a treasure consisting of rich truths, comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; of the most valuable blessings, and of exceeding great, and precious promises; and reveals the riches of God, of Christ, and of the other world; and is a treasure unsearchable, solid, satisfying, and lasting: this is said to be *hid in a field*. The Gospel was in some measure hid, under the former dispensation, from the Old Testament saints; and for a long time was hid from the Gentile world; and is entirely hid from them that are lost, who are blinded by the god of this world; and even from the elect of God themselves, before conversion: this is sometimes said to be hid in God, in his thoughts; counsels, and purposes, and in the covenant of his grace; and sometimes in Christ; who is the store-house of truth, as well as of grace; and may be thought to be hid under the Mosaic economy, in the types and shadows of the ceremonial law: but here *the field* means the Scriptures, in which the Gospel lies hid; and therefore these are to be searched into for it, as men seek and search for silver and hid treasures, by digging into mines, and in the bowels of the earth: *the which when a man hath found*: either with or without the use of means, purposely attended to, in order to find it; such as reading, hearing, prayer, and meditation: for sometimes the Gospel, and the spiritual saving knowledge of it, are found, and attained to, by persons accidentally, with respect to themselves, though provisionally, with respect to God; when they had no desire after it, or searched for it, and thought nothing about it; though by others it is come at, in a diligent use of the above means: *he hideth*; which is to be understood not in an ill sense, as the man hid his talent in a napkin, and in the earth; but in a good sense, and designs his care of it; his laying it up in his heart, that he might not lose it, and that it might not be taken away from him: and *for joy thereof*; for the Gospel, when rightly understood, brings good tidings of great joy, to sensible sinners; *goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth the field*: which is not to be interpreted literally and properly; though a man that knows the worth and value of the Bible, rather than be without one, would part with all his worldly substance for one; but figuratively, and denotes the willingness of such souls, who are led into the glory, fullness, and excellency of the word of God, the scriptures of truth, and of the immense treasure of the Gospel therein, to part with all that has been, or is dear unto them; with their sins, and self-righteousness; with their good names and characters; their worldly substance, and life itself, for the sake of the Gospel, and their profession of it: and may also design the use of all means, to gain a larger degree of light and knowledge in the Gospel. It seems by this parable, according to the Jewish laws, that not the

<sup>h</sup> Vajlers Rabba, fol. 170. 1. Siphre apud. Ceseph. Misna in Taimon. Hilch. Teshuva, c. 9.

<sup>1</sup> Midrash hannaalam apud Zohar in Gen. fol. 69. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. fol. 70. 1. Vid. Midrash Tillim. in Psal. xi. apud Galatin. ed. Arcan. Cathol. ver. l. 19. c. 6. p. 712.

finder of a treasure in a field, but the owner of the field, had the propriety in it; when it should seem rather, that it ought to be divided. Such that have ability and leisure, may consult a controversy in Philostratus<sup>1</sup>, between two persons, the buyer and seller of a field; in which, after the purchase, a treasure was found, when the seller claimed it as his; urging, that had he known of it, he would never have sold him the field: the buyer, on the other hand, insisted on its being his property; alleging that all was his which was contained in the land bought by him.

Ver. 45; 46. *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, &c.*] This parable may be understood of Christ's seeking, finding, and purchasing his elect: for, certain it is, that he has sought after them; which implies, that they were lost and going astray; expresses his great love to them, value for them, and desire after them; in doing which, he took much pains, and used much diligence: and certain it also is, that he finds them in redemption, and in effectual vocation; and that they are to him a pearl of great price; as very precious to God, so highly esteemed of by Christ, as his portion, his inheritance, and his jewels. He has also parted with all he had for the sake of these persons; he became poor, emptied himself of every thing, even gave himself a ransom for them, and so made a purchase of them, with the price of his own blood: though to this sense it may be objected, that it does not seem so agreeable, that Christ should be compared to a merchant man, which better suits with those that deal with him, than as he is concerned with them; nor does he seek after any other than his elect: whereas this merchant man is said to be *seeking goodly pearls*; any pearls that were so: nor is Christ's finding his elect a chance business; nor have they any intrinsic excellency in them, to denominate them pearls, but by his grace. The more common interpretation of it is, that it designs a sensible sinner, seeking after the true way of salvation, and finding Christ, and parting with all for him: such a man is a spiritual merchant, who trades in foreign parts, and in things of worth and value; and such an one seeks after a variety of things, which at first sight seem *goodly*, in order to obtain salvation by; as civility, morality, a legal righteousness, fasting, watchings, prayer, a profession of religion, and a submission to external ordinances; but at length finds Christ, *the pearl of great price*: who is of an unspeakable brightness and glory, of intrinsic worth and value; who is enriching to those that possess him, and precious to them that believe; and of such a price, that no valuable consideration can be given for him: wherefore such a soul is willing to part with all for him; with sinful self, and righteous self; and with the honours, riches, and profits of this world; and buy him, his grace and righteousness, without money, and without price. Though I rather think, that in connexion and agreement with the other parables, this is to be understood of such, who are seeking after knowledge in every branch of it, natural, moral, and spiritual; and so may be compared to a *merchant man, seeking goodly pearls*; and who find the Gospel, and prefer it to every thing else.

*Who when he had found one pearl of great price*: for such who seek after wisdom and knowledge in the use of proper means, are like merchant men, that trade abroad, and for things of value; and these, under divine direction, find in the Scriptures, and through the ministry of the word, and by prayer and study, the truths of the everlasting Gospel, respecting Christ, his person, office, grace and righteousness; which are equal to, yea transcend a pearl of the highest price; for their original, coming from a far country, from heaven; for their brightness, clearness, and perspicuity; for their ornament and glory; for their firmness and solidity; for their virtue and value, to them that know the worth of them; and such will buy, but not sell them; reckon all things but loss and dung, in comparison of them; and will contend for them, and stand fast in them.

Ver. 47. *Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, &c.*] By which also is meant, the Gospel, and the ministry of it. This may be compared to a net, for its meanness in the esteem of men; being despicable, and of no account in the eyes of the world: and yet like a net, a piece of curious artifice and workmanship, being the produce of the grace of God; in which his manifold wisdom is displayed, and is what angels desire to look into: it is designed, and purposely contrived, for the gathering in of sinners to Christ, and to his churches, though by accident, it has other uses; such as troubling of the world, as the net does the waters of the sea, and drawing out the corruptions of the men of it, as that does weeds, stones, &c. and which, like a net, can do nothing of itself, unless cast; and not then neither, unless succeeded with a divine blessing: *that was cast into the sea*; by *the sea* is meant the world, so called, for the storms and tempests of afflictions, and persecutions the saints meet with, and for the continual troubles that are in it; for the restlessness and instability of all things therein; for the dangers of it; and for its being the proper place and element of fishes, as the world is to the men of it. The casting of it into the sea, designs the opening of the Gospel, and the unfolding the mysteries of it, and the preaching it in all the world; and supposes persons qualified for it; such were the patriarchs and prophets under the Old Testament; and particularly Christ, John the Baptist, and the Apostles of Christ, and succeeding ministers under the New Testament; and requires art, skill, and wisdom, might and strength, industry, diligence, and patience; and which is done at a venture, whether there are fish or no; and sometimes succeeds, and sometimes not: *and gathered of every kind*: the Persic version adds, *of animals*; but much more agreeably Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and the Vulgate Latin, add, *of fishes*; and so some copies read. The preaching of the Gospel, is the means of gathering souls to Christ, and into his churches; and those that are gathered into a visible Gospel church-state, are of every kind, of all nations in the world, Jews and Gentiles: of all ranks and degrees of men, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free; of all sorts of sinners, and of men good and bad; some who have the truth of grace in them, and others that are

<sup>1</sup> De Vita Apollonii, lib. 9. c. 15.

only hypocrites; profess in words, and deny in works; have nothing more than a form of godliness, and a name to live, and are dead.

Ver. 48. *Which when it was full, &c.*] As the Gospel, and the Gospel church-state may be said to be, when all the ends of the preaching of the word are answered; when all are called by the one, and into the other, that were designed to be called; when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in, and all Israel shall be saved. *They drew to the shore;* which will be done, when the end of the world comes; then will an end be put to the Gospel ministry, the net will be drawn to shore; the preaching of the Gospel will cease, and no more use be made of it: *and sat down;* the ministers of the word having done their work, enter into the joy of their Lord, and rest from their labours: *and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away;* as fishermen used to do; though this last office seems, by the application of the parable, to be what will be performed by angels; who, as many as they find to have a good work of grace wrought and finished in their souls, they will gather into Christ's barn, into the everlasting habitations, the mansions in Christ's father's house, he is gone to prepare: but as for the bad, who shall appear to be destitute of the grace of God, and righteousness of Christ, notwithstanding their profession of religion, they shall be rejected, as good for nothing, and shall be cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.

Ver. 49. *So shall it be at the end of the world, &c.*] As the fisherman, when he has drawn his net to shore, picks out the good fish, and puts them into proper vessels, and casts the dead, putrid, and useless fish away; so, at the close of time, in the last day, *the angels shall come forth* out of heaven, from the presence of God and Christ, and by his orders, as the judge of all the earth, *and sever the wicked from the just;* with whom they have had not only civil conversation, but have been joined in a Gospel church-state; but now these ungodly shall not stand in judgment with them; nor these sinners, these hypocrites, in the congregation of the righteous: the one will be set at Christ's right hand, the other at his left; the one will go into life eternal, and the other into everlasting punishment; and their separation from one another will be for ever.

Ver. 50. *And shall cast them into the furnace of fire, &c.*] See the note on ver. 42.

Ver. 51. *Jesus saith unto them, &c.*] This is left out in the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and in some Greek exemplars; though it is necessary to the connexion and sense of the words: *have ye understood all these things?* All the parables Christ had delivered, besides those he had given a particular explanation of; as of the mustard-seed; and leaven, of the treasure hid in the field, the pearl of great price, and the net cast into the sea: Christ's putting this question to the disciples, shews that the things delivered, had some difficulty in them; that they were of moment and importance to be understood; and how concerned he was, that they should understand them; and how ready he was to communicate the knowledge of them, which he knew would be useful to them in their after-ministrations: *they say*

*unto him, yea, Lord.* This answer, which was truly and faithfully made, is a proof of their close and strict attention to the words of Christ; the quickness of their understandings, at that time, being in a very special manner opened and illuminated by Christ; and which he knew, when he put the question to them; but was willing to have it owned and expressed by themselves, that he might have the opportunity of saying what follows.

Ver. 52. *Then said he unto them, &c.*] Since the disciples had such a clear understanding of the above parables, and were by them, and by other things, so well furnished to preach the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven to others, Christ stirs them up by the following parable, to a diligent exercise of their gifts, and to a large, free, and cheerful communication of their knowledge to others. *Therefore every Scribe;* meaning not legal ones, Scribes in the law of Moses, a sort of letter-men, often mentioned by the evangelists, and the same with the lawyers, who were conversant with the letter of the law, and only understood that; as for the kingdom of heaven, they were so far from being instructed unto it, that they shut it up, and would neither go in themselves, nor suffer others; but evangelical Scribes are here meant, see Matt. xxiii. 34. the preachers of the everlasting Gospel, now every one of these, *which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven,* as each of them be more or less; that is, understands the nature of the Gospel church-state, the discipline, laws, and rules of Christ's house, the doctrines of the Gospel, the way and things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven; as Christ and his righteousness, and the regenerating and sanctifying grace of the spirit: such an one, *is like unto a man that is an householder;* that has an household or family under his care, as the ministers of the Gospel have, and which is the church of God; called the household of God, the household of faith, a spiritual house, and a family; consisting of fathers, young men, and children; of which indeed Christ is properly the householder and master, but Gospel ministers are deputies and stewards under him, and under him preside over the household, and have the government of it, provide food for it, and protect and defend it; all which require large gifts and abilities, great love and affection, both to Christ and his people; much wisdom, prudence, and knowledge; and great faithfulness and integrity, courage and firmness of mind. *Which bringeth forth out of his treasure, things new and old:* by his treasure is meant, either Christ; who is the great treasury and storehouse of grace and truth; from whence his ministers receive all their gifts, grace, light, and knowledge; or the word of God, the Scriptures of truth, by which the men of God are thoroughly furnished for every good work; or the treasure of the Gospel, which is put into their earthen vessels, into their own hearts, and that stock of Gospel knowledge and experience they are blessed with; a large competency of which is necessary to these householders; since they are to give out, not niggardly, but largely, and plentifully, and in great variety. The Syriac version reads it, *מִן סִמְתָּהוּ*, *out of his treasures,* and so may include them all. *Things new and old:* not the new Gospel and the old law, for the law is not old, nor the Gospel new; the Gospel is much older than the

law, being hid of God, and ordained before the world was, to our glory; and was even promulgated, long before the law was on Mount Sinai: nor things out of the Old and New Testament, for the New Testament was not yet in being; though 'tis right, and is the business of Gospel preachers, to bring forth such truths and doctrines, as are contained in both: rather truths that are old in themselves, but newly discovered to them, may be intended, and every new acquisition of knowledge and experience, added to the former stock and fund: the phrase seems to denote the plenty and variety of Gospel provisions, which the ministers of it are to bring forth, suited to the various cases of such who are under their care. The allusion is either to a good provider for his family, who lays up stores for them of all sorts, and upon proper occasions brings them forth for their relief; or to the people under the law, bringing their offerings out of the fruits, both of the old and new year; concerning which, take the following rule<sup>m</sup>. "All offerings, both of the congregation and of a private person, came from the land (of Israel), and without the land, כֶּן הַדְּרוֹשׁ וּמִן הָאֵרֶץ, *from the new and from the old* (i. e. from the new and old stock, the increase of the new and old year), except the sheaf of the first-fruits, and the two wave loaves; for they come only from the new, and from the land of Israel." The place where fruits of any kind were laid up, was called a treasure; hence it is said<sup>n</sup>, the palm-tree has its fallen fruits, which they don't bring לְאִוֶּזֶן, *into the treasure*; and it produces dates, which they put into the treasure: perhaps some reference is had to Cant. vii. 13. where mention is made of fruits new and old, and which the Jewish writers<sup>o</sup> interpret of the words of the Scribes, and of the words of the law; the fruits *new*, are the words and sayings of the Scribes, their doctrines and decisions; and the *old*, are the words of the law; and one that was well versed in both these, was with them a well-instructed Scribe. Unless the allusion should rather be thought to be to old and new wine, see Luke v. 37, 38, 39. it being usual to call a wine-cellar a *treasure*<sup>p</sup>, in which all sorts of wine were kept; and a well-instructed Scribe is full of matter, and, like Elihu, his belly is as wine that has no vent, and is ready to burst like new bottles, Job xxxii. 19. and, like Jeremy, he is weary of forbearing, and cannot stay, Jer. xx. 9. and, like David, his heart indites a good matter, and his tongue is as the pen of a ready writer, Psal. xlv. 1.

Ver. 53. *And it came to pass that when Jesus had finished these parables, &c.*] Which he spoke both to the multitude from the ship, and to his disciples in the house, *he departed thence*: from the house in which he was, and the city of Capernaum, where he had some time been.

Ver. 54. *And when he was come into his own country, &c.*] Not where he was born, Bethlehem, for it is never observed, that he went thither; but where he was educated, and where his parents and near relations, according to the flesh, lived; who had been some little time ago seeking for him, and desirous of speaking

with him, even Nazareth: *he taught them in their synagogue*, it being the sabbath-day; see Mark vi. 1. The Vulgate Latin, and all the Eastern versions, the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read, *in their synagogues*; but as Nazareth was so mean and obscure a place, it is not likely that there should be in it more synagogues than one; and of no more do we read in Luke iv. 16, 20, 28. where an account is given of Christ's preaching in this place before this time. *Insomuch that they were astonished*: at the doctrines he taught, which were new and unheard-of to them; and were delivered in such a graceful manner, and with so much power and authority; and also at the miracles he wrought, in confirmation of what he delivered; and said, *whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works?* They knew his education, how that he had not been put to school, had never learned letters of men, or received any instructions from their learned doctors; and therefore could not imagine, how he came by such sublime and divine knowledge, and by what power he performed such wonderful things; looking upon him to be a mere man, and a very mean, and contemptible one: not knowing that he was the wisdom of God, and the power of God; which had they been acquainted with, there would have been no room, nor reason, for such questions.

Ver. 55. *Is not this the carpenter's son? &c.*] Meaning Joseph, who was by trade a carpenter, and whose son Jesus was supposed to be; and who very probably was now dead, which may be the reason he is not mentioned by name. The Greek word here used, signifies any mechanic, or artificer. The Syriac expresses it by a word, which signifies both a carpenter and a blacksmith; and Munster's Hebrew Gospel renders it, כֶּן נַפְתָּא, *the blacksmith's son*. But the generally received notion of the ancient Christians is, that he was a carpenter, and that Jesus was brought up to the same business, which lay in making ploughs and yokes<sup>q</sup>. This also appears, from the answer the Christian schoolmaster at Antioch gave to Libanius the sophister; who being big with expectation of Julian the apostate's getting the victory, asked the schoolmaster, what he thought the carpenter's son was doing? To which, after a short pause, he replied; O sophister! the Creator of all things, whom thou callest the carpenter's son, is making a coffin for Julian; who accordingly died in a few days after<sup>r</sup>. The Jews make mention of one Abba Joseph, דְּבִנְיָא, *the builder*, or carpenter<sup>s</sup>; but whether the same, is not certain. What they here say, was no doubt by way of derision and contempt; and yet the same phrase is used by them of a person of great note and fame, for his wisdom and knowledge: thus speaking of a difficult point, they<sup>t</sup> say, "לֵית לִית", נִבְרָ לֵית בְּרָ נִבְרָ, *no carpenter, or smith, or carpenter's son, can solve this*: says R. Shesheth, I am "neither a carpenter, nor a carpenter's son, and I can solve it." The gloss upon it is, "a wise-man, the son of a wise man." *Is not his mother called Mary?* Plain Mary, without any other title, or civil respect; a poor spinstress, that got her bread by her hand-

<sup>m</sup> Misn. Parah, c. 2. sect. 1.

<sup>n</sup> Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 3. fol. 180. 3.

<sup>o</sup> Targum in Cant. vii. 13. T. Bab. Erubim, fol. 21. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

<sup>p</sup> Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 178. 9.

<sup>q</sup> Justin Martyr. Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 316.

<sup>r</sup> Tripartit. Hist. l. 6. c. 44.

<sup>s</sup> Shemoth Rabba, sect. 13. fol. 99. 2.

<sup>t</sup> T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 50. 2.

labour: the Jews say <sup>a</sup>, she was a plaiter of women's hair, and treat her with the utmost scorn. *And his brethren*; not strictly so, but either the sons of Joseph by a former wife; or Mary's, or Joseph's brothers or sisters sons, and so cousins to Christ; it being usual with the Jews to call such, and even more distant relations, brethren: *James*; the son of Alpheus, or Cleophas, one of Christ's disciples, Matt. x. 3. called the Lord's brother, Gal. i. 19. and the same that wrote the epistle that bears his name: *and Joses*; or Joseph, as the Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read; and which two names are one and the same: hence, in Talmudic writings, we often read of R. Jose, who is the same with R. Joseph <sup>w</sup>: this Joses is, by Dr. Lightfoot, conjectured to be the same with Joseph, called Barsabas, who was put in nomination for apostleship, after the death of Judas, Acts i. 23. *And Simon*; or Symeon, the son of Cleophas, who is said <sup>x</sup> to succeed James, as bishop of Jerusalem, and to be Christ's cousin, being son of Cleophas, the brother of Joseph, the supposed father of Christ: *and Judas*; the same that is called Lebbeus, and Thaddeus, Matt. x. 3. and the brother of James, Luke vi. 16. and the same that wrote the epistle that goes by his name. The Jews ought not to have made these remarks, since many of their great doctors were of mean parentage; as R. Zachariah was a butcher's son <sup>y</sup>, and R. Jochanan a blacksmith's son <sup>z</sup>; hence that advice of R. Juda ben Bethira <sup>a</sup>, "take heed that ye do not reproach the sons " of the common people, for from them comes forth " the law."

Ver. 56. *And his sisters, &c.*] Whose names, according to Epiphanius <sup>b</sup>, were Mary and Salome; whom he supposes were the daughters of Joseph, by a former wife; but rather of Alpheus or Cleophas. *Are they not all with us?* Lived in the same town with them, were well known by them, and familiar with them. *Whence then hath this man all these things?* His wisdom and his mighty works; for since he had not them from any of their schools, and nurseries of learning, from their learned doctors and wise men; and could not have received them from his parents, and near relations, they could not devise from whence he should have them.

Ver. 57. *And they were offended in him, &c.*] It was a stumbling to them, how he came by his wisdom and power; since he had not these things from men of learning, and could not have them from his relatives: and therefore, rather than believe he had them of himself, or from God, they chose to indulge at least a suspicion, that he had them from the devil, and so were offended in him: or this offence was taken at the meanness of his birth, parentage, and education, though without reason; for if without the advantage of an education, without human literature, and the

instructions of men, he was able to expound the Scriptures, preach such doctrine, and deliver such words of wisdom, and confirm all this by miracles, and mighty works, they ought to have considered him as a divine person, and all this, as a demonstration of it, and of his having a divine mission at least, and of his being raised up by God for extraordinary purposes. *But Jesus said unto them*; being unmoved at their offence in him, and contempt of him, which was no other than what he expected: *a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house*; which seems to be a proverbial speech in common use, though I have not met with it in Jewish writings; shewing, that a prophet, or any teacher, or preacher, generally speaking, is more esteemed among strangers, who have no personal pique, nor prejudices against him, and who judge of him, not by what he has been, but by his present abilities, doctrine, and conduct, than among his countrymen; who are apt to think meanly of him, because familiarly acquainted with him, and knew, if not his vices, yet his infirmities, and envy him any superior degree of honour to them, he has attained unto. I say, generally speaking, for this is not always the case on either side; sometimes a prophet is affronted and abused in strange places, as Christ himself was: and sometimes is received with esteem and applause among his countrymen, relations, and acquaintance; but this is rare and uncommon; the proverb respects what is usually and ordinarily done, and the truth of it is easy to be observed.

Ver. 58. *And he did not many mighty works there, &c.*] Some he did, though not many; partly that they might be left inexcusable, and partly that it might not be said, he did not wish well to his own country: what he did, were not of the first class, and greatest note; he only *laid his hands*, as Mark says, ch. vi. 5. *upon a few sick folk, and healed them*; and yet these were such as raised their wonder and astonishment, but did not command their faith, and were rather stumbling-blocks unto them; such were their prejudices, their unbelief, and the hardness of their hearts: and the reason indeed why he did no more was, *because of their unbelief*. These words in Mark are joined with this expression, *he marvelled*; shewing, that their continued unbelief in him, notwithstanding his ministry and miracles among them, was matter of surprise to him; but here they are given as a reason why he did no more mighty works among them: and which Mark says he could not do, not for want of power, or as if their unbelief was too mighty for him to overcome; but he would not, because he judged them unworthy, and that it was not fit and convenient to perform any more, since they were offended with what was done; and that their condemnation might not be increased.

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 104. 2. Chagiga, fol. 4. 2. Sanhedrim, fol. 67. 1.

<sup>w</sup> Vid. Juchasin, fol. 61. & 62.

<sup>x</sup> Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 11.

<sup>y</sup> *Agin. Sota, c. 5. sect. 1.*

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 96. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Ib.

<sup>c</sup> Contr. Hæres. Tom. 2. l. 3. Hæres. 79. & lib. Anconst.

## C H A P. XIV.

Ver. 1. *AT that time Herod the tetrarch, &c.*] Not Herod the Great, in whose reign Christ was born, and who slew the infants of Bethlehem, but his son; this was, as the Jewish chronologer<sup>c</sup> rightly observes, "Herod Antipater, whom they call מַטְרַרְךָ, the *tetrarch*; the son of Herod the First, and brother of "Archelaus, and the third king of the family of "Herod." And though he is here called a *tetrarch*, he is in Mark vi. 14. called a king: the reason of his being styled a *tetrarch* was this; his father Herod divided his large kingdom into four parts, and bequeathed them to his sons, which was confirmed by the Roman senate: Archelaus reigned in Judea in his stead; upon whose decease, that part was put under the care of a Roman governor; who, when John the Baptist began to preach, was Pontius Pilate; this same Herod here spoken of, being *tetrarch* of Galilee, which was the part assigned him; and his brother Philip *tetrarch* of Iturea, and of the region of Trachonitis; and Lysanias, *tetrarch* of Abilene, Luke iii. 1. the word *tetrarch* signifying one that has the *fourth* part of government: and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, he is called *one of the four princes*; and in the Arabic version, a *prince of the fourth part*; and in the Persic, a *governor of the fourth part of the kingdom*. The time referred to, was after the death of John the Baptist; and when Christ had been for a good while, and in many places, preaching and working miracles; the particular instant which respect is had unto, is the sending forth of the twelve disciples to preach and work miracles; and which might serve the more to spread the fame of Christ, and which reached the court of Herod; who, 'tis said here, *heard of the fame of Jesus*: what a wonderful preacher he was, and what mighty things were done by him.

Ver. 2. *And said unto his servants, &c.*] Those of his household, his courtiers, with whom he more familiarly conversed; to these he expressed his fears, that it might be true what was suggested by the people, and he was ready to believe it himself; *this is John the Baptist*: some copies add, *whom I have beheaded*, as in Mark vi. 16. the guilt of which action rose in his mind, lay heavy on him, and filled him with horror and a thousand fears: *he is risen from the dead*; which if he was a Sadducee, as he is thought to be, by comparing Matt. xvi. 6. with Mark viii. 15. was directly contrary to his former sentiments, and was extorted from him by his guilty conscience; who now fears, what before he did not believe; and what he fears, he affirms; concluding that John was raised from the dead, to give proof of his innocence, and to revenge his death on him: *and therefore mighty works do shew themselves in him, or are wrought by him*; for though he wrought no miracles in his life-time, yet, according to a vulgar notion, that after death men are endued

with a greater power, Herod thought this to be the case; or that he was possessed of greater power, on purpose to punish him for the murder of him; and that these miracles which were wrought by him, were convincing proofs of the truth of his resurrection, and of what he was able to do to him, and what he might righteously expect from him.

Ver. 3. *For Herod had laid hold on John, &c.*] By his servants, whom he sent to apprehend him: *and bound him*; laid him in chains, as if he was a malefactor; *and put him in prison*, in the castle of Machærus<sup>d</sup>, *for Herodias's sake*: who was angry with him, had a bitter quarrel against him, and by whose instigation all this was done; who was *his brother Philip's wife*. This Herodias was the daughter of Aristobulus, son to Herod the Great<sup>e</sup>, and brother to Philip, and to this Herod; so that she was niece to them both; and first married the one, and then the other, whilst the former was living. Philip and this Herod were both sons of Herod the Great, but not by the same woman; Philip was born of Cleopatra of Jerusalem, and Herod Antipas of Malthace, a Samaritan<sup>f</sup>; so that Philip was his brother by his father's side, but not by his mother's; the Evangelist Mark adds, *for he had married her*: the case was this, Herod being sent for to Rome, called at his brother Philip's by the way, where he fell into an amorous intrigue with his wife, and agreed, upon his return, to take her with him and marry her; as he accordingly did; and divorced his own wife, who was daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia Petraë; which occasioned a war between Herod and his wife's father, in which the former was beaten<sup>g</sup>.

Ver. 4. *For John said unto him, &c.*] John having heard of this incestuous marriage, went to Herod, and reproved him to his face for it; and, as Luke says, *for all the evils he had done*, ch. iii. 19. for he was a very wicked man, and guilty of many flagitious crimes: John, in so doing, shewed his zeal for holiness, his hatred of sin, his courage and faithfulness in reproving thus freely so great a man; and made it manifest, that he came in the spirit of Elijah: what he said to him was, *it is not lawful for thee to have her*, being forbidden, Levit. xviii. 16. for though by another law it was right to marry a brother's wife, after his decease, when he left no issue, yet this was not the case here; Philip was now living, and, had he been dead, such a marriage would have been unlawful, because there was issue; she had a daughter, who afterwards is said to dance before Herod; and besides, he himself had another wife, whom he put away; so that his sin was a very aggravated and complicated one: lying with a brother's wife, was one of those sins which, according to the Jewish<sup>h</sup> canons, deserved cutting off, or death by the hand of God. Josephus<sup>i</sup> gives another reason of the imprisonment and death of John, that Herod

<sup>c</sup> David Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 95. 2. and so in Juchasin, fol. 149. 2.

<sup>d</sup> Joseph. Antiqu. l. 18. c. 7.

<sup>e</sup> Ib. c. 6.

<sup>f</sup> Joseph. Antiqu. l. 18. c. 6. de Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 29. sect. 7.

<sup>g</sup> Joseph. Antiqu. l. 18. c. 6.

<sup>h</sup> Mian. Ceritot, c. 1. sect. 1.

<sup>i</sup> Antiqu. l. 18. c. 6.

feared that the people of the Jews, through his means, would be moved to sedition, and revolt from his government; which might be what Herodias suggested to him, or what he gave out himself, to cover the true cause of his proceedings: but the true reason is, what is here given, and is to be confirmed by the testimony of Jewish writers. One of their chronologers<sup>k</sup> delivers the account in these express words: "Herod Antipater was a very wicked and pernicious man, many of the wise men of Israel he slew with the sword; and he took to wife, his brother Philip's wife, whilst he was living; and because John the high-priest (for so through mistake they call him) דוכייו על זה, reproved him for this; (see Luke iii. 19.) he slew him with the sword, with many of the wise men of Israel." And, says their historian<sup>l</sup>, "also he, Herod, slew John, because he said unto him, it is forbidden thee to take the wife of Philip, and he slew him; this is that John that practised baptism."

Ver. 5. *And when he would have put him to death, &c.*] As soon as he apprehended him, and put him into prison; being provoked by his reproving him, and being stirred up by Herodias, who was greatly incensed and enraged, and would have killed him herself, but could not, being hindered by Herod: who, though he had a good will and strong inclination to take away his life, yet what with fearing the terror of his own conscience, and the reverence and respect he had for John, as a good man; and especially for the reason here given, he did not do it, for *he feared the multitude*: not God, but the multitude; and these, not only the large number of people that attended on John's ministry, and were baptized by him, and became his disciples, but the generality of the people, the whole body of the Jewish nation. So God is pleased oftentimes to restrain the wickedness of princes, by the fear of their subjects: *because they counted him as a prophet*; a holy good man, and who was sent of God; they respected him as such, believing him to be a true and real prophet, and treated him with honour and reverence, suitable to his character; wherefore Herod was afraid, should he take away his life, that the people would mutiny, rise up against him, and revolt from him. In what esteem John was with the people of the Jews in general, may be learned from the character Josephus gives of him, as a good man; who stirred up the Jews to the practice of virtue, especially piety and justice; which made the common people fond of him and his doctrine; and who were of opinion, that the defeat of Herod's army, which followed the death of John, was a just judgment of God upon him for it.<sup>m</sup>

Ver. 6. *But when Herod's birth-day was kept, &c.*] The birth-days of princes, both of their coming into the world, and accession to the throne of government, were kept by the Gentiles; as by the Egyptians, Gen. xl. 20. and by the "Persians, and Romans", and other nations, but not by the Jews; who reckon these among the feasts of idolaters. "These (say they)<sup>n</sup>

"are the feasts of idolaters; the *Calends*, and the *Saturnalia*, the time kept in memory of subduing a kingdom (or when a king takes possession of it, the day of his accession), יוים גוסייה של מלכ, and the *birth-day of kings* (when they are made and crowned, the day of coronation), and the day of birth, and the day of death." And it is a question, whether this day, that was kept, was the day of Herod's natural birth, or of his civil government, being his accession, or coronation-day: and it might also be a question, whether it was the then present Herod's birth-day, or whether it was not his father Herod's, was it not that Mark says, ch. vi. 21. it was his birth-day; since it is the latter the poet<sup>p</sup> refers to, as kept by the Jews, when he says, *At cum Herodis venire dies*; and the old Scholiast upon him observes, that "Herod reigned over the Jews in Syria, in the times of Augustus; therefore the Herodians kept Herod's birth-day, as also the sabbath, on which day they set up candles in the windows lighted, and encircled with violets." This they did, believing him to be the Messiah: and it is further to be observed, that the word here used, is said<sup>q</sup> to be proper to the dead, and not to the living; and that he that uses it of the living, speaks very inaccurately: but however, it was a festival, and a time of great mirth and jollity; and a proper opportunity offered to Herodias, to execute her malicious designs against John the Baptist; for at this time, the daughter of Herodias danced before them: in the original text it is, *in the midst*, in the middle of the hall; or in the midst of the company, the lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee, for whom Herod made a supper, Mark vi. 21. and the Syriac renders it קדם סמיכה, before the guests. Music and dancing were usual at such entertainments, they were the common appendages of a feast<sup>r</sup>: the daughter of Herodias, who danced before the company for their diversion, whether alone, or with others, was very probably Salome<sup>s</sup>, whom she had by her former husband; and therefore is called, not the daughter of Herod, but of Herodias: *and pleased Herod*; and as Mark adds, *and them that sat with him*; so that the pleasure he had did not arise merely from the respect and honour shewn to him and his birth-day, by her appearing with so much cheerfulness on this occasion before him; who had taken her father's wife from him, and defiled her mother; but from the airs, gestures, and motions of the lady in dancing; which were so extremely fine and regular, that she gave wonderful satisfaction and delight to Herod, and the whole company.

Ver. 7. *Whereupon he promised with an oath, &c.*] On account of her fine dancing, and being extremely pleased with it himself; and the more, that it gave such pleasure to the whole court: he first promised her, *to give her whatsoever she would ask*; and then repeating it, he confirmed it with an oath; adding, as Mark says, that he would give it her, *even to the half of his kingdom*: a way of speaking used by princes,

<sup>k</sup> Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 2.

<sup>l</sup> Joseph. Gorionides, l. 5. c. 45.

<sup>m</sup> Antiqu. l. 18. c. 6.

<sup>n</sup> Herodot. l. 1. c. 133. & 9. c. 109.

<sup>o</sup> Plin. Ep. l. 10. ep. 61.

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>p</sup> Misen. Avoda Zara, c. 1. sect. 3.

<sup>q</sup> Persius, Satyr. 5. prope finem.

<sup>r</sup> Ammohius, *μεγαλοπρεπες*, &c. in lit.

<sup>s</sup> Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 25.

<sup>t</sup> Joseph. Antiqu. l. 18. c. 6.

when they give full power to persons to ask what they will of them; and to express their great munificence and liberality; signifying, let it be ever so great, or cost what it will, though as much as half a kingdom comes to, it shall be granted; see Esth. v. 3. 6. A very foolish promise, and a rash oath these, which were made upon such a consideration, as only a fine dance. If she, as Theophylact observes, had asked for his head, would he have given it her? And if he swore by his head, which was a common form of swearing with the Jews, she very appositely, though unjustly, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, answers to him; as you have sworn by your head, give me John Baptist's head.

Ver. 8. *And she being before instructed of her mother, &c.*] What request to make; for as Mark says, *she went forth* to her mother immediately, as soon as she had received the king's promise, and took advice of her, what she should ask; who bid her ask for the head of John the Baptist; and accordingly she went in, *straightway with haste unto the king*, as the same evangelist observes, to take him at his word, and whilst he was in the mood; being urged and hastened on by her mother, who was eager to satisfy her revenge on John; and said, *give me here John Baptist's head in a charger*: she desires his head, and this to be brought to her in a large dish, that her mother might be sure of his death; and have an opportunity of insulting that mouth and tongue, that had spoke against her incestuous marriage: and she desires to have it given *here*, in that very place, at that very time, where, and while the company was together, who were witnesses of the king's promise and oath; and this she did, lest when the festival was over, and he was out of his cups, he should repent of his folly and rashness. The mother and daughter seem to be much alike, both for lasciviousness, revenge, and cruelty: and if what the historian says<sup>2</sup> be true, that this same person Salome, the daughter of Herodias, as she walked over a river which was frozen in the winter season, the ice broke, and she fell in, and the pieces of ice cut off her head; the *lex talionis*, the law of retaliation, was righteously executed on her.

Ver. 9. *And the king was sorry, &c.*] As he might be upon many accounts; partly on account of John, for whom, notwithstanding his freedom in reproving him, he had a respect; and partly on his own account, his conscience dictating to him that it was an evil action, and would leave a brand of perpetual infamy upon him; as also on account of the people, who were so much affected to John, lest they should make an insurrection, and rebel against him; and likewise, because it was reckoned an ill omen with the Romans, to take away life on that day they received their own; and therefore carefully abstained, on such days, from executions. *Nevertheless for his oath's sake*; that he might not be guilty of perjury, chose rather to com-

mit murder; though it would have been no iniquity in him to have acted contrary to such a rash promise, and wicked oath; which would have been better to have been broke, than kept; *and them which sat with him at meat*; lest he should be thought by them fickle and inconstant, and not a man of his word, and who had no regard to an oath: or it may be, they, either to curry favour with Herodias, or out of ill will they might bear to John; or in great respect to the damsel, who had so well pleased them with her dancing; instead of dissuading him from it, pressed him much to perform his promise: and therefore, *he commanded it to be given her*: in the form and manner she requested it. Some have thought, that the whole of this affair was a concerted scheme; and that Herod himself was in it, though he pretended to be sorry and uneasy, having fixed on this season as a convenient time for it; and chose to have it done in this way, and in so public a manner, to lessen the odium of it; or otherwise, it is not easy to account for his extravagant promise, and his punctual performance of it.

Ver. 10. *And he sent, &c.*] *An executioner*, as in Mark vi. 27. where the Latin word *speculator*, or as it is sometimes written *spiculator*, is used; and is the name of an officer concerned in executions, and particularly in beheading of persons; and so is used by Latin writers. "In a civil war (says<sup>2</sup> Seneca), a servant hid his master that was proscribed; and when he had fitted his rings for himself, and put on his clothes, he met *speculatoribus*, the *speculators*; he told them he desired nothing, but that they would perform their orders, and immediately stretched out his neck." And the same writer elsewhere<sup>3</sup> speaks of a soldier that was condemned by Piso, on suspicion of murdering his fellow-soldier; "Who was had without the camp, and as soon as he stretched out his neck, he, who was thought to be killed, suddenly appeared; upon which the centurion that had the management of the execution, ordered *speculatorem*, the *speculator*, to put up his sword, and returned the condemned person to Piso." The word is also used by the Jewish doctors, and in the same sense: take the following instance among many<sup>4</sup>. "R. Ishmael said to R. Simeon ben Gamaliel (when they were both apprehended, in order to be executed), brother, there was a man ready to receive his blow, and they entreated לאדפקלמור, the *speculator*: one said, I am a priest, the son of an high-priest, slay me first, that I may not see the death of my companion; and the other said to him, I am a prince, the son of a prince, slay me first, that I may not see the death of my companion: he replied unto them, cast lots; and they cast lots, and the lot fell on R. Simeon ben Gamaliel; immediately he took a sword, and cut off his head." And as this word is often used by them<sup>5</sup> for an executioner, so ספקלמא, *specula* is often made mention of by them<sup>6</sup>, as a sort

<sup>2</sup> Misc. Sanhedrim. c. 3. sect. 2. T. Bab. Beraot, fol. 3. 1. Derech Eretz, c. 6. fol. 18. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Nicephorus, Hist. l. 1. c. 20.

<sup>4</sup> De beneficiis, l. 3. c. 25.

<sup>5</sup> De ira, l. 1. c. 16. Vid. Julium Firmicum, l. 8. c. 26. & Florum, l. 4. c. 7. & Suetonium in vit. Caligul. c. 52. Octav. August. c. 74. & Claud. c. 35. Tertullian. de Corona, c. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Abot R. Nathan, c. 38. fol. 9. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Vid Targum Jon. in Gen. xxxvii. 36. & xxxix. 1. & Targ. Shen. in Esth. v. 2. Jarchi in Exod. iv. 11. T. Bab. Sabbath, fol. 108. 1. & Gloss. in ib.

<sup>4</sup> Bereshit Rab. sect. 79. fol. 69. 3. Vajikra Rab. sect. 24. fol. 165. 2. & Bemidbar Rab. sect. 7. fol. 187. 4.



of punishment by death: and such an officer was sent by Herod, to inflict this punishment upon John; who accordingly executed it, *and beheaded John in the prison*; that is, of Machærus, where he lay, without giving him a hearing, or allowing him to speak for himself, or with his friends: and which was done in this private manner, partly for dispatch, and partly on account of the people; who it might have been feared, had the execution been public and known, would have rose and rescued him.

Ver. 11. *And his head was brought in a charger, &c.*] By the executioner that cut it off, to Herod, whilst he and his guests were at table; by which it should seem, that the prison was very near; and it is not improbable, that it was the castle of Machærus that Herod made this entertainment in: *and given to the damsel*; the daughter of Herodias, who, by her mother's instigation, had asked it, and who received it out of the hands of Herod himself; or however, it was delivered to her by his orders: *and she brought it to her mother*; who had put her upon it, than which, nothing could be a more agreeable dish to her; and who, as Jerome says<sup>c</sup>, because she could not bear truth, that tongue which spoke truth; she plucked out, and pierced it through and through with a needle, as Fulvia did Cicero's: but this triumph over the faithful reprover of her, and Herod's vices, did not last long; for quickly after this, they were stripped of their honours and riches, and deprived of the kingdom, and banished to Lyons in France, where they died<sup>d</sup>. A Jewish chronologer says<sup>e</sup>, Herod was driven out of the land by Tiberius, and fled to Spain, and died there.

Ver. 12. *And his disciples came, &c.*] To the prison where his body was left, and to which they had liberty of recourse before; see Matt. xi. 2. and very probably, upon hearing what was done, might apply to Herod, as Joseph of Arimathea did to Pilate, for the body of Jesus; who might, as he did, give them leave to take it: *and took up the body and buried it*. Theophylact says, his body was buried in Baste Cesaræa, and that his head was first repositied in Emesesa. This was the last office of love to their master, and was done in respect and gratitude to him, and to shew that they still abode by his doctrine; and was what decency and the belief of the resurrection of the dead, as well as the will of God, require should be done: *and went and told Jesus*; that their master was dead, what kind of death he suffered, and by what means it was brought about; and how that they had interred him; and what Herod also had said of Jesus, that he was John risen from the dead. Their coming to Christ, and informing him of all this, shew, that they were taught by their master to respect him as the Messiah, and believe in him, and adhere to him; and it is very likely that they continued with him.

Ver. 13. *When Jesus heard of it, &c.*] Of the death of John, and of the cruel usage he had met with; and particularly, that his fame had reached the court of Herod, and that he was talked of there, and said by

Herod himself to be John the Baptist, that was risen from the dead; *he departed thence by ship, into a desert place apart*; to avoid Herod, though not through fear of death; but because his time was not yet come: which may teach us, that it is lawful to shun dangers, when there is an opportunity; which may be done, without betraying truth, or sacrificing a good conscience. The other evangelists, Mark and Luke, assign another reason of this departure of Christ's, that it was upon the return of his disciples to him from their embassy; when having given him an account of what they had done, and taught, he judged it proper they should retire, and get some refreshment and rest; and both may very well be thought to be the reasons of this recess. At the same time that John's disciples brought him the news of their master's death, Christ's disciples return to him, with the account of the success of their ministry; who might not only be weary, and want refreshment, but be discouraged in their minds, at this instance of cruelty; wherefore Christ thought it necessary to retire, partly for his own safety, and partly for their ease; and that he might have an opportunity of fortifying their minds against all trials and persecutions they were to meet with: the place from whence he departed, was either Capernaum, his own country and city, or Nazareth, where we have lately heard of him; or some other place in Galilee, where he was, when John's disciples came to him: the place whither he went, was a desert place; and, as Luke says, *belonging to the city called Bethsaida*, the city of Andrew and Peter, which lay on the other side of the sea of Galilee, of Tiberias; over which he went by ship, John vi. 1. *And when the people had heard thereof*; of his departure, and whither he went, *they followed him on foot out of their cities*; such as Nazareth, Capernaum, Tiberias, and others; and passing the bridge at Jordan, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, they outwent the ship, and got thither before them, as Mark relates. This shewed their great affection and zeal for Christ, and their diligence in attending on him.

Ver. 14. *And Jesus went forth, &c.*] Either from the mountain where he sate with his disciples, John vi. 3. or out of the desert, where he had retired for secrecy; or out of the ship, which seems best, the company having got thither before his landing: *and saw a great multitude*; for there were about five thousand men, beside women and children, ver. 21. *and was moved with compassion toward them*: partly on account of their bodily infirmities, which were very many and great; and partly on account of the bad situation they were in, through want of spiritual pastors to feed them with the bread of life; for Mark gives this as the reason, moving his compassion, *because they were as sheep, not having a shepherd*: all which shews the truth of Christ's human nature; proves him to be a merciful high-priest, and one truly concerned for both the bodies and souls of men: *and he healed their sick*; which they brought along with them, and that without the use of any medicine, by a word speaking: so that as the former phrase gives

<sup>c</sup> Adv. Ruffin. Tom. 2. fol. 82. K.

<sup>d</sup> Joseph. Antiqu. l. 18. c. 8.

<sup>e</sup> Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 96. g.

proof of his humanity, this attests his divinity: but this was not all he did, he not only healed their bodies, but he taught them the doctrines of the Gospel; and spake to them concerning the kingdom of God, for the good of their souls, as the other evangelists relate.

Ver. 15. *And when it was evening, &c.*] Mark says, *when the day was now far spent*; and Luke, *when the day began to wear away*: it was upon the decline of the day. The Jews, as Grotius rightly observes, had two evenings; the one began when the sun declined at noon, and the other at sun-setting: now it was the former of these, and not the latter, that was now come; for after this, you read of another evening that was come, ver. 23. between which two evenings Christ made the multitude to sit down, and he fed them in a miraculous manner; and the disciples' reason for the dismissal of the multitude, that they might go into the neighbouring villages, and buy provisions, shews that it could not be the last, but the first of these evenings, that is here meant. *His disciples came to him*; the twelve, whom he had left in that part of the desert he retired to; or on the mount, where he had sate down with them for their rest and refreshment: *saying, this is a desert place*; where no food was to be had; where were no houses of entertainment: *and the time is now past*; not the time of the day, but of dining: the usual dinner-time was past, which, with the Jews, was the fifth hour of the day, and answers to eleven o'clock with us, or at furthest six; which, with us, is twelve at noon; concerning which, the Jewish doctors thus dispute: "The first hour, is the time of eating for the Lydians, or Cannibals; the second for thieves, the third for heirs, the fourth for workmen, and the fifth for every man: but does not R. Papa say, that the fourth is the time of dining for every man? But if so, if the fourth is the time for every man, the fifth is for workmen, and the sixth for the disciples of the wise men." Which is elsewhere delivered with some little variation, thus; "the first hour is the time of eating for Lydians; the second, for thieves; the third, for heirs; the fourth, for workmen; the fifth, for scholars; and the sixth, for every man: but does not R. Papa say, &c." But supposing the usual time of dining to be, at the furthest, at the sixth hour, at twelve o'clock, this time must be elapsed, since the first evening was commenced; so that the reasoning of the disciples is very just, *send the multitude away*. Christ was preaching to them, the disciples move that he would break off his discourse, and dismiss them; in the synagogue the manner of dismissing the people was, by reading the *הפטרות*, or *dismission*, which was some passage out of the prophetic writings. *That they may go into the villages and buy themselves victuals*; the little towns which lay nearest the desert, where they might be supplied with suitable provisions.

Ver. 16. *But Jesus said unto them, &c.*] The disciples, *they need not depart*; meaning so long as he was with them, who had power enough to provide a

sufficient meal for them, as well as by a word speaking, to heal their diseases; however, to try their faith, and make way for the working of the following miracle, he says to them, *give ye them to eat*; such provisions as you have along with you.

Ver. 17. *And they say unto him, &c.*] In order to excuse themselves, and to shew the impossibility of feeding such a large number of people; *we have here but five loaves*; and these barley ones, coarse bread; *and two fishes*: small ones, which were dried and salted, and fit for present eating; which they either brought along with them for their own refreshment, or rather, were brought thither by a boy to sell, as is usual where a great concourse of people are got together: these words seem to be spoken by Andrew, Simon Peter's brother; who added, *but what are they among so many?* see John vi. 8, 9. not thinking of the power of Christ, who was able to multiply, and make this provision a sufficiency for the whole company.

Ver. 18. *He said, bring them hither to me.*] The loaves and the fishes, signifying that they were sufficient; or that he would make them so: this he said, to try their faith in him, their obedience to him, and their liberality to others: and indeed, the best way to have an increase of temporal supplies, is to bring what we have, and put it into Christ's hands; whereby not only good is done to others, but that with an overplus is returned to the giver.

Ver. 19. *And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, &c.*] The other evangelists say, that he ordered the disciples to evade the people to sit down; both no doubt were done: the multitude were commanded to sit down by Christ, which, without his orders, they would never have done; and the disciples were enjoined to place them in form, by companies, in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties, that their number might be the better taken, and the food more orderly distributed by the apostles: *and took the five loaves and the two fishes*; into his hands, lifting them up, that they might be seen by the whole company; and they be fully convinced of the miracle going to be wrought by him: *and looking up to heaven*: to his father in heaven, who is the father of mercies; and from whom every mercy and blessing of life comes; and giving thanks to him for the same, as was usually done by him, *he blessed the five loaves and the two fishes; and brake the loaves, and divided the fishes; and gave the loaves, and fishes also, to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitude*; who were the ministers and servants of Christ, employed by him in this manner, for the more orderly and quick dispatch of this business: and which was an emblem of their spiritual work and office: who received all their food from Christ, which they distributed to the churches, and fed them with.

Ver. 20. *And they did all eat, &c.*] Christ and his twelve disciples, and the five thousand men, with the women and children, of the five loaves and two fishes; every one had their portion, *and were filled*; they were satisfied, they had a full meal, they had enough, and to spare; see 2 Chron. xxxi.

† T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 11. 1.

\* T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 14. 2.

10. which the Targumist paraphrases thus. "And Azariah said unto him, who was appointed chief over the house of Zadok, and said, from the time that they began to separate the offering, to bring it into the sanctuary of the Lord, אֲרִיָּהוּ זָדוֹק, we have eat and are filled, and have left much; for the word of the Lord hath blessed his people, and what is left, lo! it is this plenty of good." The Jews used not to reckon it a meal, unless a man was filled, and account it an ill sign, if nothing was left: but here was fulness, and more left than was first had; which was gathered up, either for the use of the poor, or reserved for after service; teaching us liberality to the needy, and frugality, not to waste that which is left. And the took up of the fragments that remained, twelve baskets full; according to the number of the disciples, every man had his basket full. It may be inquired, where they could have so many baskets in the wilderness? It is not likely, that every one of the apostles had a basket with him; it is indeed not improbable, but that they might be furnished with them from some in the company, who might bring provisions with them, either for their own use, or to sell; see John vi. 9. but perhaps the reason why they were so easily supplied with such a number of baskets in a desert place, might be a custom which the Jews<sup>a</sup> had of carrying baskets with hay and straw, in commemoration of what they did in Egypt; when they were obliged to carry bricks in baskets, and to go about and pick up straw in baskets to make bricks; hence the<sup>1</sup> Epigrammatist calls a Jew, *cistifer*, a basket-bearer, or carrier; and Juvenal<sup>2</sup> laughs at these people, as if all their household goods lay in a basket, and a little hay, or straw: it is said of R. Simeon, that when he went to the school, שָׂקל צַנָּה, he carried a basket on his shoulders<sup>3</sup>; the gloss suggests, it was to sit upon; but a basket is not very proper for a seat; very likely it was for the above reason: such a custom will account for it, how such a number of baskets could be come at in the wilderness.

Ver. 21. *And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, &c.*] The word *about*, is omitted in the Vulgate Latin, in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, which expressly say there were so many. A large number indeed, to be fed with five loaves and two fishes! besides women and children; who were not taken into the account, though they all ate, and were filled, it not being usual with the Jews to number their women; and who might be near as large a number as the men: for generally there is a very great concourse of the female sex, and of children, where any thing extraordinary, or out of the way, is to be seen or heard; and of this sort was a large number of Christ's audience, who only came out of curiosity, or for one sinister end or another.

Ver. 22. *And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples, &c.*] As soon as ever he had wrought the

above miracle, and perceived that the people were so convinced by it, of his being the Messiah, that they were determined, whether he would or no, to set him up for a temporal king, to deliver them from the Roman yoke; which they doubted not he was able to do, who could feed so large a number, with such a small quantity of provision; see John vi. 14, 15. and knowing also, that his disciples had imbibed the same notion of a temporal kingdom, were very fond of it, and big with expectation thereof; and would have readily encouraged the populace, and joined with them in such an action: wherefore, in all haste, he hurried them away, obliged them to depart, lest any step should be taken, which might be of dangerous consequence to them, and the people: it looks as if the disciples were bent upon the same thing, and that it was with much difficulty and reluctance they were brought off of it. Christ was forced to use his power and authority; and order them directly to *get into a ship*; very likely, the same they came over in; and to go before him unto the other side of the lake of Tiberias or sea of Galilee, over-against Bethsaida, to Capernaum, or the land of Genesaret; while he sent the multitudes away: who would not so easily have been prevailed upon to have departed, if Christ had not first shipped off his disciples; for had he withdrawn himself, and left his disciples with them, they would have been in hopes of his return, and would have continued in a body with them, in expectation of it; and therefore, the better to disperse them, and prevent their designs, he sends away his disciples before him.

Ver. 23. *And when he had sent the multitudes away, &c.*] Had ordered them at least to go away; for, it seems, according to John vi. 22. that they did not in general disperse: there was a large body of them that continued upon the spot all night, expecting his return; in which being disappointed, they took shipping, and came to Capernaum. *He went up into a mountain apart to pray*; perhaps the same he went up to before, and from whence he came down, John vi. 3. This he chose as a proper place for prayer, where he could be retired, and alone, have his thoughts free, and, as man, pour out his soul to his father, on his own account, and on the behalf of others; and particularly, he might be concerned about this notion of a temporal kingdom, that his disciples and others were so fond of; and pray that his disciples might be convinced of their mistake, and that the people might be hindered from prosecuting their designs. His going up into a mountain and praying there, were quite contrary to the canons of the Jews; which forbid praying in places ever so little raised. "Let not a man stand (say they) בְּמִקְוֵים גְבוּהִים, in an high place, and pray, but in a low place and pray; as it is said, *Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord*, Psal. cxxx. 1. 'Tis a tradition, that a man may not stand, neither upon a throne, nor upon a footstool, nor in any high place and pray,

<sup>a</sup> Nicholas de Lyra, in Psal. lxxx. 6.

<sup>1</sup> Nubere: nupsisti, Gellia, Cistifero. Martial. Epigram. l. 5. ep. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Judæis: quorum Cophinus fœnuumque supellex. Juvenal. Satyr. 3. cum dedit ille locum, Cophino, fœnoque relicto. ib. Satyr. 6.

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 49. 2.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 10. 2. Piske Tosaph. in ib. art. 52. T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 4. 4. Kotsensis Mitzvot Torâ precept. Affirm. 19. Mi-draah Kohelet, fol. 70. 2.

“because there are no high places before God.” This rule is delivered by Maimonides, in this form: “A man may not stand in a place that is three hands high, or more, and pray, neither upon a bed, nor upon a seat, nor upon a throne.” But Christ did not look upon himself obliged, by these traditions of the elders; but chose such places, whether high or low, which were most private and retired. *And when evening was come*; when it was now dark, John vi. 17. when the second evening was come and ended; see ver. 15. and it was properly night, *he was there alone*; in the mountain, where he continued the greatest part of the night, even until the fourth watch.

Ver. 24. *But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, &c.*] That is, the ship in which the disciples were put into, to go on the other side, had by this time got into the midst of the sea: the Syriac and Persic versions say, it was *many furlongs from land*; and the Arabic expressly says, *about twenty-five furlongs*: which account seems to be taken from John vi. 19. but this was not all, it was not only at such a distance from land, but was *tossed with waves*; up and down, and in danger of being overset, and the passengers lost: *for the wind was against them*; which beat the waves with such violence against them, that they were in the utmost danger of their lives, and not able to get forward; and what was worst of all, and most discouraging to the disciples, Christ was not with them. The ship in which the disciples were, was an emblem of the church of Christ, and of its state and condition in this world: this world is like a sea, for its largeness, and the abundance of nations and people in it, compared to many waters, Rev. xvii. 15. and for the tumultuousness of its inhabitants; the wicked being like a troubled sea, which cannot rest, continually casting up the mire and dirt of sin, to the dishonour of God, and the grief of his people; and for its fickleness and inconstancy, changes and war being continually in it: now the church of Christ is like a ship in this troublesome sea; where the true disciples and followers of Christ are selected together; and are preserved from the pollutions of the world, and from the danger to which the men of it are exposed, being in their sins, and liable to the wrath and curse of God, and eternal damnation; which they that are in Christ, and members of his body, are secure from; the port or haven to which they are bound, is heaven and eternal happiness; their's and Christ's father's house, where are many mansions provided for them; and where they long to be, and hope, and believe, ere long they shall arrive unto; and hope is as an anchor of their soul, sure and steadfast: but in the mean while, whilst they are sailing through the sea of this world, they are often, as the church of old, tossed with tempests, and not comforted, Isa. lv. 11. with the tempests of Satan's temptations, the storms of the world's persecutions, and with the winds of error and false doctrine; and then is it most uncomfortable to

them, when Christ is not with them, which was the case of the disciples here.

Ver. 25. *And in the fourth watch of the night, &c.*] This is said, according to the division of the night into four watches, by the Jews; who say, that “there are four watches in the night, and four watches in the day.” It is true indeed, that it is disputed among them, whether there were four watches, or only three in the night: some say there were four, others say there were but three<sup>r</sup>; not but that these made a division of the night into four parts, the three first of which, they thought were properly the watches of the night, and the fourth was the morning. The first watch began at six o'clock in the evening, and lasted till nine; the second began at nine, and ended at twelve, which was midnight; the third began at twelve, and closed at three; the fourth began at three, and ended at six in the morning. But since some<sup>s</sup> Jewish writers are so positive for the division of the night into three watches only, and a watch is with them called<sup>t</sup> the third part of the night; and it is dubious with some, whether the Jewish division is here referred to; and since it is so clear a point, that the Romans<sup>u</sup> divided their night into four watches, and their writers speak not only of the first, second, and third watches, but also of the fourth watch<sup>v</sup>; it is thought by some, that the evangelist speaks after the Roman manner: but however, certain it is, that within this period, probably at the beginning of it, after three o'clock in the morning, Christ came to his disciples, when they had been almost all the night at sea, tossed with waves, and in great danger. *Jesus went unto them*; from the mountain where he had been praying, the greatest part of the night, to the sea-side, and so upon the waters to them: for it follows, *walking upon the sea*; as on dry land: though it was so stormy and boisterous, that the disciples, though in a ship, were in the utmost danger, yet he upon the waves, was in none at all; by which action he shewed himself to be the Lord of the sea, and to be truly and properly God; whose character is, that he *treadeth upon the waves of the sea*, Job ix. 8.

Ver. 26. *And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, &c.*] It being now morning, and perhaps might have moon-light; and besides, there is always more light upon the water than land; they were able to discern something like a man, walking upon the surface of the sea, but had not light enough to distinguish what, or who it was; and, moreover, had no thought of Christ, or expectation of seeing him; and the appearance of a man walking upon the waters being so unusual, and astonishing, *they were troubled, saying it is a spirit*: a nocturnal apparition, a demon in human form. The Jews, especially the sect of the Pharisees, had a notion, from whom the disciples might have their's, of spirits, apparitions, and demons, being to be seen in the night; hence that rule<sup>w</sup>, “it is forbidden a man to salute his friend in the night,” “for we are careful, lest שׂוֹד דְּרֵינָא, it should be a demon.” They say a great many things of one לילית, *Lilith*,

<sup>r</sup> Hilch. Tephillah. c. 5. sect. 7.

<sup>s</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 2. 4. Echa Rabbati, fol. 54. 4.

<sup>t</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 3. 1. 2.

<sup>u</sup> Jarochi & Kimchi in Jud. vii. 19. & in Psal. cxix. 147.

<sup>v</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 2. 1.

<sup>w</sup> Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 20.

<sup>x</sup> Liv. Hist. l. 26. c. 24.

<sup>y</sup> T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 3. 1. Sanhedrim, fol. 44. 1.

that has its name from לילה, *the night*, a she demon, that used to appear in the night, with an human face, and carry off young children, and kill them. Some such frightful notions had possessed the minds of the disciples: *and they cried out for fear*, as persons in the utmost consternation, in the greatest danger, and in want of help: the fear of spirits arises from the uncommonness of their appearance; from their superiority to men in power and strength; from the enmity there is between men and evil spirits; and from a general notion of their doing hurt and mischief: hence, demons are, by the Jews, called בויקין, *hurtful*, or *hurting*, all their study being to do hurt to men; and the same word is here used in Munster's Hebrew Gospel: add to all this, that the fear of the disciples might be increased, through a vulgar notion among seafaring men, that such sights are ominous, and portend evil to sailors; and they might the more easily be induced to give credit to this, and fear, since they were already in such imminent danger.

Ver. 27. *But straightway Jesus spake unto them, &c.* Directly, the very moment, as soon as ever they cried out, and he perceived the consternation they were in, as one truly affected towards them, and concerned for their welfare; he called out aloud unto them, not coming with any intention to fright them, but to save them; *saying, be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid; take heart, be of good courage, don't be affrighted at my appearance, from whom you have nothing to fear; nor be afraid of the storm and tempest in which you are, I'll deliver you; for it is I, your Master, Saviour, and Redeemer, and not any hurtful spirit; who am able to save you, and am come for that purpose.* Christ may be sometimes near his people, and they not know him; as the Lord was in the place where Jacob was, and he knew it not, Gen. xxviii. 16. and as Christ was standing by Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, and she took him to be the gardener: and for want of a distinct knowledge of Christ in his person, offices, and grace, persons have wrong apprehensions of him, and are filled with dread and fears, concluding they have no interest in him; that he is a Saviour, but not of them; that their sins are so many, and of such a die, and attended with such aggravating circumstances, that though he is able to save them, he never can be willing to receive such vile sinners as they are: but when Christ makes himself known unto them, as the able and willing Saviour, and their Saviour and Redeemer, then, instead of dreading him as a judge, their fears vanish, their faith increases, and they are ready to do any thing he shall order them; as Peter says in the next verse, who was willing to come to Christ on the water, when he knew who he was, if he was but pleased to bid him come.

Ver. 28. *And Peter answered him and said, &c.* Who knew his voice, and was ready to believe it might be Christ; and having more courage, and being more forward than the rest of the disciples, ventured to speak to him; *saying, Lord, if it be thou; for he was not fully assured that it was he: he might consider that nocturnal apparitions are deceitful, and that*

Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, and could put on the appearance, and mimic the voice of Christ; wherefore, to try whether it was a spectre, or really Christ, he says, *bid me come unto thee on the water*; thereby expressing great love and affection to Christ, being willing to come to him, though through danger, through storms and tempests; and also his strong faith in him, supposing it to be he; who, he knew, was as able to support his body on the water, as his own; and yet much modesty, submission, and dependence; not willing to take a step without his order.

Ver. 29. *And he said, come, &c.* This he said, partly to assure them who he was; for had he denied him, he and the rest might have concluded, it was none of Jesus; and partly to commend his love, and confirm his faith, by giving a further instance of his power, in enabling him to walk upon the water, as he did: *and when Peter was come down out of the ship; as he immediately did, having orders from Christ; and being by this second speech fully convinced it was he, he walked on the water; a little way, being supported and enabled by the power of Christ; for this was an extraordinary and miraculous action: for if it was so in Christ, it was much more so in Peter: Christ walked upon the water by his own power, as God; Peter walked upon the water, being held up by the power of Christ.* The Jews \* indeed, call swimming על פני המים, *walking upon the face of the waters*: hence we read of a swimmer's vessel, which is explained to be what men make to learn in it, how לשוט על פני המים, *to go or walk upon the face of the waters*; \*; but then this is not going upon them upright, but prone, or lying along upon the surface of the waters, which was not Peter's case; he did not, as at another time, cast himself into the sea, and swim to Christ; see John xxi. 7. but as soon as he came down from the ship, standing upright, he walked upon the waters, *to go to Jesus*: not merely for walking sake, but for the sake of Christ, he dearly loved; that he might be with him, and be still more confirmed of the truth of its being he, and not a spirit.

Ver. 30. *But when he saw the wind boisterous, &c.* Or *strong*, blowing hard against him, and raising up the waves, which beat with great violence upon him, *he was afraid*; though Christ was so nigh him, and he had had such an instance of his power in bearing him up, causing him to walk upon the waters thus far; which shews, that his faith was imperfect: *and beginning to sink*; through fear, and the violence of the wind and waves, just ready to be immersed, and go down to the bottom of the sea, *he cried*; being in a great fright and much danger, and with great impatience and eagerness, *saying, Lord, save me*: I'm just going, I shall certainly perish else; still having so much faith in Christ, that he was able to save him in the last extremity.

Ver. 31. *And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, &c.* The Syriac reads it, וברשתו, *and in that very moment*; for his case required immediate assistance, and Christ readily gave it; he reached out his hand at once, being just by him, *and caught him*;

\* R. David Kimchi, Sepher Shorash. rad. שוש.

\* R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel moed, fol. 78. 1.

as he was sinking to the bottom, and lifted him up, and set him on his feet upon the water, and enabled him to walk with him to the ship; but not without reproving him for the weakness of his faith, and said unto him, *O thou of little faith: he does not say, O thou unbeliever! or, O thou who hast no faith! for some faith he had, though but small; of this phrase, see the note on ch. vi. 30. Wherefore didst thou doubt? waver, fluctuate, or wast divided between faith and fear. He was worthy of reproof, since he had had the order of Christ to come to him upon the water; and an experience of his power in supporting him thus far; and was now so near unto him, that he had no room to doubt, whether it was he or no, nor of his power to preserve him.*

Ver. 32. *And when they were come into the ship, &c.]* Christ and Peter. The Arabic and Persic versions, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read, *when he ascended, or was come into the ship*; but there's no doubt but Peter went with him into it, though the following effect is only to be ascribed to Christ's coming into the ship, and not to Peter's: *the wind ceased*: from blowing with that fury and violence it did before, and there was a perfect calm; which gave equal proof of the divine power of Christ, as his walking upon the sea: he walked upon the sea whilst the wind was blowing hard, and the waves were tumultuous; he comes into the ship, and all is calm; both winds and sea obey him, who is Lord of both.

Ver. 33. *Then they that were in the ship, &c.]* Not only the rest of the disciples, who remained in it, whilst Peter came forth out of it, to walk upon the sea, to go to Christ: but the mariners also, the owners of the vessel, and their servants that managed it, *came and worshipped him*: not merely in a civil, but in a religious way; being convinced, by what they saw, that he must be truly and properly God, and worthy of adoration; *saying, of a truth, thou art the son of God*: not by creation, as angels and men, nor by office, as magistrates, but by nature; being of the same essence, perfections, and power, with God, his father: and which these actions of his now done, as well as many others, are full attestations of; as his walking upon the sea, causing Peter to do so too, saving him when sinking, and stilling the wind and waves upon his entrance into the vessel; all which being observed by the disciples and mariners, drew out this confession upon full conviction from them, that he was a divine person, and the proper object of worship.

Ver. 34. *And when they were gone over, &c.]* That is, *the sea*, as Munster's Hebrew Gospel adds, the sea of Tiberias, or Galilee; *they came into the land of Gennesaret*; the same with Cinnereth, or Chinnereth, or Cinnerot, Numb. xxxiv. 11. Deut. iii. 17. Josh. xi. 2. and xii. 3. and xiii. 27. 1 Kings xv. 20. in all which places, the Chaldee paraphrase renders it by גִּנְסָרַיִם, *Ginusal*, the same word that is used in Munster's Hebrew Gospel here: it was a country in Galilee, in

the tribe of Napthali<sup>v</sup>, bordering upon a lake, called the lake of Gennesaret; taking its name from the country, or the country from the lake: it was exceeding fruitful, full of gardens and orchards; hence we often read in the Talmud<sup>z</sup>, of פִּירְתֵי גִנְסָרַיִם, *the fruits of Genuzar*, or Gennesaret, which are said to be exceeding sweet: and it is said to<sup>a</sup> be a country in the land of Israel, in which were many gardens; and by others<sup>b</sup>, a place in the land of Galilee (as it was) whose fruits were large and good; and was, as Josephus says<sup>c</sup>, thirty furlongs long and twenty broad. And thus the saints, after a long and troublesome passage over the sea of this world, arrive, at last, safe at their desired haven, and enter upon a most delightful country, a paradise, a garden of pleasure; where all delicious fruits and desirable things are enjoyed, even pleasures for evermore; where they shall be led to fountains of living waters, into fulness of joy; where all troubles will cease, and tears will be wiped away; and when they will have leisure and capacity to reflect upon all they have met with in their dangerous, and difficult voyage; and will admire the wonderful grace of God, which has been with them; and his divine power, which has appeared for them, and supported them, and brought them safe to eternal glory; and they will ascribe greatness to Christ, as the son of God, and for ever worship him as the eternal Jehovah, who has done such great things for them, as none but God can do.

Ver. 35. *And when the men of the place had knowledge of him, &c.]* Not merely by report, but by face, having seen, and heard him before; see Luke v. 1. *They sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased*; which not only expresses their faith in him, that he was able to heal all their sick and diseased, were they ever so many; but also their affectionate regard to their fellow-creatures and countrymen; and their care and diligence in sending messengers about to their respective cities, towns, and villages, and which must be attended with expense: for they neither spared cost nor pains, to do good to their country; in all which, they set an example worthy of imitation.

Ver. 36. *And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment, &c.]* As the woman with the bloody issue did; ch. ix. 20. This they desired, partly to shew the strength of their faith in him, that they doubted not of a cure, could they be admitted so near his person; and partly, to signify the sense of their unworthiness, to be in another way taken notice of by him, either by speaking to them, or putting his hands on them: *and as many as touched, were made perfectly whole*. Christ condescended to this their request, and perfectly cured all such of their diseases, of whatever kind they were, who, in the exercise of faith, touched the hem of his garment, the fringe he wore, in compliance with the ceremonial law, Numb. xv. 38. 39. Deut. xxii. 12.

<sup>v</sup> Targum Jon. in Deut. xxxiii. 23.

<sup>z</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 44. 1. Erubin, fol. 30. 1. & Pesachim, fol. 68.

<sup>a</sup> Vid. Jarchi in Isa. xxviii. 1. & Kimchi in Josh. xi. & in 1 Kings xv. 20.

<sup>a</sup> Maimon. in Misn. Maserot, c. 3. sect. 7.

<sup>b</sup> Bartenora, in ib.

<sup>c</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 32.

## C H A P. XV.

Ver. 1. **THEN** came to Jesus Scribes and Pharisees, &c.] After he had wrought so many miracles, particularly that of feeding five thousand men; besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes: the fame of which had reached Jerusalem, and occasioned much talk there about him: the Scribes and Pharisees, who were his inveterate enemies, hearing thereof, came to him, where he was, in Galilee, to know the truth of these things, to converse with him, and to watch, and observe, what he said and did; *which were of Jerusalem, saying.* There were Scribes and Pharisees throughout the land, but those of Jerusalem were the chief; they were men of the greatest learning and abilities, and were more expert in their religion and customs: these were either sent by the sanhedrim at Jerusalem, or came of themselves; taking upon them a greater power, and authority of examining, correcting, directing, and advising.

Ver. 2. *Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? &c.*] Having observed, for some little time, the conduct of Christ and his disciples, they thought proper to take no notice of him as yet, but of them; and of them, not as transgressing any command of God, but of men; not being able to charge them with any breach of the law of God: and could they have done this with any shew of truth, yet they might choose rather to accuse them of breaking the rules of the elders; by whom they mean, not the elders of the present sanhedrim, but Hillel and Shammai; the two heads of their famous schools, and other ancient doctors; from whom were delivered by one to another, certain rules and laws of their own devising, which had no foundation in the word of God; and of these the Scribes and Pharisees were more tenacious, than of the Scriptures; and indeed they preferred them before them: most extravagant are their praises and commendations of these unwritten traditions; thus they say<sup>d</sup>, "Know then, that the words of the Scribes are more lovely than the words of the law: for, says R. Tarphon, if a man does not read, he only transgresses an affirmative; but if he transgresses the words of the school of Hillel, he is guilty of death, because he hath broke down a hedge, and a serpent shall bite him." 'Tis a tradition of R. Ishmael, the words of the law have in them both prohibition and permission; some of them are light, and some heavy, but the words of the Scribes are all of them heavy — "חמורים דברי זקנים, weightier are the words of the elders, than the words of the prophets." And elsewhere<sup>e</sup>, this advice is given; "My son, attend to the words of the Scribes, more than to the words of the law: for in the words of the law, are affir-

matives and negatives; but the words of the Scribes "כל העובר על דברי סופרים, every one that transgresses the words of the Scribes, is guilty of death." This is what they charge the disciples with here, and could they have had their wills, would have put them to death for it: the particular tradition, they accuse them with the breach of, follows, for they wash not their hands when they eat bread; common bread, an ordinary meal; for, for eating of holy things, more than bare washing was required, even an immersion of them in water; but the hands were to be washed before eating common food, whether they were known to be defiled or no: bread is particularly mentioned, as including all sorts of food, and as distinct from fruit; for, for eating of common fruit, there was no need of washing of hands; he that washed his hands for eating fruit, was reckoned an ostentatious man<sup>1</sup>, who were the first authors of this tradition, 'tis not certain; 'tis said<sup>2</sup>, that "Hillel and Shammai decreed על טוהרות ידים, concerning the purification of the hands; R. Jose ben R. Bon, in the name of R. Levi, says, so was the tradition before, but they forgot it; and these two stood up, and agreed with the minds of the former ones." However, it is a certain point, that the washing of the hands, and the dipping of them, are "מבריי סופרים, from the words of the Scribes<sup>3</sup>." The breach of this rule was reckoned equal to the most flagitious crimes<sup>4</sup>: R. Jose says, "whoever eats bread without washing of hands, is as if he lay with a whore; and, says R. Eleazer, whoever despoiseth washing of hands, shall he rooted out of the world." And elsewhere it is said by them<sup>5</sup>, that "he that blesteth (food) with defiled hands, is guilty of death." And again<sup>6</sup>, "whoever does not wash his hands as is fitting, although he is punished above, he shall be punished below." And to fright people into an observance of this tradition, they talk of Shibta, a sort of an evil spirit, that hurts such as eat without washing their hands: they say, he sits upon their hands, and upon their bread, and leaves something behind, which is very dangerous<sup>7</sup>; and it is recorded<sup>8</sup>, to the praise of R. Akiba, that he chose rather to die, than to transgress this tradition; for being in prison, and in want of water, what little he had, he washed his hands with it, instead of drinking it. Eleazar ben Chanac was excommunicated for despising the tradition concerning washing of hands; and when he died, the sanhedrim sent and put a great stone upon his coffin, to shew, that he that died in his excommunication, the sanhedrim stoned his coffin<sup>9</sup>: but of this, see more in the note on Mark vii. 3.

<sup>d</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 3. 2.

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Erubim, fol. 21. 2. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 4. 2.

<sup>f</sup> Misn. Chagiga, c. 2. sect. 5, 6. Maimon. Prefat. ad Tract. Yadaim, & Hilch. Beracot, c. 6. sect. 3.

<sup>g</sup> T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 3. 4.

<sup>h</sup> Maimon Hilch. Mikvaot, c. 11. sect. 1.

<sup>i</sup> T. Bab. Sota, fol. 4. 2.

<sup>k</sup> Zohar in Deut. fol. 107. 3.

<sup>l</sup> Ib. in Gen. fol. 60. 2.

<sup>m</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 77. 2. Taanith, fol. 20. 2. & Cholin, fol. 107. 2.

<sup>n</sup> T. B. Erubim, fol. 21. 2.

<sup>o</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 19. 1.

Ver. 3. *But he answered and said unto them, &c.*] Taking no notice of the tradition about eating bread without washing the hands, whether it was right or wrong; it being at most but an human tradition, of no moment and importance, whether it was broke or kept; he makes a very just recrimination, by putting another question to them, *why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?* suggesting, that, if his disciples were guilty, they were not so guilty as they themselves were; that his disciples, at most, were but guilty of the breach of an human precept, whereas they were guilty of the breach of a divine command; and that it was strange, that men who were so scrupulous of breaking, and bore so hard on such as did transgress the traditions of the elders, could allow themselves to transgress the commandments of God; yea, to do this by, and while they were observing their own traditions: and which observation carries a full acquittance of the disciples from blame; for, if by keeping the traditions of the elders, they broke the commands of God, it was a very good reason why they should not observe them.

Ver. 4. *For God commanded, saying, &c.*] That he might not be thought to suggest this without any foundation, he gives them an instance, wherein a command of God was transgressed, by the observance of their tradition: the command he refers to, stands in Exod. xx. 12. and is this; *Honour thy father and mother.* This was a plain command of God, written with his own hand, and delivered by Moses to them; it was of a moral nature, and of eternal obligation: and to be understood, not merely of that high esteem parents are to be had in by their children, and of the respectful language and gesture to be used towards them, and of the cheerful obedience to be yielded to them; but also of honouring them with their substance, feeding, clothing, and supplying them with the necessaries of life, when they stand in need thereof; which is but their reasonable service, for all the care, expense, and trouble they have been at, in bringing them up in the world: nor did the Jews deny this to be the duty of children to their parents, and own it to be the sense of the commandment: they say<sup>p</sup>, that this is the weightiest commandment among the weighty ones, even this, the honouring of father and mother; and ask, "What is this honour?" To which is replied, he "must give him food, drink, and clothing; buckle his shoes, and lead him in, and bring him out." They indeed laid down this as a rule, and it seems a very equitable one<sup>q</sup>; that, "when a man's father has any money, or substance, he must be supported out of that; but if he has none, he must support him out of his own." But then, as will be seen hereafter, they made void this command of God, and their own explications of it, by some other tradition. Moreover, Christ observes, that it is said, Exod. xxii. 17. *And he that curseth father or mother,*

*let him die the death;* temporal and eternal: and which is a positive command of God, made as a fence for the former; and is to be understood, not only of giving abusive language to parents, but of slighting, as the Hebrew word signifies, and neglecting them, taking no notice of them, when needy and in distress, to supply their wants. Now these commands of God, Christ shews the Jews transgressed by their tradition, as appears from the following verses.

Ver. 5, 6. *But ye say, whosoever shall say to his father or mother, &c.*] That is, it was a tradition of theirs, that if a man should say to his father and mother, when poor and in distress, and made application to him for sustenance, *it is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, and honour not his father, or his mother, he shall be free;* or, as Mark expresses it, *it is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, he shall be free, and ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or mother.* For the understanding of this tradition, let it be observed, that the word *Corban* signifies a gift, or offering, which was devoted to sacred use; and was unalienable, and could not be converted to any other use; and that this word was used among the Jews, from hence, as the form of an oath, or vow; and therefore, when any one said *Corban*, it was all one, as if he swore by *Corban*; or as if he had said, let it be as *Corban*, as unalienable as *Corban*: by which oath, or vow, the use of that which was spoken of, whether it respected a man's self, or others, was restrained and prohibited: the rule was<sup>r</sup> this *קרבן כאומר* *קרבן הוא אסור*, *בקרבו הוא אסור*, *if a man said Corban, it was as if he said as Corban, and it was forbidden;* and if he used the words *Conem*, *Conach*, and *Conas*, which they call<sup>s</sup> the surnames of *Corban*, and were no other than corruptions of it, it was all one as if he had said *Corban* itself. There are many instances of this kind of vows, and the form of them in their oral law<sup>t</sup>, or book of traditions; "If any one should say, *קונם שאני נהנה*, *Conem (or Corban) whatsoever I might be profited by the sons of Noah, it is free of an Israelite, and forbidden of a Gentile;* "if he should say, *whatsoever I might be profited by the seed of Abraham, it is forbidden of an Israelite, and is free of a Gentile*—if any one should say, *קונם שאני נהנה לערלים*, *Conem (or Corban) whatsoever I might be profited by the uncircumcised, it is free of the uncircumcised of Israel, and forbidden of the circumcised of the Gentiles;* if he says *Conem (or Corban) whatsoever I might be profited by the circumcised, it is forbidden of the circumcised of Israel, and free of the circumcised of the Gentiles.*" Again<sup>u</sup>, "if any one says to his friend, *לך נהנה*, *Conem (or Corban) whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, &c.*" which is exactly the same form as here, unless it should be rather rendered, *whatsoever I might be profited by thee: once more*<sup>v</sup>, "if a married woman should say to her husband, *קונם שאני נהנית לאבני ולאבניך*, *Conem (or*

<sup>p</sup> T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 61. 2.

<sup>q</sup> Piske Joseph. ad T. Bab. Kiddushin, art. 61.

<sup>r</sup> T. Hieros. Nedariim, fol. 37. 1. Misn. Nedariim, c. 1. sect. 4. Maimon. Hilch. Nedariim, c. 1. sect. 7.

<sup>s</sup> Misn. Nedariim, c. 1. sect. 1, 2. Maimon. Hilch. Nedariim, c. 1. sect. 16.

<sup>t</sup> Misn. Nedariim, c. 3. sect. 11.

<sup>u</sup> Ib. c. 3. sect. 7. Vid. c. 11. sect. 2, 4.

<sup>v</sup> Ib. c. 11. sect. 11.



"Corban) whatsoever I might be profited by my father, or thy father, &c." Let these instances suffice: the plain and evident sense of the tradition before us, is this; that when, upon application being made to a man by his parents, for support and sustenance, he makes a vow in such form as this, *Corban, whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me*; that is, whatsoever profit or advantage thou mightest have, or expect to have from me, let it be as *Corban*, as a gift devoted to God, that can never be revoked and converted to another use; or, in other words, I vow and protest thou shalt never have any profit from me, not a penny, nor a pennyworth of mine. Now, when a man had made such an impious vow as this, according to this tradition, it was to stand firm and good, and he was not to honour his father or mother, or do any thing for them, by way of relief: so that our Lord might justly observe upon it as he does; *thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect, by your tradition*: for if such a vow was valid, and a man was obliged to abide by it, according to the tradition of the elders, and not honour his father and mother, as the law of God requires; 'tis a plain case, that the command of God was made void by this tradition: nay they expressly say <sup>2</sup>, that נדרים חלות על דברי מצוה *vows fall upon things of a (divine) commandment*, as well as upon things in a man's power, and that he is bound by them; so that without sin he can't do what the law commands; inasmuch, that if a man vows a vow, and that it may be ratified, a command must be made void, his vow must stand, and the command be abrogated. So truly and justly does Christ charge them with making the command of God of none effect, by their tradition. It is indeed disputed by the doctors, and at last allowed, that such a vow might be dissolved by a wise man, for the honour of parents'. "R. Eliezer says, they open to a man, (*i. e.* the door of repentance, and dissolve his vow,) for the honour of his father and his mother, but the wise men forbid it. Says R. Tzadok, if they open to him for the honour of his father and mother, they will open to him for the honour of God, and if so, there will be no vows: however, the wise men agreed with R. Eliezer in the affair between a man and his parents, that they should open to him for the honour of them." And this could be done only by a wise man; and very probably this last decree was made on account of this just reproof of Christ's, being ashamed any longer to countenance so vile a practice; and even, according to this determination, the vow stood firm till dissolved by one of their doctors: so that notwithstanding, Christ's argument is good, and the instance full to prove that for which he brought it: for the above reason it may be, it is, that this tradition Christ refers to is not now extant; but that there was such an one in Christ's time, is certain; he would never have asserted it else; and had it not been true, the Pharisees would have been able to have refuted him, and forward enough to have done it: and that such vows were sometimes made, and which were not to be rescinded, is clear from the

<sup>2</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Nedarim, c. 3. sect. 1. 6, 7. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Misn. Nedarim, c. 9. sect. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Ib. c. 5. sect. 6.

following fact\*. "It happened to one in Bethoron, שודיה אביו מרדד היכנו הנאה, *whose father was excluded, by a vow, from receiving any profit from him*: and he married his son, and said to his friend, a court and a dinner are given to thee by gift; but they are not to be made use of by thee, but with this condition, that my father may come and eat with us at dinner;" which was a device to have his father at dinner, and yet secure his vow. Upon the whole, the sense of this passage is, not that a man excused himself to his parents, according to this tradition, by saying, that his substance, either in whole, or in part, was *Corban*, or devoted to the service of God, and therefore they could expect no profit, or relief, from him; but that he vowed that what he had should be as *Corban*, and they should be never the better for it: so that a man so vowing might give nothing to the service of God, but keep his whole substance to himself; which he might make use of for his own benefit, and for the benefit of others, but not for his father and mother; who, after such a vow made, were to receive no benefit by it, unless rescinded by a wise man; and which seems to be an explanation of it, made after the times of Christ.

Ver. 7. *Ye hypocrites, &c.*] After our Lord had given so full a proof of their making void the commandments of God by their traditions, he might very justly, as he does, call them hypocrites; who pretended to so much religion and holiness, and yet scrupled not, upon occasion, to set aside a divine command; who affected so much sanctity, as to be displeas'd with the disciples, for not complying with an order of their elders, when they themselves made no account of a divine precept; and plainly shewed they had more regard to men than God, and to the precepts of men, than to the commands of God, and to approve themselves to men more than to God; and that they sought the praise and applause of men, and not the honour which comes from God; and that their religion lay in mere rituals and externals, and those of men's devising, and not in the spiritual worship and service of God. Nor can it be thought that Christ, in calling them hypocrites, bears too hard upon them; when one of their own doctors, who lived not very distant from this age, says<sup>a</sup> of the men of Jerusalem, that "if the hypocrites of the world were divided into ten parts, nine of them would belong to Jerusalem, and one to the rest of the world." *Well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying*, in ch. xxix. 13. which prophecy, though it was directed to, and suited with many in that generation in which the prophet lived, yet had a further view to the Jews in after-times: their own writers<sup>b</sup> acknowledge, that the whole prophecy is spoken of that nation; for by Ariel they understand the altar at Jerusalem, the city in which David dwelt,

Ver. 8. *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, &c.*] The preface to these words, or the form in which they are introduced by the prophet; *wherefore the Lord said*, is left out in this citation, being unnecessary here, though of the greatest importance there;

<sup>a</sup> R. Nathan in Rabba, sect. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Abarbinel, Jarchi, Kimchi, & Aben Ezra.

partly to shew, that what was about to be said, was not the prophet's own words, but the words of the Lord, of which the Jews in Christ's time made no doubt; and partly to give a reason why that judicial blindness, threatened in the context, should be inflicted on them, which is no part of Christ's design here; but which is only to shew, that the description here given exactly agrees with them, and so proves, and confirms the character he gives of them as hypocrites. They approached the ordinances of God, and drew nigh to him, and attended him in outward worship; they prayed unto him publicly, and constantly, in the streets, in the synagogues, and temple, and with much seeming devotion and sanctity: *and honoureth me with their lips*: they owned him to be their creator, and preserver; they made their boast of him, and of their knowledge of him, as the one only living, and true God, and as the God of Israel; they brought their sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, even the fruit of their lips, unto him, for their many peculiar mercies, privileges, and favours, as a nation, church, and people, and with much seeming sincerity and affection. *But their heart is far from me*; they had no true love to God, nor faith in him, nor fear of him; they were not at all concerned for his presence with them, or for communion with him, or for his honour and glory; their hearts were in the world, and after their covetousness; they made religion a tool to their secular purposes, supposing gain to be godliness; sought the applause of men, and contented themselves with bodily exercise; having no regard to internal religion, powerful godliness, or where their hearts were, so be it, their bodies were presented to God in public worship; and what they did it was to be seen and approved of men, not caring what the searcher of hearts knew concerning them, or what he required of them.

Ver. 9. *But in vain do they worship me, &c.*] In the Hebrew text it is, *their fear towards me*; which is rightly expressed here by *worship*; for the fear of God often intends the whole worship of God, both external and internal: here it only signifies external worship, which these men only attended to. They prayed in the synagogues, read, and, in their way, expounded the books of Moses, and the prophets, to the people, diligently observed the rituals of the ceremonial law, brought their offerings and sacrifices to the temple, and neglected nothing appertaining to the outward service of it; and yet it was all *in vain*, and to no purpose; since the heart was wanting, no grace there, they acted from wrong principles, and with wrong views; their worship was merely outward, formal, and customary; and besides, they added doctrines and traditions of their own inventing and devising. The phrase, *in vain*, is not in the text in Isaiah: some have thought that it was not originally in Matthew, but inserted by some other hand, to make the sense more complete. Grotius thinks there was a various reading, which is followed by the Septuagint, and the evangelist; and that instead of *ותרי*, *and is*, it was *ותרי*, the same with *לתרי*, *in vain*: but there is no need to suppose either of these: Christ, who made this citation, either added it himself for the clearer illustration of

the passage, and as being entirely agreeable to the sense of it, and which it required, for the true understanding of it; or he might have in his view another passage of the same prophet, speaking of the same people, and upon the same subject, Isa. i. 11, 13. and from thence take the phrase, and, for explanation-sake, join it to the passage here. It follows, *teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*; that is, teaching the people to observe the traditions of the elders, the decrees and determinations of the doctors, as if they were doctrines delivered by God himself; or, instead of the doctrines contained in the Bible; which lay neglected by them, they obtruded on them the orders and injunctions of men. In the text in Isaiah, are only these words, *taught by the precept of men*; and which relate to their fear and worship of God; and which is here interpreted of their teachers teaching them it, and that explained of the commandments of men; as if, instead of *בלמוד*, *taught*, it had been read, *בלמדי*, *teaching*. The Jews have no reason to quarrel with this construction and sense, since their Targum paraphrases it thus; *and their fear before me is, נתפקידת נברין מלפין*, according to the commandment of men that teach: and a noted commentator<sup>c</sup> of their's has this remark on the text, *their fear towards me is not with a perfect heart, but by the commandment אותם המלמדים אותם*, of the men that teach them.

Ver. 10. *And he called the multitude, &c.*] Having silenced the Scribes and Pharisees, and judging it not worth his while to say any more to men so obstinate and perverse; who were not open to conviction, nor would attend to any argument or reason, though ever so clear and strong, against their darling notions; he leaves them, as both disliking them, and despairing of them, and calls to the common people; who, through their great veneration for these men, upon their coming withdrew, and stood at a distance; nor indeed would they admit them very near unto them, lest they should be polluted by them: Christ, I say, calls to these to come nearer to him, hoping better of them, and knowing that they were more tractable, and teachable; and that there were some among them, that were to be brought off of their former principles and prejudices, to embrace him, and the truths delivered by him: *and said unto them, hear and understand*; this he said, partly by way of reflection upon the learned Scribes and Pharisees, who, with all their learning, could not hear him so as to understand him; and partly to excite the attention of the multitude to what he had to say; as also to shew, that barely to hear with the outward hearing of the ear, will be of no service, unless what is heard is understood; and that the way to understand, is to hear.

Ver. 11. *Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth the man, &c.*] No sorts of meats, or drinks, or whatever is proper food for men, or manner of eating and drinking them, when moderately used; defile a man, or render him loathsome and odious in the sight of God. This is directly opposite to the notions of the Jews, who say<sup>d</sup>, that "forbidden meats are unclean themselves, *דגורין דונפש*, *and defile both body and soul.*" The first food of man was herbs; after

<sup>c</sup> R. Sol. Jarchi in Isa. xxix. 13.

<sup>d</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 142. 1.

the food he had an allowance of the flesh of beasts, without distinction; under the Levitical dispensation, a difference of meats was enjoined to be observed; the laws respecting that distinction are now abolished, and not binding on us under the Gospel dispensation. Some scruples, about some of these things, did arise among the first Christians; but in process of time these difficulties were got over: nor is there any religion in abstinence from any sort of food; men, indeed, on a *physical* account, ought to be careful what they eat and drink, but not on a religious one; moderation in all ought to be used; and whatever is ate or drank, should be received with thankfulness, and done to the glory of God, and then no defilement can arise from hence: *but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.* 'Tis sin, and that only, which takes its rise from the heart, lies in thought, and is either expressed by the mouth, or performed by some outward action, which defiles the man, and renders him loathsome, abominable, and odious in the sight of God. The heart is the source of all evil; the pollution of it is very early, and very general, reaching to all the powers and faculties of the soul; which shews the ignorance of some, and folly of others, that talk of, and trust to the goodness of their hearts; and also the necessity of new hearts and right spirits being formed and created; and that the sinful thoughts of the heart, and the lusts thereof, are defiling to men; and that they are sinful in God's account, and abominable in his sight; that they are loathsome to sensible sinners, and are to be repented of, and forsaken by them; and need the pardoning grace of God, or otherwise will be brought into judgment. Sinful words, which, through the abundance of wickedness in the heart, come out of the mouth, have the same influence and effect: words are of a defiling nature; with these men pollute both themselves and others: the tongue, though a little member, defiles the whole body; and evil and corrupt communication proceeding out of the mouth, corrupts the best of manners, and renders men loathsome to God, and liable to his awful judgment. And this is the nature of all sinful actions; they are what God can take no pleasure in; they are disagreeable to a sensible mind; they leave a stain, which can never be removed by any thing the creature can do; nothing short of the blood of Christ can cleanse from it; and inasmuch as they are frequently committed, there's need of continual application to it. These are now the things men should be concerned about, as of a defiling nature; and not about meats and drinks, and the manner of using them, whether with hands washed, or unwashed.

Ver 12. *Then came his disciples, and said unto him, &c.*] That is, after he had dismissed the people, and was come into a private house; see Mark vii. 17. his disciples came to him, being alone, full of concern, for what he had said to the Pharisees, and before all the people; and not so well understanding it themselves. *Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this saying?* that they set aside the commandments of God, by observing the traditions of the elders; or that they were hypocrites; and that the prophecy of Isaiah, which describes such persons,

belonging to them; or that not what goes into, but what comes out of a man, defiles him: whichever it was they have respect unto, or it may be to the whole, they seem to wish Christ had not said it; because the Pharisees were, as they thought, grieved and troubled at it, as being contrary to true religion and piety; and lest they should be so stumbled, as no more to attend, and so all hopes of bringing them over to the faith of Christ be lost; and chiefly, because they perceived they were made exceeding angry, and were highly provoked, so that they might fear that both Christ, and they themselves, would feel the effects of their wrath and rage; and perhaps it was with some such view, that he would take some prudential step that he might not fall into their hands, that they acquaint him with it.

Ver. 13. *But he answered, and said, &c.*] As being unconcerned at their rage, and having nothing to fear from them; and being well satisfied, that what he had said was right, and would produce proper effects, he gave his disciples this for answer: *every plant which my heavenly father hath not planted, shall be rooted up:* which may be understood either of things, or of persons: it may have regard to doctrines and ordinances; and the meaning be, that whatever doctrine is not delivered by God, or whatever ordinance is not instituted by him; whatever is not of heaven, but of man, of man's devising, and of human imposition, as the traditions of the elders, must be opposed and rejected; and sooner or later will be utterly rooted up, and destroyed; as will all the false notions, corrupt worship, and errors, and heresies of men, in God's own time: or it may respect persons. There are some plants, which are planted by Christ's father, which is in heaven; these are the elect of God, who are trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. These are planted by the river of God's love, in the person of Christ, in the likeness of his death and resurrection; they are transplanted out of a state of nature, are ingrafted into Christ, have the graces of the spirit implanted in their souls; and are themselves planted in the courts of the Lord, in a Gospel church-state; and being watered with the dews of grace, appear to be choice plants, plants of renown, pleasant ones, very fruitful, and which shall never perish, or be rooted, and plucked up; but there are others, like these Pharisees, hypocrites, formal professors, and heretics, who pretend to much religion and holiness, make a shew of the leaves of profession, but have not the fruit of grace; these get into churches, and are outwardly and ministerially planted there; but being never rooted in Christ, nor partake of his grace, in time they wither; and die away; or persecution arising because of the word, or truth being dispensed in so clear and glaring a light, that they cannot bear it; they are offended with it, and so are detected, discovered, and rooted up: and it is necessary that truth should be freely spoken, as it was here by Christ, that such plants might be rooted out; for these words are said by Christ, in justification of his conduct. So the Jews speak of God, as a planter, and of rooting up what he does not like. "The holy, blessed God (say they),

"plants trees in this world; if they prosper, it is well; if they do not prosper, אֵשֶׁקֶר לוֹן, *he roots them up*, and plants them even many times." And elsewhere 'tis said, "let the master of the vineyard come, and consume its thorns: the gloss on it is, the holy, blessed God; for the vineyard of the Lord of hosts, is the house of Israel, and he will consume, and take away the thorns of the vineyard."

Ver. 14. *Let them alone, &c.*] Have nothing to say, or do with them; don't mind their anger and resentment, their reproaches and reflections, nor trouble yourselves at the offence they have taken; if they'll go, let them go; they are a worthless generation of men, who are not to be regarded, hearkened to, nor to be pleased; it matters not what they say of me, and of my doctrine: *they be blind leaders of the blind*; the people that hearken to them, and are followers of them, are *blind*, as to any true sense of themselves, their state, and condition by nature; as to any spiritual, saving knowledge of God; as to any acquaintance with the Messiah, and the method of salvation by him; as to the spirit of God, and the work of grace, regeneration, and sanctification upon the soul; as to the Scriptures of truth, and doctrines of the Gospel; and the *leaders* of them were as *blind* as they: by whom are meant the Scribes and Pharisees, the learned doctors and rabbins of the Jewish nation; who thought themselves very wise and knowing, yet they were blind also; and none more than they. It was an old tradition\* among the Jews, "that there should be *blind teachers* at the time when God should have his *tabernacle* among them. This was predicted, in Isa. xlii. 19. and all such leaders and teachers are blind, who, notwithstanding their natural abilities, and acquired parts, are in a state of unregeneracy; and have nothing more than what they have from nature, or have attained to at school; and as apparently all such are, who lead men from Christ, to mere morality, and to a dependence upon their own righteousness for justification, which was the darling principle of the blind leaders in the text. *And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch*; of ignorance and error, immorality and profaneness, distress, if not despair, temporal ruin and destruction; which was notoriously verified in the Jewish people, and their guides: and of eternal damnation, the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; what else can be expected?

Ver. 15. *Then answered Peter, &c.*] Mark says, *his disciples asked him concerning the parable*: which might be by the mouth of Peter; who, probably, being the eldest man, and very forward to speak, was generally their spokesman: and who, at this time, might be requested, by the rest, to ask the meaning of the parable, which had given offence to the Pharisees, and was not clearly understood by them; which he accordingly did: *and said unto him, declare unto us this parable*: that not what goes into the mouth, but what comes out of it, defiles the man; which, though expressed in very plain words, and easy to be understood, yet did not appear clear to their understandings; and seemed to be contrary, not only to the traditions of the

elders, but to the laws of God, respecting the difference of clean and unclean meats; and therefore call it a *parable*; and desire an explanation of it.

Ver. 16. *And Jesus said, &c.*] As wondering at, and as being displeased with, and as reproving them for their dulness and ignorance: *are ye also yet without understanding?* you, my disciples, as well as the Scribes and Pharisees; you, who have been with me so long, who have heard so many discourses from me, who for so long a time have been instructed by me, both in private, and in public; and yet do not understand what is so plain and easy, that has nothing of difficulty in it, but what might easily be accounted for.

Ver. 17. *Do not ye understand, &c.*] You must understand, you can't be so ignorant, *that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth, goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught*? that is, that whatsoever food a man takes in at his mouth, he swallows down, and it is received into his stomach; which, having performed its office, the grosser parts go down into the belly, and passing through the bowels, are evacuated into the vault, or privy, *purging all meats*, as Mark says; for that only receives the filth and excrementitious matter; so that what is left in the body is pure, wholesome, and nourishing: nor can any part of what goes into a man defile him, because it only enters into the body, and passes through it; and, as Mark says, *entereth not into the heart*, which is the seat of moral impurity; so that no moral pollution can be contracted by eating any sort of food, even though it should not be clean itself, nor be eaten with clean hands.

Ver. 18. *But those things which proceed out of the mouth, &c.*] Meaning not material things, as spittle, vomit, &c. but, as it follows, which *come forth from the heart*: are first conceived and formed there, and then come forth from thence, and are expressed by the mouth; as all idle words, foolish talking, filthy jesting, unsavoury communication, and every word that is rotten and corrupt, or which is done in the life and conversation; *and they defile the man*: the heart is the corrupt fountain from whence all moral defilement flows; and sinful words and actions are the impure streams, which spring from thence, and increase the moral pollution of human nature.

Ver. 19. *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, &c.*] Of God, of Christ, of the spirit, of fellow-creatures, and of all sorts of wickedness. The thoughts of sin are evil, are to be hated, forsaken, and for which men are accountable to God. All wicked imaginations, carnal reasonings, lustful desires, and malicious contrivances, are here included; which take their rise from, and are devised, and forged, in the corrupt heart of man. *Murders*: inveterate hatred of men's persons, malice prepense, schemes to take away life, all angry and wrathful words, and actual effusion of man's blood. *Adulteries*: uncleanness committed between married persons, both in thought, and deed: *fornications*: unlawful copulations of persons in a single state: *thefts*; taking away from others by force or fraud, what is their right and property: *false witness*; swearing falsely, or exhibiting a false testimony to the hurt of his neighbour, either his name, person, or

\* T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 82. 2.

\* Midrash Tillim in Psal. cxlvi. apud Grotium in loc.

estate: *blasphemies*; evil speakings of God or men. To which Mark adds *covetousness*; a greedy and insatiable desire after the things of the world, or the neighbour's goods: *wickedness*; doing hurt and mischief to fellow-creatures: *deceit*. in words and actions, in trade and conversation: *lasciviousness*. all manner of uncleanness, and unnatural lusts: *an evil eye*; of envy and covetousness: the vitiosity, or corruption of nature, is, by the Jews<sup>b</sup>, called עין רעה, *the evil eye*: *pride*; in heart and life, in dress and gesture; and *foolishness*; expressed in talk and conduct.

Ver. 20. *These are the things which defile a man, &c.*] These are filthy in themselves, and must pollute all in whom they are; they bring a defilement on the whole man, both body and soul, fasten guilt upon him, and expose him to everlasting punishment: *but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man*: should a man neglect to wash his hands before eating a common meal, this need give him no uneasiness; he contracts no filth to his soul hereby, nor any guilt to his conscience; nor does he break any law of God; nor is he liable to any penalty for such an omission. This is a trifling matter, and merits no regard; but the things before mentioned are in their nature evil: they are contrary to the law of God; they are abominable in his sight; they render men loathsome and odious to the divine being; and expose them to shame and ruin; and it is only the blood of Christ can cleanse them from the pollution and guilt of them, and secure them from that punishment they deserve.

Ver. 21. *Then Jesus went thence, &c.*] From the land of Genesaret, after he had silenced the Pharisees, as to the charge brought by them against his disciples; and when he had reproved them for their hypocrisy and wickedness, in making void the commands of God by their traditions; and had explained some difficult and parabolical sayings he had made use of to his disciples, he then left that country, and departed very privately: either to shun the multitude, for the sake of retirement; or to avoid any snares the Scribes and Pharisees might be laying for him, who must be greatly galled with his free discourse, and strong arguments: *and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon*; two principal cities of Phœnicia: not that he went into these places themselves, but into some places that bordered upon them; for as he ordered his disciples not to go in the way of the Gentiles, so neither did he himself.

Ver. 22. *And behold a woman of Canaan, &c.*] That is, of Phœnicia, which was called Canaan; so Shaul, the son of a Canaanitish woman, is, by the Septuagint in Exod. vi. 15. called the son of a Phœnician; and the kings of Canaan are, by the same interpreters in Jos. v. 1. called kings of Phœnicia: hence this woman is by Mark said to be a Greek, that is, a Gentile, as the Jews used to call all of another nation, and a Syro-phœnician, being a native of Phœnicia, called Syro-phœnician; because it bordered upon Syria, and had been formerly a part of it, by conquest: so Cadmus, who is reported to have first brought letters from Phœnicia to Greece, is called<sup>1</sup> a Syro-phœnician merchant. *Came out of the same coasts*; being an in-

habitant, it is very likely, either of Tyre or Sidon: this shews that Christ did not go into these places, but only to the borders of them, since she is said to come out of them to him; who, having heard of him, and the miraculous cures wrought by him, and being informed that he was near, at such a place, as the Persic version says, *suddenly came forth out of a corner*; and the Ethiopic reads it, *out of the mountains thereof*; and made to the house where he was privately retired, and would have hid himself, as Mark suggests, *and cried unto him*; with a loud voice, with much vehemency, being in great distress, *saying, have mercy on me*; meaning, by curing her daughter, with whose case she was so much affected, that she made it, as it were, her own: *O Lord, thou son of David*. The first of these characters expresses her faith in his power, dominion, and government, that all persons and things, and so all diseases were at his command, and control; and that being Lord of all, he could remove them at his pleasure: the other shews her knowledge and belief of him, as the Messiah, that being a name by which he was usually known by the Jews; see the note on Matt. i. 1. and which she, though a Gentile, might come at the knowledge of, either through being a proselyte to the Jewish religion, or through a general report which might reach, especially the neighbouring nations, that the Jews expected a wonderful deliverer to arise among them, under this character of the son of David; and from what she had heard of him, she concluded he must be the person. *My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil*, which had took possession of her, and most grievously afflicted her: and her request to him was, that he would cast him out of her: believing he had power so to do, without seeing or touching her, only by a word speaking: her faith was like that of the centurion's.

Ver. 23. *But he answered her not a word, &c.*] Not that he did not hear her, or that he despised either her person or petition, or that he was not moved with it; but to continue her importunity, and try her faith, and make it manifest: for like reasons the Lord does not always, and immediately, answer the requests of his people. This giving her no answer, either that he would, or would not help her, carried in it a tacit repulse of her, and a denial of assistance to her; and it seems as if she did for a while desist from her application to him, and betook herself to his disciples to plead with him for her: *and his disciples came*; to the house where he was; who, it seems by this, had been elsewhere; *and besought him, saying, send her away*; not in any shape, with any sort of answer, without curing her daughter, or without a promise of a cure; no, they desired she might be dismissed, with a grant of her request, to her entire satisfaction, as appears from Christ's answer: *the reason they give is, for she crieth after us*; not only because she was troublesome to them, was importunate with them, and would take no denial from them; she followed them wherever they went; there was no getting rid of her: but also, because her case was so moving, was delivered in such an affecting manner, and her cries were so piercing, that they could not bear them; and therefore entreat him, that he would relieve, and dismiss her.

<sup>b</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 141. 3.

<sup>1</sup> Lucian. Dialog. Deor. Coneil. sect. 9.

Ver. 24. *But he answered, and said, &c.*] To his disciples, who knew how limited their commission was, that they were not to go into the way of the Gentiles, not to preach to them, nor perform miracles among them; and therefore could not reasonably expect that either the woman, or they, on her behalf, should succeed in this matter. *I am not sent, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*; as a priest, or as a Saviour and Redeemer, he was sent to make satisfaction and atonement for the sins of all God's elect, and to obtain eternal redemption and salvation for all of them, whether Jews or Gentiles; but as a prophet, in the discharge of his own personal ministry, he was sent by his father only to the Jews; he was the *minister of the circumcision*, Rom. xv. 8. that is, a minister to the circumcised Jews; he was sent only to preach the Gospel to them, and work miracles among them, in proof of his Messiahship; and upon their rejection of him, then his apostles were to be sent among the Gentiles; but he himself was sent only to the Jews, here styled *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*: by *the house of Israel*, is meant the whole body of the Jewish nation, so called from Israel, the name of Jacob their father, from whom they sprung; and by *the lost sheep of that house*, are more especially designed the elect of God among them; for though all the individuals of that house were *lost* persons, considered in Adam, and in themselves, as the rest of mankind, and Christ, in the external ministry of the word, was sent to preach to them all; yet the elect of God are *only sheep*: they are the sheep of Christ, of his pasture, and of his hand, whom he has the particular care and charge of; and who, in their nature-state, are lost and straying, and could never find their way, or recover themselves from their lost state in Adam, and by their own transgressions; but he came to seek, and to save them, and to these his ministry was powerful and efficacious.

Ver. 25. *Then came she and worshipped him, &c.*] She followed the disciples into the house; and perceiving another repulse by Christ's answer to them, she pushes on, through all discouragements; her faith grows stronger, and her importunity greater: she had called Christ Lord, and the son of David before, but now she worships him as God; *Saying, Lord help me*: a short petition, but what fully and fitly expressed her case: the object she prays unto is the Lord, by which she owns his sovereignty, dominion, and power: the request she makes is for *help*, signifying that her case required it; that it was such, that she could not help herself, nor any creature help her, only he, which she firmly believed; and though it was her daughter, and not she herself, that was so miserably afflicted; yet such was her sympathy, love, and affection to her, that she makes the case her own, and calls helping her daughter, helping herself; for her daughter being relieved, she would be made easy.

Ver. 26. *But he answered, and said, &c.*] To the woman, as the Persic version reads it, and the sense requires: *it is not meet to take the children's bread, and*

*to cast it to dogs*; which he said, to try her faith the more, and make it the more illustrious; and that not so much from his own sense of things, as in the language of the Jewish people, and which she might not be a stranger to. By *the children*, are meant the Jews, to whom the adoption belonged; who, as a nation and people, were the children of God in a large sense; being distinguished by many blessings and favours, which others had not, and being under the more peculiar care and notice of God; not that all of them were the children of God by special grace: by *the bread*, which belonged to them, is meant the external ministry of the word, and the miracles of Christ wrought among them: and particularly such outward favours which related to the good of the bodies of men, by healing their diseases, and dispossessing them of devils: and by *the dogs* are designed the Gentiles, so called by the Jews in a way of contempt, because of their ignorance, idolatry, and impurity. Christ here speaks not his own mind, as if he reproached the Gentiles, and held them in scorn and contempt, but uses the common dialect of the people; and which, this woman, living upon the borders of the Israelitish nation, was acquainted with; so that it was not so shocking and surprising, or quite so discouraging, as it would otherwise have been. The Jewish doctors say<sup>a</sup>, that the idolatrous Gentiles are not called men, that they are comparable to the beasts of the field<sup>b</sup>, to oxen, rams, goats<sup>m</sup>, and asses<sup>n</sup>: the fœtus in the bowels of a Canaanitish servant, they say<sup>o</sup>, “כולד במעי ברומה דמי, *is like the fœtus in the bowels of a beast.*” Take the following passage, as an illustration of this, and as a further proof of the Jews calling the Gentiles dogs<sup>p</sup>. “A king provides a dinner for the children of his house; whilst they do his will they eat their meat with the king, and he gives to the dogs the part of bones to gnaw; but when the children of the house don't do the king's pleasure, he gives the dogs the dinner, and the bones to them: even so; while the Israelites do the will of their Lord, they eat at the king's table, and the feast is provided for them, and they of their own will give the bones to the Gentiles; but when they don't do the will of their Lord, lo! the feast is לכלבי, *for the dogs*, and the bones are theirs.” And a little after, “*thou preparest a table before me*; this is the feast of the king; *in the presence of mine enemies*: אינין לכלבי, *these are the dogs* that sit before the table, looking for their part of the bones.” In which may be clearly discerned the distinction between children and dogs, and the application of the one to the Jews, and the other to the Gentiles, and the different food that belongs to each: and hence it is easy to see from whom Christ borrowed this expression, and with what view he made use of it.

Ver. 27. *And she saith, truth, Lord, &c.*] She owns all that he had said to be true, that he was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel: that she was indeed but a dog, a poor sinful creature, and

<sup>k</sup> T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 11. a. 2. Zohar in Exod. fol. 35. 4. Tzerzor Hammor, fol. 1. 4.

<sup>l</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 31. 1. & 34. 1. 2.

<sup>m</sup> Jarchi in Gen. 15. 10.

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 68. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Ib. fol. 69. 1.

<sup>p</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 63. 1, 2. Vid. Tzerzor Hammor, fol. 147. 4.

unworthy of any favour; and that it was not right and fitting that all the children's bread should be taken from them, and given to dogs: *yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.* The Syriac and Persic versions add, *and live*: thus she wisely lays hold upon, and improves, in a very beautiful manner, in her own favour, what seemed to be so much against her. It is observed<sup>9</sup> of the Syro-phœnicians in general, that they have all, in their common talk, something *ἡδυκαὶ κρησίουμοις*, *pleasant and graceful*, as there is indeed in this smart reply of her's, who was one of that people. She suggests that though the Gentiles were but dogs, and she one of them; yet their common Lord and Master had a propriety in them, and they in him; and were to be maintained and fed, and ought to live, though not in such fulness of favours and blessings, as the Jews, the children of God: nor did she desire their affluence, only that a crumb of mercy might be given her, that her poor daughter might be healed; which was but a small favour, in comparison of the numerous ones he heaped upon the children, the Jews: nor would this be any more detrimental to them, than it is to the children, for the dogs, under the table, to eat of the crumbs that fall.

Ver. 28. *Then Jesus answered, and said unto her, &c.* As one surprised at the strength of her faith, and the clearness and justness of her pious reasoning; and not concealing himself, and the designs of grace, any longer from her, breaks out in great admiration of her, saying, *O woman, great is thy faith!* He seems surprised, that she, a woman, and a poor Gentile, should express such strong faith in him; calling him Lord, owning him to be the Messiah, worshipping him as God, believing him able to do what could not be done by human art; and though she met with such repulses, and even called a dog, yet still continued importunate with him, believing she should succeed: *be it unto thee even as thou wilt*; let thy daughter be healed, as thou desirest, and in the way; and at the very time thou wouldst have it: *and her daughter was made whole from that very hour*: power went forth from Christ, and dispossessed the devil; so that when she came home, as Mark observes, she found her daughter lying on the bed, quiet, and easy, and perfectly well. The conduct of our Lord towards this woman, and her behaviour under it, do, in a very lively manner, represent the methods which God sometimes takes with his people, when they apply to him in their distress; and the nature and actings of their faith upon him: as she, when she first applied to Christ for mercy and help, had not a word of answer given her; so sometimes they cry, and the Lord turns a deaf ear, or seems not to hear, and, in their apprehension of things, has covered himself with a cloud, that their prayer should not pass through; however, an immediate answer is not returned; yea, when others interpose on their behalf, and entreat for them, yet no favourable answer is returned, as was not by Christ to his disciples, when they besought him on this woman's account: and yet, notwithstanding all this, as she, they are not discouraged, but ply the throne of grace with fresh suits, acknowledge that the worst of names and characters belong to them: that

they are unworthy of the least of mercies, and should be content with the crumbs of divine favour, but can't go away without a blessing; they lay hold on every word of God, and hastily catch at it, and improve every thing in their own favour, that faith can come at, and so, in the issue, succeed in their requests: effectual, fervent, and importunate prayer, the prayer of faith availeth much with God.

Ver. 29. *And Jesus departed from thence, &c.* From the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, where he would have been private and retired; but being discovered, and knowing that the fame of this last miracle would make him more public in those parts, he removed, and passed through the midst of the coast of Decapolis, as Mark says, *and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee*: the same with the sea of Tiberias, John vi. 1. and xxi. 1. that is, he came to those parts of Galilee, which lay near the sea-side, and went up into a mountain; which was very usual with him, either for solitude, or for prayer, and sometimes, for better conveniency, to preach to the people: *and sat down there*: to take some rest, being weary with his journey, and as waiting for the multitude to come to him, both for instruction and healing.

Ver. 30. *And great multitudes came unto him, &c.* From the adjacent places; having heard of his being where he was; and who had either attended on him before, or, however, the fame of him, and his miracles, had reached their ears: these flocked to him, *having with them*; in their hands, or arms, or upon their backs, or shoulders, leading some, and carrying others, in some form or another, *those that were lame*: either in their legs, or arms: *blind*; in one eye, or both, and that either from their birth, or since: *dumb*: the word signifies both deaf and dumb: these often meet in the same person: and if a man is born deaf, he is always dumb: *maimed*; having lost a limb, an arm, or a leg, or so enfeebled by some disease or another, as the palsy, that their limbs were useless to them. The Persic version reads it *leprous: and many others*; who were afflicted with various other diseases, too many to be mentioned particularly: *and cast them down at Jesus' feet*: to ease themselves of their burdens, and with a view to move his compassion, believing he was able to cure them: nor do they say a word to him, or desire him to relieve these miserable objects; thinking it was enough to present them to him, and not doubting at all, but he would shew favour to them: *and he healed them*; immediately, either by a word speaking, or by touching them, or by putting his hands on them, or without any such outward sign, through a divine power proceeding from him, which, at once, removed all their disorders and complaints.

Ver. 31. *Insomuch that the multitude wondered, &c.* The multitude of the spectators, who, though they came in expectation of seeing miracles wrought; yet these were so much beyond what they could have imagined, that they were amazed and surprised to see cures so instantly performed, in such a miraculous manner: these were such glaring proofs and evidences of the wonderful power of God, that they

were astonished *when they saw the dumb to speak*; that is, such who before were dumb, now spoke; and the same is to be observed in the other following instances: some copies have also, *the deaf to hear*; and so the Arabic version: *the maimed to be whole*. This is left out in some copies; nor is it in the Arabic, Ethiopic, and Vulgate Latin versions, nor in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; but the Syriac has it, and most Greek copies, and seems necessary; since these are particularly mentioned among the persons brought to be cured; and a wonderful cure this was, that persons who had not only lost the use of their limbs, but such who had lost the limbs themselves, should have them restored perfect; for doubtless, the power of our Lord was able to do this, and which was amazing to behold: *the lame to walk, and the blind to see*; as was prophesied of the times of the Messiah, and as things to be effected by him, Isa. xxxv. 5, 6. *and they glorified the God of Israel*. The Ethiopic version adds, *which had given such power to the son of man, or unto men*, which seems to be taken out of ch. ix. 8. This must be understood both of the multitude that saw these miraculous operations, and the persons on whom they were wrought; who were both affected with them, and gave God the praise and glory of them, by whose power alone such things could be done, who is the one only and true God: and therefore, to distinguish him from the fictitious deities of the Gentiles, he is here styled the God of Israel, of the people of Israel, so called from Jacob their ancestor, whose name was Israel; by whom God was known, and worshipped, and was their Covenant-God, and Father.

Ver. 32. *Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, &c.*] Who were at some little distance from him, to impart his mind unto them, whom he had made, and used, as his familiar friends; and to try their faith, and raise their attention, and prepare them for the following miracle; as well as to teach them by his example, and accustom them to shew bowels of mercy and compassion to persons in any kind of want and distress: *and said, I have compassion on the multitude*; which must be understood of him as man, whose bowels yearned towards them, having been so long without any food for their bodies, or very little; as he had compassion on the sick, and diseased, and healed them, so on the sound and whole, and was willing to feed them. Christ, our high-priest, is a merciful one, and is touched with the feeling of the infirmities of men, of every sort, both of soul and body: *because they continue now with me three days*; which time had been spent in healing their bodily disorders, and in preaching to them for the good of their souls; which shews the diligence and indefatigableness of Christ, as well as the attachment of the people to him; who were so struck with his miracles and ministry, that though they had been so long from their habitations and families, knew not how to leave him; nor did they talk, or shew any signs of departing from him, and returning to their houses, and business of life; *and have nothing to eat*; not that they had been so long without eating any thing, though very likely it was but little, and what they brought

with them, and was now expended; nor could they provide themselves in a desert place, and many of them were a great way off from home: *and I will not send them away fasting*; he might have done it, nor did the multitude ask any food of him; but he could not bear the thoughts of dismissing them in such a condition; having had but very little sustenance all this while, and so might be said to be in a manner fasting during this time, at least now: *lest they faint by the way*; to their own houses, not having strength and spirit enough to travel, and get home: *for divers of them, as Mark says, came from far*.

Ver. 33. *And his disciples said unto him, &c.*] The former miracle of feeding five thousand men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes, being quite out of their thoughts, they reply, *whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?* The question is big with objections, and is put with some vehemency and astonishment: the people to be fed were a multitude, a great multitude, a very great multitude; and these too had had but little, or no food, for a great while; and therefore would require the more to fill and satisfy them; and besides, it was a wilderness where they were, and where no provisions were to be had; and if they could have been got for money, they had not stock enough to purchase such a large number of loaves, as were necessary to feed so great a company with.

Ver. 34. *And Jesus saith unto them, &c.*] In a very mild and gentle manner, taking no notice of their stupidity, nor upbraiding them with their forgetfulness of the late miracle, and willing to exercise their patience, and try their faith, asks, *how many loaves have ye?* meaning in the common stock, and which they brought along with them, for their own supply: *and they said seven, and a few little fishes*; which they mention as so small a provision, that it was as nothing for such multitudes; their loaves of bread were but seven, and their fishes, which were ready dressed, dried, or boiled, &c. were few in number, and small, as to size and bigness.

Ver. 35. *And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.*] Not regarding the smallness of the provisions, nor any further consulting with his disciples; but knowing his own power to increase this food, and determining to feed the multitude before he dismissed them, in an authoritative way ordered them to sit down upon the ground in rows, that they might be the better seen, and served.

Ver. 36. *And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, &c.*] Into his hands, and lifted them up, that it might be seen, and observed, that there were no other food than these, that so the miracle might appear in its true light: *and gave thanks*; to God for the provision, though it was so small, in the name of the whole company, according to the usage of the Jewish nation; who, if there were ten thousand, one for the rest used to say, "let us bless the Lord our God, the God of Israel, the God of hosts, that sitteth between the cherubim:" teaching us to do so likewise, and to be thankful for, and content with



our portion, be it more or less: *and brake them*; which also was the custom of the master of the family to do: *and gave to his disciples*: as a fresh trial of their faith, to prove their unbelief, to put them in mind of the former miracle, and that they might be witnesses of this, and, in order to distribute to the people, which they accordingly did: *and the disciples to the multitude*; in doing which they obeyed their master's orders, though before they could not persuade themselves, that such a multitude of people could be filled with so small a quantity.

Ver. 37. *And they did all eat, and were filled, &c.*] Every one had a share of the provision, and that to full satisfaction; no one was overlooked and neglected, and every one had as much as he could eat: *and they took up of the broken meat that was left, seven baskets full.* The disciples, after they had distributed to every one his portion, went round, and collected the remaining fragments, and filled seven baskets therewith, according to the number of the loaves which were broken; and so had a full return for the loaves and fishes they spared on this occasion.

Ver. 38. *And they that did eat, were four thousand men, &c.*] This number of men, as well as of the baskets of fragments, clearly shews this to be a distinct miracle from the former of this kind, recorded in chap. xiv. There the number of men were five thousand, here four thousand; there the quantity of food was five loaves and two fishes, here seven loaves and a few fishes; there the number of the baskets of fragments was twelve, here seven; though the quan-

tity might be as large; since the word here used for a basket is not the same as there, and designs one of a larger size: *besides women and children*; who were not taken into the account, though they ate as well as the men, and whose number might be very large.

Ver. 39. *And he sent away the multitude, &c.*] Dismissing them, either with a prayer for them, or with a suitable word of exhortation, to be thankful for the mercies, both spiritual and temporal, they had received, and behave agreeably in their lives and conversations: *and took ship*; being near the sea-side, the sea of Galilee, *and came into the coasts of Magdala*: not far from Tiberias; for often mention is made of Magdala in the Talmud<sup>1</sup>, along with Tiberias, and Chanmath, another place in the same neighbourhood; and was famous for some Rabbins, as R. Joden and R. Isaac<sup>2</sup>, who are said to be מַגְדָּלָא, of Magdala. Thus the Syriac version reads it Magedo, and the Vulgate Latin Magedan; and Beza says, in one Greek exemplar 'tis read Magadan; and some have thought it to be the same with Megiddo, where Josiah was slain by Pharaoh-necho, and which Herodotus calls Magdolos<sup>3</sup>. The Evangelist Mark says, that he came into the parts of Dalmanutha, which was a place within the coasts of Magdala. This was not the place, but another of the same name near Jerusalem, from whence Mary Magdalene may be thought to have her name. The Ethiopic version renders it, *they went into a ship, and departed into the mountains of Magdala*; that is, Christ, and his disciples.

## C H A P. XVI.

Ver. 1. *THE Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, &c.*] Not from Jerusalem, as in ch. xv. 1. but from the neighbouring places: these were Galilean Sadducees and Pharisees, of whom mention is made in the Misna<sup>4</sup>; "says נְזִיקֵי גַלִּילִי, a Galilean Sadducee, (i. e. one that was of the land of Galilee, as Bartenora "on the place observes,) I complain of you Pharisees, because ye write the name of a ruler with "the name of Moses, in a divorce; say the Pharisees, "we complain of you Galilean Sadducees, that you "write the name of a ruler with the name of God, "in the same leaf:" but though these two sects could not agree in this, and in many other things, yet they could unite against Christ, to whom they bore an implacable hatred. *And tempting, desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven*: they came with no sincere view to be taught by him, or learn any thing from him; but if they could, to ensnare him, and get an opportunity of exposing him to the people; and therefore pretending dissatisfaction with the miracles he wrought on the earth, they ask of him to produce a sign from heaven, of his coming from thence, of his being the son of God, and the

true Messiah. They wanted some such sign, as the standing still of the sun and moon, in the times of Joshua; and as raining manna, in the times of Moses; or some such appearances of thunder and lightning, as at the giving of the law. The appearance of the rainbow, in a very extraordinary manner, is looked upon by the Jews as a sign of the Messiah's coming<sup>5</sup>. "Says a certain Jew, when my father departed "out of the world, he said thus to me; don't look "for the Messiah until thou seest the bow in the "world, adorned with light colours, and the world "enlightened by it; then look for the Messiah, as it "is written, Gen. ix. 16." Some very unusual and uncommon sight in the heavens, was what these men asked of Christ in proof of his mission from God.

Ver. 2. *He answered and said unto them, &c.*] Knowing full well their views, and having wrought sufficient miracles to confirm his Messiahship, he thought fit to give them no other answer than this: *when it is evening, ye say, it will be fair weather, for the sky is red*; when the sun is setting, it is a common thing for you to say, looking up to the heavens, and observing the face and colour of them, that it is like to be fair wea-

<sup>1</sup> T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 38. 4. Maaserot, fol. 50. 5. Erubin, fol. 21. 4.

<sup>2</sup> T. Hieros. Taanith, fol. 64. 3. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 81. 2. & Nidda, fol. 33. 1. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 4. 4.

<sup>3</sup> I. s. c. 159.

<sup>4</sup> Yadaim, c. 4. sect. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 53. 2.

ther; no rain that night, nor perhaps the next day, for the sky is red like fire, through the rays of the sun; which shew the clouds to be very thin, and so will soon waste away, and consequently fine weather must follow.

Ver. 3. *And in the morning, it will be foul weather to-day, &c.*] When you rise in the morning, and take a survey of the heavens, it is a very usual thing with you to say, it is like to be windy or rainy weather to-day, for the sky is red and lowering: which shews, that the clouds are so thick that the sun can't pierce through them, and its face is not seen; so that it may be reasonably concluded they will issue in rain, or wind, or both. *O ye hypocrites.* The Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel, leave out this appellation; but all other versions, as well as copies, have it: and it is an usual epithet, bestowed very justly by Christ, on these men; who pretended to be the guides of the people, took upon them to teach and instruct them in divine things, and set up themselves as men of great holiness, piety and knowledge; and yet, instead of searching the Scriptures, and comparing the characters of the times of the Messiah therein fixed, with the present ones, spent their time in making such low and useless observations, and which fall within the compass of every one's knowledge and reach. *Ye can discern the face of the sky;* very distinctly, and make some very probable guesses, if not certain conclusions, what will follow, good weather or bad: but can ye not discern the signs of the times? or, as the Syriac reads it, the time, the present time: if they had not been blind, they might easily have discerned, that the signs of the time of the Messiah's coming were upon them, and that Jesus was the Messiah; as the departure of the sceptre from Judah, the ending of Daniel's weeks, the various miracles wrought by Christ, the wickedness of the age in which they lived, the ministry of John the Baptist, and of Christ, the great flockings of the people, both to one and to the other, with divers other things which were easy to be observed by them: but they pretend this to be a very great secret. "The secret of the day of death, they say", and the secret "of the day when the king Messiah comes, who by his wisdom can find out?"

Ver. 4. *A wicked and adulterous generation, &c.*] He says the same things here, as he did to the Pharisees on a like occasion, in ch. xii. 39. see the note there. *And he left them;* as persons hardened, perverse, and incurable, and as unworthy to be conversed with: *and departed;* to the ship which brought him thither, and went in it to the other side of the sea of Galilee; see Mark viii. 13.

Ver. 5. *When his disciples were come to the other side, &c.*] Of the sea, as Munster's Hebrew Gospel adds, to Bethsaida, Mark viii. 22. as they were either in the ship, or going from the shore to the said place, they recollected themselves, that they had forgotten to take bread: having but one loaf, as Mark says, in the ship; the seven baskets of fragments being either expended, or given away to the poor, of their own accord, or by Christ's orders. It seems, it was usual with the disciples to buy food at places most proper, and carry with

them; since Christ often went into deserts and mountainous places, where provisions could not be had. This their forgetfulness to act according to their wonted method, might arise either from their being intent upon Christ's conversation with the Pharisees, and Sadducees, or from the suddenness of Christ's departure.

Ver. 6. *Then Jesus said unto them, &c.*] Either taking occasion from the disciples observing that they had forgot to take bread with them, or on account of what passed between him and the Pharisees and Sadducees, he gave the following advice to his disciples; *take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.* Mark, instead of the leaven of the Sadducees, says, the leaven of Herod; either because Christ might caution against all three; or because the Sadducees were generally Herodians, taking Herod to be the Messiah; or were on his party, or for his government, which the Pharisees disliked; and the Herodians were generally Sadducees. By the leaven of these is meant their doctrine, as appears from ver. 12. The doctrines the Pharisees taught were the commandments and inventions of men, the traditions of the elders, free will, and justification by the works of the law: the doctrine of the Sadducees was, that there was no resurrection of the dead, nor angels, nor spirits: now because they sought secretly and artfully to infuse their notions into the minds of men; and which, when imbibed, spread their infection, and made men sour, morose, rigid, and ill-natured, and swelled and puffed them up with pride and vanity, Christ compares them to leaven; and advises his disciples to look about them, to watch, and be on their guard, lest they should be infected with them.

Ver. 7. *And they reasoned among themselves, &c.*] Either what should be the meaning of this caution of Christ's, and upon what account he should say this to them; or they were anxiously concerned what they should do for provision: *saying, because we have taken no bread;* for the phrase, *it is,* is a supplement, and is not in the original text, which confines the sense to the first way of interpretation; the words may be read without it, and confirms the other sense, and which receives strength from what follows.

Ver. 8. *Which when Jesus perceived, &c.*] Without hearing any of their debates, but by his omniscience; for he knew the doubts and unbelief, and anxious solicitude of their minds, as well as their private reasonings one with another: *he said unto them, O ye of little faith;* a phrase used upon a like occasion, when he would dissuade his disciples from an anxious distressing care about a livelihood, Matt. vi. 30. see the note there: *why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?* blaming one another for your negligence and forgetfulness in this matter; distressing your minds, as if you should be famished and starved, because ye have not brought a quantity of bread, as you used to do with you.

Ver. 9. *Do ye not understand, &c.*] Meaning either the sense of the advice he had now given; or rather his almighty power displayed in the two miracles of feeding five thousand at one time, and four thousand at another, with a very small quantity of provision;

for to this the word *understand* refers, as well as the following: *neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?* Have you forgot what was so lately done, namely, the feeding five thousand men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes, when ye took up, after all were filled and satisfied, no less than twelve baskets of fragments? And can you, after this, distrust my power in the care of you? Have I fed so many with so small a quantity of food? and am I not able to feed twelve of you, though you have but one loaf? Why all these anxious thoughts and carnal reasonings?

Ver. 10. *Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, &c.*] Have you forgot the other miracle done but a very little while ago, when I fed four thousand men, beside women and children, with seven loaves and a few small fishes, *and how many baskets ye took up?* no less than seven large baskets; and am I not able to provide for you? distress not yourselves about this matter; give not way to unbelief, which must argue great stupidity and insensibility.

Ver. 11. *How is it that ye do not understand, &c.*] That you should be so senseless and void of thought, after such instances, as to imagine, that I concerned myself about what bread you brought with you; one would think you could not but know, *that I spake it not to you concerning bread*, taken in a literal sense; but must be thought to speak figuratively and mystically, and to have an higher sense and meaning, when I said to you, *that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the Sadducees*; how could you think that I had any regard to the leaven taken in a literal sense, the Pharisees and Sadducees approve or disapprove of?

Ver. 12. *Then understood they, &c.*] Without any further explication of his sense and meaning, *how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread*: which sense they first took him in; imagining, because the Pharisees were very particular and precise what sort of leaven they made use of<sup>a</sup>, that Christ forbade them buying bread that was made with leaven according to their directions: and since their rules in every thing prevailed much in all places, they were concerned what bread they must, or could buy; but now they perceived that he did not speak of this, *but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees*. It was very common with the Jews<sup>b</sup> to call the corruption and vitiosity of nature by the name of שְׂאוֹר שְׂבִיעִים, *leaven in the lump*: hence our Lord calls their doctrine so, because it proceeded from thence, and was agreeable thereunto; and uses the phrase on purpose to expose it, and bring it into neglect and contempt.

Ver. 13. *When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, &c.*] The towns that were in the neighbourhood of this city; which city went by several names, before, as Leshem, Josh. xix. 47. which being taken by the Danites, they called it Dan; hence we read of דָּן רִקְסִין, *Dan, which is Cesarea*<sup>c</sup>. It was also called Paneas, from the name of the fountain of Jordan, by which it was situated; and which Pliny says<sup>d</sup>, gave the surname to Cesarea; and hence it is called by

Ptolomy<sup>e</sup> Cesarea Panie; and by the name of Paneas it went, when Philip the<sup>e</sup> tetrarch rebuilt it, and called it Cesarea, in honour of Tiberius Cæsar; and from his own name, Philippi, to distinguish it from another Cesarea, of which mention is made in the Acts of the Apostles, built by his father Herod, and so called in honour of Augustus Cæsar; which before bore the name of Strato's tower. The Misnic doctors speak of two Cesareas<sup>f</sup>, the one they call the eastern, the other the western Cesarea. Now, as Mark says, whilst Christ and his disciples were in the way to these parts; and, as Luke, when he had been praying alone with them, *he asked his disciples, saying, whom do men say that I the son of man am?* He calls himself *the son of man*, because he was truly and really man; and because of his low estate, and the infirmities of human nature, with which he was encompassed: he may have some respect to the first intimation of him, as the seed of woman, and the rather make use of this phrase, because the Messiah was sometimes designed by it in the Old Testament, Psa. lxxx. 17. Dan. vii. 13. or Christ speaks here of himself, according to his outward appearance, and the prevailing opinion of men concerning him; that he looked to be only a mere man, born as other men were; was properly a son of man, and no more: and therefore the question is, not what sort of man he was, whether a holy, good man, or no, or whether the Messiah, or not; but the question is, what men in general, whether high or low, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, under the notion they had of him as a mere man, said of him; or since they took him to be but a man, what man they thought he was; and to this the answer is very apposite. This question Christ put to his disciples, they being more conversant with the people than he, and heard the different opinions men had of him, and who were more free to speak their minds of him to them, than to himself; not that he was ignorant of what passed among men, and the different sentiments they had of him, but he was willing to hear the account from his disciples; and his view in putting this question to them, was to make way for another, in order to bring them to an ingenuous confession of their faith in him.

Ver. 14. *And they said, some say that thou art John the Baptist, &c.*] It was the opinion of some of the Jews, that he was John the Baptist risen from the dead. This notion was spread, and prevailed in Herod's court, and he himself, at last, gave into it. *Some Elias*; the Tishbite, because an extraordinary person was prophesied of by Malachi, under the name of Elias; and who was to come in his power and spirit before the great day of the Lord; and it being a prevailing notion with the Jews, that Elias was to come before the Messiah; see the note on Matt. xi. 14. they concluded that he was now come: *and others Jeremias*; this is omitted both by Mark and Luke; the reason why he is mentioned, is not because of what is said of him, in Jer. i. 5, 10. or in ver. 18. but because the Jews thought he was that prophet spoken of, in Deut. xviii. 15. that should be raised up from among them, like unto

<sup>a</sup> Mien. Pesach, c. 2. sect. 2, 3. T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 3. 3.

<sup>b</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 7. 4. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 17. 1. Bereshit Rabbe, fol. 29. 4. Caphtor, fol. 28. 2. Tzerer Hammor, fol. 73. 2.

<sup>c</sup> Targum Hieros. in Gen. xiv. 17.

<sup>d</sup> Hist. l. 5. c. 15, 16.

<sup>e</sup> Geograph. l. 5. c. 15.

<sup>f</sup> Joseph. Antiqu. l. 18. c. 3. & de Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 13.

<sup>g</sup> Miss. Obolot, c. 18. sect. 9.

Moses: and this is the sense of some of their writers<sup>5</sup>: and in their very ancient writings a parallel is run between Moses and Jeremy<sup>6</sup>. "R. Judah, the son of R. Simon, opened Deut. xviii. 18. and xxxiv. 10. thus: *as thee*, this is Jeremiah, who was, as he, in reproofs; you'll find all that is written of the one, is written of the other; one prophesied forty years, and the other prophesied forty years; the one prophesied concerning Judah and Israel, and the other prophesied concerning Judah and Israel; against the one those of his own tribe stood up, and against the other those of his own tribe stood up; the one was cast into a river, and the other into a dungeon; the one was delivered by means of an handmaid, and the other by the means of a servant; the one came with words of reproof, and the other came with words of reproof." Now they fancied, either that the soul of Jeremy was transmigrated into another body, or that he was risen from the dead. Or *one of the prophets*; one of the ancient ones, as Hoseah, or Isaiah, or some other: they could not fix upon the particular person who they thought was risen from the dead, and did these wonderful works among them. From the whole it appears, that these persons, whose different sentiments of Christ are here delivered, were not his sworn enemies, as the Scribes and Pharisees, who could never speak respectfully of him; saying, that he was a gluttonous man, a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners, a very wicked man, and far from being one, or like one of the prophets: they sometimes represent him as beside himself, and mad, yea, as being a Samaritan, and having a devil, as familiar with the devil, and doing his miracles by his assistance; but these were the common people, the multitude that followed Christ from place to place, and had a great opinion of him on account of his ministry, and miracles: wherefore, though they could not agree in their notions concerning him, yet each of them fix upon some person of note and worth, whom they took him for; they all looked upon him as a great and good man, and as a prophet, as John the Baptist was accounted by all the people, and as one of the chief of the prophets, as Elias and Jeremiah; and they that could not fix on any particular person, yet put him into the class of the prophets: but still they came short of the true knowledge of him; they did not know him to be a divine person, which his works and miracles proved him to be: nor to be that prophet Moses had spoken of, who was alone to be hearkened unto, though his ministry was a demonstration of it: nor that he was the Messiah, so much spoken of in prophecy, and so long expected by the Jewish nation, though he had all the characters of the Messiah meeting in him. The chief reason why they could not entertain such a thought of him, seems to be the mean figure he made in the world, being of a low extract, in strait circumstances of life, regarded only by the poorer sort; and there appearing nothing in him promising, that he should deli-

ver them from the Roman yoke, and set up a temporal kingdom, which should be prosperous and flourishing, which was the notion of the Messiah that then generally obtained: and since they could not, by any means, allow of this character as belonging to Jesus, though otherwise they had an high opinion of him; hence they could not agree about him, but formed different sentiments of him; which is usually the case in every thing, where the truth is not hit upon and received.

Ver. 15. *He saith unto them, but whom say ye that I am?* Without taking any further notice, or making any reflections on the different sentiments of men concerning him, he put this question to his disciples, and which is what he had chiefly in view, that he might have their sense of him; and which he puts in a different form, and leaves out the phrase, *the son of man*, because they knew he was more than a man: nor was his mean appearance an offence to them; they had believed in him, became his disciples, and were followers of him: but it was not enough to believe in him, they must confess him; both are necessary: therefore he does not say, whom believe ye, but whom say ye that I am? You who have been with me so long from the beginning; you who have heard so many discourses from me, and have seen so many miracles wrought by me; and who are to be the teachers of others, to preach my Gospel, and publish my salvation to Jews and Gentiles, what have you to say of me? whom do you say I am? as for those men, it is no great matter who they say I am; but of great moment and consequence are your sense and confession of me. Such who have long sat under a Gospel-ministry, or who have been long in the church and school of Christ, it is expected of them, that they should know more of Christ than others; and should be come to a point about his person and office, and be ready to make a confession of their faith, and give a reason of their hope in him; and especially such who are, or are to be preachers of Christ to others: these ought to be well acquainted with him, who, and what he is; they should have no doubt, nor hesitation in their minds, about him, but be fully satisfied concerning him; and be free, and open, and ready to declare what they know and believe of him.

Ver. 16. *And Simon Peter answered and said, &c.* Either of his own accord, and for himself, being a warm, zealous, and forward man; one that dearly loved Christ, truly believed in him, and was ready to make a confession of him: or, as the mouth of the rest, in their name, and with their consent; or, at least, as full well knowing the sentiments of their minds. *Thou art Christ, the son of the living God*: a short, but a very full confession of faith, containing the following articles: as that there is a God, that there is but one God; that he is the living God, has life in himself, is the fountain of life to others, and by this is distinguishable from the idols of the Gentiles: that Jesus is the Christ, the Christ of God,

<sup>5</sup> Baal Hatturim in Deut. xviii. 15. R. Abraham Seba; Tzeror Hammor, fol. 127. 4. & 143. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Pesikta Rabbati apud R. Abarbanel, Præfat. ad Jer. fol. 96. 2.

the true Messiah, that was promised by God, prophesied of by all the prophets, from the beginning of the world, and expected by the people of God: a character that includes all his offices, of prophet, priest, and king, to which he is anointed by God; and that this Messiah was not a mere man, but a divine person, the son of God; not by creation, as angels and men are, nor by adoption, as saints, nor by office, as magistrates, but by nature, being his own son, his proper son, the only-begotten of the father, of the same nature with him, being one with him, and equal to him. This confession, as it is uniform, and all of a piece, and consistent with itself, and is what all the disciples of Christ agreed in, so it greatly exceeds the most that can be made of the different sentiments of the people put together. They took him, one and all, to be but a mere man; their most exalted thoughts of him rose no higher: but in this he is acknowledged to be the son of God, a phrase expressive of his divine nature, and distinct personality: they thought him to be a dead man brought to life; but here he is called the son of the living God, as having the same life in him the father has: they indeed judged him to be a prophet, but not that prophet that was to come, superior to all prophets; but here he is owned to be the Christ, which not only takes in his prophetic office in a higher sense than they understood it, but all his other offices, and declares him to be the promised Messiah; which they who thought, and spoke the most honourably of him, could not allow of.

Ver. 17. *And Jesus answered and said unto him, &c.*] Not waiting for any other declaration from them; but taking this to be the sense of them all, he said, *blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona, or son of Jona, or Jonas, as in John i. 42. and xxi. 15.* His father's name was Jonah, whence he was so called: so we read<sup>1</sup> of R. Bo bar Jonah, and of a Rabbi of this very name<sup>2</sup>, ר' שמעון בר יונה, Rabbi Simeon bar Jona; for Simon and Simeon are one, and the same name. Some read it Bar-Joanna, the same with John; but the common reading is best; Bar-Jona signifies *the son of a dove*, and Bar-Joanna signifies *the son of one that is gracious*. Our Lord, by this appellation, puts Peter in mind of his birth and parentage, but does not pronounce him blessed on that account: no true blessedness comes by natural descent: men are by nature children of wrath, being conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity: though he was Bar-Jona, the son of a dove, and his father might be a good man, and answer to his name, and be of a dove-like spirit; yet such a spirit was not conveyed from him to Peter by natural generation: and though he might be, according to the other reading, Bar-Joanna, or the son of a gracious man, yet grace was not communicated to him thereby; for he was not *born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*, John i. 13. He was a blessed man, not by his first, but by his second birth; and the reason why our Lord makes mention of his father, is to observe to him, that he was the son of

a mean man, and had had but a mean education, and therefore his blessedness in general was not of nature, but of grace, and this branch of it in particular; the knowledge he had of the Messiah, was not owing to his earthly father, or to the advantage of an education, but to the revelation he had from Christ's father which is in heaven, as is hereafter affirmed. He is pronounced *blessed*, as having a true knowledge of God, and of his son Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal; and all such as he are so, appear to be the favourites of God, to have an interest in Christ, and in all the blessings of his grace; are justified by his righteousness, pardoned through his blood, are accepted in him, have communion with Father, Son, and Spirit, and shall live eternally with them hereafter. *For flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee*: nothing is more frequent to be met with in Jewish writings, than the phrase of *flesh and blood*, as designing men in distinction from God: so the first man is said<sup>1</sup> to be "the workmanship of the blessed God, and not the workmanship of *בשר ודם*, of *flesh and blood*." Again<sup>2</sup>, *בשר ודם*, *flesh and blood*, who knows not the times and seasons, &c. but the holy, blessed God, who knows the times and seasons, &c. Instances of this way of speaking are almost without number: accordingly, the sense here is, that this excellent confession of faith, which Peter had delivered, was not revealed unto him, nor taught him by any mere man; he had not it from his immediate parents, nor from any of his relations, or countrymen; nor did he attain to the knowledge of what is expressed in it, by the dint of nature, by the strength of carnal reason, or the force of his own capacity and abilities: *but my father which is in heaven*; from whom both the external and internal revelation of such truths come; though not to the exclusion of the son, by whose revelation the Gospel is taught, and received; nor of the Holy Ghost, who is a spirit of wisdom and revelation, but in opposition to, and distinction from any mere creature whatever. Neither the Gospel, nor any part of it, is an human device or discovery; it is not after man, nor according to the carnal reason of man; it is above the most exalted and refined reason of men; it has in it what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive of: its truths are the deep things of God, which the spirit of God searches and reveals: and which men, left to the light of nature, and force of reason, must have been for ever ignorant of, and could never have discovered. The Gospel is a revelation, it consists of revealed truths; and which are to be received and believed upon the testimony and credit of the revealer, without entering into carnal reasonings, and disputes about them; and it is the highest reason, and the most noble use of reason, to embrace it at once, as coming from God; for this revelation is from heaven, and from Christ's father; particularly the deity, sonship, and Messiahship of Christ, are doctrines of pure revelation: that there is a God, is discoverable by the light of nature; and that he is the living God, and

<sup>1</sup> Juchasin, fol. 85. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. fol. 105. 1.

<sup>1</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 43. 3.

<sup>2</sup> R. Simeon in Jarchi in Gen. ii. 2.

gives being, and life, and breath, and all things, to his creatures; but that he has a son of the same nature with him, and equal to him, who is the Messiah, and the Saviour of lost sinners, this could never have been found out by flesh and blood: no man knows the son, but the father, and he to whom he reveals him; he bears witness of him, and declares him to be his son, in whom he is well pleased; and happy are those who are blessed with the outward revelation of Jesus Christ in the Gospel, but more especially such to whom the father reveals Christ in them the hope of glory!

Ver. 18. *And I say also unto thee, &c.*] Either besides what he had already said concerning his happiness; or, as the father had revealed something great and valuable, so likewise would he; or inasmuch as he had freely said and declared who, and what he was, in like manner he also would say what Peter was, *thou art Peter*: intimating, that he was rightly called Peter, or Cephas, by him, when he first became a follower of him, Matf. iv. 18. John i. 42. which words signify the same thing, a *rock*, or *stone*: because of his firmness and solidity, and because he was laid upon the sure foundation, and built on the rock Christ, and was a very fit stone to be laid in the spiritual building. The aptness of this name to him is easy to be seen in his full assurance of faith, as to the person of Christ, and his free, open, and undaunted confession of him. *And upon this rock will I build my church*: by the *church*, is meant, not an edifice of wood, stones, &c. but an assembly, and congregation of men; and that not of any sort; not a disorderly, tumultuous assembly, in which sense this word is sometimes taken; nor does it design the faithful of a family, which is sometimes the import of it; nor a particular congregated church, but the elect of God, the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven; and especially such of them as were to be gathered in, and built on Christ, from among the Jews and Gentiles. The materials of this building are such, as are by nature no better, or more fit for it, than others: these stones originally lie in the same quarry with others; they are singled out, and separated from the rest, according to the sovereign will of God, by powerful and efficacious grace; and are broken and hewn by the spirit of God, generally speaking, under the ministry of the word, and are, by him, made living stones; and being holy and spiritual persons, are built up a spiritual house: and these are the only persons which make up the true and invisible church of Christ in the issue, and are only fit to be members of the visible church; and all such ought to be in a Gospel church-state, and partake of the privileges of it: these materials are of different sorts, and have a different place, and have a different usefulness in this building; some are only as common stones, and timber; others are as pillars, beams, and rafters; and all are useful and serviceable; and being put, and knit together, grow up as an holy temple to the Lord: and are called, by Christ, *my church*, because given him by the father; and he has purchased them with his own blood; are built by him, and on him; inhabited by him, and of whom

he is the head, king, and governor; though not to the exclusion of the father, whose house they also are; nor of the spirit, who dwells in them, as in his temple. This church Christ promises to *build*. Though his ministers are builders, they are but *under-builders*; they are qualified, employed, directed, encouraged, and succeeded by him; he is the wise, able, and chief master-builder. This act of *building* seems to have a special regard to the conversion of God's elect, both among Jews and Gentiles, particularly the latter; and to the daily conversions of them in all ages; and to the building up of saints in faith and holiness; each of which will more manifestly appear in the latter day; and are both generally effected through the word, and ordinances, as means, the spirit of Christ blessing them. By the *rock* on which Christ builds his church, is meant, not the person of Peter; for Christ does not say, upon thee Peter, but upon *this rock*, referring to something distinct from him: for though his name signifies a rock, or stone, and there may be some allusion to it; and he is so called because of his trust and confidence in the Lord, on whom he was built; but not because he was the foundation on which any others, and especially the whole church, were built: 'tis true, he may be called the foundation, as the rest of the 'twelve apostles of the Lamb are, Eph. ii. 20. Rev. xxi. 14. without any distinction from them, and preference to them; they and he agreeing in laying doctrinally and ministerially Christ Jesus as the foundation of faith and hope, but not in such sense as he is; neither he, nor they, are the foundation on which the church is built, which is Christ, and him only. Moreover, what is said to Peter in these, and the following words, is not said to him personally and separately from the rest of the apostles, but is designed for them, as well as him, as appears by comparing them with ch. xviii. 18. As he spoke in the name of them all, to Christ; so Christ spake to him, including them all. Peter had no pre-eminence over the rest of the apostles, which he neither assumed, nor was it granted; nor would it ever have been connived at by Christ, who often shewed his resentment at such a spirit and conduct, whenever there was any appearance of it in any of them; see ch. xviii. 1, 2, 3. and xx. 25—28. and though Peter, with James, and John, had some particular favours bestowed on him by Christ; as to be at the raising of Jairus's daughter, and at the transfiguration of Christ on the mount, and with him in the garden; and he appeared to him alone after his resurrection, and before he was seen by the rest of the disciples; yet in some things he was inferior to them, being left to deny his Lord and master, they did not; and upon another account is called Satan by Christ, which they never were; not to mention other infirmities of his, which shew he is not the rock: and, after all, what is this to the pope of Rome, who is no successor of Peter's? Peter, as an apostle, had no successor in his office; nor was he bishop of Rome; nor has the pope of Rome either his office, or his doctrine: but here, by the rock, is meant, either the confession of faith made by Peter; not the act, nor form, but the matter of it, it containing the prime articles of Christianity, and which are as immoveable as a rock; or rather Christ himself, who

points, as it were, with his finger to himself, and whom Peter had made such a glorious confession of; and who was prefigured by the rock the Israelites drank water out of in the wilderness; and is comparable to any rock for height, shelter, strength, firmness, and duration; and is the one and only foundation of his church and people, and on whom their security, salvation, and happiness entirely depend. Christ is a rock that is higher than they, where they find safety in times of distress, and the shadow of which is refreshing to them; and therefore betake themselves to him for shelter, and where they are secure from the wrath of God, and rage of men: he is the rock of ages, in whom is everlasting strength; and is the sure, firm, and everlasting foundation on which the church, and all true believers, are laid: he is the foundation of their faith, and hope, and everlasting happiness, and will ever continue; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The Jews speak of the gates of hell: sometimes of the gate of hell, in the singular number<sup>p</sup>; and sometimes of the gates of hell, in the plural number. They say<sup>q</sup>, that "שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּתוּחֵי שַׁי לְנִיהוֹם, hell has three gates, one in the wilderness, one in the sea, and one in Jerusalem." They talk<sup>r</sup> of "an angel that is appointed על תְּרֵיעַ דְּנִיהוֹם, over the gates of hell, whose name is Sam-ri-el; who has three keys in his hands, and opens three doors." And elsewhere<sup>s</sup> they say, that "he that is appointed over hell his name is Dumah, and many myriads of destroying angels are with him, and he stands על פְּתוּחַ דְּנִיהוֹם, at the gate of hell; and all those that keep the holy covenant in this world, he has no power to bring them in." Our Lord may allude to these notions of the Jews, and his sense be, that all the infernal principalities and powers, with all their united cunning and strength, will never be able to extirpate his Gospel; to destroy his interest, to demolish his church in general, or ruin any one particular soul that is built upon him. Again, the gates of Hades, or hell, sometimes seem to design no other than the gates of death, and the grave, and persons going into the state of death; see Job xxxviii. 17. Isa. xxxviii. 10. where the Septuagint use the same phrase as here; and then the sense is, that neither death, nor the grave, shall finally, and totally prevail over the people of God, and members of Christ; but they shall be raised out of such a state, and live gloriously with him for ever. By it here is not meant Peter himself; though it is true of him, that Satan, and his posse of devils that beset him, did not prevail against him, so as to destroy his grace, hurt his estate, and hinder his salvation: nor could death, in all its frightful appearances, deter him from holding, and preaching, and maintaining the doctrine of Christ; and though death, and the grave, have now power over him, yet they shall not always detain him: but rather, it designs the doctrine Peter made a confession of; which, though it may be opposed by hell and earth, by Satan, and his emissaries, by the open force of persecutors, and the secret fraud of heretics;

it may be brought into contempt by the scandalous lives of professors; and though the true professors of it may die off, yet truth itself always lives, and defies the power of death, and the grave: or else the church in general is meant, and every true believer. These words do not ascertain the continuance of any one particular congregated church, but secures the church universal, which will continue as long as the sun and moon endure, and the perseverance of every, one of God's elect; and assure that death, and the grave, shall not always have the dominion over the saints, but that they shall be rescued from them. Once more, this *it* may refer to Christ the rock, who, though he was brought to the dust of death, by the means of Satan, and the powers of darkness, yet to the ruin of him that had the power of death; and though death, and the grave, had power over him for a while, yet could not hold him; he rose victorious over them, and ever lives, having the keys of hell and death, to open the gates thereof, and let his people out when he thinks fit.

Ver. 19. *And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, &c.*] By the kingdom of heaven is meant the Gospel, which comes from heaven, declares the king Messiah to be come, speaks of things concerning his kingdom, is the means of setting it up, and enlarging it, displays the riches of his grace, and gives an account of the kingdom of heaven, and of persons' right unto it, and meetness for it. The keys of it are abilities to open and explain the Gospel-truths, and a mission and commission from Christ to make use of them; and being said to be given to Peter particularly, denotes his after-qualifications, commission, work, and usefulness in opening the door of faith, or preaching the Gospel first: to the Jews, Acts ii. and then to the Gentiles, Acts x. and xv. 7. 14. and who was the first that made use of the keys of evangelical knowledge with respect to both, after he, with the rest of the apostles, had received an enlarged commission to preach the Gospel to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Otherwise these keys belonged to them all alike; for to the same persons the keys, and the use of them, appertained, on whom the power of binding and loosing was bestowed; and this latter all the disciples had, as is manifest from ch. xviii. 18. wherefore this does not serve to establish the primacy and power of Peter over the rest of the apostles; nor do keys design any lordly domination or authority; nor did Christ allow of any such among his apostles; nor is it his will that the ministers of his word should lord it over his heritage: he only is king of saints, and head of his church; he has the key of David, with which he opens, and no man shuts, and shuts, and no man opens; and this he keeps in his own hand, and gives it to none. Peter is not the door-keeper of heaven to let in, nor keep out, whom he pleases; nor has his pretended successor the keys of hell and death; these also are only in Christ's hands: though it has been said of the pope of Rome, that if he sends millions of men to hell, none should say to him, what dost thou? but the keys here mentioned are the keys

<sup>p</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 39. 1. Succa, fol. 39. 2. Bava Bathra, fol. 84. 1.

<sup>q</sup> T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 19. 1. Menasseh ben Israel, Nishmat Chayim, fol. 83. 1. 2.

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>r</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 47. 6

<sup>s</sup> Ib. fol. 7. 1.

of the kingdom of heaven; or of the Gospel, which was shut up in the Jewish nation, through the ignorance, malice, and calumnies of the Scribes and Pharisees, who would neither embrace it, or enter into the kingdom of God themselves, nor suffer others that were going to enter into it; and through their taking away the key of knowledge, or the right interpretation of the word of God; and through a judicial blindness, which that nation in general was given up to: and this was shut up to the Gentiles through the natural darkness that was spread over them, and through want of a divine revelation, and persons sent of God to instruct them: but now Christ was about, and in a little time he would (for these words, with what follow, are in the future tense) give his apostles both a commission and gifts, qualifying them to open the sealed book of the Gospel, and unlock the mysteries of it, both to Jews and Gentiles, especially the latter. Keys are the ensigns of treasurers, and of stewards, and such the ministers of the Gospel are; they have the rich treasure of the word under their care, put into their earthen vessels to open and lay before others; and they are stewards of the mysteries and manifold grace of God, and of these things they have the keys. So that these words have nothing to do with church-power and government in Peter, nor in the pope, nor in any other man, or set of men whatever; nor to be understood of church-censures, excommunications, admissions, or exclusions of members: nor indeed are keys of any such similar use; they serve for locking and unlocking doors, and so for keeping out those that are without, and retaining those that are within, but not for the expulsion of any: but here they are used in a figurative sense, for the opening and explaining the truths of the Gospel, for which Peter had excellent gifts and abilities. *And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.* This also is not to be understood of binding, or loosing men's sins, by laying on, or taking off censures, and excommunications; but only of doctrines, or declarations of what is lawful and unlawful, free, or prohibited to be received, or practised; in which sense the words *אסור ומותר*, *bound and loosed*, are used in the Talmudic writings, times without number, for that which is forbidden and declared to be unlawful, and for that which is free of use, and pronounced to be so: in multitudes of places we read of one Rabbi *אסור*, *binding*, and of another *מתיר*, *loosing*; thousands, and ten thousands of instances of this kind might be produced; a whole volume of extracts on this head might be compiled. Dr. Lightfoot has transcribed a great many, sufficient to satisfy any man, and give him the true sense of these phrases; and after him to mention any other is needless; yet give me leave to produce one, as it is short, and full, and explains these phrases, and points at the persons that had this power, explaining Eccl. xii. 11. and that clause in it, *masters of the assemblies*. "These (say they) are the disciples of the wise men, who sit in different collections, and study in the law; these pronounce things or persons defiled, and these pronounce

things or persons clean, *הללו אסורין והללו מתירין*, *these bind, and these loose*; these reject, or pronounce persons or things profane, and these declare them right." And a little after, "get thyself an heart to hear the words of them that pronounce unclean, and the words of them that pronounce clean; the words of them that pronounce *אסורין*, that *bind*, and the words of them that pronounce *מתירין*, that *loose*; the words of them that reject, and the words of them that declare it right." But Christ gave a greater power of binding and loosing, to his disciples, than these men had, and which they used to better purpose. The sense of the words is this, that Peter, and so the rest of the apostles, should be empowered with authority from him, and so directed by his holy spirit, that whatever they bound, that is, declared to be forbidden, and unlawful, should be so: and that whatever they loosed, that is, declared to be lawful, and free of use, should be so; and accordingly they bound some things which before were loosed, and loosed some things which before were bound; for instance, they bound, that is, prohibited, or declared unlawful, the use of circumcision, which before, and until the death of Christ, was enjoined the natural seed of Abraham; but that, and all ceremonies, being abolished by the death of Christ, they declared it to be nothing, and of no avail, yea, hurtful and pernicious; that whoever was circumcised, Christ profited him nothing, and that he was a debtor to do the whole law: they affirmed, that the believing Gentiles were not to be troubled with it; that it was a yoke not fit to be put upon their necks, which they, and their fathers, were not able to bear, Gal. v. 1, 2, 3. 6. Acts xv. 10. 19. They bound, or forbid the observance of days, months, times, and years; the keeping holy days, new moons, and sabbaths, which had been used in the Jewish church for ages past; such as the first day of the new year, and of every month, the day of atonement, the feasts of the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles, the jubilee year, the sabbatical year, and seventh-day sabbath, Gal. iv. 9, 10. Col. ii. 16, 17. They loosed, or declared lawful and free, both civil and religious conversation between Jews and Gentiles; whereas, before, the Jews had no dealings with the Gentiles, nor would not enter into their houses, nor keep company with them, would have no conversation with them; neither eat, nor drink with them; but now it was determined and declared, that no man should be called common, or unclean; and that in Christ Jesus, and in his church, there is no distinction of Jew and Gentile, Acts x. 28, and xi. 2, 3, 18. Gal. iii. 28. They also loosed, or pronounced lawful, the eating of any sort of food, without distinction, even that which was before counted common and unclean, being persuaded by the Lord Jesus Christ, by the words he said, Matt. xv. 11. They asserted, that there is nothing unclean of itself; and that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; or that true religion does not lie in the observance of those things; that every creature of God is good, and fit for food, and nothing to be refused, or abstained from, on a religious account, provided it be received with thanksgiving, Rom. xiv. 14, 17. 1 Tim. iv. 4. And these things now being to



them bound or loosed, pronounced unlawful or lawful, are confirmed as such by the authority of God, and are so to be considered by us.

Ver. 20. *Then charged he his disciples, &c.*] When Peter had so freely and fully confessed him to be the Messiah, and which was the sense of all the disciples; and when Christ had expressed his approbation of his confession, and had promised such great and excellent things upon it, he gave a strict charge unto his disciples, *that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.* The word *Jesus* is not in some copies; and is left out in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions; nor does it seem absolutely necessary; it was enough to charge them to tell no man that he was the Messiah: his reasons for it might be, lest his enemies, the Scribes and Pharisees, should be the more provoked and incensed against him, and seek his death before his time; and lest the jealousy of the Romans should be stirred up, who might fear he would set up himself against Cæsar, as king of the Jews, which might lead them to take measures obstructive of his further designs; and lest some persons, hearing of this, should rise and proclaim him king of the Jews, who were big with the notion of the Messiah being a temporal prince: and moreover, because the disciples were to attest the truth of this after his resurrection; and he chose, for the present, that the people should collect this from his own ministry and miracles, which were sufficient to lead them into the knowledge of it, without any declarations of their's: and though they were possessed of true faith in him, as such, for themselves, as yet they had not the gifts and abilities to defend those doctrines respecting his person, and his offices, they had after the spirit was poured down upon them.

Ver. 21. *From that time forth, began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, &c.*] From the time that Peter made the confession concerning Jesus, as that he was the Messiah, and son of God, and which things were clear to all the apostles, he began to teach them more expressly, and to point out to them more clearly, and plainly, his sufferings and death, than he had done before: and this he chose to do now, partly because that their faith in him was well-grounded and established, so that they were the better able to bear these things he told them, which before might have been more staggering and discouraging to them; and partly, that being forewarned of them, they would not be so shocking when they came to pass: as also to destroy all their expectations of a temporal kingdom, which they might now be big with, he having so fully and freely owned himself to be the Messiah: and this also furnishes out some reasons why Jesus would not have his disciples, for the present, declare him to be the Messiah, that his death might not, by any means, be prevented, which was so necessary; since, should the princes of the world know him, they would not crucify him: and besides, seeing he was to suffer, and die, and rise again for the salvation of his people, it was proper that all this should be over before he was so publicly declared to be the Messiah, the Saviour, and Redeemer. *How that he must go to Jerusalem: the metropolis of the nation, where the great sanhedrim sate, who only could take cognizance of him, under*

the imputation of a false prophet, and adjudge him to death, and which therefore would be in the most public manner; and though it would add to his reproach, would leave no room to be doubted of. The word *must*, not only belongs to his going to Jerusalem, but to his sufferings, death, and resurrection; all which must be because of the immutable decree of God, the council, and covenant of grace, and peace, the prophecies of the Old Testament, and the redemption and salvation of God's elect; these required them, and made them absolutely necessary: *and suffer many things of the elders, chief priests, and Scribes.* who would lie in wait for him, send persons to apprehend him, insult, reproach, and despitefully use him; load him with false charges, accusations, and calumnies, and deliver him to the Gentiles, to be mocked, scourged, and crucified: and this is aggravated as what would be done to him, not by the common people, or the dregs of them, but by the principal men of the city, by the sanhedrim, which consisted of the *elders* of the people, their senators; for this is not a name of age, but of office and dignity; and of the *chief priests*, the principal of them, those of the greatest note among them, who were chosen members of the grand council; and of the *Scribes*, a set of men in high esteem for their learning and wisdom: *and be killed:* signifying, that he should not die a natural death, but that his life should be taken from him in a cruel and violent manner, without any regard to law or justice; indeed, that he should be properly murdered; but for the comfort of his disciples, and that they might not be overmuch pressed and cast down, at the hearing of these things, he adds, *and be raised again the third day;* according to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and the type of Jonas.

Ver. 22. *Then Peter took him, &c.*] The Arabic version reads it, *called to him;* the Ethiopic, *answered him;* and the Syriac, *led him;* he took him aside, by himself; and as the Persic version, *privately said to him;* or he took him by the hand in a familiar way, to expostulate with him, and dissuade him from thinking and talking of any such things; *and began to rebuke him:* reprove and chide him, forgetting himself and his distance; though he did it not out of passion and ill will, but out of tenderness and respect; looking upon what Christ had said, unworthy of him, and as what was scarce probable or possible should ever befall him, who was the son of the living God, and overlooking his resurrection from the dead, and being ignorant at present of the end of Christ's coming into the world, and redemption and salvation by his sufferings and death: *saying, far be it from thee, Lord, or Lord, be propitious to thyself, or spare thyself:* the phrase answers to  $\text{לך שׁוּב}$ , often used by the Targumists, and stands in the Syriac version here. The Septuagint use it in a like sense, in Gen. xliii. 23. 2 Sam. xxiii. 17: 1 Chron. xi. 19. Some think the word *God* is to be understood, and the words to be considered, either as a wish, *God be propitious to thee; or spare thee,* that no such thing may ever befall thee; or as an affirmation, *God is propitious to thee,* he is not angry and displeased with thee, as ever to suffer any such thing to be done to thee: but it may very well

\* Targum Hieros. in Gen. xlix. 22. & Targum Onkelos in 1 Sam. xx. 9.

be rendered, by *God forbid*; or as we do, *far be it from thee*, as a note of aversion, and abhorrence of the thing spoken of: *this shall not be done unto thee*: expressing his full assurance of it, and his resolution to do all that in him lay to hinder it: he could not see how such an innocent person could be so used by the chief men of the nation; and that the Messiah, from whom so much happiness was expected, could be treated in such a manner, and especially that the son of the living God should be killed.

Ver. 23. *But he turned, &c.*] Either to Peter, changing his countenance, and looking sternly upon him, or rather to the disciples; for Mark says, *when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter*: Peter had took him aside, and was arguing the case privately with him; but what he said was so offensive to him, that he chose to reprove him publicly before the disciples; and therefore turned himself from him to them, in a way of resentment, and said unto Peter; in their hearing, and before them all, *get thee behind me, Satan*. The Persic version renders it, *O infidel!* as he was at present, with respect to the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ: some take the word *Satan*, to be a general name for an adversary, or enemy, as it is used in 2 Sam. xix. 22. 1 Kings xi. 14. and think that Christ calls Peter by this name, because he was against him, and opposed him in this point; which sense abates the harshness of this expression. But it seems rather to mean the devil, who took the advantage of Peter's weakness and ignorance; and put him upon dissuading Christ from suffering, for the salvation of his people: though it should be known, that the word *Satan*, is used by the Jews, to signify the vitiosity and corruption of nature; of which they say, שַׁטָּן הוּא, *this is Satan*; so the messenger, or angel *Satan*, 2 Cor. xii. 7. may be thought to be the same; see the note there. And then our Lord's sense is, be gone from me, I can't bear the sight of thee; thou art under the influence of the corruption of thy heart, and nature; thou talkest like a carnal, and not like a spiritual man; and therefore Christ denominates him from his carnality, *Satan*, one of the names of the vitiosity of nature, whom a little before he had pronounced blessed; being then under the influence of another spirit, as appeared from the noble confession of his faith in Christ: this change shews the weakness of human nature, the strength of corruption, the inconstancy and fickleness of frames, and the imperfection of grace in the best of saints. *Thou art an offence unto me*; or a stumbling-block to me, a cause of stumbling and falling; not that he really was, but he endeavoured to be, and was as much as in him lay; and had he given heed unto him, would have been so. It may be observed, that nothing was more offensive to Christ, than to endeavour to divert him from the work his father called him to; he had agreed to do; what he came into this world for, and his heart was so much set upon; namely, to suffer and die in the room of his people, in order to obtain salvation for them: never were such words uttered by him, and such resentment shewn to any, but to the devil himself, when he tempted him to worship him. *For*

*thou savourest not the things that be of God*; meaning his sufferings and death, which were the appointment of God, the counsel of his will, the provision of his covenant; what he foretold in the prophecies of the Old Testament, and what he had an hand in, and in which the glory of his grace, power, and justice, was concerned, and were the end of the mission of his son into this world; which things were out of sight and mind, and were not regarded by the apostle at this time; *but those that be of men*: he thought of nothing but worldly grandeur in the kingdom of the Messiah, as a temporal prince and Saviour; and of the continuance of Christ's natural life, for his own carnal and worldly advantage; which shewed him to be, at this time, greatly under the influence of corrupt nature. So, though the blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and death of Christ, are savoury things, things to be savoured, minded, and regarded by believers, and accounted precious; and they do *mind* them, so the word signifies, Rom. viii. 5. when being blessed with a spiritual and experimental knowledge, and application of them to themselves, they exercise faith, hope, and love upon Christ, with respect unto them; when they remember them aright in the ordinance of the supper, the love from whence they spring, and the benefits that come hereby; and when they discern the Lord's body in it, a crucified Jesus, and the blessings of grace which come by him, and ascribe their whole salvation to his sufferings and death, and taste the sweetness there is in these things, eating his flesh and drinking his blood by faith; yet being left to themselves, they do not savour, mind, and regard these things, but carnal things, and human schemes; as when they are dilatory to profess a crucified Christ, and submit to those ordinances of his, which set forth his sufferings and death; or are negligent in their attendance on them, their place being often empty at supper-time; or if they do attend, their hearts go after other things.

Ver. 24. *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, &c.*] Knowing that they had all imbibed the same notion of a temporal kingdom, and were in expectation of worldly riches, honour, and pleasure; he took this opportunity of preaching the doctrine of the cross to them, and of letting them know, that they must prepare for persecutions, sufferings, and death; which they must expect to endure, as well as he, if they would be his disciples: *if any man will come after me*: that is, be a disciple and follower of him, it being usual for the master to go before, and the disciple to follow after him: now let it be who it will, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, young or old, male or female, that have any inclination and desire, or have took up a resolution in the strength of grace, to be a disciple of Christ, *let him deny himself*: let him deny sinful self, ungodliness, and worldly lusts; and part with them, and his former sinful companions, which were as a part of himself: let him deny righteous self, and renounce all his own works of righteousness, in the business of justification and salvation; let him deny himself the pleasures and profits of this world, when in competition with Christ; let him

drop and banish all his notions and expectations of an earthly kingdom, and worldly grandeur, and think of nothing but reproach, persecution, and death, for the sake of his Lord and Master: *and take up his cross*; cheerfully receive, and patiently bear, every affliction and evil, however shameful and painful it may be, which is appointed for him, and he is called unto; which is his peculiar *cross*, as every Christian has his own; to which he should quietly submit, and carry, with an entire resignation to the will of God, in imitation of his Lord: *and follow me*; in the exercise of grace, as humility, zeal, patience, and self-denial; and in the discharge of every duty, moral, or evangelical; and through sufferings and death, to his kingdom and glory. The allusion is, to Christ's bearing his own cross, and Simeon's carrying it after him, which afterwards came to pass.

Ver. 25. *For whosoever will save his life, &c.*] Whoever is desirous of preserving himself from troubles, reproaches, persecutions, and death; and takes such a method to do it, as by forsaking Christ, denying his Gospel, and dropping his profession of it; and by so doing, carries favour with men, in order to procure to himself worldly emoluments, honour, peace, pleasure, and life, *shall lose it*; he will expose himself to the wrath of God, to everlasting punishment, the destruction of soul and body in hell, which is the second death, and will be his portion: *and whosoever will lose his life for my sake*: that is, is willing to forego all the pleasures and comforts of life, and be subject to poverty and distress, and to lay down life itself, for the sake of Christ and the Gospel, rather than deny him, and part with truth, *shall find it*; in the other world, to great advantage; he shall enjoy an immortal and eternal life, free from all uneasiness and affliction, and full of endless joys and pleasures.

Ver. 26. *For what is a man profited, &c.*] Such persons, though they are only seeking their own profit, will find themselves most sadly mistaken; for of what advantage will it be to such a man, *if he shall gain the whole world*; all that is precious and valuable in it; all the power, pleasures, and riches of it; if with Alexander, he had the government of the whole world, and with Solomon, all the delights of it; and was possessed with the wealth of Croesus, and Crassus, *and lose his own soul*? If that should be consigned to everlasting torment and misery, be banished the divine presence, and continually feel the gnawings of the worm of conscience that never dies, and the fierceness of the fire of God's wrath, that shall never be quenched, he will have a miserable bargain of it. *Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul*? Or, *for the redemption of it*, as the Ethiopic version renders it: see Psal. xlix. 8. If he had the whole world to give, and would give it, it would not be a sufficient ransom for it; the redemption of an immortal soul requires a greater price than gold and silver, or any corruptible thing; nothing short of the blood and life of Christ, is a proper exchange, or ransom-price for it. But in the other world there will be no redemption; the loss of a soul is irrecoverable: a soul once lost and

damned, can never be retrieved. This passage is thought to be proverbial; what comes nearest to it, is the following<sup>2</sup>. "If a scholar dies, we never find an exchange for him; there are four things, which are the ministry or service of the world, אֶסֶךְ אֲבָרָה, יֵשׁ חֲלִיפִין, if they are lost, they may be changed; and they are these, gold, silver, iron, and brass; Job xxviii. 1, 2. but if a scholar dies, מִי מְבִיא לָנוּ תְּמִוּתוֹ, who will bring us his exchange? or an exchange for him: we lost R. Simon, who will bring us his exchange?"

Ver. 27. *For the son of man shall come in the glory of his father, &c.*] This is a reason, proving the truth of what is before asserted, that men's lives may be lost by saving them, and be found by losing them, whatever paradoxes they may seem to be; and that the loss of a soul is irrecoverable, and no compensation can be made for it; and points out the time, when all this will appear: for nothing is more certain, and to be depended upon, than that Christ, who, though he was then a mean and contemptible man, and attended with the senseless infirmities of human nature, wherefore he calls himself, *the son of man*, should come; either a second time to judgment at the last day, in the same glory as his father, as his son, equal with him, and clothed with power and authority from him, and as mediator, to execute judgment: *with his angels*; the holy ones, so the Syriac and Persic versions read, and so some copies; who will add to the glory of his appearance; and will be employed in gathering all nations before him, and in executing his will: or, in his power, to take vengeance on the Jewish nation; on those that crucified him, or did not believe in him, or deserted and apostatised from him. *And then he shall reward every man according to his works, or work*; either that particular action of putting him to death, or their unbelief in him, or desertion of him; or any, or all of their evil works, they had been guilty of: for though good works are not the cause of salvation, nor for which men will be rewarded; though they may be brought into judgment, as proofs and evidences of true faith, in the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, by which good men will be acquitted and discharged; yet evil works will be the cause of condemnation, and the rule of judgment; and the reason of adjudging to temporal punishment here, and eternal destruction hereafter.

Ver. 28. *Verily I say unto you, &c.*] This is a strong asseveration, Christ puts his *Amen* to it; declaring it to be a certain truth, which may firmly be believed: *there be some standing here*; meaning either his disciples, or some of the audience; for it is clear from Mark viii. 34. that the people were called unto him with his disciples, when he said these words: *which shall not taste of death*: that is, shall not die; a phrase frequently used by the Jewish doctors: they say,<sup>3</sup> "All the children of the world, מְעַמְּיָן שְׂעִמָּה דְּמוּתָה, taste the taste of death." That is, die: *till they see the son of man coming in his kingdom*; which is not to be understood of his personal

<sup>2</sup> Midrash Kohelet, fol. 72. 3, 4. T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 5. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 27. 4. & 37. 1. & in Exod. fol. 19. 2. & ni

Num. fol. 50. 4. & 51. 2. 4. Vid. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 9 fol. 7. 3, 4. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 83. 2.

coming in his kingdom in the last day, when he will judge quick and dead; for it can't be thought, that any then present should live to that time, but all tasted of death long before, as they have done; for the story of John's being alive, and to live till then, is fabulous, and grounded on a mistake which John himself has rectified at the close of his Gospel: nor of the glorious transfiguration of Christ, the account of which immediately follows; when he was seen by Peter, James, and John, persons now present; for that, at most, was but an emblem and a pledge of his future glory: rather, of the appearance of his kingdom, in greater glory and power, upon his resurrection

from the dead, and his ascension to heaven; when the spirit was poured down in an extraordinary manner, and the Gospel was preached all over the world; was confirmed by signs and wonders, and made effectual to the conversion and salvation of many souls; which many then present lived to see, and were concerned in: though it seems chiefly to have regard to his coming, to shew his regal power and authority in the destruction of the Jews; when those his enemies that would not be should reign over them, were ordered to be brought and slain before him; and this the Apostle John, for one, lived to be a witness of.

## C H A P. XVII.

Ver. 1. *AND* after six days, &c.] That is, so long after Christ's conversation with his disciples at Cæsarea Philippi, Peter's confession of him, and the reproof he gave him, upon his intimating that he should suffer and die, and Christ's resentment of it; after he had discoursed about his disciples taking up their cross, and following him; and of men's losing and finding their lives; and after the promise, or prophecy, that he had given out, that some then present should not die, until he came into his kingdom. Mark says the same as here, ch. ix. 2. but Luke, ch. ix. 28. says, it was *about an eight days after*, which may be reconciled in this manner; Matthew and Mark leave out the day in which Christ delivered the above sayings, and that in which he was transfigured, and so reckon but six days; and Luke takes them both into the account, and makes it eight days, so that they all agree; and it appears, in short, to be that day sevennight. *Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother*: Peter is taken, though he had so lately offended his master; Christ did not bear the offence in mind, but freely forgave him; and still loved him: James was not the brother of our Lord, who was of that name, but the son of Zebedee; as appears from John being his brother, who was the beloved disciple; these three were all favourite disciples, and were at other times admitted to be with him, when others were not, Matt. xxvi. 37. Mark v. 37. Such a number was taken, as being proper and sufficient to bear witness of the truth of the following account of Christ's transfiguration; and *bringeth them up into an high mountain apart*. Luke says, *to pray*: as he was wont to do, in such places. This mountain is generally said to be Tabor; but for what reason does not appear. Christ was going to Cæsarea Philippi, when he had that discourse with his disciples, which this account is connected with; and though it was a week after, yet we have no intimation of his removing from these parts, with his disciples; only of his leading them up into a mountain: and quickly after this, we hear of him at Capernaum, which was ten miles from Mount Tabor. Dr. Lightfoot<sup>2</sup> thinks, that this was the mountain, which Cæsarea was at the foot of; where formerly,

the first idolatry was set up, one of Jeroboam's calves; and now the eternal son of God is shewn, in the confession of Peter, and in the illustrious demonstration of the Messiah. Since the goodly mountain Lebanon, and which was a very high one, was in those parts which Moses had a sight of before he died; why may it not be that, which he now descended upon, to be one of the witnesses from heaven, of Christ's transfiguration?

Ver. 2. *And was transfigured before them, &c.*] Peter, James, and John, before whom he was metamorphosed, or changed into another form; for not the substance of his body was changed, nor even the shape of it altered, only it received a more glorious form; that whereas before he appeared in the form of a servant, and looked mean and despicable, now he appeared in the form and majesty of God; or there was a divine glory, which from his deity shewed itself in a visible manner through his flesh: *and his face did shine as the sun* it had still the same appearance of an human face, but had such a dazzling glory upon it, as equalled the sun shining in its full strength: *and his raiment was white as the light*: he did not put off his clothes, nor were the nature and substance, and fashion of them changed; but such rays of glory darted through his flesh, and through his clothes, as made them as bright and shining, as the light of the sun at noon-day. Mark says, they became *exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them*. The Vulgate Latin reads, *as snow*, here; and so do the Ethiopic version, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel. Snow has a peculiar whiteness in it, and is therefore made use of, to express the glittering brightness of Christ's raiment; and the *fuller* is mentioned, who by the Jews<sup>2</sup> is called כְּבֹרֵס, and means one that whitens wool, or raiment, and such an one is here designed: not that any fuller makes garments of another colour white; for though this may be done, it is not the work of fullers, but diers: but fullers, whatever colour garments are of, if sullied and spotted, can restore them to their native colour; and if white, can bring them to their former whiteness: now Christ's garments were as white, yea, whiter, than any such men could possibly make garments, that were white

<sup>2</sup> Hor. Heb. in Mar. ix. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Maimon. in Misn. Bava Kama, c. 10. sect. 10.

at first: what colour Christ's garments were of before, is not certain; now they appeared white, to the greatest degree of whiteness. Dr. Hammond <sup>b</sup> has a conjecture, that in the phrase *on earth*, reference is had to the earth fullers make use of in cleaning, and which is called *fullers' earth*: and that the words are to be rendered, *as no fuller, by or with earth can whiten them*: but if this will not bear, the sense is, that there is no fuller, nor ever was, or ever will be upon earth, that can make raiment so white as Christ's was.

Ver. 3. *And behold there appeared unto them, &c.* The disciples: *Moses and Elias*: Moses the giver of the law, and Elias one of the chief of the prophets: one of them had been dead near a thousand and five hundred years, and the other had been caught up to heaven, about nine hundred years before this. The Jews sometimes speak of these two as together. They say <sup>c</sup>, "that the Shekinah never descends below, but *משה ואליהו*, *Moses and Elias* ascend above." Yea, they expect that these two will come together in future time; for so they represent <sup>d</sup> God saying to Moses; "Moses, as thou hast given thy life for them (the Israelites) in this world, so in time to come (the days of the Messiah) when I shall bring Elias the prophet, *שניכם באין כאחת*, *you two shall come together*." Now they came. Luke says, they appeared *in glory*: in glorious bodies, in a glory upon their bodies; like, though inferior, to the glorious body of Christ, now transfigured: that they appeared in their own real bodies, no doubt need be made; about the body of Elijah, or Elias, there is no difficulty; since he was carried soul and body to heaven, he died not, but was changed; and has ever since remained in a glorious body, in which he doubtless now appeared: and why this should not be the case of Moses, or why he should appear in another body, and not his own, I see not; for though he died, yet he was buried by the Lord, and no man ever knew the place of his sepulchre; and there was a dispute about his body, between Michael and the devil, all which are uncommon circumstances: so that it might be, that his body was, quickly after his death, raised and restored to him; or at this time, as a pledge of the resurrection of the dead, as Christ's transfiguration was of his glory. The Jews have a notion that Moses is not dead, but is ascended, and stands and ministers to God, in the highest heavens <sup>e</sup>: the appearance of these two with Christ, was to shew, that Christ is the end of the law and prophets; that there is an entire agreement between him and them, and that they have their full accomplishment in him; and also shews, that he was neither Elias, nor any of the prophets, as some took him to be; since he was distinct from them, and the chief and more glorious than any of them. If it should be asked; how came the disciples to know these two to be Moses and Elias, since they never saw them before, nor could have any statues or pictures of them, these being not allowed among the Jews; nor do the accounts of them in Scripture seem to be sufficient to

direct them to such a thought; especially, since by their glorification, they must be greatly altered: it may be replied, they knew them either by immediate divine revelation, or by the discourse that passed between them and Christ; for it follows, *talking with him*. The Jews often speak of the appearance of Elias to their doctors, and of his conversing with them, and teaching them. Whether this is done with design to lessen the glory of this appearance, I will not say; however, they can't reasonably object to the probability of this account, since they make it to be so frequent among themselves; though they look upon it as an high favour, and that such are holy good men, that are indulged with it, take an instance or two: thus they say <sup>f</sup> of a certain person, "Lo! the pious man, whom Elias used *בדירה בודדה*, *to converse with*." And elsewhere it is said <sup>g</sup>, "R. Phineas and R. Mari, the sons of R. Chasda, were godly men, whom *ואליהו מרבר עמוכם*, *and Elias was talking with them*, and they were priests." What Moses and Elias were talking with our Lord about, is expressed by Luke, ch. ix. 31. see the note there.

Ver. 4. *Then answered Peter and said unto Jesus, &c.* Which was, as Luke informs us, after he, and James, and John, awoke out of sleep; for it being night when Christ was transfigured, and they weary, were overpressed, and fell asleep on the mount, as they afterwards did in the garden with him: but when they were awaked, either by the talk of the men with Christ, or by the rays of brightness and glory, which darted from them, and especially from Christ, to their great surprise; they saw the glory that was upon him, and observed the two men that were with him, who appeared also in glorious forms; whom either by revelation, or the sequel of their discourse, they knew to be Moses and Elias: and just as these were taking their leave of Christ, Peter, charmed with such objects, and with such delightful company, and pleasant conversation, he had the happiness of hearing part of, addresses himself to Christ and says, *Lord, it is good for us to be here*: in this mountain, with thyself and such company; better than to be below among the throng and multitude, where nothing but misery and distress are to be seen, and noise and tumult heard; or it is better to be here, than to go to Jerusalem, and there suffer and die; the horror of which, is thought by some, still to abide on Peter's mind. *If thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles*; tents, or booths, such as were made at the feast of tabernacles, of boughs and branches of trees, to keep off heat, cold, and rains: *one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias*; Luke adds, *not knowing what he said*; and Mark, *for he wist not what to say*: the one representing him, as with the rapture and surprise, not himself; and the other, under the awe and dread of such majesty, as at the utmost loss what to say, agreeably to such a situation of things: not but that he knew what words he did deliver, and with what view; but he spake as a mistaken man, being ignorant of the design of this appearance; which was,

<sup>b</sup> In Mark ix. 3.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Sereab, fol. 5. 1.

<sup>d</sup> Debarim Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 99. 2.

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Sota, fol. 13. 2. Maimon. præfat. ad Seder Zeraim in Talmud. fol. 66. 4.

<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 7. 2.

<sup>g</sup> Juchasin, fol. 101. 1. Vid. fol. 79. 1. & 118. 2. & 13. 139. 1. & T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 106. 1.

not that this glory should continue, only that he should be an emblem and pledge of what was future; and besides, he was wrong in putting these two men upon an equal foot with Christ, each of them being to have a separate tabernacle as he; and he appeared to be quite out of the way, in proposing earthly tabernacles for glorified persons to dwell in, who had an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens: moreover, as to the mystical sense, Moses and Elias, the law and the prophets, were not to be considered as in distinct apartments, and separate from Christ, but as agreeing with him, and fulfilled and swallowed up in him; who only, according to the voice that followed, was to be heard and attended to, and not they, as distinct from him.

Ver. 5. *While he yet spake, &c.*] That is, while Peter was proposing the above to Christ, before an answer could be given by him, and which was unworthy of one, another scene of things presents, and a full answer is returned him by a voice from the father; directing him and his fellow disciples, to attend to Jesus only, and not to Moses and Elias; *and behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them*: that is, Jesus, Moses, and Elias; the two last of which were seen no more; and which cloud covered them, as the cloud of glory covered the Israelites in the wilderness: and which, as it ceased at the death of Moses, the first prophet; one like unto it appeared at the declaration of Christ, as the greater prophet, spoken of, and typified by Moses. The disciples at its first appearance were not under it, and overshadowed by it; for Luke adds, *and they feared as they entered into the cloud*; there was such a solemnity and glory in it, as struck their minds with awe and fear, as they gradually came into it, and under it. This cloud, which is said to be a *bright* one, was a symbol of the divine presence, and a token of the love, grace, and favour of God; and expressive of the brightness and clearness of the Gospel dispensation, in distinction from the obscurity of the legal one, signified by the thick, dark, and black cloud, God descended in on Mount Sinai, when he gave the law; *and behold, a voice out of the cloud*. The word *behold*, is prefixed both to the cloud and to the voice out of it, which were both wonderful and surprising; and which voice came from heaven, and from the excellent glory, from God the father in heaven: as says Peter, who was now present, 2 Pet. i. 17, 18. *Which said, this is my beloved son*; not a servant, as Moses, Elias, and the rest of the prophets were: though as Mediator, and as considered in his office-capacity, he was a servant; but in this clause, he is considered in his personal character and relation to the father, as a divine person, who was the son of God: not by creation, as angels and men are the sons of God; nor by adoption, as saints are; or on account of his miraculous incarnation, and resurrection from the dead; whereby indeed, he was manifested and declared to be the son of God, which he was before; but on account of his natural relation to God, as his father; he being the eternal, essential, and only begotten son of God, in a way of filiation no creature is, and which is ineffable by us. And as such he is dearly *beloved* of God his father, being his image and the brightness of his glory; of the same nature and perfections with him,

and equal to him. So he ever was, and will be, and that even in the meanest form and lowest condition, in which he has appeared: he was his beloved son, when he was made flesh and dwelt among men, while submitting to ordinances, as to baptism, and obeying his father's will, when covered with reproach, and full of sorrows; when he hung upon the cross, and laid down his life for his people; which he shewed, by concealing nothing from him; by putting all things into his hands, and by appointing him the head of the church, the Saviour of the body, and the judge of quick and dead. *In whom I am well pleased*: Mark and Luke have not this clause, but Peter, who was present, and heard the words spoken, mentions it, 2 Pet. i. 17. which confirms Matthew's relation. This regards, not so much the well-pleaseness of God with the person of Christ, which is expressed in the former clause; but signifies that he was in him, as Mediator, well pleased with all his people; he was well pleased with his righteousness he was working out, whereby the law was magnified, and made honourable; and with the sacrifice he was about to offer up, which would be of a sweet-smelling savour to him, his justice being entirely satisfied with it; and with all he did and suffered in human nature; which were things that always pleased the father, being according to his will, his counsel and covenant: and so he graciously accepted of, and was infinitely well pleased with all his elect, as considered in him, and represented by him, on account of his righteousness, sacrifice, and satisfaction: *hear ye him*; as the former clause chiefly respects that part of his mediatorial office, the priestly, this regards his prophetic office principally, and also his kingly office; so that in this divine testimony, first his sonship is bore witness to, and then his several offices; which his sonship is the foundation of, and qualifies him to bear and execute. This clause has the very words which Moses delivered, when he spoke of the Messiah, the great prophet like unto himself, that should be raised up among the Jews; saying, *unto him ye shall hearken*, Deut. xviii. 15. So that these words, *hear ye him*, most clearly point to Christ, as being this prophet, who is to be heard, and he only; not Moses, but he, the prophet Moses prophesied of; nor Elias, or any of the other prophets, but one greater than them all: hear and believe his prophecies, concerning his sufferings, death, and resurrection, lately delivered by him; listen to, and embrace his doctrines, as coming from God, and as having a divine impress upon them, and being confirmed by miraculous works; submit to his ordinances, and obey his commands, as king of saints; hear him always, and in all things.

Ver. 6. *And when the disciples heard it, &c.*] The voice out of the cloud, and which they apprehended came from God, and was uttered with so much majesty: *they fell on their face*; not so much out of reverence, or for the sake of adoration, but as persons struck with astonishment and fear, and were as half dead; and so fell with their faces flat to the ground, not being able to stand before God, to behold his majesty, and hear his voice: *and were sore afraid*: they were filled with fear, when, awaking out of their sleep, they saw the surprising glory of Christ, and of the

two men that were with him, insomuch that they knew not what to think, or say; and so they were when they entered into the cloud, and still more upon hearing the voice of God himself, even though it was a voice of love, grace, and mercy; see Deut. v. 24, 25, 26. But yet they were not struck with so much amazement and surprise, as not to know what was said; for they distinctly heard the words, rightly understood, and faithfully related them; from whom the evangelists had them, and which Peter perfectly remembered, and recorded many years after.

Ver. 7. *And Jesus came and touched them, &c.*] The disciples were at some little distance from Christ, but he observing the fear and surprise they were in, came to their relief and assistance; which he did not disdain to give, notwithstanding the glory he was covered with; but acts the part of a mediator between God and them, and lays hold on them to raise them up, whom the majesty of God's voice had cast down: the Persic version renders it, *he came and brought them to themselves*; who were just fainting and swooning away, at the awfulness of the voice: *and said, arise, and be not afraid*: it is not the voice of an angry God, but of God well pleased with me, and in me with you; it is the voice of my God, and your God, of my father, and your father; arise, stand on your feet, take heart, and be of good courage, no hurt will come to you.

Ver. 8. *And when they had lift up their eyes, &c.*] *And looked round about*, as Mark says, to see whether the same objects still continued, as Moses and Elias, and the bright cloud: *they saw no man*; neither Moses nor Elias, who were both gone; signifying, that though the law and the prophets were till this time, they were now finished and completed, and the Mosaic economy was to be no more; as these men appeared no more after, nor will they till the second coming of Christ. And Mark has it, *they saw no man any more*; that is, these men any more, neither then, nor afterwards, *save Jesus only*. Mark adds, *with themselves*: in the same form as before his transfiguration. Christ is the only Mediator, Saviour, and Redeemer; the only Prophet, Priest, and King; and who only is to be, and can be beheld as such; and who does, and will abide with his people; and helps, comforts, and saves them, when none else can. Luke observes, that *when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone*; which was so ordered, that it might be a clear case, that this voice was only concerning Christ, and not either Moses or Elias.

Ver. 9. *And as they came down from the mountain, &c.*] Where all these things had been transacted, *Jesus charged them, saying, tell the vision to no man*: by the *vision* is meant, as it is explained in Mark, *what things they had seen*; as Moses and Elias, and the bright cloud that overshadowed them, and Christ transfigured before them, in a surprising, glorious manner. These Christ strictly ordered Peter, James, and John, to speak of to no man whatever; no, not their fellow-disciples; who either would be apt to disbelieve them, on account of the greatness of them, as

Thomas did the resurrection of Christ afterwards; or lest they should be troubled and displeased, that they were not admitted to the same sight; and especially not to the multitude, or to any other person, *until the son of man be risen again from the dead*; meaning himself and his resurrection, when such proof would be given of his mission, authority, and glory, which would make this account more easy to be believed: besides, he had told the Jews, that no sign, that is, from heaven, as this voice was, should be given, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas; referring to his resurrection, which would be a sure testimony of the truth of his Messiahship. This order of Christ was strictly observed by the disciples; for Luke says, *they kept it close*; to themselves, in their own breasts; it lay concealed between these three; and *told no man in those days, any of those things which they had seen*: and Mark says, *they kept that saying within themselves*; only as he adds, they were *questioning one with another, what the rising from the dead should mean*: for they were not yet reconciled to the Messiah's dying, which was contrary to their expectation of a temporal kingdom; and therefore could not tell what to make of his rising again, whether this had not some secret, mystical meaning; for of his resurrection from the dead, in a literal sense, they had no notion: though it was foretold in the writings of the Old Testament, and had been so lately affirmed by Christ himself.

Ver. 10. *And his disciples asked him, saying, &c.*] That is, these three, Peter, James, and John, before they came to the rest; whilst they were going down the mountain, or from it, to the place where the others were; for the rest knew nothing of the appearance of Elias, and so can't be thought to join in a question concerning him. *Why then say the Scribes, that Elias must first come?* That is, come before the Messiah comes; for certain it is, that this was the sense of the Scribes, as it was of the ancient Jews, and is still the opinion of the modern ones. They say<sup>a</sup>, "that in the second year of Ahaziah, Elias was hid; nor will he appear, till the Messiah comes; then he'll appear, and will be hid a second time; and then will not appear, till Gog and Magog come." And they expressly affirm<sup>b</sup>, that "before the coming of the son of David, *יבא אליהו לברש*, *Elias will come to bring the good news of it*." And this, they say<sup>c</sup>, will be one day before the coming of the Messiah. And Maimonides<sup>d</sup> observes, "that there are of their wise men that say, *שקדים ביאת המשיח יבא אליהו*, *that before the coming of the Messiah, Elias shall come*." So Tryphon the Jew, the same with R. Tarphon, so often mentioned in Talmudic writings, disputing with Justin Martyr, tells him<sup>e</sup>, that the Messiah "shall not know himself, nor have any power, *עומד על יגדיו, till Elias comes, and anoints him, and makes him known to all*." And hence the Targumist<sup>f</sup> often speaks of Messiah and Elias as together, and of things done by them; and in their prayers, petitions are put for them, as to come together<sup>g</sup>: this is founded upon a mistaken sense of Mal. iv. 5. and which is the general

<sup>a</sup> Seder Olam Rabba, p. 45, 46.

<sup>b</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Erubim, fol. 43. 2.

<sup>c</sup> R. Abraham ben David in Misa. Ediot, c. 8. sect. 7.

<sup>d</sup> Hilch. Melacim, c. 12. sect. 2.

<sup>e</sup> VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>m</sup> Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 226.

<sup>n</sup> In Exod. xl. 10. Deut. xxx. 4. & Lam. iv. 22.

<sup>o</sup> Seder Tephillot, fol. 56. 2. & 129. 2.

sense of their commentators<sup>p</sup>. Now the Scribes made use of this popular sense, to disprove Jesus being the Messiah: they argued, that if he was the Messiah, Elias would be come; but whereas he was not come, therefore he could not be the Messiah. The disciples having just now seen Elias, are put in mind of this tenet of the Scribes, and of their use of it; and inquire of Christ, not so much about the truth of it, and the reason of their imbibing it, as why they were suffered to make use of it, to his disadvantage; and especially why they, the disciples, should be forbid publishing what they had seen; whereas, were they allowed to divulge this vision, and bear their testimony to this truth, that Elias had appeared, and they had seen him, it might be a means of stopping the mouths of these Scribes; and of convicting men of the truth of the Messiahship of Jesus, upon their own principles, and of confirming them that believed it: or else the sense is, whereas they had seen Elias, and he was gone again, without making any public appearance in the nation, their question is, how came the Scribes to say, that he should come first? and if there was any truth in this, how came it to pass, that he did not come sooner, even before Christ came in the flesh; and inasmuch as he did now appear, why he did not appear more publicly, as the person that was to come, at least, before the setting up of the kingdom and glory of the Messiah; which they might hope were at hand, and that Elias was come to usher it in: but that he did not appear publicly, and they were not allowed to speak of it, they wanted to know Christ's sense of these things; and took this opportunity as they came from the mountain, to converse with him about it.

Ver. 11. *And Jesus answered and said unto them, &c.*] By way of concession, *Elias truly shall first come*: this is indeed a tenet of the Scribes, and it is also certain, that there is a prophecy in Mal. iv. 5. of the coming of Elias; of one that goes under that name, not of Elias the Tishbite, in person, but of one that was to come in his power and spirit, and restore all things. The Syriac and Persic versions render it, *shall perfect, or complete all things*, that are prophesied of him; and shall put a period to the law and the prophets, and close the Mosaic economy, and direct persons to Christ; in whom are the perfection of the law, and the fulfilling of the prophets. The Arabic version reads it, *he shall teach you all things*; the whole of the Gospel being to be reduced to these two heads, repentance towards God, and faith in Christ; both which were taught by the true Elias: but the truest sense of the phrase is to be learned out of Mal. iv. 6. *He shall restore, והשיב, he shall turn all things, the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers*; and as this is explained in Luke i. 17. *he shall turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, and make ready a people prepared for the Lord*: which is other, and better sort of work, than what the Jews assign to their Elias, whom they expect, and whom they make to be a restorer of all things, in their way: they often speak of his purifying<sup>q</sup> of things, or pro-

nouncing things pure, that were defiled; and among others, that he will purify bastards, and *ישיבם, restore them* to the congregation of the Lord'. Though Maimonides<sup>r</sup> denies, that when he comes he will pronounce defiled that which is pure, or pronounce pure, that which is defiled. They pretend<sup>s</sup>, that he is now employed, and very busy, in writing every thing that is done in every age; so that when he comes, he'll be able to give an account of every thing; and nothing is more common with them, than to say concerning any matter, that there is any doubt or difficulty about it<sup>t</sup>. *יהא כונח עד שיבא אליהו, let it be left till Elias comes.*

Ver. 12. *But I say unto you, &c.*] A way of speaking used by Christ, when he opposes and contradicts any of the tenets of the Scribes and Pharisees; see Matt. v. 22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44. *that Elias is come already*; the person that was signified by, and prophesied of, under the name of Elias; for Christ refers not to the late appearance of Elias on the mount, but to the coming of a certain person some time ago; who came in the power and spirit of Elias, and was the forerunner and harbinger of him, the Messiah; as was said of him he should, *and they knew him not*: that is, the Scribes and Pharisees, who believed that Elias would come before the Messiah; and yet when he who was designed by him was come, they knew him not, they did not know him to be the Elias; they knew him under the name of John the Baptist, and seemed pleased with his ministry for a while, but afterwards rejected his doctrine and baptism, which is referred to in the next clause: *but have done unto him whatsoever they listed*; they did not believe what he said, nor repent upon his preaching to them; they rejected the counsel of God he declared, not being baptized of him; they treated him with indignity and contempt, charging him with having a devil, and were well pleased when Herod put him to death; some of whom were doubtless among those that sat at meat with him; for whose sake, as well as for his oath's sake, he ordered the execrable murder to be committed: *likewise also shall the son of man suffer of them*. Christ takes this opportunity to confirm what he had said in the preceding chapter, concerning his sufferings and death; and his meaning is, that as sure as John the Baptist had suffered indignities, and death itself, so sure should the son of man suffer like things; if not from the same individual persons, yet from that generation of men.

Ver. 13. *Then the disciples understood, &c.*] By his saying that Elias was come, and by the account he gave of his ill usage, it was clear to them, *that he spake unto them of John the Baptist*; and that he was the Elias that was to come, and was come: so that this observation, that according to prophecy Elias was to come before the Messiah, was no objection to Jesus being the Messiah; but on the contrary, since he that was intended by Elias was come, and had done his work and office, it was a confirmation of the truth of his Messiahship.

<sup>p</sup> Ahen Ezra, Kimchi, & Abarinelt in loc.

<sup>q</sup> T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 25. 1. & Beccorot, fol. 33. 2. & 34. 1.

<sup>r</sup> Kimchi in Zech. ix. 6.

<sup>s</sup> Hilehot Melacina, c. 12. sect. 2. Vid. Misn. Ediot, c. 8. sect. 2. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>t</sup> Seder Olam Rabba, p. 46.

<sup>u</sup> Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 1. sect. 3. T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 3. 1. & 37. 1. & Bava Bathra, fol. 94. 1.



Ver. 14. *And when they were come to the multitude, &c.*] Which was on the next day, as Luke says, ch. ix. 37. when Christ and his three disciples, Peter, James, and John, came down from the mount to the other nine, with whom the multitude of the people were, during their stay on the mountain, *there came to him a certain man*; who was, as Mark says, *one of the multitude*; and as Luke, *a man of the company*: who had applied to the nine disciples on the behalf of his son, but without success, and was waiting till Christ came from the mount; who when he saw him, made up to him, and *knocking down to him* in the manner of a supplicant, doing him homage and worship; hereby shewing his great esteem of him, and veneration for him, *and saying* the following words:

Ver. 15. *Lord, have mercy on my son, &c.*] He addressed him with great marks of honour and respect, not only by gesture, but by words; he craves mercy, pity, and compassion; for the case he had to present, was a miserable one; and his earnestness and impatience he hoped might be excused, since it was for a child of his own. Luke adds, *for he is mine only child*; and therefore his affection for him must be thought to be very strong, and he greatly concerned for its grievous affliction, and earnestly desirous of its health and life. *For he is lunatic*: not a mad man, but troubled with the *epileptic* disease; upon which, as on madness or lunacy, the changes and full of the moon have an influence: hence the next clause, *and sore vexed*, is rendered in the Arabic version, *and sore vexed at the beginning of full moons*; at which times, he had very grievous and frequent fits of his disorder: *for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water*: which shews it to be the *epilepsy*, or falling-sickness, he was afflicted with; which, whenever it seized him, whether by the fire-side, or by the side of a river or brook, or any place of water, or in any other dangerous situation, he fell into it, not being able to help himself, or avoid any danger to which he was exposed. A larger account of this child's disorder, and of the circumstances of his cure, are related by Mark, ch. ix. 17, 18, &c. where this case will be more fully considered.

Ver. 16. *And I brought him to thy disciples, &c.*] To the nine, whilst Christ was with the other three upon the mountain: no doubt but his design was to bring him to Christ first; but he being absent, he applied to his disciples, and desired them to make use of their power to heal him; and which they attempted, but without success: *and they could not cure him*. This he said, partly to shew the malignity and stubbornness of the disease, and partly to accuse the disciples of weakness; when he himself was as much in fault as they, as the following words shew. Here the Jew's insults, and charges with contradiction, that in one place it should be said, that Jesus gave his disciples power to cast out unclean spirits, and here all the disciples could not cast a spirit out of one little child: but without any reason; let it be observed, that all the disciples were not present, the three principal ones were with Christ; besides, this was not owing to want of power in them, which Christ had conferred on them, and which they often made use of with

success: but partly to their own unbelief, and partly to the unbelief of the father of this child, and others with him, as appears from what follows: and it is clear from Mark, that when he came to Christ, he had but little faith; he says to him, *if thou canst do any thing, help us*; and after Christ had talked with him about his faith, he could only say, *Lord, I believe, help mine unbelief*.

Ver. 17. *Then Jesus answered and said, &c.*] Not to the disciples, but to the father of the child; see Mark ix. 19. and those that were with him, and the Scribes that were present, disputing with the disciples, upbraiding them with their weakness, and triumphing over them: *O faithless and perverse generation*; a way of speaking, which is never used of the disciples, and indeed could not be properly said of them; for though they often appeared to be men of little faith, yet not faithless; nor were they so rebellious, stubborn, and perverse, as here represented, though there was a great deal of perverseness in them: but the characters better suit the body of the Jewish nation, who, on account of the incredulity of this man, and those that were present, being of the same temper with them, are exclaimed against in words, which were long ago spoken of their ancestors, Deut. xxxii. 5. and from whence they seem to be taken. *How long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?* Upbraiding them with the length of time he had been with them, in which so many wonderful works had been done among them, and yet they remained unbelieving and incorrigible; and intimating, that his patience and long-suffering would not always continue; and that in a short time, he should be gone from them, and they should no longer enjoy the benefit of his ministry and miracles, but wrath should come upon them to the uttermost: but however, whilst he was with them, notwithstanding all their unbelief and obstinacy, he should go on to do good; and therefore says, *bring him hither to me*, meaning the lunatic child. These words also are directed, not unto the disciples, but to the father of the child; for so it is said in Luke, ch. ix. 41. *bring thy son hither*; and so the Syriac renders it here *בְּרִיךְ, bring thou him*; though, as expressed in the plural number, may very well be thought to intend him, and his friends.

Ver. 18. *And Jesus rebuked the devil, &c.*] The words may indeed be rendered, *and Jesus rebuked him, and the devil departed out of him*; so the Vulgate Latin, and the Oriental versions; but the sense our version gives is certainly right; for it was not the father of the child Christ rebuked for his unbelief; this he had done already; nor the lunatic himself, as some have thought, either for his unbelief, or because he was possessed by the devil, for some sins of his own; which is not likely, since he was so from a child, and perhaps not now in his right mind, and capable of any rebuke: besides, the Evangelists Mark and Luke expressly say, that he *rebuked the foul, or unclean spirit*; for though it was a natural disease which attended this child, yet he was afflicted with it in a preternatural way, by the means of Satan: who, by divine permission, had a

power of inflicting bodily diseases: and that this disease was effected by him, is clear from the manner of curing, by the dispossession of him; for when *he departed out of him*; at the command of Christ, whose power he could not withstand, but was obliged, whether he would or no, to obey; *the child was cured from that very hour*; directly, immediately, and continued well, and in good health. Hence the word rendered *lunatic*, in ver. 15. is in several Oriental versions, translated in the sense of *demoniac*, or one possessed with a devil. The Arabic version renders it, *he is with a demon*; the Persic thus, *on whom a demon hath power*; and the Ethiopic after this manner, *an evil demon takes hold on him*. And it is usual with the Jews, to ascribe diseases to evil spirits; and perhaps this uncommon dispensation in the times of Christ, may give rise to such a notion; particularly, they ascribe this very same disease of the *epileptic*, or falling-sickness, to the same cause, which they call<sup>2</sup> *Kordicus*, or *Cardiacus*, the *Cardiac* passion, which one of their commentators<sup>3</sup> explains thus. "It is a disease which proceeds from the repletion of the vessels of the brain, whereby the understanding is confounded; wherefore it is one of the sorts *חזקו הנופל*, of the falling sickness." Says another<sup>4</sup> of them, "It is *שם שירה*, the name of a demon, that rules over such, that drink much wine out of the fat." To which others agree, saying<sup>5</sup>, that one attended with this disorder, is one, whose understanding is confounded, *בחמת שד*, by means of a demon, who rules over such, that drink new wine; and lo! the spirit's name is *Kardiacus*." From whence it is clear, that with them, the disease and the demon go by the same name; and that the former is from the latter.

Ver. 19. *Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, &c.*] Or *secretly*, as the Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read; that is, privately, and when alone; and as Mark says, *when he was come into the house*; and was by himself, then came the nine disciples to him, to converse with him about this matter, and said unto him, *why could not we cast him out?* That is, the devil, and so cure the lunatic; the Syriac and Persic versions render it, *why could not we heal him?* The lunatic; which only could be done by casting out the demon: they were concerned, fearing they had lost the power which Christ had bestowed on them, and wanted to know what they had done, which had deprived them of it; and what should be the cause of their late unsuccessful attempt, when they had so frequently triumphed over the unclean spirits, that were subject to them. Though they might have learned from the answer Christ gave to the father of the lunatic, and the general character of the Jewish nation in that answer, the true reason of their own inability; but this they took no notice of, imagining it belonged entirely to others, and not to them.

Ver. 20. *And Jesus said unto them, because of your unbelief, &c.*] The Arabic and Ethiopic versions

read, *because of your little faith, or the smallness of your faith*; and so does one Greek manuscript; and which is what is doubtless meant by their unbelief; for they were not altogether destitute of faith, but their faith was very low, and their unbelief very great. Christ says, not because of the unbelief of the parent of the child, and those that were with him, though that also was a reason; but because of their unbelief, being willing to convince them of their unbelief, as he had done the father of the child, who had confessed it, and desired it might be removed from him; but lest they should think they had lost their power of doing miracles, Christ adds; *for verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed*; which was a very small seed, the least of all seeds, and is used very often proverbially by the Jews, to signify any thing of a small quantity or weight<sup>6</sup>, and is sometimes used of faith, as here; so speaking of the congregation of Edom, meaning the Christians, they<sup>7</sup> say, "they have not *אמנתו חרדל כמו גרעין של חרדל*." And it is used in like sense in other eastern nations; and by Mahomet in his *Alcoran*<sup>8</sup>, who says, "We will appoint just balances in the day of resurrection, neither shall any soul be injured at all, although the merit or guilt of an action be of the weight of a grain of mustard-seed." So that it has no reference to the quality of mustard-seed, being hot and acrimonious; which has led some interpreters wrong, to compare faith unto it, for its liveliness and fervency: when our Lord only means, that if his apostles had ever so small a degree of faith in exercise, which might be compared for its smallness to this least of seeds, such an effect as he after mentions would follow; and which therefore is to be understood, not of an historical faith, by which men assent to all that is in the Bible as true; nor of a special, spiritual faith, by which souls believe in Christ, as their Saviour and Redeemer; for of neither of these can the following things in common be said; but of a faith of miracles, peculiar to certain persons in those early times, for certain reasons; which such as had but ever so small a degree of, as the apostles here spoken to might say, as Christ observes to them, *ye shall say to this mountain*; pointing perhaps to that he was just come down from, which might be in sight of the house where he was, *remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove*: meaning, not that it would be ordinarily or ever done in a literal sense by the apostles, that they should remove mountains; but that they should be able to do things equally difficult, and as seemingly impossible, if they had but faith, when the glory of God, and the good of men, required it. So that it does not follow, because the apostles did not do it in a literal sense, therefore they could not, as the Jew insultingly says<sup>9</sup>; since it was meant that they should, and besides, have done, things equally as great as this, and which is the sense of the words.

<sup>2</sup> Miso. Gittin, c. 7. sect. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Maimon. in *ib.*

<sup>4</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 87. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Bartenora & Yom Tob. in Miso. Gittin, c. 8. sect. 1.

<sup>6</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 31. 1. Megilla, fol. 28. 2. Nidde, fol. 66. 1.

Maimon. Issure Biab, c. 11. sect. 4. Mascolot Asurot, c. 9. sect. 21. & c. 14. sect. 8. Tumaot Okelim, c. 4. sect. 2. & 7. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Vet. Nizzachon, p. 148.

<sup>8</sup> C. 21. p. 268. & c. 31. p. 336. Ed. Sale.

<sup>9</sup> Vet. Nizzachon, p. 237.

So the apostle expresses the faith of miracles, by *removing mountains*, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. *i. e.* by doing things which are difficult, seem impossible to be done: wherefore Christ adds, *and nothing shall be impossible to you*: you shall not only be able to perform such a wonderful action as this, were it necessary, but any, and every thing else, that will make for the glory of God, the enlargement of my kingdom and interest, the confirmation of truth, and the good of mankind.

Ver. 21. *Howbeit, this kind goeth not out, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin renders it, *is not cast out*; and so do the Arabic version, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel; and which confirm the more commonly received sense of these words, that they are to be understood of that kind of devils, one of which was cast out of the lunatic, and was of the worst sort, of a fierce and obstinate kind; and having had long possession, was not easily ejected: and that there is a difference in devils, some are worse and more wicked than others, is clear from Matt. xii. 45. and not of that kind of miracles, or kind of faith to the working of such miracles. Moreover, the above versions, as they fitly express the word *καταρριπται* here used; see Mark ix. 17. compared with Matt. xv. 17. So they pertinently set forth the dispossession of devils, who don't go out voluntarily, but by force; and this sort could not be ejected, *but by fasting and prayer*: that is, in the exercise of a miraculous faith, expressed in solemn prayer to God, joined with fasting. It seems that Christ not only suggests, that faith was greatly wanting in his disciples; for which reason they could not cast out the devil, and heal the lunatic; but they had been wanting in prayer to God, to assist them in the exercise of their miraculous gifts; and that whilst Christ, and the other three disciples were on the mount, they had been feasting and indulging themselves with the people, and so were in a very undue disposition of mind, for such extraordinary service, for which our Lord tacitly rebukes them. This agrees with the notions of the Jews, who think that, by fasting, a divine soul<sup>f</sup> *תשי את מברקשה*, may obtain that which is sought for; and that among other things, for which a private person may afflict himself with fasting, this is one, *בפני רוח רעה*, because of an evil spirit<sup>g</sup>; which they think may be got rid of this way.

Ver. 22. *And while they abode in Galilee, &c.*] Munster's Hebrew Gospel reads it *וכשרלוכו*, and while they were walking in Galilee, for they passed through it, when they departed from hence; see Mark ix. 30. and as they were going to Capernaum, and so onward, to the coasts of Judea, in order to be at Jerusalem at the feast of the passover; where, and when, Christ was to suffer: and observing that the time of his death drew nigh, he inculcates it again to his disciples a third time, that they might be prepared for it, and not be discouraged and terrified by it; *Jesus said unto them, the son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men*: some copies read, *sinful men*; and so the angels report the words, in Luke

xxiv. 7. by whom may be meant the Gentiles, who, by the Jews, were reckoned very wicked men, and called sinners of the Gentiles. Now Christ intimates, that the son of man, meaning himself, should be betrayed by the Jews, into the hands of the Gentiles; than which, with the Jews, nothing was reckoned a fouler action, or a viler crime; their canons run thus<sup>h</sup>: "It is forbidden to betray an Israelite into the hands of the Gentiles, whether in his body or in his substance; and though he may be a wicked man, and a ringleader in sin, and though he may have oppressed and afflicted him; and every one that betrays an Israelite into the hands of the Gentiles, whether in his body, or in his substance, has no part in the world to come." They forgot this rule, when they delivered Christ to Pontius Pilate. They go on to observe, that "it is lawful to kill a betrayer in any place, even at this time, in which they do not judge capital crimes; and it is lawful to kill him before he betrays; but when he says, lo! I am about to betray such an one in his body, or in his substance, though his substance is small, he exposes himself to death; and they admonish him and say to him, don't betray: if he is obstinate, and says I will betray him, it is commanded to kill him; and he that is first to kill him, is a worthy man."

Ver. 23. *And they shall kill him, &c.*] Put him to death, with the death of the cross; for the angels in rehearsing these words, affirm, that Christ told his disciples at this time, and in this place, whilst they were in Galilee, that he should be crucified, Luke xxiv. 7. *And the third day he shall be raised again*: this he said for their comfort; and it is observable, that when Christ speaks of his rising again, he makes mention of the exact time, the third day, on which he should rise, according to the types and prophecies of the Old Testament: *and they were exceeding sorry*; that he should be betrayed into the hands of the Gentiles, fearing that another nation would come, and take away, and possess the worldly kingdom and grandeur they were dreaming of; and that he should die at all; and much more that he should die such a cruel and ignominious death, as that of the cross. They seem to have overlooked, and to have taken no notice of his rising again from the dead; which might have administered comfort to them, and have relieved them under their melancholy apprehensions of things; but this they understood not, nor indeed truly any part of what he had said; so Mark and Luke intimate: but then it may be said, how came they to be so very sorrowful, if they did not know what was said? To which may be replied, that this might be the reason of their sorrow, because they did not understand what he said, and they were afraid to ask; they could not tell how to reconcile the betraying of him into the hands of men, and his sufferings and death, with their notions, that the Messiah should abide for ever, and should set up a temporal kingdom, in great splendour and magnificence; and what he meant by rising again from the dead, they could not devise; they could

<sup>f</sup> Jacchiades in Dan. x. 3.

<sup>g</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 22. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Taanith, c. 1. sect. 6.

<sup>h</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Chobel Umazrik, c. 8. sect. 9, 10.

not tell whether all this was to be understood in a literal, or mystical sense.

Ver. 24. *And when they were come to Capernaum, &c.*] Called Christ's own city, ch. ix. 1. where he dwelt some time. ch. iv. 13. and Peter had an house, ch. viii. 14. *they that received tribute-money*, or the *didrachms*; in Talmudic language, it would be נבצק דהשקלים, *they that collect the shekels*: for not the publicans, or Roman tax-gatherers are meant; nor is this to be understood of any such tribute: there was a tribute that was paid to Cæsar, by the Jews; see Matt. xxii. 17. but that is expressed by another word, and was paid in other money, in Roman money, which bore Cæsar's image and superscription; and was exacted of them, whether they would or no: but this designs the collection of the half *shekel*, paid yearly for the service of the temple: the original of this custom, was an order of the Lord to Moses, upon numbering the people; that every one that was twenty years of age and upwards, should give half a shekel as atonement-money, or as a ransom for his soul; which was to be disposed of for the service of the tabernacle, Exod. xxx. 12—16. This does not appear to have been designed for a perpetual law, or to be paid yearly; nor even whenever the number of the people was taken, but only for that present time: in the time of Joash king of Judah, a collection was set on foot for the repair of the temple; and the collection of Moses in the wilderness, was urged as an argument, and by way of example; nor is any mention made of the half shekel, nor was any sum of money fixed they should pay; but, according to the account, it was entirely free and voluntary. In the time of Nehemiah, there was a yearly charge of the *third part of a shekel*, for the service of the temple; but this was not done by virtue of a divine order, or any law of Moses, with which it did not agree; but by an ordinance the Jews then made for themselves, as their necessity required. Aben Ezra<sup>k</sup> indeed says, that this was an addition to the half *shekel*. Now in process of time, from these instances and examples, it became a fixed thing, that every year an half shekel should be paid by every Israelite, excepting women, children, and servants, towards defraying the necessary charges of the temple service, and this obtained in Christ's time. There is a whole tract in the Jewish Misna, called *Shekalim*; in which an account is given of the persons who are obliged to pay this money, the time and manner of collecting it, and for what uses it is put: and so it continued till the times of Titus Vespasian, who, as Josephus says<sup>l</sup>, laid a tax of two drachms, the same with the half *shekel*, upon the Jews; and ordered it to be brought yearly into the capitol at Rome, as it used to have been paid into the temple at Jerusalem. We need not wonder that we hear of receivers of the half shekel at Capernaum; since once a year, on the *fifteenth*

of the month Adar, tables were placed, and collectors sat in every city in Judea, as they did on the *twenty-fifth* of the same month, in the sanctuary<sup>p</sup>. The value of the half shekel, was about *fifteen-pence* of our money. The Syriac version renders the word here used, *two zuzim of head-money*: now a *zuz* with the Jews, answered to a Roman penny, four of which made a *shekel*<sup>q</sup>; so that two of them were the value of an half *shekel*; it is further to be observed, that shekels in Judea, were double the value of those in Galilee, where Christ now was: *five shekels* in Judea, went for ten in Galilee, and so ten for twenty<sup>r</sup>. The receivers of this money *came to Peter*; not caring to go to Christ himself; but observing Peter a forward and active man among his disciples, they applied to him; or rather, because he had an house in this place, at which Christ might be: *and said, doth not your master pay tribute?* or the *didrachms*, the half *shekel* money. Had this been the Roman tribute, the reason of such a question might have been either to have ensnared him, and to have known whether he was of the same mind with Judas of Galilee, that refused to pay tribute to Cæsar; or because they could not tell whether he was reckoned as an inhabitant, or citizen of that city; for, according to the Jewish canons<sup>s</sup>, a man must be twelve months in a place, before he is liable to tribute and taxes; or because they might suspect him to be exempted, as a doctor, or teacher; for the Jewish doctors, wise men, and scholars, were freed from all tribute and taxes<sup>t</sup>, even from the *head-money*, the Syriac version here mentions; and which was a civil tax paid to kings<sup>u</sup>; to which sense that version seems to incline: the rule concerning wise men or scholars, is this<sup>v</sup>. "They don't collect of them for the building a wall, or setting up gates, or for the hire of watchmen, and such like things; nor for the king's treasury; nor do they oblige them to give tribute, whether it is fixed upon citizens, or whether it is fixed on every man." But this was not the Roman tax, nor tribute, on any civil account, but the half shekel for religious service: and it may seem strange that such a question should be asked; and especially since it is a rule with them<sup>w</sup>, that "all are bound to give the half shekel, priests, Levites, and Israelites; and the strangers, or proselytes, and servants, that are made free; but not women, nor servants, nor children; though if they gave, they received it of them." But a following canon<sup>x</sup> explains it, and accounts for it: on the fifteenth "*(i. e. of the month Adar.)* the collectors sit in every province or city, (that is, in the countries,) בענין כל בנחת כל, *and mildly ask every one*: he that gives to them, they receive it of him; and he that does not give, אמן כופין אותו ליתן, *they don't oblige him to give*: on the five-and-twentieth they sit in the sanctuary to collect; and from hence and onward, they urge him that will not give, until he gives; and every

<sup>1</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 2. sect. 4.

<sup>2</sup> In Neh. x. 32.

<sup>3</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 7. c. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Misn. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 3. Maimon. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 9.

<sup>5</sup> T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 11. 2. Vid. Targum & Kimchi in 1 Sam. ix.

<sup>6</sup> Maimon. in Misn. Shekalim, c. 2. 4. & Hilch. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Misn. Trumot, c. 10. sect. 8. & Cetubot, c. 5. sect. 9. T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 59. 1.

<sup>p</sup> T. Hieros. Bava Bathra, fol. 12. 4. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 8. 1.

<sup>q</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 5.

<sup>r</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 100. 2. & Nedarim, fol. 62. 2. & Bava Metzia, fol. 73. 2.

<sup>s</sup> Maimon Talmud Tora, c. 6. 10.

<sup>t</sup> Ib. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 7.

<sup>u</sup> Ib. sect. 9.

“one that will not give, they take pawns of him.” So that it seems, there was a different usage of persons, at different times and places: our Lord being in Galilee at Capernaum, was treated in this manner.

Ver. 25. *He saith, yes, &c.*] Without any hesitation, knowing it had been his master's practice; and therefore as he had done it, did not doubt but he would again: *and when he was come into the house*; that is, Peter, as both the Syriac and Persic versions express; when he was come into his own house, or at least into that where Christ was, in order to talk with him about this affair, the collectors had been speaking of to him, who seems to have been alone when they met with him; however, Christ was not with him: *Jesus prevented him*: saying what he intended to say, on that head; for he being the omniscient God, though not present, knew what question had been put to Peter, and what answer he had returned; and therefore, before Peter could lay the case before him, he puts this question to him; *saying, what thinkest thou, Simon?* How does it appear to thee, to thy reason and understanding? in what light dost thou consider this matter? what is thy judgment of it? *Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers, or others?* What is the usual practice of earthly kings, whether of Judea, or of other countries? do their own children, sons, and heirs, such as are of their own family, pay? or is it only their subjects that are not of their family?

Ver. 26. *Peter saith unto him, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin reads, *and he said*; and so the Ethiopic, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel; but without doubt Peter is meant, and rightly expressed; whose answer to Christ's question is, *of strangers*: meaning not foreigners, or such who formerly belonged to other nations, but were now taken captive, and brought into subjection; but their own native subjects, so called, in distinction from their domestics, their children, and those of their own family: *Jesus saith unto him, then are the children free*; from paying custom, tribute, and taxes, and leaves Peter to make the application; and which he suggested might be made, either thus: supposing it was a civil tax, that since he was the son of David, king of Israel, was of his house and family, and heir apparent to his throne and kingdom; according to this rule, he must be exempt from such tribute: or, thus; taking it to have respect to the half shekel, paid on a religious account, for the service of the temple worship; that since he was the son of the King of kings, for the support of whose worship and service that money was collected; and was also the Lord and proprietor of the temple, and greater than that, he might well be excused the payment of it.

Ver. 27. *Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, &c.*] Though Christ could have maintained his right

of exemption from payment, by such strong and clear reasons and arguments; yet he chose to forego it, lest any should be offended with him, and look upon him as a transgressor of the law; one that had no regard to the temple, and slighted the worship and service of it, and so be prejudiced against him, and his doctrines: which, by the way, may teach us to be careful to give no offence, to Jew or Gentile, or the church of God; though it may be to our own disadvantage, when the honour and interest of religion lie at stake. This is following the example of Christ, who therefore said to Peter, *go thou to the sea*; of Tiberias, which was near this city, *and cast an hook*; a fisher's hook into it: *and take up the fish that first cometh up, and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money*: a stater, as in the original text, the same with the אַסְתֵּרִיָּא of the Talmudists; and which word the Syriac version here retains, and was, they \* tell us, of the same value with a *sela*, or *shekel* of the province. The Arabic and Persic versions render it, by *four drachms*, which also were the same with a *shekel*: and so was just enough to pay the two half shekels, for Christ and Peter, and was worth, of our money, near *half a crown*; and not *nearly a crown*, as in a late paraphrase is said, through mistake. This was a wonderful instance of the omniscience of Christ, who knew there was in such a fish, such a piece of money, as exactly answered the present exigence, and that that would come first to Peter's hook; and of his omnipotence, if not in forming this piece of money immediately in the fish's mouth, as is thought by some, yet in causing this fish to come to Peter's hook first, and as soon as cast in; and of his power and dominion over all creatures, even over the fishes of the sea; and so proved himself to be what he suggested, the son of the King of kings; and to be a greater person than the kings of the earth, to whom tribute was paid: and yet, at the same time, it declares his great poverty as man, that he had not a shekel to pay on such an occasion, without working a miracle; and his great condescension to do it, rather than give offence by non-payment: *and take, and give unto them for me and thee*: for the half shekel was expected of Peter, as well as of Christ, and he had not wherewith to pay it; and this Christ knew, and therefore provides for both. But why did not Christ pay for the other disciples, as well as for himself and Peter? It may be replied, that this money would pay for no more than two: but this is not a full answer; Christ could have ordered more money in the same way he did this: it may then be further said, that only he and Peter were looked upon as inhabitants of this place; and so the rest were not called upon here, but in their respective cities, where they might pay also, and, besides, were not now present.

\* Gloss. in T. Ben. Cetubot, fol. 64. 1. & 105. 1. & Bava Metzia, fol. 102. 2.

## CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1. *At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, &c.*] When the receivers of the half shekel had spoke to Peter about his master's paying it, and Christ and he had conversed about it, by whose orders he had taken up a fish out of the sea, and from it a piece of money, which he had paid for them both; just at this time came the other eleven disciples to the house where Christ and Peter were: *saying, who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?* Mark says, that the disciples disputed this point in the way; and that when they came to Jesus, he put the question to them, what they had been disputing about: and Luke takes no notice of any question put by one or another; but observes, that Christ perceiving the thoughts of their hearts, in order to rebuke, and convince them, took the method hereafter mentioned. All which is reconcilable, and of a piece: the sum is this; that as they were in the way to Capernaum they fell upon this question, which, being known to Christ, the omniscient God; when they came to Capernaum, and to the house where he was, and knowing that the same thought was in them, he asked them what they had been talking of by the way; upon which they were silent; but calling them nearer to him, and they finding that the matter was known; took courage to put the question to him, and desired to have his sense of it. The Vulgate Latin reads, *who dost thou think*; and the Arabic version, *who in thy opinion, &c.* The occasion of this could not be the respect shewn to Peter, in paying the half shekel for him; for this conversation was begun in the way, and before this was done, or, at least, before they knew it: rather it might be occasioned by his promise of giving the keys of the kingdom of heaven to him; or by his taking him, and James, and John, so lately to the mountain with him, where he was transfigured before them; though it seems best to ascribe it to the mention Christ had made of his resurrection from the dead: for as Dr. Lightfoot, Hammond, and others, have observed, something of this kind generally followed any account Christ gave of his death and resurrection, as Mark ix. 31. 34. Matt. xx. 19, 20. Luke xxii. 24. and this thought of an earthly kingdom still continued, when they saw him risen, Acts i. 6. for they had been taught, that the resurrection, and the kingdom of the Messiah, would be at the same time. And, by the kingdom of heaven, they meant, not the kingdom of glory in another world, but the kingdom of the Messiah in this; and which they looked upon to be a temporal one, though they call it the kingdom of heaven; not only because Christ often used this phrase, but because the times of the Messiah, and his reign, were frequently so called by the Jews; see the note on Matt. iii. 2. Now, what they wanted to be satisfied in was, who should be advanced to the post highest in that kingdom next to the Messiah; and, as they doubted

not but it would fall on one of them, to have the most honourable post, and the place of the greatest trust, they were desirous of knowing who it should be.

Ver. 2. *And Jesus called a little child unto him, &c.*] One, very likely, that was in the house, and might belong to the master of it, and which was big enough to come to him at his call. Some have thought that this was Ignatius the martyr, but without any foundation. His own words, in his epistle to the church at Smyrna<sup>7</sup>, can give no countenance to it; where he says, "for I also know, that after his resurrection he was in the flesh, and I believe that he is." The Latin version indeed renders it thus; "for I also saw him in the flesh after the resurrection, and believe that he exists." But it does not follow from hence that he must be this child, but rather the contrary; since it can't be thought, that a child so young as this, in half a year after, had it seen Christ, when risen from the dead, could have took so much notice of him, as this version represents Ignatius to do; but it matters not who it was; Christ designed, by this emblem, to give them his sense of the question, and convey some proper instruction to the minds of his disciples: *and set him in the midst of them*; that every one might see him; and upon the very sight of him, had he said no more to them, they might easily have perceived what was his opinion; that he that was but a child, the most humble, and least in his own eyes, would be the greatest: but besides setting the child in such a situation, he pointed to him, saying what follows.

Ver. 3. *And said, verily I say unto you, &c.*] You may take it for a certain truth, and what may be depended upon, that *except ye be converted or turned*; from that gross notion of a temporal kingdom, and of enjoying great grandeur, and outward felicity in this world; and from all your vain views of honour, wealth, and riches, *and become as little children*: the Arabic renders it, *as this child*; that is, unless ye learn to entertain an humble, and modest opinion of yourselves, are not envious at one another, and drop all contentions about primacy and pre-eminence, and all your ambitious views of one being greater than another, in a vainly expected temporal kingdom; things which are not to be found in little children, though not free from sin in other respects, *ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*: ye shall be so far from being one greater than another in it, that you shall not enter into it at all; meaning his visible, spiritual kingdom, which should take place, and appear after his resurrection, upon his ascension to heaven, and pouring forth of the spirit: and it is to be observed, that the apostles carried these carnal views, contentions, and sentiments, till that time, and then were turned from them, and dropped them; for, upon the extraordinary effusion of the holy spirit, they were cleared of these worldly principles, and understood

<sup>7</sup> Vid. Pocock. not. miscell. ad. Port. Mosis, p. 103, 104, 105, 106.

<sup>7</sup> P. 3. Ed. Voss.

the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom; which they then entered into, and took their place in, and filled it up with great success, without envying one another; having received the same commission from their Lord, and Master: so that these words are a sort of prophecy of what should be, as well as designed as a rebuke to them for their present ambition and contentions.

Ver. 4. *Whosoever therefore shall humble himself, &c.*] Whoever shall entertain mean thoughts of himself, and prefer others to himself, shall behave in a modest humble manner, not affecting dominion over others, or treating his brethren and Christians in a haughty and supercilious manner, with scorn and contempt; but condescend to those of the lowest state, and place himself in the lowest form, conversing with his friends freely and familiarly, without distinction, as *this little child*: or any other of the like age; for there is no reason to suppose, that there was any thing peculiar in this child, which was not in another, it being common to children to behave towards one another, as on a level; not to envy one another, or to set up one above another, or be vainly elated with the distinctions of birth and fortune. *The same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven*: in the Gospel church-state; which was verified in the Apostle Paul; though not one of the twelve: nor are these words limited to them; at least, this passage may be illustrated in his case: he thought himself to be the chief of sinners, and less than the least of all saints, and unworthy to be called an apostle; yet had the largest measures of grace, the greatest gifts and abilities; and was honoured with the greatest usefulness and success in the preaching of the Gospel to the conversion of sinners, and planting of churches; labouring more abundantly than they all.

Ver. 5. *And whoso shall receive one such little child, &c.*] Which is to be understood, not literally but metaphorically; meaning not such an one in age, but one, as the Syriac renders it, אִךְ פְּלִיט דָּנָא, *that is as this child*: like unto it for modesty and humility; one, that is as that, free from pride, ambition, and envy. Christ's sense is, that whoever receives his disciples, that are meek and lowly, into their houses, or into their hearts and affections; that receives their ministry and message, embraces the Gospel preached by them with readiness and cheerfulness, with faith and love, *in my name*; on his account, because they are his disciples, believe in him, preach his Gospel, and, as being sent by, and personating him, *receiveth me*: it is so taken by Christ, as if he was personally present, and personally received, and had all the favours shewn to his, done to himself in person; yea, such receive Christ in the ministry of the word, he being the sum and substance of it. This is said to encourage modesty and humility; and intimates, that proud and haughty persons will not be received as the disciples and followers of the meek and lowly Jesus; and to encourage persons to receive such that are modest and humble, since the respect shown to them, is all one as if shown to him.

Ver. 6. *But whoso shall offend one of these little ones, &c.*] Not in age, but are little and mean in their own eyes, and contemptible in the esteem of the world; though otherwise men of great grace, gifts, and usefulness; who may be said to be offended, when they are not received; their persons despised, their ministry rejected, and they reproached and persecuted; and every thing done to them to discourage, and cause them to stumble and fall, to drop their profession of Christ, to quit his service, and desert his cause: and that such persons are designed, appears by the following descriptive character of them, *which belicve in me*; which can't be said of infants, or little ones in age, and who also are not capable of offence; but must be understood of adult persons, of such who by faith look unto, lay hold on, and receive the Lord Jesus Christ, as their Saviour and Redeemer, and who make a profession of their faith in him; and chiefly of such who preach the doctrine of faith, who having believed, therefore speak; and who are generally the butt of the contempt, reproach, and persecution of men.

*It were better for him, that a mill-stone be hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.* The word translated *depth*, is sometimes used for the sea itself, Isa. xxvii. 5. and signifies the middle, or deeper path, and answers to the Hebrew phrase, *the heart of the sea*: פְּלִיטוֹס דִּבְנָא רַבָּנָא, used by the Targum, in Psal. xlv. 3. and by Jonathan ben Uzziel, in Exod. xv. 8. Jerom thinks, that this was a sort of punishment in use among the Jews, that is here referred to; but this does not appear. The four capital punishments inflicted by them were stoning, burning, slaying with the sword, and strangling<sup>2</sup>: they had indeed other sorts of punishment, which they borrowed from other nations; and so they might this, either from the Romans, or Greeks, or their neighbours the Syrians. The *mill-stone*, in the original, is called μύλος ονίκου, which may be rendered *the ass mill-stone*, being either the nether mill-stone, as some think, which was called *the ass*, because, like an ass, it bears the chief of the weight and burden; or else respects such mill-stones as were turned about by an ass, in distinction from those that were turned by the hand; for that it was usual with the Jews to make use of asses in grinding, as well as other nations, is certain: hence we read<sup>3</sup> of חֲמֵרָא יִרְדִּינָא, *the ass of mills*, that were employed in grinding in the mills, and of one that turned his mill with wild asses<sup>4</sup>: but it is further to be observed, that mention is made<sup>5</sup> of חֲמֵרָא שֶׁל רְחִים שֶׁל יָד, *the ass of an hand-mill*: which the commentators say<sup>6</sup>, was a beam on which an hand-mill was fixed, and was called *the ass*. Now, I should rather think that this is meant than the other. It does not seem likely that a nether mill-stone, or one that required an ass to turn it, should be tied to a man's neck, in order to drown him, when cast into the sea; for our Lord must be thought to refer to a practice somewhere in use: but rather, that such a beam, or log, of an hand-mill, so called, were wont to be put about the necks of malefactors,

<sup>2</sup> Misn. Sanhedrim. c. 7. sect. 1.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Moed Katon, f. 1. 10. 2. Maimon. Hilch. You Tob, c. a. sect. 15.

<sup>4</sup> T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 16. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Misn. Zabim. c. 4. sect. 2.

<sup>6</sup> R. Maimon. R. Sampson, & R. Obadiah Bartenora, in. ib.

in drowning them. Our Lord's sense is, that it was much better for a man to endure the severest temporal punishment, rather than by offending, and evil treating any of his disciples, expose himself to everlasting destruction. The phrase of having a *mill-stone about the neck*, I find, is sometimes used to denote any thing very troublesome and burdensome. "The tradition is, a man that marries a wife, and after that learns the law, R. Jochanan says, רידיך בציאתי, *though a mill-stone is about his neck*, yet he must study in the law:" that is, though his worldly circumstances are narrow, and his wife and family are as burdensome as if he had a mill-stone about his neck, he must continue his studies.

Ver. 7. *Woe unto the world because of offences! &c.]* By which are meant, not sins, as sometimes, but rather temptations to sin; and so the Ethiopic version renders this word by *temptation* in every clause, as the Arabic does in the next; and may design all the contempt and reproach cast upon the doctrines, ordinances, and people of Christ, and all those afflictions, distresses, and persecutions exercised on them, on purpose to cause them to stumble and fall; to tempt them to deny the truth, drop their profession of religion, and relinquish the service of Christ; things which are displeasing to God, discouraging to his people, and often attended with bad consequences to formal professors; and bring down the judgments of God upon the men of the world; who sooner or later will vindicate his own cause, avenge his own elect, and render tribulation to them that trouble them. *For it must needs be that offences come;* considering the implacable malice of Satan, his unwearied and indefatigable pains, the malignity of the men of the world, their aversion and enmity to the Gospel of Christ, and all good men; it can't be thought, God suffering such things for the trial of such as are truly gracious, and for the discovery of hypocrites, and for the manifestation of his grace, power, and faithfulness in the preservation of his dear children, that it should be otherwise, but that such offences should be: *but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh;* for though God, for wise ends and reasons, as above, voluntarily permits such things to be in the world; and though they do not succeed, as to cause the true followers of Christ so to stumble and fall, as to perish, yet this does not excuse their sin and wickedness, in doing all that in them lay to effect it. For though God will, and does over-rule all their base designs against his ministers, church, and people, for his glory, and their good, this is no thanks to them; and as it does not in the least extenuate their crime, it will not abate the severity of their punishment.

Ver. 8. *Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot, &c.]* The same words are repeated here on occasion of offences, as are spoken by Christ, ch. v. 29, 30. on account of unchaste looks, desires and lusts: giving offence to Christ's disciples, or endeavouring, by any means whatever, to cause them to stumble and fall, is equally gratifying the flesh, and no more to be indulged, than the other, on pain of eternal damnation. See the note there.

Ver. 10. *Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, &c.]* That is, one of those little ones that believed in Christ; for he is not speaking of infants in age, but of those who might be compared to such, for their humility and modesty; who were little in their own eyes, and mean and despicable in the eyes of the world, as well as appeared but little in the eyes of their fellow-disciples and brethren; for our Lord returns and addresses himself to his disciples, who had been contending among themselves who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven; and so were striving to lessen one another, each looking upon himself as the greater, and every other as little. Wherefore Christ cautions them against such a spirit, and bids them beware of despising their fellow-disciples, as little, and below them; especially since so much notice and care were taken of them, both in heaven, and in earth: *for I say unto you, that in heaven:* the phrase, *in heaven*, is omitted in the Syriac and Persic versions, perhaps because it might be looked upon as unnecessary, since it afterwards appears; but is very proper, or pertinent, whether it be considered as descriptive of the angels, who have their habitation there, in distinction from the evil angels, who are cast down from thence; or as pointing out the place where the angels behold the face of God, and who are styled *their angels*; the angels of the little ones, that believe in Christ, who are ministring spirits unto them, the guardians of them, who encamp about them, and do many good offices for them. Some have thought from hence, that every good man has his peculiar angel that waits upon him, and cares for him; but this does not necessarily follow from these words, only that they all have an interest in angels, and in their good services. This seems indeed to have been a notion that prevailed among the Jews, not only that there were angels which presided over particular nations, but who also had the care of particular persons; so they speak of an angel that was particularly appointed for Abraham<sup>f</sup>. Nor will they allow, that one angel does two messages, nor two angels one<sup>g</sup> message: but that every one has his particular place, person, and work; of whom it is further said, that they *do always behold the face of my father which is in heaven*: which is not so much to be understood of their intellectual knowledge, and apprehension of the divine being, of their beholding the glory of his nature, and essence, and of their contemplating and applauding his perfections; as of their ministring before him, waiting, as servants, upon him, watching to receive his orders, and ready to obey his commands. And our Lord's argument is, that if such excellent creatures as the angels in heaven, who are continually favoured with being in the presence of Christ's heavenly father, honoured with so high a station, as always to stand before him, as ministers of his; if these are the guardians of these little ones, if they are committed to their care, and they have the oversight of them, then they ought not to be despised: and besides, since the angels that have the care of them are so near the throne, it should deter every one from having their charge in contempt, or doing any injury to them; since they are

<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 29. 2.

<sup>g</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 96. 1.

<sup>f</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 50. fol. 44. 4.



capable of lodging accusations and complaints against them; and, when leave is given, have power of executing the sorest judgments upon men. This description of angels agrees with what the Jews say of them, especially of the chief of them. Michael, they say <sup>a</sup>, is the first and principal of the chief princes, רֹאֵי פְנֵי דְמֶלֶךְ, that behold the face of the king; that is, the King of kings, the Lord of hosts. Suriel, which, with them, is another name of an angel, is called <sup>b</sup>, אֲשֶׁר הַפְּנִים, the prince of faces, who is always in the presence of God; and, as the gloss says, is "an angel that is counted " worthy to come before the king."

Ver. 11. For the son of man is come to save that which was lost.] This is another, and stronger reason, why these little ones should not be despised; because Christ, who is here meant by the son of man, came into this world to save these persons; who were lost in Adam, and had destroyed themselves by their transgressions, and carries great force in it: for if God had so great a regard to these little ones, as to send his son to obtain eternal salvation for them, when they were in a miserable and perishing condition; and Christ had so much love for them, as to come into this world, and endure sorrows, sufferings, and death itself for them, who were not only little, but lost; and that to obtain righteousness and life for them, and save them with an everlasting salvation; then they must, and ought to be, far above the contempt of all mortals; and the utmost care should be taken not to despise, grieve, offend, and injure them in any form or shape whatever; see Rom. xiv. 15. 1 Cor. viii. 11. Beza observes, that this whole verse is left out in some Greek copies, but it stands in others, and in all the Oriental versions, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; nor can it be omitted; the following parable, which is an exemplification of it, requires it.

Ver. 12. How think ye, &c.] Or, as the Arabic, what do you think? what is your opinion of this matter? what is your sense of it? how does it appear to you? 'Tis a Talmudic way of speaking, the same with חֲוֵיָא מִן אֲתָם סְבוּרָא, what do you think? what is your judgment? So the Rabbins, after they have discussed a point among themselves, ask <sup>c</sup>, מַה סְבוּרָא לָן, what is our opinion? or what do we think upon the whole? Christ here appeals to his disciples, makes them judges themselves in this matter, and illustrates it by a familiar instance of a man's seeking and finding his lost sheep, and rejoicing at it. If a man have an hundred sheep; who is the proprietor of them; not the hireling, who has them under his care, and whose the sheep are not; but the owner of them, to whom they belong, and who must be thought to be most concerned for any one of them that should go astray: a hundred sheep seem to be the number of a flock; at least flocks of sheep used to be divided into hundreds. In a Maronite's will, a field is thus bequeathed <sup>d</sup>; "the north part of it to such an one, and with it מֵאוֹת צֹאן, a hundred sheep, " and a hundred vessels; and the south part of it to such an one, and with it מֵאוֹת צֹאן, a hundred sheep, " and a hundred vessels; and he died, and the wise " men confirmed his words, or his will." Such a

supposition, or putting such a case as this, is very proper and pertinent. And one of them be gone astray; which sheep are very prone to; see Psal. cxix. 176. Isa. liii. 6. doth he not leave the ninety and nine, which are not gone astray, in the place where they are; it is usual so to do: and goeth into the mountains; alluding to the mountains of Israel, where were pastures for sheep, Ezek. xxxiv. 13, 14. and whither sheep are apt to wander, and go from mountain to mountain, Jer. l. 6. and therefore these were proper places to go after them, and seek for them in: but the Vulgate Latin version joins the words in or on the mountains, to the preceding clause, and reads, doth he not leave the ninety and nine in the mountains; and so read all the Oriental versions, Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, and Persic; and in the same manner Theophylact; and seeketh that which is gone astray? This is usual with men: no man that has a flock of sheep, and though but one strays from it, but takes this method. This parable now may be considered, either as an illustration of the son of man's coming into this world, to seek, and to save his lost sheep, mentioned in the preceding verse; even the lost sheep of the house of Israel, the little ones that believed in him, who were despised by the Jews. And then by the ninety and nine, we are not to understand the angels; who never went astray, never sinned, but kept their first estate, whom Christ left in the highest heavens, on the holy mountains of eternity, when he became incarnate, and came down on earth to redeem mankind: for these never go by the name of sheep; nor are they of the same nature and kind with the one that strays, and is sought out; nor is their number, with respect to men, as ninety-nine to one; at least it cannot be ascertained; nor were they left by Christ, when he came on earth; for a multitude descended at his birth, and sung glory to God. Nor are the saints in heaven intended, whose state is safe; since it cannot be said of them, as in the following verse, that they went not astray; for they went astray like lost sheep, as others, and were looked up, sought out, and saved by Christ as others; but rather, by them, are meant the body of the Jewish nation, the far greater part of them, the Scribes and Pharisees, who rejected the Messiah, and despised those that believed in him: these were in sheep's clothing, of the flock of the house of Israel, of the Jewish fold; and with respect to the remnant among them, according to the election of grace, were as ninety-nine to one: these were left by Christ, and taken no notice of by him, in comparison of the little ones, the lost sheep of the house of Israel he came to save: these he left on the mountains, on the barren pastures of Mount Sinai, feeding on their own works and services; or rather, he went into the mountains, or came leaping and skipping over them, Cant. ii. 8. encountering with, and surmounting all difficulties that lay in the way of the salvation of his people; such as appearing in the likeness of sinful flesh, bearing, and carrying the griefs and sorrows of his people, obeying the law, satisfying justice, bearing their sins, and undergoing an accursed death, in order to obtain the salvation of his chosen ones, designed by

<sup>a</sup> Jacchiades in Dan. x. 13.  
<sup>b</sup> T. Eab. Beracot, fol. 51. 1.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 88. 2.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 156. 2.

the one sheep that was *gone astray*; who strayed from God, from his law, the rule of their walk, out of his way, into the ways of sin, which are of their own choosing and approving; or, the intention of this parable is, to set forth the great regard God has to persons ever so mean, that believe in Christ, whom he would not have stumbled and offended, and takes special care of them, that they shall not perish; even as the proprietor of a flock of sheep is more concerned for one straying one, than for the other ninety-nine that remain.

Ver. 13. *And if so be that he find it, &c.*] Which is a casual and uncertain thing with the shepherd, but not so with Christ, who certainly finds all those he goes after, and seeks: for, *verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep*; at the finding of it, whose loss greatly affected him, *than of the ninety and nine which went not astray*; who seemed not to go astray, were outwardly righteous before men, and, in their own opinion, being the same with the ninety and nine just persons who needed no repentance in their own apprehension, Luke xv. 7. This same parable is related in Luke xv. 3, 4, 5, 6. and it being there more largely expressed, and along with other parables of the same kind, I shall refer the more particular consideration of it to that place; only observe, that it seems to me that this parable was twice delivered by our Lord, and that on two different occasions; once, as here, in his discourse on offences, and upon mention of his coming into this world to save lost sinners; at another time, as there, upon the Pharisees murmuring at his receiving sinners, and eating with them.

Ver. 14. *Even so it is not the will of your father which is in heaven, &c.*] This is the accommodation, or application of the parable of the lost sheep to the present purpose, and is the top of the climax or gradation here made use of. First, Christ observes, in order to deter any from despising and offending any of his disciples, even the meanest, that they have angels to be their guardians, who are continually in the presence of God; and next, that he himself in human nature came to be the author of salvation to these persons; and then rises up to the sovereign will of his father, and their's, the source and security of their everlasting happiness; which will is, *not that one of these little ones, that believe in Christ, should perish*. It is his will of command that no stumbling-block should be laid in their way to cause them to stumble and fall, to the grieving of their souls, the wounding of their consciences, and the perishing, or loss of their peace and comfort; and it is his unalterable will of purpose, or his unchangeable decree, that not one of them, even the meanest, shall perish eternally: in pursuance of which will, he has chosen them in his son, he has put them into his hands, and secured them in his covenant; and having redeemed them by Christ, and called them by grace, he keeps them by his power, through faith unto salvation. Nor shall any one of them finally and totally fall away and perish, through the power of their own corruptions, the temptations of Satan, the reproaches and persecutions of men, the frowns or flatteries of the world, or through the errors and heresies of false teachers, or any other way. It is to be observed, that when our Lord, in ver. 10. is speaking of the

happiness of the angels, and the honour done to the little ones by having such guardians; then the more to aggrandize this matter, he represents those as in the presence of his *father which is in heaven*; but here, when he would express the wonderful love and grace of God, in the resolutions of his heart, and purposes of his will, to save them, then it is *your father which is in heaven*; and this, the rather to engage them to the belief of it, since they stood in such a near relation to him, as children to a father; and therefore must be infinitely more concerned for their welfare, than a proprietor of sheep can be, for one that is lost. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions indeed read, *my father*, but without any authority; for the phraseology, *the will before your Father*, as in the original text, see the note on Matt. xi. 26.

Ver. 15. *Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, &c.*] This is said to shew, that as on the one hand, if any of those that believe in Christ, should commit a trespass against his fellow-Christian, his sin is not to be connived at, for fear of offending him; for what Christ has before said, is not to be taken in such sense, as to prevent private reproof, or public censures, when there is occasion for them; so on the other hand, he is not to be despised and ill used, and treated in the same injurious manner; but gentle reproofs are to be made use of, for his good. This is spoken not to the apostles as such, but as believers in Christ; and concerns every one that stands in the relation of a brother, or church-member to each other, and only such; for they that are without, don't fall under their notice, nor are they obliged to take, nor can they take altogether, the same methods with them. This rule respects sins committed by one brother against another, either in word or deed; or such as are of a private nature, and which one only, or at least but few, are acquainted with: in such cases the advice is, *go and tell him his fault between thee, and him alone*; don't wait for his coming to thee, as being the aggressor, to acknowledge his fault, testify his repentance, express his sorrow for his sin, and ask pardon: but go to him, and freely and faithfully lay his sin before him; but don't aggravate it, and reproach him with it, and bear hard on him for it, but gently rebuke and reprove him: let this be done in the most private manner; let none be present, nor any know of it, even the most intimate friend and acquaintance: *if he shall hear thee*: patiently, take your reproof kindly, acknowledge his offence, declare his hearty sorrow for it, and desire it might be overlooked, and reconciliation made: *thou hast gained thy brother*: recovered him from the error of his ways, restored him to his duty, and secured his friendship, and interest in his favour; nor should any mention be made of this ever after, either to him, or any other, or to the church.

Ver. 16. *But if he will not hear thee, &c.*] But will either deny the fact, or extenuate and excuse it, or defend it, or at least is obstinate and incorrigible, shews no signs of repentance, but is angry, gives hard words, and ill language: *then take with thee one or two more*; members of the church, and perhaps of weight, reputation, and character, who either know some-

thing of the matter, and so can confirm, by their testimony, what has been alleged, in order to bring the person to conviction and acknowledgment; or if they do not, and which seems rather to be the sense, they may, by hearing what is said on both sides, judge where the truth lies, and join with the offended person in the admonition, that it may fall with the greater weight, and become more effectual: *that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established*, referring to Deut. xix. 15. So that should the matter be brought before the whole church, these witnesses would be able to testify the truth of the case, and report the steps that had been taken, and what effect they had had; so that things being thus prepared, the case would appear plain and easy, and without difficulty. The whole of this is very agreeable to the rules and customs of the Jews, and is founded on the law, in Lev. xix. 17. upon which they form rules very much like to these. They represent God himself taking such a method as this, with the sons of men: "When the holy blessed God reproves a man, he reproves him in love, privately: if he receives it, it is well; if not, he reproves him among his friends: if he receives it, it is well; if not he reproves him openly before the eyes of all; if he receives it is well; if not, he leaves him, and reproves him no more." And this is an instruction to men, how they should reprove their friends. They say, "he that sees any thing in his friend that is not becoming, he ought to reprove him." And which is elsewhere more largely expressed: "he that seeth his friend walking in a way that is not good, he is bound to reprove him, even a disciple his master; and this he shall do for his good, and in order to bring him to the life of the world to come, or eternal life; and if he takes it of him, it is well: but if not, he must reprove again, a second and a third time; and so he must reprove him many times, if, or until he hears him." And this they require to be done, in the most private manner: "reproof out of love (they say) is secret from the children of men; whoever reproves his friend in love, seeks to secrete his words from the sons of men, that he may not expose him thereby to shame and reproach." That is, as the gloss<sup>a</sup> on it observes, "he seeks to reprove him in secret, so that he may not be put to shame before many." If this way does not succeed, they allow of a public reproof, for so it is said; "thou mayest not reprove him with hard words, till his countenance changes; for whoever causes the face of his friend to turn pale publicly, has no portion in the world to come; but thou mayest reprove in the words of heaven, or God; and if he does not return privately, thou mayest make him ashamed publicly, and expose his sin before him; and reproach and curse him, until he returns to do well; for so did all the prophets to Israel." They plead also for a second reproof, from the text in Lev. xix.

17\*. "From whence does it appear, that he that sees any thing in his friend unbecoming, ought to reprove him? As it is said, *thou shalt in any wise rebuke*, "קבל, *and he does not receive it*, (he does not take it kindly, or, as here, "he does not hear him,) from whence is it manifest, that he must return and reprove him (or repeat the reproof)? from what is said, *reproving thou shalt reprove*." The whole of this is very fully expressed in a few words, by one of their best writers, and in great agreement with these rules of Christ: "He that sees his friend sinning, or going in a way not good, he is commanded to cause him to return to that which is good; and to let him know, that he sins against himself by his evil works; as it is said, *thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour*: he that reproveth his friend, whether for things between him and himself, or whether for things between him and God, *ought to reprove him*, *בינו לבין עצמו*, *between him and himself*; and should speak to him mildly, and in tender language; and let him know that he does not speak to him, but for his good, and to bring him to everlasting life; and if he receives it of him, it is well, and if not, he must reprove him, *פעם שנייה*, *a second and a third time*; and so a man must continually reprove, until the sinner strikes him and says, *I will not hear*." Buxtorf has produced a passage out of one of their writers<sup>b</sup>, in the very language in which Christ here delivers himself: "The wise man says, if thy friend does thee an injury, reprove him between him and thee alone: if he hears thee, thou hast already gained; if he does not hear thee, speak to him before one or two, who may hear the matter, and if he will not hear, reckon him a worthless friend." One would almost be ready to think, that this writer should mean Christ by the wise man, were it not for the implacable enmity they bear unto him. The above author has cited also the following passage out of the same<sup>c</sup> writer, pertinent to the present purpose: "A friend that declares to thee thy faults, *between him and thee*, whenever he meets thee, is better to thee than a friend, that whenever he meets thee, gives thee a golden penny."

Ver. 17. *And if he shall neglect to hear them, &c.*] The one or two, in conjunction with the offended person that shall hear the case, and admonish and reprove; if he takes no notice of what they say to him, but remains stiff and impenitent, *tell it unto the church*: which some understand, of the רבים, or multitude, before whom it was lawful to reprove, after such private methods had been taken: others, of the political magistrates, or sanhedrim; who took cognizance of cases between one person and another, either by themselves, or messengers; and gave admonitions and reproofs, as to parents, when they did not provide for their families<sup>d</sup>, and to wives that were perverse, and provoked their husbands<sup>e</sup>, &c. others,

<sup>a</sup> Rays Mehimna in Zohar, in Lev. fol. 35. 4.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 31. 1, 2.

<sup>c</sup> Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora pr. Afirm. 11.

<sup>d</sup> Zohar, in Lev. fol. 19. 3.

<sup>e</sup> Imre Binah in ib.

<sup>f</sup> Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 6.

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Erachin, fol. 16. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Deyot. c. 6. sect. 7.

<sup>c</sup> Mischar happeinim apud Buxtorf. Florileg. Heb. p. 997.

<sup>d</sup> Ibid.

<sup>e</sup> Maimon Hilchot Isbot, c. 12. sect. 14.

<sup>f</sup> lb. c. 14. sect. 9. & Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 81.

of the presbyters and governors of the Christian church; others, of the church itself, and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *the house of Christians*; to which it is objected, that as yet a Christian church was not formed: but what were the twelve apostles of the Lamb? They were the great congregation and church, in the midst of which Christ sung praise to his father: and since the whole of this advice, and these excellent rules are given to them, and they are spoken of in the next verse, as having the power of binding and loosing, they may well be thought to be meant here; and that the design of Christ is, to instruct them how to behave, in case of offence to one another; that the reproof should be first private, and if it did not succeed, to be made before one or two more; and if that did not do, the whole body was to be acquainted with it; and which rules hold good, and are to be observed by all Christian men and churches, in all ages: though no doubt but allusion is made to the Jewish customs, in rebuking before the multitude, or carrying of a private case, after all other means used were ineffectual, to the sanhedrim. *But if he neglect to hear the church:* the advice they should give unto him, the reproof they should think proper for him, or the censure they should pass upon him, *let him be unto thee as an Heathen man, and a publican.* This is not a form of excommunication to be used among Christians, nor was there ever any such form among the Jews; nor could Heathens or publicans, especially such publicans as were Gentiles, be excommunicated, when they never were of the Jewish church. "A religious person indeed, that becomes a collector of taxes, they first said, is to be driven from the society; but they afterwards said, all the time that he is a tax-gatherer, they drive him from the society; but when he goes out of his office, lo! he is as a religious person." But one that never was of a religious society, could not be driven out of it. And besides, this is given, not as a rule to the church, but as advice to the offended person, how to behave towards the offender: after he has come under the cognizance, reproof, and censure of the church, he is to look upon him as the Jews did one that disregarded both private reproof by a man's self, and that which was in the presence of one or two more, *חבר פרוץ, a worthless friend, or neighbour; as a Gentile, with whom the Jews had neither religious nor civil conversation; and as a publican, or as Munster's Hebrew Gospel reads it, בעל עברה, a notorious sinner, as a publican was accounted: hence such are often joined together, and with whom the Jews might not eat, nor keep any friendly and familiar acquaintance: and so such that have been privately admonished and publicly rebuked, without success, their company is to be shunned, and intimate friendship with them to be avoided.*

Ver. 18. *Verily I say unto you, &c.]* To them all, what he had said before to Peter, ch. xvi. 19. see the note there: what is said here, refers to things and not persons, as there also.

Ver. 19. *Again, I say unto you, &c.]* As the words in the former verse seem to regard the whole body of the disciples, whose decisions in cases brought before them, declaring them just or unjust, are determinate and unalterable; these seem to respect the one or two, that should join the offended person in the reproof of the offender, and are spoken for their encouragement; who might think proper either to premise, or follow their engaging in such a work with prayer: *that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask; both in the case before mentioned, and in any other thing: whether it be for themselves or others; to assist them in the ministry of the word, and give success to it, for the conversion of sinners; and in the performance of any miracle, for the confirmation of the Gospel; in the administration of ordinances, for the comfort of saints; and in laying on of censures, for the reclaiming of backsliders; or be it what it will that may be done, consistent with the glory of God, the purposes of his mind, and the declarations of his will, and the good of men, provided they agree in their requests; though they are here on earth, and at such a distance from heaven, from whence their help and assistance come: it shall be done for them of my father which is in heaven; with whom nothing is impossible; and who, as he regards the effectual fervent prayer of any righteous man, so more, of two agreed together in any one thing; and still more, of a church and community of saints in their united requests: a great encouragement this to social prayer, though ever so few are engaged in it.*

Ver. 20. *For where two or three are gathered together, &c.]* This seems to be said in opposition to a Jewish notion, that a number less than ten, is not a congregation<sup>a</sup>; whereas, though the number is ever so few that are met together to pray to God, or to hear his word, attend on his ordinances, or do the business of his house, or transact any affair that is for the glory of God, and the good of souls, *in my name*, says Christ; that is, by his authority, depending on his assistance, calling upon his name, and making use of it, and seeking the glory of it: *there am I in the midst of them; presiding over them, ruling in their hearts, directing their counsels, assisting them in all they are concerned, confirming what they do, and giving a blessing and success to all they are engaged in.* The Jews, though they say there's no congregation less than ten, yet own that the divine presence may be with a lesser number, even as small an one as here mentioned<sup>b</sup>. "Ten that sit and study in the law, the Shekinah dwells among them, as it is said, *Psal. lxxxii. 1.* From whence does this appear, if but five? from Amos ix. 6. from whence, if but three? from *Psal. lxxxii. 1.* from whence, if but two? from Mal. iii. 16. from whence, if but one? from Exod. xx. 24." And again<sup>c</sup>, "two that sit together, and the words of the law are between them, the Shekinah dwells among them, according to Mal. iii. 16. from whence does it appear, that if but one sits and studies in the law, the holy

<sup>a</sup> T. Hieros. Demai, fol. 23. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Minn. Sanhedrim, c. 1. sect. 6. T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 23. 2. Gloss. in ib.

<sup>b</sup> Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 6.

<sup>c</sup> Ib. sect. 2.

“ blessed God hath fixed a reward for him? from Lam. iii. 28.”

Ver. 21. *Then came Peter unto him, &c.*] Having heard and observed the rules Christ gave concerning offences and brotherly reproofs, he drew near to Christ, and put this question to him: *and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? He instances in a brother, because it was such an one Christ had been speaking of; he makes no doubt of its being his duty to forgive him upon his repentance, and acknowledgment, but wanted to be informed, how often this was to be done, and asks, whether until seven times? Which was, as he might think, a large number; and especially, since it was double the number of times, that the Jewish doctors set for forgiveness: for thus they say, “ A man that commits a sin, “ the first time they pardon him; the second time they pardon him; the third time they pardon him; the fourth time they do not pardon, according to Amos “ ii. 6. and Job xxxiii. 29.” Again, “ he that says “ I have sinned, and I repent, they forgive him unto “ three times, and no more.”*

Ver. 22. *Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, &c.*] Which is as if he had said, observe what I am about to say, I do not agree to what thou sayest to fix the number, *until seven times only, but until seventy times seven;* a certain number for an uncertain, see Gen. iv. 24. Christ's meaning is, that a man should be all the days, and every day of his life, forgiving those that sin against him, as often as they repent and acknowledge their fault; and that no time is to be set for the exercise of the grace of forgiveness; but as often as there are objects and occasions, though ever so many and frequent, it should be used; and which he illustrates by the following parable.

Ver. 23. *Therefore is the kingdom of heaven, &c.*] The Gospel church-state, or the church of Christ under the Gospel dispensation, and the methods of God's dealings in it; *likened unto a certain king;* or a man, a king, pointing either to Christ, the king Messiah, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, the King of saints and churches; who, as God, has a natural kingdom of providence, and as man and Mediator, a kingdom of grace; and will have a more visibly glorious one, both in this world and in the other; or rather, the father of Christ, as appears from the application of the parable, in ver. 35. who is the living God, and everlasting King: whose is the kingdom of nature, grace, and glory: *which would take account of his servants;* not all mankind, though these are all in a sense his servants, and accountable to him; nor only ministers of the Gospel, who are so in an eminent and peculiar sense, and must give an account to God of their time and talents, and souls committed to them; but all that bear the Christian name, that are professors of religion, that are either really or nominally the subjects and servants of God. These, it is sometimes the will and pleasure of God, to *take account of;* not of their persons, or number, but of their conduct and behaviour; which, as it will be

more fully done at death, or at judgment, so sometimes is taken in this life: God sometimes calls, and brings, professors of religion to an account, and reckons with them by afflictive dispensations of providence; when he puts them upon reflecting how they have spent their time, made use of their talents and gifts, and have behaved in their families, and in the world, and church; or by dealing roundly with men's consciences, awakening and convincing them of their sins, of omission and commission, which seems to be intended here.

Ver. 24. *And when he had begun to reckon, &c.*] To open the book of conscience, and to bring to account by some awakening providence, and strong conviction: *one was brought unto him;* whether he would or no, through the force of an awakened conscience, under guilt and terror; *which owed him ten thousand talents;* which must be understood, either of gold, or silver: a talent of silver contained 3,000 shekels, as appears from Exod. xxxviii. 25, 26. and was in value of our money 375*l.* but a talent of gold was equal to 4,500*l.* of our money. According to Dr. Prideaux <sup>4</sup>, a talent of silver was 450*l.* and a talent of gold, the proportion of gold to silver being reckoned as sixteen to one, was 7,200*l.* and according to Bishop Cumberland, a talent of silver was 353*l.* 11*s.* 10*d.* ob. and a talent of gold of the same weight, was 5,075*l.* 15*s.* 7*d.* ob. The whole, according to Dr. Hammond, was a thousand eight hundred seventy-five thousand pounds, reckoning their silver talents; but if talents of gold are meant, what an immense sum must ten thousand of them be! According to some, seventy-two millions sterling. The design of the phrase, is to set forth the exceeding greatness of the debt. Munster's Hebrew Gospel reads it, *ten thousand manehs,* or pounds; and so the Persic version: now the value of a *maneh* of gold, was 75*l.* and of silver, 7*l.* 10*s.* <sup>5</sup> take the sum in the least quantity and value, it was exceeding large. The Arabic version renders it a *sum* of talents, without mentioning the number, and may mean an innumerable one. Mention is made of such a number of talents of silver, in Esth. iii. 9. which Aben Ezra says is defective, and signifies ten thousand thousand talents. The second Targum on the place says, that the sum of six hundred thousand zuzim, drachms, or pence (*i. e.* Roman ones) is ten thousand talents of silver. These ten thousand talents intend sins, which are called debts, in Scripture; not that they are properly so, or owing to God, for then it would be right to pay them, but because they bind over to punishment. All men owe a debt of thankfulness to God, for their beings, the preservation of them, and all the mercies of life; and also a debt of obedience to the whole law, in failure of which, they are obliged to punishment: hence every sin becomes a debt, and these are numerous; in-dwelling sin, and the lusts thereof, are innumerable; as are actual sins and transgressions, they are more than the hairs of a man's head, and are fitly expressed, both for the weight and quantity of them, by *ten*

<sup>4</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 86. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Teshuba. c. 3. sect. 5.  
<sup>5</sup> Abot. R. Nathan, c. 40. fol. 9. 3.  
<sup>6</sup> Brerewood de Nummis Heb. c. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Connection, Vol. I. Preface, p. 20.  
<sup>5</sup> Brerewood de Nummis. Heb. c. 4.

*thousand talents.* In this light they appear to the conscience of an awakened sinner, who sees that he has been doing nothing but sin, all the days of his life; and that he has been continually breaking the law, one precept or another of it, in thought, word, or deed: which violations of the law, even in word and deed, are risen up to so great a sum, that he is not able to give it to any nearness, and with any exactness; he can't understand all his errors, nor express the full number of them, or declare all their aggravated circumstances; besides the swarms of corruption of internal lusts and sins, which he observes dwelling in his heart, and are as innumerable as the motes and atoms in a sun-beam. The sins of God's people, which have been all made to meet upon Christ, have been laid upon him by his father's imputation of them to him, with his own consent, are represented in this manner; see Psal. xl. 12. And indeed, if the debts of one of them amount to ten thousand talents, what must the sum of all be, put together! and how great must be the strength and power of Christ, to bear the weight of these sins, and not be broken or discouraged, and fail, as he did not! and what a rich virtue and efficacy must there be in his blood, to pay off all these debts, and make satisfaction for them, which could never have been done, if he had not done it! for it is impossible that a person in such circumstances as here described, should ever be able to recover himself, or pay his debts, as follows.

Ver. 25. *But forasmuch as he had not to pay, &c.* Every sinner is insolvent; sinful man has run out the whole stock of nature, and is become a bankrupt, and has nothing to offer by way of composition; nor has he any righteousness to answer for him, nor any works of righteousness which deserve that name: and if he had, these are nothing in point of payment: for a debt of sin can't be discharged by a debt of obedience; since God has a prior right to the latter; and in paying it, a man does but what is his duty. Sin being committed against an infinite God, contracts the nature of an infinite debt, which can't be paid off by a finite creature. Christ only was able to pay this debt, and he has done it for his people; and without an interest in his blood, righteousness, and satisfaction, every debtor is liable to be cast, and will be cast into the prison of hell, there to lie till the uttermost farthing of the ten thousand talents is paid, which will be to all eternity. We see what a sad condition sin has brought men into; it has stripped them of their estates and possessions; it has reduced them to want and beggary; it exposes them to a prison; to the just resentments of their creditor; to the wrath of God, and the curses of the law; and what little reason there is to think, yea, how impossible it is, that a man should be able to merit any thing at the hands of God, to whom he is so greatly indebted: he must first pay his debts, which is a thing impracticable, before he can pretend to do any thing deserving the notice of God; and even was he set free, and clear of all his debts, and entered upon a new life of obedience, and this strictly attended to, without

contracting any debts for the future, yet all this would be but what is due to God, and could merit nothing of him; see Luke xvii. 10. Rom. xi. 35, 36. We see also from hence, how much the saints are obliged to Christ Jesus, and how thankful they should be to him, who became a surety for such insolvent creatures; has paid all their debts for them, and procured for them every blessing of grace they stand in need of: but think, O sinner, what thou wilt be able to say and do, when God comes to reckon with thee, and thou hast nothing to pay, nor any to pay for thee, or be thy surety; a prison must be thy portion for ever. *His Lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had;* according to the Jewish laws, in such a case: of a man's being sold, or selling himself when poor, see Lev. xxv. 47. for the law in Exod. xxii. 3. referred to by some as an instance of this, respects the selling of a man for theft, and not for debt. Of the selling of a man's wife for the payment of his debts, I don't remember to have read any law concerning it, or instances of it; but of children being taken for bondmen by the creditor, for their father's debts, mention is made, 2 Kings iv. 1. These children, by the Jewish writers<sup>1</sup>, are said to be the children of Obadiah, who contracted the debt to feed the prophets in a cave, when they were persecuted by Jezebel; and the creditor, according to them, was Jehoram, the son of Ahab, who lent him money on usury for this purpose, in his father's time; and now Obadiah being dead, he takes his children for the debt, and makes them bondmen; see also Neh. v. 5. There seems to be an allusion to this practice, in Isa. l. 1. and it was not only the custom of the Jews to come upon children for the debts of parents, but of other nations: with the Athenians, if a father could not pay his debts, the son was obliged to pay, and in the mean while to be kept in bonds till he did<sup>2</sup>: and as Grotius, in 2 Kings iv. 1. proves from Plutarch and Dionysius Halicarnassensis, children were sold by the creditors of their parents, as in Asia, at Athens, and at Rome. Now this expresses the state of bondage, sin, as a debt, brings men into; they become slaves to their own lusts, vassals of Satan, and in bondage to the law; and also the ruin and destruction it exposes them to; as, the curse and condemnation of the law, the wrath of God, eternal death, even the destruction of body and soul in hell: and *payment to be made* by punishment, which will always be making, and never finished. This order of the king was not intended to be executed, as the sequel shews; but declares the will of God, that the sad and woful condition of man should be set before him by the ministers of the word; signifying what his state is, how deserving of vengeance, and what must be his portion, if grace prevent not: the view of which is to vindicate the rights of law and justice, to express the sinner's deserts, and move him to apply to the Lord for grace and mercy, which effect it had.

Ver. 26. *The servant therefore fell down, &c.* At his feet, upon his knees, or on his face, to the ground;

<sup>1</sup> Targum Jon. in loc. Tanchuma in Abarbanel in loc. Jarchi, Kimchi & Laniado in ib.

<sup>2</sup> Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 10.

not being able to stand before him, or look him in the face, and much less to answer the demands of his law and justice; but owned the debt, and his present inability to pay, *and worshipped him*: the Vulgate Latin reads it, *prayed*, or entreated him, *saying, Lord have patience with me*; give me but time, spare me a little longer, send me not to prison, *and I will pay thee all*: a very weak and foolish promise, but what is usual for men in such circumstances to make. Thus men, under guilt, and dreadful apprehensions of wrath and ruin, frequently promise, that if their lives are but spared, what they will do for God, and in a religious way; and very foolishly and ignorantly imagine, that by their humiliation and tears, their prayers and other services, by their good lives and conversations, for the future, they shall be able to make compensation to God for all the iniquities they have been guilty of: which shews them to be exceeding ignorant of the nature of sin, which is committed against an infinite being, and therefore reconciliation for it cannot be made by a finite creature; as also of the nature of their duties and services, which, when performed, in ever so good a manner, can never make satisfaction for past offences, these being duties they are obliged to perform; and would have been equally obliged thereunto if they had never offended; and likewise betrays great vanity, pride, boasting, and conceit of themselves, and abilities, as that they shall be able, in a little time to pay all, when they have nothing at all to pay with: and was patience to be exercised towards them ever so long, they would still be in the same condition, and in no better capacity to make payment; but, on the contrary, would still run a larger score, and be more and more in debt. Indeed, the patience and long-suffering of God to his people is salvation; not that by giving them time, and bearing with them, they discharge their debts, and work out their salvation; but waiting upon them to be gracious to them, he brings them to repentance, to a sense of themselves and sins, and to an acknowledgment of them, and leads them, by faith, to his son for righteousness, forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life; but as for others, his patience towards them, and forbearance of them, issue in their everlasting destruction, which, by their iniquities, they are fitted for.

Ver. 27. *Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, &c.*] Or had compassion on him, shewed pity to him, and extended mercy towards him; not that he was moved hereunto by any actions of his, as his prostrating himself before him, and his worshipping him, nor by his cries and entreaties, nor by his promises, which were not at all to be depended on, but by his own goodness, and will; for not to any thing that this man said, or did, nor to any deserts of his, but to the pure mercy, and free grace of God, is to be ascribed what is after related: *and loosed him*; from obligation to punishment, and from a spirit of bondage, through the guilt of sin; and work of the law upon his conscience: *and forgave him the debt*; the whole debt of ten thousand talents: for when God forgives sin, he forgives all sin, original and actual, secret and open, sins of omission and commission, of

heart, lip, and life, of thought, word, and deed, past, present, and to come; and that freely, according to his abundant mercy, and the riches of his grace, without any regard to any merits, motives and conditions in the creature; though not without respect to the satisfaction of Christ, which no ways detracts from the grace and mercy of God, since this is owing to his gracious provision and acceptance. It was grace in God that provided, sent, and parted with his son to be the propitiatory sacrifice for sin, and accepted the satisfaction when made, in the room, and stead of sinners: it was grace in Christ to become a surety for them, to assume their nature, to shed his precious blood, and give himself an offering, and a sacrifice for them; and it is distinguishing grace that this satisfaction should be provided, made, and accepted, not for angels, but for men; and though it is at the expense of Christ's blood and life, that this satisfaction is made, and remission of sins obtained, yet the whole is entirely free to those who are partakers of it; they have it without money; and without price. So, that though the satisfaction of Christ is not expressly mentioned in this parable, and forgiveness of sin, which lies in a non-remembrance, and non-imputation of it, in a covering, and blotting it out, and in remitting the obligation to punishment for it, is ascribed to the compassion and mercy of God, yet it is implied; since these two involve each other: the special mercy of God, in the forgiveness of sins, streams only through the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; and the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ largely display the grace and mercy of God.

Ver. 28. *But the same servant went out, &c.*] From his Lord's palace and presence, immediately, directly, after he had got his pardon and liberty: *and found one of his fellow-servants*; a fellow-creature and Christian; not only one of the same nature and species, but of the same profession of religion, and in the service of the same kind and generous master: *which owed him an hundred pence*; which, if understood of Roman pence, each penny being seven-pence halfpenny of our money, amounted to no more than three pounds and half-a-crown; a small sum, in comparison of the ten thousand talents which had been just now forgiven him: for so sins committed against men, against fellow-creatures, or fellow-Christians, are but small, when compared with those which are committed against God. All which circumstances, as that it was immediately after he had been forgiven himself; that it was a fellow-servant he found: and the sum he owed him so inconsiderable, greatly aggravate his inhuman carriage, next related: *and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, pay me that thou owest*; he laid hold on him in a violent manner, and used him with great inhumanity: he took him by the collar, and shook him, and gripped him so hard about the neck, that he almost throttled, and strangled, or choaked him, as the word signifies, and is so rendered in most versions. It answers to the Hebrew word דָּחַק, which is used by the Jews! in the same sense: "דָּחַק, he that throttles any one (who is indebted to him) in the streets, and his friend comes

“ up and says, let him go, and I'll pay thee, he is “ free,” &c. This man insisted on payment of the whole debt; which expresses the rigour and severity used by some professors of religion to their fellow-Christians; who, having offended them, in ever so small a matter, will not put up with the affront, nor forgive the injury, without having the most ample satisfaction, and avenging themselves upon them to the uttermost.

Ver. 29. *And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, &c.*] In the most humble and submissive manner, just as he himself had done a little before at the feet of his Lord: *and besought him, saying, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all;* using the very same words, in which he had expressed himself to his Lord, and had succeeded.

Ver. 30. *And he would not, &c.*] Have patience with him, give him time for payment, and forbear severity at present, as he requested: *but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt;* had him before a proper officer, and proved his debt, and got him sent to jail, there to lie till the whole debt was paid; which, as it discovered ill nature, severe usage, so, great ignorance and stupidity; for a prison will pay no debt: which sets forth the rigorous proceedings of some church-members against their brethren; that have displeased them; who immediately bring the matter before the church, and won't be easy unless some censure is laid upon them, or they are cast out, until full satisfaction is given them, whereby oftentimes a useful member of a church is lost.

Ver. 31. *So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, &c.*] What hard usage, and ill treatment, their fellow-servant met with; the Syriac reads, *their fellow-servants*, being the fellow-servants both of the creditor and the debtor: *they were very sorry;* they were greatly grieved and troubled at the cruelty of the one, and the unhappiness of the other; being more tender-hearted, and of a more forgiving spirit than he: *and came and told unto their Lord all that was done;* to their fellow-servant, by one that had so lately received such favours from him: this may be expressive of the concern of some members of churches at such conduct: who, though they may not have strength and number sufficient to oppose such measures, yet being secretly grieved at such cruel methods, go to the throne of grace, and spread the case before the Lord, tell him all that is done by way of complaint; which is no impeachment of his omniscience, only shews their trouble for such mal-practices, and the sense they have, by whom only such grievances can be redressed.

Ver. 32. *Then his Lord, after that he had called him, &c.*] Or ordered him to be called, and brought before him, *said unto him, O thou wicked servant!* Munster's Hebrew Gospel reads, *thou servant of Belial;* thou cruel and hard-hearted man to thy fellow-servant, and ungrateful creature to me, on whom my goodness to thee has not made any impression, nor taken any effect: *I forgave thee all that debt;* all that vast debt of ten thousand talents, and that freely: *because thou desiredst me* to not to forgive the debt, but to have patience, and give time, and therefore unasked forgive the whole sum, every farthing of it; which was such an instance of pure goodness, as was enough to have wrought upon an heart of stone, and engaged the

most tender concern and pity for a fellow-creature, as well as filled with thankfulness to the kind benefactor. The favour so lately bestowed on him is justly observed as an aggravation of his wickedness.

Ver. 33. *Shouldst not thou also have had compassion, &c.*] It is but reasonable, what ought to be, and may be expected, that such who have received mercy, should show mercy; and as the Lord had compassion on this man, and had forgiven him such an immense sum, and saved him, his wife and children, from being sold for bond-slaves, the least he could have done after this, would have been to have followed such an example, and have had mercy, as his Lord says to him, *on thy fellow-servant:* between whom, and him, there was not so great a distance, as between him, and his Lord; and the sum so small that was owing to him, as not to be mentioned with his: *even as I had pity on thee;* such an instance of pity and compassion did not only set him an example, worthy of his imitation, but laid him under an obligation to have acted such a part.

Ver. 34. *And his Lord was wroth, &c.*] Very angry, greatly incensed, and justly provoked at such inhuman treatment: *and delivered him to the tormentors, or jail-keepers.* The Ethiopic version renders it, *to them that judge,* or the judges; Munster's Hebrew Gospel, *to the punishers,* or such that inflicted punishment according to the decree of the judge: from both, the sense may be, that he was delivered over to proper judges of his case, to be treated as the nature of it required, to be cast into prison, and there endure all the severities of law and justice: *till he should pay all that was due unto him;* which being so vast a sum, and he but a servant, could never be done: but inasmuch as this man was fully and freely pardoned before, how comes it to pass, that full payment of his debt is yet insisted on? It is certain, that sin, once pardoned by God, he never punishes for it; for pardon with him is of all sin; he forgives all trespasses, though ever so many, and remits the whole debt, be it ever so large; which act of his grace will never be revoked: it is one of his gifts which are without repentance; it proceeds upon, and comes through a plenary satisfaction for sin made by his own son, and therefore it would be unjust to punish for it: by this act, sin is covered out of sight; 'tis blotted out, and entirely done away, and that for ever. Hence some think this man had only the offer of a pardon, and not that itself; but it is not an offer of pardon, that Christ, by his blood, has procured, and is exalted to give, but that itself; and this man had his debt, his whole debt forgiven him: others think, that this was a church-forgiveness, who looked upon him, judged him, and received him as one forgiven; but for his cruel usage of a fellow-member, delivered him to the tormentors, passed censures on him, and excommunicated him, till he should give full satisfaction, which is more likely: others, this forgiveness was only in his own apprehensions: he presumed, and hoped he was forgiven, when he was not; but then his crime could not have been so aggravated as it is: rather, this forgiveness is to be understood of averting calamities and judgments, likely to fall on him for his iniquities, which is sometimes the sense of



this phrase: see 1 Kings viii. 34, 36, 39. and so his being delivered to the tormentors may mean, his being distressed with an accusing guilty conscience, an harassing, vexing devil, many misfortunes of life, and temporal calamities. Though after all, this is not strictly to be applied to any particular case or person, but the scope of the parable is to be attended to; which is to enforce mutual forgiveness among men, from having received full and free pardon at the hands of God; and that without the former, there's little reason to expect the latter, as appears from what follows.

Ver. 35. *So likewise shall my heavenly father, &c.*] This is the accommodation and application of the parable, and opens the design and intent of it; shewing that God, who is Christ's father, that is in heaven, will act in like manner towards all such persons, who are cruel and hard-hearted to their brethren, and are of merciless and unforgiving spirits; for so it is said, he will do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

The phrase, *their trespasses*, is omitted by the Vulgate Latin, the Arabic, and the Ethiopic versions, but is in all the Greek copies; and designs not pecuniary debts, though these are to be forgiven, and not rigorously exacted in some cases, and circumstances; but all injuries by word or deed, all offences, though ever so justly taken, or unjustly given; these should be forgiven fully, freely, and from the heart, forgetting, as well as forgiving, not upbraiding with them, or with former offences, and aggravating them; and should also pray to God that he would forgive also. 'Tis certainly the will of God, that we should forgive one another all trespasses and offences. The examples of God and Christ should lead and engage unto it; the pardon of sin received by ourselves from the hands of God strongly enforces it; the peace and comfort of communion in public ordinances require it; the reverse is contrary to the spirit and character of Christians, is very displeasing to our heavenly father, greatly unlike to Christ, and grieving to the spirit of God.

## C H A P. XIX.

Ver 1. *AND it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, &c.*] Concerning humility, avoiding offences, the methods to be taken in re-proving offenders, and the forgiveness that is to be exercised towards them: *he departed from Galilee*; where he had chiefly preached and wrought his miracles, no more to return thither till after his resurrection: *and came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan*; that is, to that country which was called *beyond Jordan*, and bordered on Judea; coming still nearer and nearer to Jerusalem, where he had told his disciples, a little while ago, he must come, and suffer, and die. Rather, it should be rendered, *on this side Jordan*, as also in John i. 28. for the coasts of Judea were on this side; so עבר הירדן, is rendered in Deut. iv. 49.

Ver. 2. *And great multitudes followed him, &c.*] The Persic version adds, *of the sick and diseased*; but all that followed him were not such, though some were: these came not only from Galilee, but from the adjacent parts, from the country beyond Jordan, and the coasts of Judea, where he had been formerly; and who resort to him again, as Mark observes; and whom, according to his usual manner, he taught and instructed in the knowledge of divine things, and confirmed his doctrines by miracles: *and he healed them there*; in the above-mentioned places, even as many of them as were sick and diseased.

Ver. 3. *The Pharisees also came unto him, &c.*] Either from the places round about, or from Jerusalem: these came unto him, not for the sake of learning, or to be instructed by him; but as spies upon him, to observe what he said and did, and watch every opportunity to expose him to the contempt and hatred of the people; *tempting him with a question about divorces*, in order to ensnare him: *and saying to him, is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?* be it ever so trivial, as said the school of Hillell: for there was a difference

between the school of Shammai and the school of Hillell about this matter; the former insisted that a man might not put away his wife but in case of uncleanness; but the latter allowed putting away for very trifling things; as if she spoiled her husband's food by over-roasting, or over-salting it; and, as one of the doctors say, if he found another woman that was more beautiful than her; see the note on ch. v. 32. This question being now agitated in the schools, they artfully put to Christ; not for information, but with a view to reproach him in some way or other; and that he might incur the resentment of one party or another, as he should answer. They might argue thus with themselves, and hope to succeed in this manner; should he be on the side of the school of Shammai, which was the weakest side, and less popular, as they had reason to believe he would, he would then expose himself to the resentment of the school of Hillell, and all on that side the question; should he take the part of Hillell, he would make the school of Shammai his enemies; should he forbid putting away of wives, which Moses allowed, they would then traduce him as contrary to Moses, and his law, which could not fail of setting the people against him; and should he consent to it, they would charge him with contradicting himself, or with inconstancy in his doctrine, since he had before asserted the unlawfulness of it, but in case of adultery; and should he abide by this, they might hope to irritate the men against him, who would think their liberty granted by Moses was intrenched on; as, on the other hand, should he, according to the question, admit of putting away for every cause, the women would be provoked at him, who would be left to the uncertain humour and caprice of their husbands; so that either way they hoped to get an advantage of him.

Ver. 4. *And he answered and said unto them, &c.*]

Not by replying directly to the question, but by referring them to the original creation of man, and to the first institution of marriage, previous to the law of Moses; *have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female?* This may be read in Gen. 1. 27. and from thence this sense of things collected; that God, who in the beginning of time, or of the creation, as Mark expresses it, made all things, the heavens, and the earth, and all that is therein, and particularly man, as the Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel supply it here, made the first parents of mankind, male and female; not male and females, but one male, and one female; first, one male, and then of him one female, who, upon her creation, was brought and married to him; so that in this original constitution, no provision was made for divorce, or polygamy. Adam could not marry more wives than one, nor could he put away Eve for every cause, and marry another: now either the Pharisees had read this account, or they had not; if they had not, they were guilty of great negligence and sloth; if they had, they either understood it or not; if they did not understand it, it was greatly to their reproach, who pretended to great knowledge of the Scriptures, and to be able to explain them to others; and if they did understand it, there was no need for this question, which therefore must be put with an evil design.

Ver. 5. *And said, &c.*] Gen. ii. 24. where they seem to be the words of Adam, though here they are ascribed to God, who made Adam and Eve; and as if they were spoken by him, when he brought them together; and which is easily reconciled by observing, that these words were spoken by Adam, under the direction of a divine revelation; shewing, that there would be fathers, and mothers, and children; and that the latter, when grown up, would enter into a marriage state, and leave their parents, and cleave to their proper yoke-fellows, which relations then were not in being: this therefore being the effect of a pure revelation from God, may be truly affirmed to be said by him. Some think they are the words of Moses the historian; and if they were, as they were delivered by divine inspiration, they may be rightly called the word of God. Jarchi's note on the text exactly agrees herewith, which is כן דקדש אומרת רוח, *the holy Spirit says thus: for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife;* and not wives: and the phrase denotes that close union between a man and his wife, which is not to be dissolved for every cause, it being stricter than that which is between parents and children; for the wife must be cleaved unto, and father and mother forsaken: not that upon this new relation between man and wife, the former relation between parents and children ceases; nor does this phrase denote an entire separation from them, so as to have the affection alienated from them, or to be disengaged from all duty and obedience to them, and care and regard for them, for the future; but a relinquishing the house of his father and mother's bed, as all the three Targums on the place explain it: that is, he shall quit his father's house,

and not bed and board there, and live with him as before; but having taken a wife to himself, shall live and cohabit with her: *and they twain shall be one flesh;* the word *twain* is not in the Hebrew text in Genesis, but in the Septuagint version compiled by Jews, in the Samaritan Pentateuch, and version, and in the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel, who renders, it as here, רדון תרדיון לבישרא דוד, *and they two shall be one flesh.* This is the true sense, for neither more nor less can possibly be meant; and denotes that near conjunction, and strict union, between a man and his wife, the wife being a part of himself, and both as one flesh, and one body, and therefore not to be parted on every slight occasion; and has a particular respect to the act of carnal copulation, which only ought to be between one man and one woman, lawfully married to each other; see the note on 1 Cor. vi. 16.

Ver. 6. *Wherefore they are no more twain, &c.*] They were two before marriage, but now no more so; not but that they remain two distinct persons, *but one flesh;* or, as the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, *one body:* hence the wife is to be loved by the husband as his own body, as himself, as his own flesh, Eph. v. 28, 29. *what therefore God hath joined together;* or, by the first institution of marriage, has declared to be so closely united together, as to be, as it were, one flesh, and one body, as husband and wife are; *let no man put asunder;* break the bond of union, dissolve the relation, and separate them from each other, for every trivial thing, upon any slight occasion, or for any thing; but what is hereafter mentioned. The sense is, that the bond of marriage being made by God himself, is so sacred and inviolable, as that it ought not to be dissolved by any man; not by the husband himself, or any other for him; nor by any state or government, by any prince or potentate, by any legislator whatever; no, not by Moses himself, who is, at least, included, if not chiefly designed here, though not named, to avoid offence: and God and man being opposed in this passage, shews, that marriage is an institution and appointment of God, and therefore not to be changed and altered by man at his pleasure; 'tis not merely a civil, but a sacred affair, in which God is concerned.

Ver. 7. *They say unto him, &c.*] That is, the Pharisees, who object the law of Moses to him, hoping hereby to ensnare him, and expose him to the resentment of the people, should he reject that, as they supposed he would; *why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and put her away?* referring to Deut. xxiv. 1. which they thought to be a contradiction, and what they knew not how to reconcile to the doctrine Christ had delivered, concerning the original institution of marriage, and the close union there is between a man and his wife, by virtue of it, and which is not to be dissolved by men. Concerning a writing of divorcement and the form, and manner of it, see the note on ch. v. 31.

Ver. 8. *He saith unto them, &c.*] In answer to their objection; *Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives:* in which may be observed, that, though it was by divine

direction that Moses, in his system of laws, allowed of divorces; yet not God, but he is said to do it, because it was a branch of the political and judicial laws, by which the people of the Jews were governed under Moses, and whilst the Mosaic economy continued, and did not concern other people, and other times; and therefore 'tis said *you*, and *your wives*, you Jews, and you only, and not the Gentiles. And so the Jews say<sup>m</sup>, that the Gentiles have no divorces: for thus they represent God, saying; "in Israel I have granted divorces, I have not granted divorces among the nations of the world. R. Chananiah, in the name of R. Phineas, observed, that in every other section it is written, the Lord of hosts, but here it is written, the God of Israel; to teach thee, that the holy, blessed God does not join his name to divorces, but in Israel only. R. Chayah Rabbah says, נִיִּים אֵין לֶרֶן גִּירוּשִׁין, *the Gentiles have no divorces.*" Besides, this was a direct positive command to the Jews, as the Pharisees suggest in their objection; it was only a sufferance, a permission in some cases, and not in every one; and that because of the hardness of their hearts; they being such a stubborn and inflexible people, that when they were once displeased there was no reconciling them; and so malicious and revengeful, that if this had not been granted, would have used their wives, that displeased them, in a most cruel, and barbarous manner, if not have murdered them: so that this grant was made, not to indulge their lusts, but to prevent greater evils; and not so much as a privilege and liberty to the men, as in favour of the women; who, when they could not live peaceably and comfortably with a man, might be dismissed and marry another: *but from the beginning it was not so*; from the beginning of time, or of the creation, or of the world, or at the first institution of marriage, and in the first ages of the world, there was no such permission, nor any such practice. This was not the declared will of God at first, nor was it ever done by any good men before the times of Moses; we never read that Adam, or Seth, or Noah, or Abraham, put away their wives, upon any consideration; though in the latter there might have been some appearance of reason for so doing, on account of sterility, but this he did not; nor Isaac, nor Jacob, nor any of the patriarchs.

Ver. 9. *And I say unto you, &c.*] To his disciples, when they were with him alone in the house, and asked him more particularly about the subject, concerning which he had been discoursing with the Pharisees, as Mark observes, ch. x. 10, 11. when he said to them much the same things, he had delivered before in Matt. v. 32. *whosoever shall put away his wife*; separate her from his person, house, and bed, and dismiss her as his wife, no more to be considered in that relation to him, *except it be for fornication*; or whoredom, for defiling his bed: for this is not to be understood of fornication committed before, but of uncleanness after marriage, which destroys their being one flesh: *and shall marry another woman, committeth adultery*; Marks adds, *against*

*her*; which may be understood either of the woman he marries, which not being lawfully done, she lives in adultery with another woman's husband; or of his former wife, and who is still his wife, and to whose injury he has married another; and he not only commits adultery himself, but, as in Matt. v. 32. *causeth her to commit adultery* also, by being the occasion of marrying another man, when she is still his lawful wife: *and whoso marrieth her which is put away*, for any other cause than adultery, *doth commit adultery* also; since he cohabits with another man's wife; see the note on Matt. v. 32.

Ver. 10. *His disciples say unto him, &c.*] Being surprised at this account of things, it being quite contrary to what they had been taught, and very different from the general practice and usage of their nation: *if the case of a man, be so with his wife*; if they are so closely joined together in marriage; if they are, as it were, one flesh, or one body, that a man's wife is himself: that the bond between them is so inviolable, that it is not to be dissolved, but in case of adultery; that if a separation be made by a bill of divorce, in any other case, and either party marry again, they are guilty of adultery; if a man can't part with his wife lawfully, provided she be chaste, and is faithful to his bed, let her be what she will otherwise, though ever so disagreeable in her person, and troublesome in her behaviour; though she may be passionate, and a brawler; though she may be drunken, luxurious, and extravagant, and mind not the affairs of her family, yet if she is not an adulteress, must not be put away: *it is not good to marry*; it would be more expedient and advisable for a man to live always a single life, than to run the risk of marrying a woman, that may prove very disagreeable and uncomfortable; to whom he must be bound all the days of his or her life, and, in such a case, not be able to relieve and extricate himself. This they said under the prejudice of a national law and custom, which greatly prevailed, and under the influence of a carnal heart.

Ver. 11. *But he said unto them, &c.*] With respect to the inference or conclusion, the disciples formed from what he had asserted: *all men cannot receive this saying*; of their's, that it is not good to marry, but it is more proper and expedient to live a single life: every man, as the Syriac version renders it, is not לֵרֶן כֹּפֵף, *sufficient*, or *fit*, for this thing; every one has not the gift of continency, and indeed very few; and therefore it is expedient for such to marry: for what the disciples said, though it might be true in part, yet not in the whole; and though the saying might be proper and pertinent enough to some persons, yet not to all, and indeed to none, *save they to whom it is given*: to receive such a saying, to live unmarried with content, having the gift of chastity; for this is not of nature, but of grace: it is the gift of God.

Ver. 12. *For there are some eunuchs, &c.*] Our Lord here distinguishes the various sorts of persons, that can and do live in a single state with content: some by nature, and others by violence offered to them, are rendered incapable of entering into a mar-

<sup>m</sup> T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 58. 3.

riage state; and others, through the gift of God, and under the influence of his grace, abstain from marriage cheerfully and contentedly, in order to be more useful in the interest of religion; but the number of either of these is but few, in comparison of such who choose a conjugal state, and with whom it is right to enter into it, notwithstanding all the difficulties that may attend it. Some men are eunuchs, and of these there are different sorts; there are some, *which were so born from their mother's womb*; meaning, not such who, through a natural temper and inclination of mind, could easily abstain from marriage, and chose to live single; but such who had such defects in nature that they were impotent, unfit for, and unable to perform the duties of a marriage state; who, as some are born without hands or feet, these were born without proper and perfect organs of generation; and such an one was, by the Jews, frequently called *סריס הזנה*, *an eunuch of the sun*<sup>a</sup>: that is, as their doctors<sup>b</sup> explain it, one that from his mother's womb never saw the sun but as an eunuch; that is, one that is born so; and that such an one is here intended, ought not to be doubted. The signs of such an eunuch, are given by the Jewish<sup>c</sup> writers, which may be consulted by those, that have ability and leisure. This sort is sometimes<sup>d</sup> called *סריס ברי שמים*, *an eunuch by the hands of heaven, or God*, in distinction from those who are so by the hands, or means of men, and are next mentioned: *and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men*; as among the Romans formerly, and which Domitian the emperor forbid by a law<sup>e</sup>; and more especially in the eastern countries, and to this day among the Turks, that they may the more safely be entrusted with the custody of their women; and this sort the Jews call *סריס אדם*, *an eunuch of men*, or *ברי אדם*, *by the hands of men*. The distinction between an *eunuch of the sun*, and an *eunuch of men*, is so frequent with the Jews<sup>f</sup>, and so well known to them, that a question need not be made of our Lord's referring to it: *and there be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs*; not in a literal sense, in which the words are not to be taken, as they were by Origen; who though otherwise too much pursued the allegorical way of interpreting Scripture, here took it literally, and castrated himself<sup>g</sup>; as did also a sort of heretics, called *Valesians*, from one Valens an Arabian; and which practice is recommended by Philo the Jew<sup>h</sup>, and by Heathen philosophers<sup>i</sup>, for the sake of chastity. But here it means such, who having the gift of continency without mutilating their bodies, or indulging any unnatural lusts, can live chastely without the use of women, and choose celibacy: *for the kingdom of heaven's sake*; not in order, by their chaste and single life, to merit and obtain the kingdom of glory; but that they might be more at leisure, being free from

the incumbrances of a marriage state, to attend the worship and service of God, the ordinances of the Gospel church-state, to minister in, and preach the Gospel of Christ, and be a means of spreading it in the world, and of enlarging his kingdom and interest. *He that is able to receive it, let him receive it*: whoever is able to receive cordially, and embrace heartily, the above saying concerning the expediency and goodness of a single life, and having the gift of continency, can live according to it, let him take it, and hold it fast, and act up to it; he may have less of worldly trouble, and be more useful for God in the Gospel of Christ, and to the interest of religion; but this should be a voluntary thing: no man should be forced into it; and he that goes into it, ought to consider well whether he is able to contain, or no.

Ver. 13. *Then were there brought unto him little children, &c.*] It does not appear that they were newborn babes; the words used by either of the evangelists do not always signify such, but are sometimes used of such as are capable of going alone; yea, of receiving instructions, of understanding the Scriptures, and even of one of twelve years of age, *Matt. xviii. 2. Mark v. 39, 42. 2 Tim. iii. 15.* nor is it probable that infants just born, or within a month, should be had abroad. Moreover, these were such as Christ called unto him, *Luke xviii. 16.* and were capable of coming to him of themselves, as his words following suppose; nor does their being brought to him, or his taking them in his arms, contradict this; since the same things are said of such as could walk of themselves, *Matt. xii. 22. and xvii. 16. Mark ix. 36.* Nor is it known whose children they were, whether their parents were believers or unbelievers, nor by whom they were brought: but the end for which they were brought is expressed, *that he should put his hands on them, and pray*; not that he should baptize them, nor did he; which may be concluded from the entire silence of all the evangelists; and from an express declaration that Christ baptized none; and from the mention of other ends for which they were brought, as that Christ should touch them, *Mark x. 13. Luke xviii. 15.* as he sometimes used to do persons, when he healed them of diseases; and probably some of those infants, if not all of them, were diseased, and brought to be cured; otherwise, it is not easy to conceive what they should be touched by him for: or as here, that he might put his hands on them, and pray over them, and bless them, as was usual with the Jews to do; see *Gen. xlix. 14, 15, 16.* and it was common with them to bring their children to venerable persons, men of note for religion and piety, to have their blessing and prayers<sup>j</sup>: *and the disciples rebuked them*; not the children, as the Persic version reads, but those that brought them, as Mark observes; either because they came in a rude and disorderly manner, and were very noisy and cla-

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 75. 1. 79. 2. & 80. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, c. 2. sect. 14.

<sup>b</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Yebamot, c. 8. sect. 4.

<sup>c</sup> Bartenora, ibid. & Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, ut supra.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 80. 2.

<sup>e</sup> Philostrat. vit. Apollon. l. 6. c. 17.

<sup>f</sup> Misn. Yebamot, c. 8. sect. 4. Zabim, c. 2. sect. 1. T. Hieros.

Yebamot, fol. 9. 4. Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, c. 2. sect. 26. & 4. 18. Mechose Caphara, c. 3. sect. 6. Mishcabumoshab, c. 1. sect. 5.

<sup>g</sup> Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 6. c. 8.

<sup>h</sup> Augustin de Heres. c. 57. & Danes in ib.

<sup>i</sup> Lib. quod deterius, p. 160.

<sup>j</sup> Sexti Pythag. Sent. p. 8.

<sup>k</sup> Massechet Sopherim, c. 18. sect. 5. see the note on Luke ii. 49.

morous; or they might think it would be too troublesome to Christ, to go through such a ceremony with so many of them; or that it was too mean for him, and below him to take notice of them; or for fear he should take fresh occasion, on the sight of these children, to rebuke them again for their pride and ambition. However, from this rebuke and prohibition of the disciples, it looks plainly as if it had never been the practice of the Jews, nor of John the Baptist, nor of Christ and his disciples, to baptize infants; for had this been then in use, they would scarcely have forbid and rebuked those that brought them, since they might have thought they brought them to be baptized; but knowing of no such usage that ever obtained in that nation, neither among those that did, or did not believe in Christ, they forbid them.

Ver. 14. *But Jesus said, suffer little children, &c.*] This he said to shew his humility, that he was not above taking notice of any; and to teach his disciples to regard the weakest believers, and such as were but children in knowledge; and to inform them what all ought to be, who expect the kingdom of heaven; for it follows; *and forbid them not to come unto me, now, or at any other time; for of such is the kingdom of heaven*: that is, as the Syriac renders it, *who are as these*; or as the Persic version, rather paraphrasing than translating, renders it, *who have been humble as these little children*: and it is as if our Lord should say, don't drive away these children from my person and presence; they are lively emblems of the proper subjects of a Gospel church-state, and of such that shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: by these I may instruct and point out to you, what converted persons should be, who have a place in my church below, and expect to enter into my kingdom and glory above; that they are, or ought to be, like such children, harmless and inoffensive; free from rancour and malice, meek, modest, and humble; without pride, self-conceit, and ambitious views, and desires of grandeur and superiority. Christ's entire silence about the baptism of infants at this time, when he had such an opportunity of speaking of it to his disciples, had it been his will, has no favourable aspect on such a practice. It is not denied that little children, whether born of believers or unbelievers, which matters not, may be chosen of God, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and have the passive work of the spirit on their souls, and so enter into heaven; but this is not the sense of this text. It was indeed a controversy among the Jews, whether the little children of the wicked of Israel, *בָּאֵן לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא*, *go into the world to come*: some affirmed, and others denied; but all agreed, that the little children of the wicked of the nations of the world, do not. They dispute about the time of a child's entrance into the world to come; some say, as soon as it is born, according to Psal. xxii. 31. others, as soon as it can speak, or count, according to ver. 30. others, as soon as it is sown, *i. e.* as the gloss says, as soon as the seed is received in its mother's womb, though it becomes an abortion; according to the same words, *a seed shall serve thee*: others, as soon as he is circumcised, according to Psal. lxxxviii. 15. others,

as soon as he can say *Amen*, according<sup>2</sup> to Isa. xxvi. 2. All weak, frivolous, and impertinent.

Ver. 15. *And he laid his hands on them, &c.*] *And blessed them*, as Mark says; he put his hands upon them, according to the custom of the country, and wished all kind of prosperity to them: *and departed thence*. out of the house where he had been, and his disciples with him: the Ethiopic version renders it, *and they went from thence*: from those parts, towards Jerusalem.

Ver. 16. *And behold, one came, &c.*] The Persic version reads, *a rich man*; and so he was, as appears from what follows: Luke calls him, *a certain ruler*; not of a synagogue, an ecclesiastical ruler, but a civil magistrate: perhaps he might be one of the sanhedrim, which consisted of *twenty-one* persons; or of that which consisted only of *three*, as in some small towns and villages. Mark represents him as *running*; for Christ was departed out of the house, and was gone into the way, the high-road, and was on his journey to some other place, when this man ran after him with great eagerness; and, as the same evangelist adds, *kneeled to him*; thereby paying him civil respect, and honour; believing him to be a worthy good man, and deserving of esteem and veneration: *and said unto him, good master*: some say, that this was a title which the Jewish doctors were fond of, and gave to each other, but I have not observed it; he seems by this to intimate, that he thought him not only to be a good man, but a good teacher; that he was one that came from God, and taught good doctrine, which induced him to run after him, and put the following question to him: *what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?* Or, as in the other evangelists, *inherit eternal life*; a phrase much in use with the Jewish Rabbins: "Judah confessed, and was not ashamed, and what is his end? נָחַל חַיִּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא, *he inherits the life of the world to come* (*i. e.* eternal life); Reuben confessed, and was not ashamed, and *what is his end? he inherits the life of the world to come.*" This man was no Sadducee, he believed a future state; was a serious man, thoughtful about another world, and concerned how he should enjoy everlasting life; but was entirely upon a legal bottom, and under a covenant of works; and speaks in the language and strain of the nation of Israel, who were seeking for righteousness and life by the works of the law: he expected eternal life by doing some good thing, or things; and hoped, as the sequel shews, that he had done every good thing necessary to the obtaining it.

Ver. 17. *And he said unto him, &c.*] By way of reply, first taking notice of, and questioning him about, the epithet he gave him: *why callest thou me good?* not that he denied that he was so; for he was good, both as God and man, in his divine and human natures; in all his offices, and the execution of them; he was goodness itself, and did good, and nothing else but good. But the reason of the question is, because this young man considered him only as a mere man, and gave him this character as such; and which, in comparison of God, the fountain of all goodness, agrees

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 110. 2.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Sota, fol. 7. 2.

with no mere man: wherefore our Lord's view is, by his own language, and from his own words, to instruct him in the knowledge of his proper deity. Some copies read, *why dost thou ask me concerning good?* And so the Vulgate Latin, and the Ethiopic versions, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read; but the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, read as we do, and this the answer of Christ requires. *There is none good but one, that is God;* who is originally, essentially, independently, infinitely, and immutably good, and the author and source of all goodness; which can't be said of any mere creature. This is to be understood of God considered essentially, and not personally; or it is to be understood, not of the person of the father, to the exclusion of the son, or spirit: who are one God with the father, and equally good in nature as he. Nor does this contradict and deny that there are good angels, who have continued in that goodness in which they were created; or that there are good men, made so by the grace of God; but that none are absolutely and perfectly good, but God. What Christ here says of God, the Jews say of the law of Moses, whose praise they can never enough extol; *אין טוב אלא תורה*, *there is nothing good but the law.* The law is good indeed; but the author of it must be allowed to be infinitely more so. Christ next directly answers to the question, *but if thou wilt enter into life:* eternal life, which is in the question, and which being sometimes expressed by a house, a city, and kingdom, by mansions, and everlasting habitations, enjoyment of it is fitly signified by entering into it; which, if our Lord suggests, he had a desire of having a right to by doing any good thing himself, he must *keep the commandments*; that is, perfectly: he must do not only one good thing, but all the good things the law requires; he must not be deficient in any single action, in any one work of the law, either as to matter, or manner of performance; every thing must be done, and that just as the Lord in his law has commanded it. Our Lord answers according to the tenour of the covenant of works, under which this man was; and according to the law of God, which requires perfect obedience to it, as a righteousness, and a title to life; and in case of the least failure, curses and condemn to everlasting death; see Deut. vi. 25. Gal. iii. 12, 10. This Christ said, in order to shew, that it is impossible to enter into, or obtain eternal life by the works of the law, since no man can perfectly keep it; and to unbind this man from off the legal foundation on which he was, that he might drop all his dependencies on doing good things, and come to him for righteousness and life.

Ver. 18. *He saith unto him, which? &c.]* Whether those commandments of a moral, or of a ceremonial kind; whether the commands of the written, or of the oral law; of God, or of the elders, or both; or whether he did not mean some new commandments of his own, which he delivered as a teacher sent from God: *Jesus said;* according to the other evangelists, *thou knowest the commandments;* not the true nature, spirituality, and use of them, but the letter and num-

ber of them; being trained up from a child by his parents, in the reading them, committing them to memory, and the outward observance of them, particularly those of the second table: *thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness.* Christ takes no notice of the ceremonial law, nor of the traditions of the elders, only moral precepts; and these only such as refer to the second, and not the first table of the law, which respect duty to the neighbour, and not to God: and this he does, because these commandments were more known, and were in common use; and he chose to instance in these, partly to shew, that if men are under obligation to regard these, much more such as concern God more immediately; and partly, to observe, that if men are deficient in their duty to one another, they are much more so in their worship of God; and consequently, eternal life is never to be got and enjoyed by the performance of these things.

Ver. 19. *Honour thy father and thy mother, &c.]* This, as it is the first commandment with promise, so it is the first of the second table, and yet is here mentioned last; which inversion of order is of no consequence: so the seventh command is put before the sixth, and the fifth omitted, in Rom. xiii. 9. and with the Jews it is a common saying, *אין מקודם ומאחר בתורה*, *there's neither first nor last in the law;* that is, it is of no consequence which commandment is recited first, or which last. Moreover, it looks as if it was usual to recite these commands in this order, since they are placed exactly in the same method, by a very noted Jewish<sup>d</sup> writer. *And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;* which is not a particular distinct command from the rest, or an explication of the tenth and last, not mentioned; but a recapitulation, or compendium, and abridgment of the whole, and is said to be a complement and fulfilling of the law; see Rom. xiii. 9. Gal. v. 14.

Ver. 20. *The young man saith unto him, &c.]* For though he was so very rich, and in such an exalted station in life, as to be a ruler, it seems he was but a young man; and to be so early serious and religious, amidst so much riches and grandeur, though it was but externally, was both remarkable and commendable: upon hearing Christ's answer, with which he was highly pleased and greatly elated, he very pertly replies, *all these things have I kept from my youth up:* as soon as he was capable of learning, his parents taught him these precepts; and ever since he had the use of his reason, and understood the letter, and outward meaning of them, he had been careful to observe them; nor could he charge himself with any open and flagrant transgression of them; not understanding the internal sense, extensive compass, and spirituality of them; and therefore asks, *what lack I yet?* In what am I deficient hitherto? in what have I come short of doing these things? what remains at last to be performed? what other precepts are to be obeyed? if there are any other commands, I am ready to observe them, which may be thought necessary to obtain eternal life.

<sup>b</sup> T. Hieros. Roshhashanah, fol. 59. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 151. 2.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 6. 2. Zohar in Num. fol. 61. 4.

<sup>d</sup> R. Sangari, Sepher Cosri, par. 3. sect. 11. fol. 146. 3.

Ver. 21. *Jesus said unto him, if thou wilt be perfect, &c.*] Wanting nothing, completely righteous, according to the tenour of the covenant of works, having no evil concupiscence, or worldly lusts: our Lord signifies it was not enough to be possessed of negative holiness, and do no hurt to his neighbour, to his person, property, and estate, but he must love him, and do him good; and therefore, though so far as he had complied with the law, it was right and commendable; wherefore 'tis said by Mark, that *Jesus beholding him, loved him*; had an affectionate regard to him as man, and approved of his intentions, seriousness, and actions, so far as agreeable; yet tells him, *one thing thou lackest*: not but that he lacked many more, but he was only willing to observe one thing to him, as a trial of his love to his neighbour, which is the fulfilling of the law: *go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven*: not that either the law of God, or Gospel of Christ, require this to be done of all men, and at all times; for though it is a duty binding upon all, and always, to relieve the poor and the needy, yet a man is not obliged to give all that he has to them; see 2 Cor. viii. 11. nor does either legal or Christian perfection lie in doing this: a man may give all his goods to the poor, and yet be destitute of the grace of God, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. much less can such an action merit the heavenly treasure of eternal life. Nevertheless of some persons, and in some cases, it has been required, that they part with all their worldly substance, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; as the apostles were called to leave all and follow Christ, as this man was also; for it is added, *and come and follow me*: between these two, Mark puts, *take up the cross*; all which to do, was much more than to sell what he had, and give to the poor; and indeed, in this branch lies Gospel perfection, or to be really and truly a Christian: for to come to Christ, is to believe in him, lay hold on him, receive and embrace him as a Saviour and Redeemer; and to follow him, is to be obedient to his will, to be observant of his commands, to submit to his ordinances, and to imitate him in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty; neither of which can be done, without *taking up the cross*; bearing reproach and persecution with patience; undergoing hardships and difficulties, of one sort or another, which attend faith in Christ, a profession of his name, and following him the Lamb, whithersoever he goes. The consequence of this now, not by way of merit, but by way of grace, is the enjoyment of the rich treasures of eternal glory: but this man was so far from complying with the latter, with coming to Christ, taking up the cross, and following him, that he could by no means agree to the former, parting with his worldly substance; and which is mentioned, as a test of his love to God and his neighbour, and to discover his sinful love of the world, and the things of it; and consequently, that he was far from being in a state of perfection. Moreover, it should be observed, that Christ is here speaking, not in the pure language of the law, or according to the principles of the Gospel, when he seems to place perfection in alms-deeds, and as if they were meritorious

of eternal life; but according to the doctrine of the Pharisees, and which was this man's; and so upon the plan of his own notions, moves him to seek for perfection, and convicts him of the want of it, in a way he knew would be disagreeable to him; and yet he would not be able to disprove the method, on the foot of his own tenets: for this is their doctrine; "It is a tradition, he that says this *selá*, or shekel, is for alms, that my son may live, or I may be a son of the world to come, לו צדיק נמור, *this man is a perfect righteous man.*" The gloss adds, "In this thing; and he does not say, that he does not do it for the sake of it, but he fulfils the command of his Creator, who has commanded him to do alms; and he also intends profit to himself, that thereby he may be worthy of the world to come, or that his children may live." And so in answer to a question much like this, the young man put to Christ; "How shall we come at the life of the world to come?" It is replied, "take thy riches, and give to the fatherless and the poor, and I will give thee a better portion in the law."

Ver. 22. *But when the young man heard that saying, &c.*] That he must sell his estates, and all his worldly substance, and the money made of them, give away to the poor; and become a follower of Christ, deny himself, and submit to hardships very disagreeable to the flesh: *he went away sorrowful*; not with a godly sorrow for his sin and imperfections, but with the sorrow of the world, which worketh death: he was ashamed and confounded, that he could not perform what he had just now so briskly promised, at least tacitly, that whatever else was proper he would do; as also grieved, that he had not arrived to perfection, which he had hoped he had, but now began to despair of, and of obtaining eternal life; and most of all troubled, that he must part with his worldly substance, his heart was so much set upon, or not enjoy it: *for he had great possessions*; which were very dear to him; and he chose rather to turn his back on Christ, and drop his pursuits of the happiness of the other world, than part with the present enjoyments of this.

Ver. 23. *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, &c.*] When the young man was gone; taking this opportunity to make some proper observations for the use and instruction of his disciples, after, as Mark observes, he had *looked round about*: with concern, and in order to affect their minds with this incident, and to raise their attention to what he was about to say: *verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven*: either into the Gospel dispensation, and receive the truths, and submit to the ordinances of it, or into the kingdom of glory hereafter; not but that there have been, are, and will be, some that are rich, called by grace, brought into a Gospel church-state, and are heirs of the kingdom of heaven; though these are but comparatively few: nor is it riches themselves that make the entrance so difficult, and clog the way, either into grace or glory, but putting trust and confidence in them; and therefore in Mark, *they that have riches*, are by Christ explained of such, that *trust in riches*; and which rich men in common are very apt

\* T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 8. 1. 2. & Roshbshanah, fol. 4. 1.  
VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

† Zohar in Gen. fol. 60. 4.

to do, as this young man did, against which the apostle cautions, 1 Tim. vi. 17.

Ver. 24. *And again I say unto you, &c.*] After the apostles had discovered their astonishment at the above expression, about the difficulty of a rich man entering into the kingdom of heaven; when they expected that, in a short time, all the rich and great men of the nation would espouse the Messiah's interest, and acknowledge him as a temporal king, and add to the grandeur of his state and kingdom; and after he had in a mild and gentle manner, calling them *children*, explained himself of such, that trusted in uncertain riches, served mammon, made these their gods, and placed their hope and happiness in them; in order to strengthen and confirm what he had before asserted, and to assure, in the strongest manner, the very great difficulty, and seeming impossibility, of rich men becoming followers of Christ here, or companions with him hereafter, he expresses himself in this proverbial way: *it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God*: thus, when the Jews would express any thing that was rare and unusual, difficult and impossible, they used a like saying with this. So speaking of shewing persons the interpretation of their dreams<sup>5</sup>; "Says Rabba, you know they don't shew to a man a golden palm-tree (*i. e.* the interpretation of a dream about one, which, as the gloss says, is a thing he is not used to see, and of which he never thought, *גלגל פילא דעיל בקופא דמחטא, nor an elephant going through the eye of a needle.*" Again, to one that had delivered something as was thought very absurd, it is said<sup>6</sup>; "perhaps thou art one of Pombedita (a school of the Jews in Babylon) *דמעילין פילא בקופא דמחטא, who make an elephant pass through the eye of a needle.*" That is, who teach such things as are equally as monstrous and absurd, and difficult of belief. So the authors of an edition of the book of Zohar, to set forth the difficulty of the work they engaged in, express themselves in this manner<sup>1</sup>: "In the name of our God, we have seen fit, *לדכניס פילא בקופא דמחטא, to bring an elephant through the eye of a needle.*" And not only among the Jews, but in other eastern nations, this proverbial way of speaking was used, to signify difficulties or impossibilities. Mahomet has it in his Alcoran<sup>2</sup>; "Verily, says he, they who shall charge our signs with falsehood, and shall proudly reject them, the gates of heaven shall not be opened to them, neither shall they enter into paradise, *until a camel pass through the eye of a needle.*" All which shew, that there is no need to suppose, that by a camel is meant, not the creature so called, but a cable-ropc, as some have thought; since these common proverbs manifestly make it appear, that a creature is intended, and which aggravates the difficulty: the reason why instead of an elephant, as used in most of the above sayings, Christ makes mention of a camel, may be, because that might be more known in Judea, than the other; and because the bunch on its back would serve to make the thing still more impracticable.

Ver. 25. *When his disciples heard it, &c.*] That is,

the difficulty of a rich man's entering into the kingdom of heaven, aggravated by the above proverbial expression, *they were exceedingly amazed.* They were surprised at his first words; but when he confirmed them by the proverb of a camel's passing through the eye of a needle, they were, as Mark says, *astonished out of measure*: they did not imagine there was any difficulty of rich men coming into the kingdom of the Messiah, which they took to be a worldly one, and would be filled with rich men; for so they understood Christ; though he meant by the kingdom of heaven a spiritual kingdom, a Gospel church-state here, or the heavenly glory, or both; but when he expressed, by the proverb, the impracticableness of such men becoming the subjects thereof, their amazement increased; *saying, as in Mark, among themselves, privately to one another, who then can be saved?* meaning, not with a spiritual and everlasting salvation, but a temporal one: for upon Christ's so saying, they might reason with themselves, that if rich men did not come into the kingdom of the Messiah, they would oppose him and his kingdom, with all their force and strength; and then what would become of such poor men as themselves, who would not be able to stand against them? nor could they hope to be safe long, or enjoy any continued happiness in the expected kingdom, should this be the case.

Ver. 26. *But Jesus beheld them, &c.*] Looking wishfully and earnestly at them; signifying thereby, that he knew their reasonings among themselves, though they did not speak out so as to be heard by him; and that there was no reason why they should be in so much concern, as their countenances shewed, or possess themselves with such fears: *and said unto them, with men this is impossible.* Mark adds, *but not with God; for with God all things are possible*; to be done by him, if he will, which are consistent with the glory and perfections of his nature: for as he could, by his almighty power, if he would, reduce a camel to so small a size, as to be able to go through the eye of a needle, which, with men, is an impossible thing; so by the mighty power of his grace he can work upon a rich man's heart, in such a manner, as to take off his affections from his worldly substance, and cause him to drop his trust and confidence in it: he can so influence and dispose his mind, as to distribute his riches cheerfully among the poor, and largely, and liberally supply their wants, and even part with all, when necessity requires it: he can change his heart, and cause the desires of his soul to be after true riches of grace and glory; and bring him to see his own spiritual poverty, his need of Christ, and salvation by him; and to deny himself, take up the cross, and follow him, by submitting to his most despised ordinances, and by suffering the loss of all things for his sake; and he can carry him through a thousand snares safe to his kingdom and glory, which is Christ's sense; though the thing is impossible upon the foot of human nature, and strength, which can never effect any thing of this kind: and as to what the apostles suggested concerning the safety of persons in the Messiah's kingdom, if no rich man could enter there, but should be in opposition to

<sup>5</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 55. 2.

<sup>6</sup> T. Bab. Bava Metzja, fol. 38. 2.

<sup>1</sup> Prefat. ad Zohar, Ed. Sultzbach.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. 7. p. 120. Ed. Sale.



it; our Lord's answer implies, that though, humanly speaking, it was not possible and practicable that they, a company of poor, mean, and despicable men, should be able to stand against the united force of the great and mighty men of the earth; yet God was able to support, and uphold them, succeed, and keep them, and make them both useful and comfortable, amidst all the opposition and persecution they should meet with, until he had finished his whole will and work by them.

Ver. 27. *Then answered Peter and said unto him, &c.*] Peter observing what Christ said to the young man, bidding him sell all that he had, and give to the poor, and he should have treasure in heaven, and come and follow him, lays hold on it, and addresses him in the following manner, *behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee.* Though their worldly substance was not so large as the young man's, they had not such estates to sell, nor that to give to the poor, he had; yet all that they had they left for Christ's sake, their parents, wives, children, houses, and worldly employments, by which they supported themselves and families; and became the disciples and followers of Christ, embraced his doctrines, submitted to his commands, imitated him in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, denying themselves, and suffering many hardships on his account: wherefore it is asked, *what shall we have therefore? what reward for all this? what part in the Messiah's kingdom? or what treasure in heaven?*

Ver. 28. *And Jesus said unto them, &c.*] To all the disciples whom Peter personated; *verily I say unto you:* the thing being something very considerable, and of great moment, Christ uses the asseveration he sometimes does in such cases: *that ye which have followed me.* Christ does not deny that they had forsaken all for his sake, nor does he despise it, because it was but little they left, though he does not repeat it; but only takes notice of their following him, which, including their faith in him, their profession of him, and subjection to him, was a much greater action, and of more importance than the other, and therefore is only mentioned, and which our Lord confirms: *in the regeneration.* This clause is so placed, that it may be read in connection with the preceding words, and be understood of the disciples following Christ in the regeneration; meaning, not the grace of regeneration, in which they could not be said, with propriety, to follow Christ; and one of them was never a partaker of it: but the new state of things, in the church of God, which was foretold, and is called the time of reformation, or setting all things right, which began upon the sealing up the law, and the prophets, and the ministry of John the Baptist, and of Christ; who both, when they began to preach, declared, that this time, which they call the kingdom of heaven, was at hand, just ushering in. Now the twelve apostles followed Christ herein: they believed, and professed him to be the Messiah; they received, what the Jews called, his new doctrine, and preached it to others; they submitted to the new ordinance of baptism, and followed Christ, and attended him wherever he went, working miracles, preaching the Gospel, and reforming the

minds and manners of men. Now this new dispensation is called the regeneration; and which more manifestly took place after our Lord's resurrection, and ascension, and the pouring down of the spirit; wherefore the phrase may be connected with the following words, *when the son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, in the regeneration;* not in the resurrection of the dead, or at the last judgment, but in this new state of things, which now began to appear with another face: for the apostles having a new commission to preach the Gospel to all the world; and being endued with power from on high for such service, in a short time went every where preaching the word, with great success. Gentiles were converted, as well as Jews, and both brought into a Gospel church-state; the ceremonies of the old law being abolished, were disused; and the ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's supper, every where practised; old things passed away, and all things became new: agreeably to this the Syriac version renders the phrase, *בְּעֵלְמָא דְּרִיתָא, in the new world;* and so the Persic. The Arabic reads it, *in the generation, or age to come:* which the Jews so often call the world, or age to come, the kingdom of the Messiah, the Gospel dispensation. *When the son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, or glorious throne;* as he did when he ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God; and was then exalted as a prince, and made, or declared to be Lord and Christ; and was crowned in human nature, with honour, and glory, and angels, principalities, and powers, made subject to him: *ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones:* for though Judas fell from his apostleship, yet Matthias was chosen in his room, and took his place, and made up the number twelve; a metaphorical phrase, setting forth the honour, dignity, and authority of their office and ministry, by which they should be *judging the twelve tribes of Israel:* doctrinally and practically; by charging them with the sin of crucifying Christ, condemning them for their unbelief, and rejection of him, denouncing the wrath of God, and the heaviest judgments that should fall upon them, as a nation, for their sin; and by turning from them to the Gentiles, under which judgment they continue to this day. So the doctors among the Jews are represented as sitting and judging others: of *the potters*, in 1 Chron. iv. 23. they say, "these are the disciples of the law, or the law-  
"yers, for whose sake the world is created, *דִּיתְבְּנֵי*  
"עַל דִּינָא, who sit in judgment, and establish the  
"world; and build, and perfect the ruins of the house  
"of Israel."

Ver. 29. *And every one that hath forsaken houses, &c.*] Not only the then disciples of Christ, but any other believer in him, whether at that time, or in any age, that should be called to quit their habitations, or leave their dearest relations, friends, and substance: as *brethren or sisters, or father or mother, or wife or children, or lands, for my name's sake;* or, as in Luke, *for the kingdom of God's sake:* that is, for the sake of the Gospel, and a profession of it. Not that believing in Christ, and professing his name, do necessarily require a parting with all worldly substance, and natural relations, but when these things stand in competition

\* Targum in 1 Chron. iv. 23.

with Christ, he is to be loved and preferred before them; and believers are always to be ready to part with them for his sake, when persecution arises, because of the word. All these things are to be relinquished, rather than Christ, and his Gospel; and such who shall be enabled, through divine grace, to do so, *shall receive an hundred fold*: Mark adds, *now in this time*; and Luke likewise, *in this present time*, in this world; which may be understood either in spiritual things, the love of God, the presence of Christ, the comforts of the Holy Ghost, the communion of saints, and the joys and pleasures felt in the enjoyment of these things, being an hundred times more and better to them, than all they have left or lost for Christ's sake; or in temporal things, so in Mark it seems to be explained, that such shall now receive an hundred fold, even *houses and brethren, and sisters and mothers, and children and lands*; not that they should receive, for the leaving of one house, an hundred houses; or for forsaking one brother, an hundred brethren, &c. which last indeed might be true, as to a spiritual relation; but that the small pittance of this world's goods, and the few friends they should have *with persecutions* along with them, and amidst them, should be so sweetened to them, with the love and presence of God, that these should be more and better to them than an hundred houses, fields, and friends, without them: *and shall inherit everlasting life*. The other evangelists add, *in the world to come*, which is infinitely best of all; for this is an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, which fades not away, reserved in the heavens, when all other inheritances are corruptible, defiled, fading and perishing; houses fall, relations die, friends fail, and lands and estates do not continue for ever: they then have

the best of it, who being called, in providence, to quit all terrene enjoyments for Christ's sake, are favoured with his presence here, and shall enjoy eternal glory and happiness with him in another world.

Ver. 30. *But many that are first shall be last, &c.*] This may refer unto, or be occasioned by, either the young ruler; signifying that he, and others like him, who were superior in riches and honour, were first in this world, of the first rank and figure, should be the last in the world to come: *and the last shall be first*; the apostles, who were last in this world, being poor, mean, and abject, should be the first in the other: or to the Scribes and Pharisees, who were in the chief place, and highest esteem, in the Jewish church, and yet least in the kingdom of heaven; when, on the other hand, the publicans and sinners, who were in the lowest class, and in least esteem, went first into it: or to the case of persecution, when some, who seem most forward to endure it at a distance, when it comes nearer, are most backward to it; whilst others, who were most fearful of it, and ready to shrink at the thoughts of it, most cheerfully bear it: or to the apostles themselves, one of which, who was now first, Judas, should be last; and the apostle Paul, who was last of all, as one born out of due time, should be first: or to Jews and Gentiles, intimating, that the Jews, who were first in outward privileges, would be rejected of God, for their unbelief, and contempt of the Messiah; and the Gentiles, who were last called, should be first, or chief, in embracing the Messiah, professing his Gospel, and supporting his interest. This sentence is confirmed, and illustrated, by a parable, in the following chapter.

## C H A P. XX.

Ver. 1. *FOR the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man, &c.*] That is, the Gospel dispensation, or times of the Messiah, may fitly be represented by a man that is an *householder*, or master of a family, as Christ is; see Matt. x. 25. He is master of the whole family of God, in heaven, and in earth, of all the children of God, and household of faith; his house they are, he is father and master, son and first-born, priest and prophet there. *Which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard*: by the *vineyard* may be meant the church, which, like a vineyard, is separated by electing, redeeming, and calling grace, and by the order and ordinances of the Gospel, from the rest of the world; is set with various vines, with trees of righteousness, with pleasant plants, both fruitful and profitable; and which are dear and valuable to Christ; and about which much care is used to preserve, keep, and improve them: This may be called *his*, Christ's, being what he has chosen for himself, his father has given him, and he is heir of; which he has purchased with his blood, and which he plants, waters, takes care of, and enjoys. The *labourers* design either the ministers of the Gospel, who labour in the word and doctrine, who are, or at least ought to be, labourers in Christ's vine-

yard, and not loiterers; whose work in study, meditation, and prayer, in the ministration of the word and ordinances, and in performing other services they are called unto, is very laborious; and made more so, through the wickedness of some, and weakness of others: the employment of these labourers in the vineyard is various; the business of some is to plant; they are chiefly made use of in conversion: the work of others is to water; these are instruments in edification, and means of the growth of grace: others have a good hand at pruning, giving reproofs and corrections, in a suitable manner, with success, to the checking of sin, and bringing forth more fruit: others are useful in propping and supporting the vines, comforting and strengthening weak believers; and others in protecting and defending the outworks of the church, the doctrines and ordinances of it: or else private Christians in general may be intended, who all are, or should be labourers, both in the exercise of grace; for there's the work of faith, and the labour of love, to God, Christ, and his people, in which they should be continually employed; and in the discharge of duty, with regard to themselves; and in the care of their own vineyard, with respect to their families, which are

their charge, and also to the church of Christ, of which they are members. These labourers are said to be *hired* by the householder, or owner of the vineyard, Christ, not strictly and properly speaking; nor does it mean that he had no prior right to their obedience, or that there is any merit in their labour, or that that is the condition of their salvation; but it signifies the influence of his grace, in making them willing to serve him cheerfully, and labour in his vineyard freely; to encourage them in which, he makes them many gracious, and exceeding great and precious promises, and particularly that of eternal life: for which purpose, <sup>1</sup> *his said, that he went out*, either from his father as mediator, being sent by him; or from heaven into this world, by the assumption of human nature; or by his spirit, and the influence of his grace, in the calls of his people, to their several services, in his church; and that *early in the morning*: some of them being very early called to labour there; meaning either in the morning of the world, as Adam, Abel, Seth, Enoch, and others; or in the morning of the Jewish church-state, as Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and the like; or in the morning of the Gospel dispensation, as the apostles of Christ, which seems most likely; or in the morning of youth, as Timothy and others. Several things, in this first part of the parable, might be illustrated from the Jewish writings. They have a parable indeed, which, in the several parts of it, greatly resembles this, and begins thus<sup>2</sup>; “to what is R. Bon like? to a king that hath a vineyard, וְשָׂרֵי עֲלָיו פְּעֻלָּים, and hires labourers into it, &c.” Out of which some other things will be remarked, in the following parts of this parable: of a son’s being sent, and going out to hire labourers into the vineyard, take the following instance<sup>3</sup>; “it happened to R. Jochanan ben Matthia, that he said to his son, צֵא וּשְׂרֵה, go out, and hire labourers for us: he went out, and agreed with them for their food.” The time of hiring labourers, here mentioned, exactly agrees with the Jewish accounts<sup>4</sup>. Says R. Juda ben Bethira, when the face of all the east is light unto Hebron, all the people go out, every man to his work; and when it is so light, it is good to hire labourers we say.” Upon which the gloss says, “every man goes out to his work, not for labourers, but the householder, who מְשַׁכְּיִים יוֹתֵר, rises earlier to find labourers to hire.” Perhaps it may not be worth while to observe, how large a spot of ground, set with vines, was, by them, called a vineyard: it is frequently said by them<sup>5</sup>, “that a vineyard planted by less than four cubits, is no vineyard; but R. Simeon, and the wise men, say it is a vineyard.”

Ver. 2. *And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, &c.*] These labourers were of that sort that were called שְׂכִיר יוֹם, hired for a day; concerning whom is the following rule<sup>6</sup>: “he that is hired for a day, may demand it all the night; and he that is hired for a night may demand it all the day: he

“that is hired for hours, may demand it all the night, and all the day; he that is hired for a week, he that is hired for a month, he that is hired for a year, he that is hired for seven, if he goes out in the day, may demand all the day; and if he goes out in the night, he may demand it all the night, and all the day.” And the wages of a day were usually יוֹנֵה, a penny; which, if understood of a Roman penny, was sevenpence halfpenny of our money. One of their canons runs thus<sup>7</sup>: “he that hires a labourer in the winter, to work with him in the summer, בְּרִינֵי בְּכַל יוֹם, for a penny every day, and he gives him his hire; and, lo! his hire is alike to that in the winter, a sela every day, this is forbidden; because it looks as if he chose that time to lessen his wages; but if he says to him, work with me from this day, to such a time, for a penny every day, though his hire is the same, a sela every day, this is lawful.” By the penny a day agreed for with the labourers, may be meant external privileges; or the free promise made, whether to ministers, or private believers, of a sufficient supply of grace daily, that as their day is, their strength shall be; together with that of eternal life and happiness at last. He sent them into his vineyard; to labour there: for none have any business there, but such who are called and sent by the owner of it; and where sons are sent, and work, as well as servants; see Matt. xxi. 28, 29.

Ver. 3. *And he went out about the third hour, &c.*] About nine o’clock in the morning, and saw others standing idle in the market-place: the place where labourers used to be hired: and may design the world, because a place full of people, and of great wickedness, for the whole world lies in it; a place of trade and traffic in worldly things, and likewise of worldly and carnal pleasure, and also of idleness. Now God’s elect before calling, are in this place: they are natives of it, have their conversation according to it: here Christ came in person, and here he sends his ministers, his Gospel, to find them out, and by his spirit and grace he calls them from hence; so that afterwards they are no more of it, though they are in it: but before conversion they belong to it, and their posture then is standing idle: being sluggish, and slothful in business, unwilling to work, and afraid of a little danger and trouble, sauntering away their time in carnal pleasures, and so clothed with rags, and in a starving, famishing condition: but Christ’s eye is upon them; he observes, and takes notice of them in this disagreeable position and situation, and bespeaks them in the following manner.

Ver. 4. *And said unto them, go ye also into the vineyard, &c.*] Expressive of a call of divine grace out of the world, into the church; and which arises from mere grace, and good will, without any merit in, or motive from man, as the case here shews: for the householder went out to these men, not they to him; he puts the question to them, and calls them, and

<sup>1</sup> Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 21. 3. Vid. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 72. 4. & Talmud Hieros. Beracot, fol. 5. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Misna Bava Metsia, c. 7. sect. 1.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 38. 2.

<sup>4</sup> T. Shir. Sheviith, fol. 33. 2. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 37. 2. & 33. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Misna Bava Metsia, c. 9. sect. 11. Maimon. Hilch. Shecirut, c. 11. sect. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Mithvah Ulavah, c. 7. sect. 19. Vid. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 86. 2. & 87. 1. & Gloss. in ib.

bids them go into his vineyard; they don't ask him to hire them, nor desire to be in his service. Moreover, the persons called were a parcel of idle, mean, vulgar people, as market-folks commonly are; the weak, base, and foolish things of the world. The encouragement given them follows, *and whatsoever is right I will give you*; which is to be understood, not of strict justice; for in this sense nothing could be given to sinful mortals, for their services; but of grace, for what is had on this score, whether in this, or in the other world, is in a way of giving and receiving, which are the phrases used here, and in the context. It properly signifies what is meet and convenient, and will be satisfying; and since it is not expressed what he would give them, and they should receive, it calls for faith and dependence on divine goodness: for it does not yet appear, what the faithful labourers in Christ's vineyard will want, and shall receive in this life, nor what will be their happiness in the world to come: the glories and joys of heaven are unseen things; and eternal life is a hidden one at present, and must be trusted for: *and they went their way*: into the vineyard, the church, to labour there; which shews, that the call was powerful and efficacious; they were powerfully wrought upon by it; were at once inclined, and made willing to, and did go cheerfully, without standing to dispute about their work or wages.

Ver. 5. *Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, &c.*] About twelve o'clock, or at noon, and three o'clock in the afternoon. These three last mentioned seasons of the day, were the hours of prayer; see Acts ii. 15. and iii. 1. and x. 9. *and did likewise*: seeing others in the same place, and posture, he called them, and sent them into his vineyard, to labour there, giving them the same promise he did to others.

Ver. 6. *And about the eleventh hour he went out, &c.*] About five o'clock in the afternoon. The Persic version reads it, *the twelfth hour*, which was six o'clock in the afternoon, the last hour of the day. The Jews divided their day into twelve hours, John xi. 9. and these twelve hours into four parts; see Neh. ix. 3. each part containing three hours, to which division there is a manifest respect in this parable. These different seasons of the husbandman's going out to hire labourers, may have regard either to the several periods of time, and ages of the world, as before the law, under the law, the times of the Messiah, and the last days; or the various dispensations of the Gospel, first by Christ, and John the Baptist to the Jews, then by the apostles to the same in their first mission, afterwards when their commission was renewed, first to the Jews in Judea, and then to the same among the nations of the world, and last of all to the Gentiles; or to the several stages of human life, and may regard Christ's call of persons in childhood, youth, manhood, and old age; which last may be signified by the eleventh hour, as also the Gentiles, and the remainder of God's elect in the last day: *and found others standing idle*; in the same place and position as before: for the state and condition of God's

elect, by nature, as it is the same with others, 'tis the same with them all. The word *idle* is omitted here by the Vulgate Latin, the Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; but is retained in the Syriac and Persic versions; and stands in the Greek copies: *and saith unto them, why stand ye here all the day idle?* for being about the eleventh hour, the day was far spent, it was almost gone, a small portion of it remained, but one hour, as appears from ver. 12.

Ver. 7. *They say unto him, because no man hath hired us, &c.*] This may be fitly applied to the Gentiles, who for many hundreds of years were neglected by God; he overlooked the times of their ignorance, took no notice of them in their state of stupidity, blindness, and irreligion; but suffered them to walk in their own ways, sent no prophets to instruct them, nor messages, nor messengers to them; till at length the Jews, having rejected and crucified the Messiah, and persecuted his apostles, and contradicted, and blasphemed the Gospel, they were ordered to go to the Gentiles, and preach it to them: *he saith unto them, go ye also into the vineyard*: the Gospel was made the power of God unto salvation to them; they were called by grace, became of the same body the church, were fellow-heirs with the believing Jews, partakers of the same promises and privileges, in a Gospel church-state, and were equally labourers in the Lord's vineyard: *and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive*; with the rest of the labourers in it. This clause is left out in the Vulgate Latin, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; nor is it in Beza's most ancient Greek copy, though in all the rest; nor is it in the Persic version, which has added, *and they went*, as they were bidden, into the vineyard, the call being effectual; but is retained in the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions.

Ver. 8. *So when even was come, &c.*] At six o'clock, or when the sun was set, which was the time of paying labourers their wages: thus in the parable of the Jews, before referred to, which bears some resemblance to this, it is said, "לעת ערב", that at evening time the labourers came to take their wages." Sooner than this, one that was hired for a day, could not demand it; nor was the master of the vineyard, who hired him, obliged to pay him till the sun was set; which was the time of his going forth from his labour. This even may be understood, either of the evening of the Jewish state, upon the calling of the Gentiles; or of the end of the world, the close of the Gospel dispensation; when the work of it will be over, when all the elect of God, Jews and Gentiles, shall be called and gathered in, and all brought to repentance towards God, and faith in Christ. *The lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward*: by the lord of the vineyard may be meant God the father, who has chosen and separated the vineyard of the church for himself; and has made it the care and charge of his son Jesus Christ; who, as mediator, may be designed by *his steward*; who has not only all the stores of grace in his hand, to distribute to his people, in this life, as

\* Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 21. 3. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 72. 4. T. Hieros. Beraco, fol. 5. 3.

† Bartenora in Misn. Bava Metzja, c. 9. sect. 11.  
‡ Jarchi in Lev. xix. 13.

their cases require; but has also eternal life and happiness in his possession for them; not only the promise of it, but that itself; and has a power of giving it to as many as the father hath given him; and which he, the righteous judge, and faithful steward, will give at the day of judgment, to all that love his appearing. *Call the labourers, and give them their hire*; the proper time being come: for the Jews say, "it is an affirmative precept to give the wages of an hired person in its time; as it is said, Deut. xxiv. 15. *at his day thou shalt give him his hire*; and if it is prolonged after its time, 'tis transgressing a negative precept, as it is said, (in the same place,) *neither shall the sun go down upon it.*" So Jews and Gentiles were called to partake of the same Gospel privileges; and so will all the faithful labourers in the Lord's vineyard be called together, and have the reward of eternal life bestowed upon them, and be bid to enter into the joy of their Lord, and inherit the kingdom prepared for them, as they before were ordered to go into the vineyard, and work. And though eternal life may be called hire or reward, because as hire is given to labourers, so is eternal life; and as that is given at the even and close of the day, and when the labourer has done his work, so everlasting glory will be given to the saints at the end of life, and when they have done the will and work of God: yet it will not be bestowed by way of merit, or, as if there was a just proportion between the work, labour, and services of the saints, and the glory that shall be revealed in them. Their purest services, even their sufferings for Christ, are not worthy to be compared with that; nor are there any that are done by them, but what are due to God, what he has a right unto, and are their duty to perform; so that when they are done by them in the best and most perfect manner, they are but unprofitable servants: nor can they, by any thing they do, be profitable to God, or give any thing to him, which can be obligatory upon him, to do any thing for them, or be a valuable consideration for any thing they should receive from him; and therefore they can't merit any thing at his hand, and much less eternal life: besides, their services are very impure and imperfect, and whenever any thing is well done by them, it is done not by their own strength and might, but by the assistance and grace of God; and therefore they can have no demand upon him for what they do: eternal life, though a reward, is not a reward of debt, but of grace; it is the free gift of God through Christ; God has graciously promised it in the covenant of his grace, before the world began; he has given it into the hands of his son for his people, with whom it is sure; and he gives it freely to all the sheep the father has given him. *Beginning from the last unto the first*; beginning with the last that was called and sent into the vineyard, and so proceeding on to the next to them; giving them their wages as he went along, till he came to the first, who were early in the morning hired into this service; intimating, that some such method will be taken in the introducing of the saints into the kingdom of the Messiah here, and into his everlasting

kingdom hereafter; whereby that saying of our Lord's, which occasioned this parable, will be also fulfilled, *the first shall be last, and the last first.*

Ver. 9. *And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, &c.]* Who were the last that were hired; and signify either such, as are called in their last days, in old age; or Gentile sinners; or the last of God's elect, that will be called by grace, in the end of the world: *they received every man a penny*; the same they first agreed for, that were hired early into the vineyard; and all, and every man alike, not one more, or another less. So the same church privileges and immunities are common to all believers, Jews or Gentiles, sooner or later called; and equal title given to the same eternal life and happiness, which will be enjoyed alike, by one saint as another: they are all loved with the same everlasting love by God; they are chosen alike by him in his son, at the same time, in the same way and manner, and to the same grace and glory; they are interested in the same covenant, in all the promises and blessings of it; they are bought with the same price of a Redeemer's blood, are justified by the same righteousness, and are called in one hope of their calling; they are equally the sons of God, and their glory and happiness are always expressed by the same thing, as a kingdom, a crown, an inheritance, &c. They are all equally heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; they are heirs of the same kingdom and glory, and are born again to the same incorruptible inheritance, of which they will all be partakers; they will all be called to inherit the same kingdom, they will sit on the same throne of glory, and wear the same crown of righteousness, and enjoy the same uninterrupted communion with father, son, and spirit. Now, indeed, they have not the same measures of grace; some have more, others less; but in heaven, it will be alike, complete and perfect in all; and even now, they have the same grace for nature and kind, only it is not in all in the same exercise; now the saints are distinguished by the several stations and places in which they are; though they are members of the same body, they have not the same office, and have gifts differing from one another; but in the other state, all such offices and gifts will cease, and all will be upon an equal foot; be where Christ is, and behold his glory, and will stand in no need of each other's instruction and help. Now the capacities of men are different, according to the different temperament of their bodies, their different education, opportunities, advantages, and stations in life; but in the other world, where this difference will be no more, every vessel of mercy being prepared for glory, will be equally capable of receiving it: and though there will be degrees of punishment in hell, proportionate to the sins of men, which the justice of God requires, yet it follows not, that there will be degrees in glory; since that is not proportioned to the works of men, but springs from the grace of God, and yet in a way of justice too, through the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ: and since the saints have an equal interest in these things, it seems that upon the foot

of justice, they should equally enjoy all that happiness which these entitle them to.

Ver. 10. *But when the first came, &c.*] Who were early hired into the vineyard; and design either the first saints that were in the world; or the Jews that first believed in Christ, either really or nominally; or such, who were called by grace in their early days: *they supposed, or hoped, as the Syriac version renders it, that they should have received more; than a penny, a greater reward: not that they could expect it on the foot of their agreement, or on account of their work; but because they observed, that they that came last into the vineyard, had as much as they agreed for; and therefore hoped, from the goodness of their Lord to them, that they should receive more: and they likewise received every man a penny: the self-same privileges of the Gospel, and a title to the self-same reward of free grace, the self-same glory and happiness.*

Ver. 11. *And when they had received it, &c.*] The external privileges of the Gospel dispensation, an inheritance among them that are sanctified, and a right unto it, on the foot of free grace, *they murmured against the good man of the house; who had been so kind and liberal, to those who came last into the vineyard, and had done no injury to them, but gave them a full reward. So the Jews that first believed in Christ, were at first uneasy at the Gospel being preached to the Gentiles, at the calling of them, and their partaking of the same privileges in a Gospel church-state with them, without submitting to the ceremonies of the law, as they had done; just as the Pharisees, in Christ's time, murmured against him; for receiving sinners, and eating with them: though in the latter day, the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and in the ultimate glory there will be no murmuring at each other's happiness.*

Ver. 12. *Saying, these last have wrought but one hour, &c.*] Thinking it hard, that they should have the same reward for the service of one hour, others had for the service of many. This is grudged by the Jews<sup>2</sup>; "*Bath Kol*, a voice from heaven, went out" and said, *Ketiah bar Shallum*, is prepared for the "life of the world to come; Rabbi wept, and" said, there is that obtains his world (or the world "to come for himself) *בשעה אחת, in one hour; and* "there is that obtains it in many years." The same observation is also made by the same person, on account of "R. Eleazar ben Durdia". So in the parable of the Jews above mentioned, which is the broken remains of a common proverb among them like<sup>3</sup> this; it is observed, that there being one labourer among those that were hired, who did his work better than all the rest, and who was taken notice of by the king; that when "at even the labourers came to take their" wages, this labourer also came to take his; and the "king gave him his wages equal with them, (or, as in another place, a perfect one,) the labourers began "to press him with difficulty, (or as elsewhere<sup>4</sup>, "מרתעבין, *they murmured,*) and said, Oh! our Lord, "the king, we have laboured all the day; but this man

"has not laboured but *two or three hours* in the day, "and he takes his wages, even as ours, or a perfect "reward." And so it follows here, *and thou hast made them equal to us, who have borne the burden and heat of the day*: of all the Jewish rites and ceremonies, which were burdensome and intolerable. The ceremonial law was a burden to the Jewish people; the multitude of sacrifices enjoined them, and the frequent repetition of them, together with the great number of other ordinances and institutions, produced a weariness in them; especially in the carnal part of them, who saw not the things typified by them, the use and end of them, and so did not enjoy spiritual pleasure in them. Mal. i. 13. It was a yoke, and a yoke of bondage to them, which brought on them a spirit of bondage, through the fear of death, which was the penalty annexed to it; and it was an insupportable one, which neither they, nor their forefathers, were able to bear, because it made them debtors to keep the whole law: and this was made still more burdensome, by the traditions of the elders, which were added to it, and which the Scribes and Pharisees obliged to the observance of; to which they themselves still added, and bound heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and laid them on men's shoulders. The law was a fiery law, and the dispensation of it was a hot and scorching one; it was uncomfortable working under the flashes of a mount, that burned with fire: the law worked wrath, and possessed the minds of men with a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation. This may also be applied to such Christians, who are called to more severe service or sufferings for Christ, than others are; who are almost pressed down without measure, and endure fiery trials, are scorched, and made black, with the sun of persecution beating upon them; as the saints under the ten persecutions of the Roman emperors, and as the confessors and martyrs in the times of papal power and cruelty; and who, it might be thought, will have a greater degree of glory and happiness hereafter; and so some have been of opinion, that these are they that shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years, Rev. xx. 4, 5, 6. But it rather seems, that others will be made equal with them, who have not endured what they have done; for all the dead in Christ, all that have part in the first resurrection, when Christ comes, as all the saints will then rise, will share in that glory; even the innumerable company, chosen, redeemed, and called, out of every nation, tongue, and people, and will be admitted to the same honour and happiness, Rev. vii. 9, 13, 15, 16, 17. And this character will also agree with many other servants of Christ, who are called to harder and more laborious service than others are, and labour more abundantly in the Lord's vineyard than others do, and are longer employed in it; as for instance, the Apostle Paul; and yet the same crown of righteousness that is laid up for him, and given to him, will be given to all that love the appearance of Christ, though they have not laboured for his name's sake, as he has done.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Avoða Zara, fol. 10. 2.  
<sup>3</sup> Ib. fol. 17. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 21. 4. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 72. 4.  
<sup>5</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 5. 3.

Ver. 13. *But he answered one of them, &c.*] Who was the forwardest and loudest in his complaints, and personated the rest; and said, friend, I do thee no wrong; by giving all alike, the same privileges and blessings to the last, as to the first, since nothing was withheld from him. And indeed the Lord does no wrong to any, by the distinction which he makes among his creatures: he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works: he does no injury to the evil angels, by choosing the good angels, and confirming them in the estate in which they were created; when the others are reserved in chains of darkness, to the judgment of the great day; or by choosing fallen men in Christ, and making provisions of grace for them, and not devils: and so there is no unrighteousness in him, nor does he do any wrong to any, when, like the potter, out of the same clay, he makes one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour; any more than when, in a providential way, he gives riches and wealth to some, and withholds them from others; or sends his Gospel, the means of grace to one, and not to another: and still less can he be thought to do wrong to the sons of men, by giving to them alike the same grace and privileges here, and the same happiness and glory hereafter; since neither have any right to what they have, or shall enjoy, and no one has the less for what is given to the other. *Didst thou not agree with me for a penny?* That is, to labour in the vineyard all the day for a penny; yea, this agreement was made personally with him, not with a servant, or messenger of his; though if it had, it ought, according to the Jewish canons, to have been abode by, which run thus<sup>b</sup>: "A man says "to his messenger, or servant, go and hire workmen for me for three-pence; he goes and hires them for four-pence: if the messenger says to them, "your wages be upon me, he gives them four-pence, and takes three-pence of the master of the house; he looses one out of his own purse: if he says to them, your hire be upon the master of the house, the master of the house gives them according to the custom of the province: if there are one in the province that hired for three-pence, and others that are hired for four-pence, he gives them but three-pence, and the murmuring is against the messenger; in what things? When the work is not known, but when the work is known, and it is worth four-pence, the master of the house gives them four-pence; but if his messenger does not say to them four-pence, they do not labour and do what deserves four-pence. The householder says to him, hire me for four-pence, and the messenger goes and hires for three-pence, though the work deserves four-pence, they have but three-pence; because that קבלי על עצמך, they took it upon themselves, (i. e. they agreed for so much,) and their murmuring is against the messenger." Thus the argument in the parable proceeds upon the agreement, which ought to be abode by.

Ver. 14. *Take that thine is, &c.*] By agreement, and go thy way; out of my sight, give me no more

trouble on this head; which looks like a dismissal from his service, and after-privileges; and was true of many among the Jews, who were only nominal professors, and from whom the Gospel and ordinances of it were taken: *I will give unto this last man that was called, and sent into the vineyard, even as unto thee;* the same outward privileges, besides special grace, and eternal glory, which it looks as if the other had not.

Ver. 15. *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? &c.*] External gifts and outward privileges, such as enjoying the word and ordinances, are God's own; and he may, as he does, bestow them on whom he will, and when and where he pleases; as he gave them to the Jews, and continued them many hundred years, when the Gentiles were utterly with them destitute of them; and as he has bestowed them in a more abundant manner for a long time on the Gentiles, whilst the Jews despise and reject them. Special grace is his own, which he gives to whom he pleases; 'tis by his own grace, and not the merits of men, that any are chosen, adopted, justified, pardoned, regenerated, and called; that they have faith, hope, love, repentance, or perform new obedience from a new heart, and new principles. Heaven and glory is his own, of his own preparing and giving; and both grace and glory are disposed of, and that very rightly and lawfully, according to his sovereign good will and pleasure: he chooses, adopts, justifies, pardons, regenerates, calls, and sanctifies whom he pleases; and brings what sons to glory he thinks fit, and bestows it equally upon them: and in so doing, does no wrong, or any injustice to any of his creatures; not to the fallen angels, by choosing some of their species, and confirming them in their original constitution; and by leaving them, the fallen angels, in their apostacy; nor by making provision for fallen man, and not them, nor by punishing them with everlasting destruction; nor do they ever complain of any wrong being done them: nor to non-elect men; for none of Adam's race have any right to grace or glory, and therefore no wrong is done to any of them, by withholding them from them, whereby nothing is taken from them, and given to others; and by punishing them for sin; nor to any elect men, by making others partners with them; since they are all alike by nature, unworthy of grace and glory, and deserving of wrath: what is enjoyed by any of them, is of mere grace, and not through merit; and one has not a whit the less, for what the other is possessed of; so that there is no room for envy, murmuring, and complaint: *is thine eye evil because I am good?* An *evil eye*, is opposed to a *good eye*, frequently in Jewish writings, as a good eye signifies beneficence and liberality; hence it is said<sup>c</sup>, "He that gives a gift, let him give it בעין יפה, with a good eye;" bountifully and generously; and he that devoteth any thing, let him devote it with a good eye," cheerfully and freely: so an *evil eye* intends envy and covetousness, as it does here: and the sense is, art thou envious at the good of others, and covetous and greedy to monopolize all to thyself, because I am liberal, kind, and be-

<sup>b</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Shecirut, c. 9. sect. 3.  
VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 65. 1. & 71. 1. & 79. 1.

nificent? Men are apt to complain of God, and charge his procedures in providence and grace, with inequality and injustice; whereas he does, as he may, all things according to his sovereign will, and never contrary to justice, truth, and goodness; though he is not to be brought to man's bar, and men should submit to his sovereignty.

Ver. 16. *So the last shall be first, and the first last, &c.*] As he had asserted in ch. xix. 30. and which is clearly illustrated by this parable, as it may be applied to Jews or Gentiles, or to nominal and real Christians: *for many be called*: externally, under the ministration of the Gospel, as the Jews in general were, by Christ and his apostles; *but few chosen*; in Christ from all eternity, both to grace and glory; and in consequence, and as an evidence of it, but few among the Jews; as also in the Gentile world, comparatively speaking: and even but a few of those that are outwardly called, are inwardly and effectually called by the powerful grace of God, out of darkness into marvellous light, into the grace and liberty of the Gospel, into communion with Christ, and to the obtaining his kingdom and glory, according to the eternal purpose of God. It is a saying of R. Simeon ben Jochai <sup>d</sup>, "I have seen the children of the world to come (elsewhere: "it is, of the chamber), *וְרַב כְּרֵמִישׁ, and they are few.*" Though he vainly thought, that if those few were but two, they were himself and his son.

Ver. 17. *And Jesus going up to Jerusalem, &c.*] Which was situated <sup>4</sup> in the highest part of the land of Israel: the land of Israel, is said to be higher than any other land whatever; and the temple at Jerusalem, higher than any part of the land of Israel; wherefore Christ's going to Jerusalem, is expressed by going up to it. Whither he came either from the coasts of Judea, from beyond Jordan, ch. xix. 1. where he had been some time healing diseases, disputing with the Pharisees, discoursing with the young ruler, and instructing his disciples; or from a country near to the wilderness, from a city called Ephraim, John xi. 54. where he continued some time with his disciples, after the sanhedrim had took counsel to put him to death; for this was his last journey to Jerusalem. *Took the twelve disciples apart in the way*: into some private place, which lay near the road; for it seems that there were others that followed him, besides the twelve; when he was not willing they should hear what he had to say to them, concerning the issue of this journey; lest either they should be discouraged and desert him, or it should be made public, and methods be used to prevent it: *and said unto them*; the disciples, whom he thought fit once more to remind of his sufferings and death, and to prepare them for the same; and though they would not so thoroughly understand all that he should say, yet when it was come to pass, they would remember it, and which would be of service to confirm their faith in him, as the true Messiah. See the note on Mark x. 32.

Ver. 18. *Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, &c.*] This is the last time of our going thither; observe, and

take notice of what I am about to say; some extraordinary things will come to pass, and, as Luke relates that he said, *all things that are written by the prophets concerning the son of man, shall be accomplished*: every thing that is recorded in the twenty-second Psalm, and in the fifty-third of Isaiah, or in any other prophecies of the Old Testament, relating to the ill-treatment the Messiah should meet with, to his sufferings and death, and all the circumstances attending them, shall be exactly fulfilled in every punctilio: and that they might not be at a loss about what he meant, he gives an account of various particular things, which should befall him; *and the son of man shall be betrayed*: he does not say by whom, though he knew from the beginning who should betray him, that it would be one of his disciples, and that it would be Judas; but the proper time was not yet come to make this discovery: the persons into whose hands he was to be betrayed, are mentioned; *unto the chief priests, and unto the Scribes*; who were his most inveterate and implacable enemies; and who were the persons that had already taken counsel to put him to death, and were seeking all advantages and opportunities to execute their design: *and they shall condemn him to death*; which is to be understood not of their declaring it as their opinion, that he was guilty of death, and ought to die by a law of theirs, which declaration they made before Pilate; nor of their procuring the sentence of death to be pronounced by him, upon him; but of their adjudging him to death among themselves, in the palace of the high-priest; which was done by them, as the sanhedrim and great council of the nation; though either they could not, or did not, choose to execute it themselves, and therefore delivered him up to the Romans; for this act of condemning him to death, was to be, and was, before the delivery of him up to the Gentiles, as is clear from what follows.

Ver. 19. *And shall deliver him to the Gentiles, &c.*] To Pilate, an Heathen governor, and to the Roman officers and soldiers under him; see John xviii. 35. *To mock him*, as they did, by putting on him a scarlet robe, plating a crown of thorns, and placing it on his head, and a reed in his hand; and then bowed the knee to him, and cried, hail, king of the Jews! *and to scourge him*: as he was by Pilate, at least by his orders: Mark adds, *and spit upon him*; as not only did the Jews in the palace of the high-priest, but also the Gentiles, the Roman soldiers, after they had mocked him in the manner before described: *and to crucify him*; which, as it was a cruel and shameful death, such as slaves and the worst of malefactors were put to, so it was a Roman one; for which reason, the Jews choose to deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. The Persic version here adds, *and put him into the grave*; which though it followed his crucifixion, was not done by the Gentiles, but by Joseph of Arimathea, a Jew, and a disciple of Jesus; and that not in a contemptuous, but honourable manner: *and the third day he shall rise again*: this he said for the comfort of his disciples; but now, though these things were so clearly and dis-

<sup>d</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 13. 4.

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Succa, fol. 45. 2. & Sanhedrim, fol. 97. 2.

<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 87. 1.



tinctly expressed by Christ, and which shew his omniscience, and give proof both of his deity and Messiahship, yet Luke observes of the disciples, that *they understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken*: the words were plain, the grammatical sense of them was easy, but they could not imagine that they were to be taken literally; which was such a glaring contradiction to their received and rooted principles of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, and the grandeur of it, that they fancied these expressions carried a mystical, secret meaning in them, which they were not masters of; and certain it is, that what our Lord now said, was so far from destroying, or weakening these prejudices of theirs, that it rather confirmed them in them; particularly, what he said about rising again, which seemed to have put them afresh in mind, and to excite their hopes of this external felicity, as appears from the following case.

Ver. 20. *Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children, &c.*] Whose name was Salome, as may be concluded from Matt. xxvii. 56. compared with Mark xv. 40. She is not called the wife of Zebedee, who might be now dead, but the mother of his children, his *two sons*, as the Arabic version renders it: James and John, and who were the disciples of Christ: it is not certain, that Zebedee was ever a follower of him; and therefore the woman is described by her relation to her children, and not her husband; and the rather, because it was in their name, and on their account, that she came to Jesus. She is said to be the sister of Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of our Lord; and if so, might hope to succeed in her request, on the foot of relation; as also, since she herself had been a constant follower of, and attendant on him; and especially, inasmuch as her sons were his favourite disciples; *with her sons*; her two sons, James and John, whom Mark mentions by name: *worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him*; that is, she came in a very submissive manner to him, either bowed unto him, or kneeled down before him, or threw herself at his feet, and signified that she had a single favour, and a very considerable one, to ask of him. Mark represents the case thus, that her two sons, James and John, came to Christ, and that they themselves spoke to him, and addressed him in this manner: *Master, we would that thou shouldst do for us, whatsoever we shall desire*: which was a very odd request, both as to the matter and manner of it; that they should ask, and insist upon every thing to be done for them, they desired; and suggest, that they expected that he would promise them this, before they declared the particular favour they had to ask of him. The matter may be reconciled thus. These two disciples, having observed what Christ had said concerning the twelve disciples sitting on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, and what he had just related, concerning his rising again the third day, which they might understand of some display of his glory; and concluding from all this, that the setting up of his temporal monarchy was at hand, inform their mother of it, and move to her, to use her interest with Christ, in their

favour: and which they did, partly to shun the envy and ill will of the rest of the disciples; and partly, to conceal their own pride and vanity; as also, they might think a request from her, on their behalf, would be more easily granted: accordingly, she agreeing to the motion, they all three came, as Matthew relates, and the mother is the mouth, and speaks for her sons; so that they may be said to make such a request by her, she persuading them; or they joined in the petition with her; or as soon as she had made it, they seconded it, and made it their own.

Ver. 21. *And he said unto her, what wilt thou? &c.*] Mark says, *he said unto them*; her two sons, James and John, *what would you that I should do for you?* Both is true; what is this singular favour? what business of moment and importance is it, you would have me do for you, you are so eager and pressing for, and so solicitous of? This he said, not as being ignorant of the matter; he knew the corruption of their hearts, the vanity of their minds, their carnal, worldly, and ambitious views; but to lead them on to say all they had to say upon this head; in which may be observed the goodness, humanity, and patience of Christ, in not upbraiding them with their pride and insolence, in bearing with their rashness and folly, and in giving them room to believe, that he should answer their request in every thing that was right and reasonable to be done. *She saith unto him, grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on the right hand, and the other on the left in thy kingdom*; or, as in Mark, *in thy glory*: that is, in thy glorious kingdom; meaning a temporal one, which would outvie all the kingdoms of the world, in external glory, pomp, and splendour, as they imagined: to sit one on the right hand and the other on the left hand of Christ, when he should be seated, literally, on the throne of his father David, signifies to be nearest to his person; to be next to him in power and authority; to have the highest posts of honour, and places of trust and profit; to be his prime ministers; and, in a word, to have the greatest share next to him of worldly honour, riches, and power. To sit at the right hand, was, with the Jews, reckoned a great mark of honour and affection; see 1 Kings ii. 19. and so with other nations: with the Egyptians especially, it was accounted a great honour to be placed on the right hand, but the greatest to be in the middle: which was equally observed among the Romans, and the same with the Africans and Numidians; though Xenophon relates, that Cyrus, with a singular prudence, that he might receive his guests the more honourably, used to place them at the left hand, accounting that part, as nearest the heart, to be the more worthy<sup>s</sup>. These two, the best and most honourable places, this woman was for engrossing for her two sons, who joined with her in the request; for Mark says, that *they said unto him, grant unto us that we may sit, &c.* and Christ's answer here, which follows, implies as much.

Ver. 22. *But Jesus answered, and said, &c.*] To her two sons, *ye know not what ye ask*. They were ignorant of the nature of Christ's kingdom, which is spiritual, and not of this world: or they would never

<sup>s</sup> Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 19.

have asked such a question, or sued for that which will never be enjoyed by any: and supposing that Christ's kingdom had been such as they imagined, yet in asking for honours and riches, they might not know what they asked for: they might promise themselves much pleasure and happiness in the enjoyment of them, and yet, if indulged with them, might be disappointed, and find unexpected troubles and uneasiness. It would have been much more proper and reasonable, on hearing of Christ's being mocked, scourged, spit upon, and crucified, if they had put such a question to themselves, Christ here directs to, *are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?* meaning his reproaches, sorrows, sufferings, and death; which because of the disagreeableness of them, he compares to a bitter cup of vengeance, wrath, fury, and indignation; and because they were appointed to him, and allotted for him, they were his portion, therefore he expresses them by a *cup*; and because they were so many and great, of such an overwhelming nature, that he seemed to be plunged into them, and covered with them, therefore he likens them to a *baptism*; and which the ordinance of water-baptism, performed by immersion, is a lively representation of. Now Christ suggests to these disciples, that instead of indulging their ambitious desires of worldly grandeur, that they would do well to consider what a bitter cup he had to drink of, and what a sea of sorrows and sufferings he was about to be plunged into, and drenched in; and whether they could think of enduring any thing of the like kind, for his sake, which was most likely to be in a short time, what they would be called unto, and not to honours, ease, and pleasure; and what they must be sure, more or less, to undergo, before they entered the everlasting kingdom of glory: *they say unto him, we are able*; not considering the nature of these sufferings, and their own weakness; but partly through ignorance of themselves, and a vain confidence which possessed them; and chiefly through a vehement desire of the places in his kingdom, they asked for, and which they thought drinking his cup, and being baptized with his baptism, were the condition, and the means of enjoying; and so rashly affirm their ability, and which includes their willingness to comply herewith.

Ver. 23. *And he saith unto them, ye shall drink indeed of my cup, &c.*] Not of the self-same, but of what was like unto it; meaning, that they should endure much persecution for his name's sake, as all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must expect in one shape or another. Thus James, who was one of these persons, was slain with the sword by Herod; John, the other, was imprisoned, and beaten by the order of the Jewish sanhedrim, was banished into the isle of Patmos by Domitian; and, some say, was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, though saved in it: so that these words seem to be a prophecy of what they should suffer for Christ, instead of enjoying places of worldly honour and profit under him, they were seeking for. *And be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with*: this clause is here, and in the former verse, omitted by the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, and in some Greek copies, and is thought to be tran-

scribed hither out of Mark's Gospel; but the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions have it, and so has Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and it appears in many Greek copies. James, being bathed in his own blood, when killed with the sword, and John being cast into a vessel of scalding oil, these are fitly expressed by a baptism. *But to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give*; in the sense in which they asked it, since he was no temporal prince; nor was his kingdom of this world; nor had he any such external favours, or worldly honours: and as to the true and spiritual sense of such a phrase, it was not a point to be fixed now by him, as man, and according to his own will; as who should reign with him in the kingdom of heaven, who should sit down on the same throne with him, and enjoy all the glories and happiness of the world to come; and though, as mediator, all this glory was given to him, and he had it in his hands to give to others, yet to none *but those for whom*, says he, *it is prepared of my father*: for this is the true reading and sense of the last clause; signifying, that eternal life, or the heavenly glory, is a kingdom prepared by his father, from the foundation of the world, and not for any body, and every person, but for some only, according to his father's sovereign will and pleasure; and that this is an affair that was fixed by him, in his eternal counsels and purposes, and in the covenant of his grace, and not to be adjusted now; nor was the designation of it to be, nor will the distribution of it be according to the merits of men, but the free grace of God; and though he, as mediator, was appointed to bestow both grace and glory on men, yet only on those the father had given to him, for whom grace was laid up in him, and glory prepared.

Ver. 24. *And when they ten heard it, &c.*] The other ten apostles, who either were within hearing the request made, and Christ's answer, or had by some means information of it: *they were moved with indignation against the two brethren*; the two sons of Zebedee, James and John: they were not so much displeased with the mother of them, who asked the favour for them, as with her sons, knowing that they have put her upon making this motion to Christ; nor were they so much moved with indignation at the action, detesting all notions of superiority and pre-eminence; for they were all tinctured with the same carnal principle, and each was desirous of the chief place for himself; but they were angry, and out of all temper, that these two brethren should move for that, which they thought they had as good a right unto, as any of them: wherefore, as Mark says, *they began to be much displeased with them*, and to shew their resentment, not only by their looks and gestures, but by words; and very probably they would have rose to very high words, and a downright quarrel, had not Christ interposed; as, from the following verse, it appears he did.

Ver. 25. *But Jesus called them unto him, &c.*] All his twelve disciples, perceiving that the same ambitious views prevailed in them all: to discourage which, and to prevent their quarrelling one with another, he called them to him, and made use of the following reasonings: *and said, ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great*

*exercise authority upon them*; appealing to them in a case that was well known by them, what the princes of the Gentiles did; or, as Mark expresses it, *they which are accounted, or seem to rule over the Gentiles*: who know not God, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who neither serve and obey him, or have any dependence on him, but assume a power of governing others, take upon them to rule the nations of the world, and are acknowledged as such by them: these claim a superiority over others, and exercise lordly power over them; and they that are their great ones, their lords, and nobles under them; these also assert a pre-eminence, and exercise authority on those that are below them; which they have received from those that are above them: this is the usual way and method of the governments of the kingdoms of this world: wherefore, for the apostles to affect and desire a superiority to each other, in the kingdom of Christ, was to imitate the Gentiles, and to act according to worldly forms of government; which is very unsuitable to the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, whose kingdom is spiritual, and not of this world.

Ver. 26. *But it shall not be so among you, &c.*] This is not to be extended to Christian nations, as if there were to be no order of magistracy subsisting in them; but that all must be on a level, and no distinction of princes and subjects, of governors and governed; nor to Christian churches, as if there was no ecclesiastical authority to be used, or any church-government and power to be exercised; none to rule, whom others are to obey and submit themselves to; but is to be restrained to the apostles as such, among whom there was an entire equality; being all apostles of Christ, being equally qualified and sent, and put into the self-same office by him: the same holds good of all pastors of churches, who have no superintendency and pre-eminence over one another, or can, or ought to exercise any lordly power and authority, one, or more, over the rest; being equally invested with the same office-power, one as another: for otherwise Christ's kingdom would appear like the nations of the world, and to be of a worldly nature; whereas it is spiritual, and does not lie in worldly pomp and grandeur, and in external superiority and pre-eminence of one another; but in the spiritual administration of the word and ordinances; which every pastor of a church has an equal right to exercise, and obedience to them lies in a submission to these things: *but whosoever will be great among you, let him be*, or, as in Mark, *shall be, your minister*: whoever would be reckoned a great man in the kingdom of Christ, or under the Gospel dispensation, must be a minister to others: if he is desirous of being truly great in the esteem of God, and of men, he must do great service for Christ, and to the souls of men; and seek to bring great glory to God, by faithfully ministering the word and ordinances, and by denying himself worldly honour and glory, and by serving others, through much reproach, difficulty, and opposition.

Ver. 27. *And whosoever will be chief among you, &c.*] Or first, or have the pre-eminence, the first place in the kingdom of the Messiah, *let him be your servant*; or,

as in Mark, *shall be servant of all*: not only a minister, but a servant; not a servant of some only, but of all. This was verified in the Apostle Paul, who became a servant to all men, though he was free, that he might gain some to Christ; and by so doing was the chief, though he reckoned himself the least of the apostles, yea, less than the least of all saints. The Jews have a saying somewhat like this, that <sup>b</sup> "every one that makes himself כעבד, as a servant, for the words of "the law in this world, shall be made free in the "world to come."

Ver. 28. *Even as the son of man, &c.*] Meaning himself, the seed of the woman, the son of Abraham, and of David, according to the flesh; and whom he proposes as an example of humility, and as an argument to draw them off from their ambitious views of worldly grandeur, and from all thoughts of the Messiah's setting up a temporal kingdom; since he came not to be ministered unto by others; to be attended on in pomp and state, to have a numerous retinue about him, waiting upon him, and ministering to him; as is the case of the princes, and great men of the world; though he is Lord of all, and King of kings; but to minister: in the form of a servant unto others, going about from place to place to do good, both to the bodies and souls of men: he came forth from his father, down from heaven, into this world, by his assumption of human nature, to minister in the prophetic office, by preaching the Gospel, and working miracles, in confirmation of it; and in the priestly office, one branch of which is expressed in the next clause, *and to give his life a ransom for many*: what he came to give was his life, which was his own, and than which nothing is more dear and precious: besides, his life was an uncommon one, being not only so useful to men, and entirely free from sin in itself, but was the life of the man Jesus, who is in union with the son of God: this he came to give, and did give into the hands of men, to the justice of God, and death itself; which giving, supposes it to be his own, and at his own disposal; was not forfeited by any act of his, nor was it forced from him, but freely laid down by him; and that as a ransom, or redemption-price for his people, to deliver them from the evil of sin, the bondage of Satan, the curses of a righteous law, from eternal death, and future wrath, and, in short, from all their enemies: which ransom-price was paid for them in their room and stead, by Christ, as their substitute; who put himself in their law-place, and laid himself under obligation to pay their debts, and clear their scores, and redeem them from all their iniquities, and the evil consequences of them: and this he did for many; for as many as were ordained to eternal life; for as many as the father gave unto him; for many out of every kindred, tongue, and people, and nation; but not for every individual of human nature; for many are not all.

Ver. 29. *And as they departed from Jericho, &c.*] Which was distant about ten *parsas*, or miles, from Jerusalem<sup>1</sup>, through which Christ just passed, and had met with Zaccheus, and called him, and delivered the parable concerning a nobleman's going into a far

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 85. 2.

<sup>1</sup> Bartenora in Misa. Tamid, c. 3. sect. 8.

country. The Syriac and Persic versions render the words, *when Jesus departed from Jericho*; and the Arabic, *when he went out of Jericho*; not alone, but *with his disciples*, as Mark says; and not with them only, for *a great multitude followed him* out of the city; either to hear him, or be healed by him, or to see him, or behold his miracles, or to accompany him to Jerusalem; whether he was going to keep the feast of the passover, and where they might be in some expectation he would set up his kingdom. The Ethiopic version reads it, *as they went out from Jerusalem*, contrary to all copies and versions.

Ver. 30. *And behold, two blind men, &c.*] Mark and Luke make mention but of one; which is no contradiction to Matthew; for they neither of them say that there was but one. A greater difficulty occurs in Luke's account; for whereas Matthew and Mark both agree, that it was when Jesus came out of Jericho, that this cure was wrought, Luke says it was when he *came nigh unto it*; which some reconcile by observing, that that phrase may be rendered, *while he was near Jericho*; and so only signifies his distance from it, and not motion to it; but this will not solve the difficulty, because we after read of his entrance into it, and passing through it. Some therefore have thought, that Christ met with, and cured one blind man before he entered the city, and another when he came out of it, and that Matthew has put the history of both together: but to me it seems, that there were three blind men cured; one before he went into Jericho, which Luke only relates, and two as he came out of Jericho, which Matthew here speaks of; and one of which, according to Mark, was by name Bartimeus, the son of Timeus; for so Bartimeus signifies. Tima, or Timeus, was a name in use among the Jews: we often read of R. Judah בן תימא, Ben Tima<sup>k</sup>, the son of Tima, or Timeus. Origen<sup>l</sup> thinks, he had his name from the Greek word Τιμη, which signifies *honour*; and so תימא, Time, with the Jews, is used for honour and profit<sup>m</sup>. This man's father might have been a very honourable and useful man, though the son was fallen into poverty and distress, through blindness; for which reason he may be mentioned, as being a person well known to the Jews. *Sitting by the way-side*; Mark says, *begging*, where such were wont to sit, in order to ask alms of persons, as they passed by; *when they heard that Jesus passed by*; who, upon perceiving that there was an unusual concourse of people, might ask the reason of it, when it was told them that Jesus of Nazareth was coming that way: or, without asking, they might hear the people speak of him; and inasmuch as they had heard many things concerning him, and the miracles he wrought, applied to him for help, and *cried out, saying, have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David*: in which may be observed the titles of honour they give him, which declare their faith in him; calling him Lord, expressing their sense of his deity, dominion, and power; and *son of David*, thereby owning and professing him to be the Messiah, that being a common name of him, well known among the Jews; see the

note on Matt. i. 1. the petition they make is, that he would *have mercy on them*, who, through blindness, were in a poor, helpless, and miserable condition; and this was made with great vehemency: they *cried out aloud*, that he might hear them, and take pity on them; being eagerly desirous of having their sight, and firmly believing that he was able to restore it to them.

Ver. 31. *And the multitude rebuked them, &c.*] Who were either the friends or enemies of Christ: if his friends, they might rebuke them, that they might not be so troublesome to him, and judging it unworthy of him to have any thing to do with such mean persons, and supposing that their business was only to ask alms of him; or if they were his enemies, or not so well affected to him, they might chide them for giving him such high characters, as Lord, and son of David; and therefore being displeased with such encomiums, reproved them, *because they should hold their peace*; be silent, and say no more of that kind, lest others should take up the same notion of him, and it should prevail among the people. *But they cried the more, saying, have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David.* They lifted up their voice higher, and cried the more loudly, that their voice might be above the noise of the people, and be heard by Christ; and renewed their request with more eagerness and importunity, repeating the characters they before gave him, being not in the least intimidated by the rebukes of the people: their faith in Jesus, as the Messiah, being more increased, and their desires of his pity and compassion being more enlarged, they grew bolder, and more resolute, as faith often does by opposition, and trials.

Ver. 32. *And Jesus stood still, &c.*] Made a full stop, when he was near, or right against where these blind men sat; which shews the strength of faith, the force of prayer, and the great regard Christ has to both: *and called them*; himself, being near unto them, and within the reach of his voice; or he commanded them to be brought to him, as Mark says: he ordered others to call them, or let them know, that it was his will they should come to him; upon which they threw away their garments, their long upper garments, which were some hindrance to a quick motion, at least Bartimeus did; that they might be the sooner with him: and when they were come to him, he said, *what will ye that I shall do unto you?* is it alms you want? or would you have your sight restored? This question he put, not as being ignorant of their desires, but to shew both his power and willingness to do any thing for them they should ask; and that their faith in him might be made manifest, and the people have their expectations raised, and they prepared to attend the miracle now to be wrought.

Ver. 33. *They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.*] That is, that their sight might be restored to them; for being deprived of that, it was all one as if their eyes were so closed, that they could not open them; and so the recovery of it is expressed by an opening of them. The opening of the eyes of the blind was prophesied of,

<sup>k</sup> T. Hieros. Nazir, fol. 52. 1. Erubin, fol. 19. 4. T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 84. 1. Bava Metzia, fol. 94. 1. Massech. Semachot, c. 9. Juclasin, fol. 159. 2.

<sup>l</sup> Comment. in Matt. vol. 1. p. 428. Ed. Hæc.

<sup>m</sup> Targum in Esth. iii. 8. & v. 13. T. Hieros. Peth, fol. 15. 4.

as what should be done in the days of the Messiah, and by him, as an evidence of his being that person, Isa. xxxv. 5. which prophecy these blind men might be acquainted with, and be an encouragement to their faith to expect a cure from him. They don't ask for alms, but for the recovery of their sight; which being granted, they would be able to get their bread in another way; for they were not like some idle persons that choose rather to be under such a calamity, or any other, that they might not be obliged to work with their hands for a livelihood. Their request shews, that they made no doubt of it, but firmly believed that Christ was able to do this for them, though the thing was impossible to be done by man; who therefore must conclude that he was not a mere man, but the son of the living God.

Ver. 34. *So Jesus had compassion on them, &c.*] His bowels moved towards them as a man; he pitied their miserable and distressed condition, and discovered the tenderness of his heart towards them by some outward sign, by his looks, or by some gesture or another: *and touched their eyes*; with his bare hand, without the use of any instrument or medicine. The Ethiopic version adds; *and said unto them, according to your faith shall it be unto you*; which seems to be taken out of ch. ix. 29. The Evangelist Mark relates, that *Jesus said unto him (Bartimeus) go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole*: not that the virtue of healing came from the act of faith, but from the object of it; his faith

was not the cause of, nor the reason why, but the way and means in and by which he received the cure: *and immediately their eyes received sight*; or, as the Syriac and Persic versions render the words, *that moment their eyes were opened*: the cure was wrought at once, directly; a clear proof of the omnipotence of Christ, and of his true and proper deity: the words, *their eyes*, are not in some copies: and are omitted by the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, which read thus, *they immediately saw*. The Persic version adds, *and they saw the world*; the men and things of it, which they either had never seen before, or, at least, for a considerable time; which must be a very surprising and agreeable sight to them. *And they followed him*; in a corporal sense; they joined the multitude, and went after him to Jerusalem; partly to express their gratitude for such a wonderful favour bestowed upon them; and partly that they might be witnesses of the power of his deity, and the truth of his Messiahship, as they went along, and at Jerusalem: and in a spiritual sense; they became his disciples, they embraced his doctrines, believed in him as the Messiah, submitted to his ordinances, imitated him in the exercise of grace, and in the performance of duty: for, at the same time he restored their bodily sight, he gave them a spiritual one to look to him, and follow him, the light of the world, that they might enjoy the light of life in another world.

## C H A P. XXI.

Ver. 1. *AND when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, &c.*] The Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, *when he drew nigh, or was near*; but not alone, his disciples were with him, and a multitude of people also; as is evident from the following account. They might well be said to be near to Jerusalem, since 'tis added, *and were come to Bethphage*; which the Jews say<sup>a</sup> was within the walls of the city of Jerusalem, and was in all respects as the city itself, and was the outermost part of it<sup>b</sup>; and that all within the outward circumference of the city of Jerusalem was called Bethphage<sup>c</sup>: it seems to me to be part of it within the city, and part of it without, in the suburbs of it, which reached to Bethany, and that to the Mount of Olives. Various are the derivations and etymologies of this place: some say it signifies *the house, or place of a fountain*, from a fountain that was in it; as if it was a compound of *Beth*, an house, and *פגי*, *pege*, a fountain: others, *the house of the mouth of a valley*; as if it was made up of those three words, *בית פי נאי*, because the outward boundary of it was at the foot of the Mount of Olives, at the entrance of the valley of Jehoshaphat: others say, that the ancient reading was *Bethsphage, the house of*

*slaughter*; and Jerom says<sup>d</sup>, it was a village of the priests, and he renders it, *the house of jaw-bones*: here indeed they might bake the shew-bread, and eat the holy things, as in Jerusalem<sup>e</sup>; but the true reading and signification of it is, *בית פאני, the house of figs*; so called from the fig-trees which grew in the outward limits of it, near Bethany, and the Mount of Olives; hence we read of *פני בית דני, the figs of Bethany*; which place is mentioned along with Bethphage, both by Mark and Luke, where Christ, and those with him, were now come: the latter says, they were come *nigh* to these places, for they were come to *the Mount of Olives*; near to which were the furthest limits of Bethany, and Bethphage, from Jerusalem. This mount was so called from the abundance of olive-trees which grew upon it, and was on the east side of Jerusalem<sup>f</sup>; and it was distant from it a sabbath-day's journey, Acts i. 12. which was two thousand cubits, or eight furlongs, and which made one mile: *then sent Jesus two disciples*; who they were is not certain, perhaps Peter and John, who were afterwards sent by him to prepare the pass-over, Luke xxii. 8.

Ver. 2. *Saying unto them, go into the village over-*

<sup>a</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 14. 2. & Pesach. fol. 91. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 63. 2. & 91. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Sota, fol. 45. 1. & Bava Metzia, fol. 90. 1.

<sup>d</sup> In loc. & ad Eustoch, fol. 59. 3. Tom. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Misn. Menachot, c. 11. sect. 2. T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 63. 1. &

78. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Pesul. Hamukdash, c. 12. sect. 16. Gloss. in Pesach. fol. 63. 2.

<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 53. 1. & Erubin, fol. 28. 2.

<sup>g</sup> Zech. xiv. 4. Targum in Ezek. xi. 23. & Bartenora in Misn. Mid. dot, c. 1. sect. 3.

against you, &c.] Munster's Hebrew Gospel reads, before you; not Jerusalem, as some have thought, for that would never be called a village; though the Ethiopic version reads it, *the city*; but rather Bethany, which was near to Bethphage, and is mentioned with it; though the Jews say<sup>u</sup>, the name of the village was Nob, and was near to Jerusalem, and own, that Christ had an ass from hence, on which he rode to Jerusalem, and applied to himself the prophecy in Zech. ix. 9. And it is very likely this was the village; for Nob was very near to Jerusalem; it was over-against it, within sight of it, and from thence might be taken a view of the whole city, according to the Jews; who say<sup>v</sup>, that Senacherib stood in Nob, a city of the priests, over-against the walls of Jerusalem, and saw the whole city, and it was little in his eyes; and he said, is not this the city of Jerusalem, &c. and straightway, or, as in Mark, *as soon as ye be entered into it*; and in Luke, *at your entering, at the town's end*, at one of the first houses in it, at the door thereof, *ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her*. The other evangelists only make mention of the colt, or young ass; but, no doubt, both were spoken of by Christ, and both were found by the disciples, the ass, and the colt by her, and both were brought away by them; and on both of them, very probably, Christ rode; first on one, and then on the other, as the prophecy hereby fulfilled seems to require, and as the sequel of the account shews. The ancient allegorical sense of the ass and colt is not to be despised: that the ass may signify the Jews, who had been used to bear the burdensome rites and ceremonies of the law; and the colt, the wild and untamed Gentiles, and the coming of Christ, first to the one, and then to the other: *loose them, and bring them unto me*, both ass and colt. So the Arabic version reads it, *loose both, and bring them both to me*.

Ver. 3. *And if any man say ought unto you, &c.*] As, what business have you with the ass and colt? why do you loose them? as certain persons, the owners of them did, as Mark and Luke relate; *ye shall say, the Lord hath need of them*: he that is our Lord, and your Lord, and the Lord of these creatures, and of all things else, wants them for his present service; *and straightway he will send them*: which is either a continuation of what the disciples should say to any that should ask them the reason of their loosing the ass and colt, in order to make them easy: that the Lord who had need of them, as soon as he had done with them, would send them back to their proper owners, safe and well: or they are spoken for the encouragement of the disciples to go, and not be disheartened, though they should be thus examined; for immediately upon saying, that the Lord stood in need of them, and had an use for them at that time, the owner thereof, without any more words, would immediately send them along with them; which latter rather seems to be the

sense of the clause; and which is confirmed by Mark: a very clear proof is this of the omniscience of Christ. He knew, that there were an ass, and a colt, in such a village, fastened to such a door, just at the entrance into the town: he knew the owners of it would examine the disciples about loosing and taking them away, and prepares them to give an answer; and he knew that the minds of these owners would be immediately wrought upon, and inclined to let them go directly and quietly.

Ver. 4. *All this was done, &c.*] The disciples were sent to the neighbouring village for the ass and colt, and they brought them, and Christ rode upon them; not because of the distance of the place from Jerusalem, for he was just at it; or because he was weary, or it would be very fatiguing to him to walk thither on foot; for he had been used to travelling, and had gone through most parts of Galilee and Judea; but that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: the Ethiopic version adds, Isaiah; for the former part of the following citation stands in Isa. lxii. 11. as the latter does in Zech. ix. 9. It was usual with the Jews to cite Scripture in this manner, by taking a part from one writer, and another from another, and joining them together: *saying*, the following words.

Ver. 5. *Tell ye the daughter of Zion, &c.*] These words seem to be taken out of Isa. lxii. 11. where it is said, *say ye to the daughter of Zion, behold thy salvation cometh, or thy Saviour cometh*; meaning, without doubt, the Messiah: by the *daughter of Zion* is meant, not the city of Jerusalem, but the inhabitants thereof, the Jewish synagogue; or as the Targum renders it, *בנישנתא רצין*, the congregation of Zion, the people of the Jews; particularly the elect of God among them, those that embraced the true Messiah, and believed in him: *behold, thy king cometh unto thee*: this, and what follow, are cited from Zech. ix. 9. and to be understood of the king Messiah, who, in a little time after this prophecy was given out, was to come to Zion, and redeem Jacob from all his iniquities, and was now come. One of the Jewish commentators says<sup>x</sup>, that interpreters are divided about the sense of this prophecy: but observes, that there are some that say this is the Messiah: and another<sup>y</sup> of them affirms, that it is impossible to explain it of any other than the king Messiah; and that it can be understood of no other, I have elsewhere<sup>z</sup> shewn. *Meek*; in the prophecy of Zechary 'tis, *עני, poor*, as the Messiah Jesus was, in a temporal sense; but the word, both by the Septuagint, and our evangelist, is rendered *meek*; as it is by the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, who all explain it by *ענותן, lowly, humble, or meek*: and a character it is, that well agrees with Jesus, who, in the whole of his deportment, both in life and in death, was a pattern of meekness and lowliness of mind: *and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass*. This is applied to the Messiah by the Jews, both ancient<sup>a</sup> and

<sup>u</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 9.

<sup>v</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 95. 1. Targum, Jarchi, & Kimchi in Isa. x. 38.

<sup>w</sup> Aben Ezra in Zech. ix. 9.

<sup>x</sup> Jarchi in ib.

<sup>y</sup> Prophecies of the Messiah literally fulfilled in Jesus, c. 9. p. 151, &c.

<sup>z</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 1. & 99. 1. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 66. 2. & 85. 3. Midrash Kohélet, fol. 63. 2. Zohar in Gen. fol. 127. 3. & in Num. fol. 83. 4. & in Deut. fol. 117. 1. & 118. 3. Raya Mebhiana in Zohar. in Lev. fol. 98. 3. & in Num. fol. 97. 2.

modern<sup>b</sup>, who consider this as an instance and evidence of his humility: they suppose this ass to be a very uncommon one, having an hundred spots on it; and say, that it was the foal of that which was created on the eve of the sabbath<sup>c</sup>; and is the same that Abraham and Moses rode upon: and they own, as before observed, that Jesus of Nazareth rode on one to Jerusalem, as is here related. Their ancient governors, patriarchs, princes, and judges, used to ride on asses, before the introduction and multiplication of horses in Solomon's time, forbidden by the law of God: wherefore, though this might seem mean and despicable at this present time, yet was suitable enough to Christ's character as a king, and as the son of David, and king of Israel; strictly observing the law given to the kings of Israel, and riding in such manner as they formerly did.

Ver. 6. *And the disciples went, &c.*] The two disciples, as the Arabic version reads, to the village over-against them; and, as Mark says, *found the colt tied to the door without, in a place where two ways met*: the house was just at the entrance of the village, at the door of which, on the outside in the street, was the colt fastened, where were two ways of going into, and coming out of the town; so that it was a public place; the colt was easily seen, nor could it well be taken away without being observed, as it was by the owners of it: and *did as Jesus commanded them*; they loosed the colt; and whereas whilst they were loosing it, the owners of it asked them, what they meant by so doing? they returned for answer what Christ had directed them to say; upon which they were satisfied, and let them go with it; see Mark xi. 4, 5, 6. This is a very considerable instance of the faith of the disciples in Christ, and their ready and cheerful obedience to him; who might have objected the appearance of theft, the scandal that might be brought upon them, and the trouble they might be exposed to hereby; but they make no hesitation, but go and do as he had ordered them; and in which, they are worthy of the imitation of all the followers of Jesus.

Ver. 7. *And brought the ass and the colt, &c.*] To Jesus, as Mark and Luke add, and who only make mention of the colt: both were undoubtedly brought; the colt being unloosed and taken away, the ass, its dam, followed after: *and put on them their clothes*; their loose upper garments, to be instead of saddles and trappings, and that Christ might sit thereon with ease and decency: the other evangelists say, that they cast their garments on the colt; and the Syriac version here reads, *they put their garments on the colt, and Jesus rode upon it*: but as both were brought, it is clear from hence, that their clothes were put upon both; not knowing which Christ would choose to ride on. And it should seem, that it was not unusual to put garments on asses to ride on; for the Targumist on Judg. v. 10. represents the princes of Israel as riding upon asses, strewed or saddled with all kind ציורי, of painted garments. The Persic version, without the least colour

of authority from the original text, renders it, *and Jesus put his own garment on the colt, and sat thereon*; which is ridiculous, as well as contrary to truth: *and they sat him thereon, on them*; meaning either on the ass and colt, that is, on one of them, or both successively, or on the clothes they put upon them.

Ver. 8. *And a very great multitude, &c.*] Which consisted partly of the great multitude which followed Christ from Jericho, and partly of the much people that were come up to the feast of the passover from divers parts, and met him from Jerusalem; see John xii. 12, 13. These, many of them, for it can't be thought to be done by them all, *spread their garments in the way*; either in the middle of the road, instead of carpets, to ride upon; the Persic version adds, *that he might pass over them*: this they did, in honour to him as a king. So when Jehu declared to the princes of Israel, that he was anointed king of Israel, they hastened, and took every man his garment, and put it under him, 2 Kings ix. 13. that is, to tread upon; though the Jewish writers<sup>a</sup> say, it was done that he might be higher than them all, suitable to the dignity of a king: and it is reported<sup>y</sup> of Cato Uticensis, the emperor, that his soldiers strewed their garments for him to walk upon: or these garments were spread by the way-side. Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, that little tents might be raised by them along the road, upon which they spread their garments to make a show, in imitation of the feast of tabernacles, to which there is a very great resemblance in many things which occur in this account; when they used to spread linen cloth, garments, and fruits, over their booths, for decoration and ornament; as appears from their traditions about these things: "פירס עליה סדין, if a man spreads a linen cloth over it, (his booth), because of the sun, or under it, because of the falling of leaves, &c. or spreads it over a canopy, it is not right; but he may spread it over the bed-posts<sup>z</sup>." That is, for ornament, as the commentators observe<sup>a</sup>. Again, "פרש עליה בנך, if a man spreads a garment over it, (his booth,) or if he spreads it under it, because of what falls it is not right; but if he spreads it so as that it is, לנאותה, for ornament, it is right; and so if he covers it according to the tradition of it, and encompasses it with various kinds of fruits, and precious things, and vessels which hang upon it, whether on its walls, or on its covering, so they be for ornament, 'tis right<sup>b</sup>." In like manner, the multitude might hang their garments, to make the show the greater, either on such booths, or on the houses and trees, that were upon the road, as they went along. Others cut down branches from the trees; from the olive-trees, as the Persic version expresses it, which grew in great plenty hereabout; and also from the palm-trees, the branches of which, with the boughs of other trees, were what the Jews used to carry in their hands on the feast of tabernacles; see Levit. xxiii. 40. and the Evangelist John expressly says, that the people which met Christ from Jerusalem at this time, did take branches of palm-trees in their hands, John xii. 13. And though

<sup>b</sup> Jarchi in Isa. xxvi. 6. Baal Hatturim in Exod. fol. 89. 2. Abarbanel, Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 15. 4.

<sup>c</sup> Pirke Eliezer, c. 31. Caphtor, fol. 81. a.

<sup>a</sup> R. Levi ben Gerson, & R. Samuel Laniado in loc.

<sup>y</sup> Plutarch in Alebiade.

<sup>z</sup> Mian. Succa, c. 1. sect. 3.

<sup>a</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>b</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Succa, c. 5. sect. 17.

this was not the time of the feast of tabernacles, but of the passover, yet it was common with the Jews to signify their joy upon any occasion, by such ways and methods they used at that feast: so upon the cleansing of the tower of Jerusalem, by Simon Maccabeus, the Jews entered into it with thanksgiving, and branches of palm-trees, &c. 1 Maccab. xiii. 51. Likewise upon purifying the temple, which had been polluted by Antiochus, they kept eight days with gladness as in the feast of tabernacles, and bare branches and fair boughs, and palms also, 2 Maccab. x. 6. 7. But here 'tis said, *and they strowed them in the way*: not in the middle of the road, which would have been an hindrance to riding; but by the way-side, upon the booths, or houses in the road, in honour of him; just as the Jews<sup>c</sup> say, "the streets were strowed with myrtles, and the courts with purple, when Mor-decai went out of the king's gate."

Ver. 9. *And the multitudes that went before, &c.*] That is, that went before Christ; accordingly the Syriac, Arabic, Persian, and Ethiopic versions, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel, read, *that went before him*: these seem to be the much people that met him from Jerusalem, and that followed him; which were perhaps those that came from Jericho, and other parts; cried, saying, *Hosanna to the son of David*: by calling Jesus the son of David, they owned and proclaimed him to be the Messiah; this being the usual title by which the Messiah was known among the Jews; see the note on Matt. i. 1. and by crying and saying Hosanna to him, which was done with loud acclamations, and the united shouts of both companies, before and behind; they ascribe all praise, honour, glory, and blessing to him, and wish him all prosperity, happiness, and safety. The word is an Hebrew word, and is compounded of *חַסְדָּא*, which signifies, *save I beseech*; and which words stand in Psal. cxviii. 25. to which the multitude had reference, as appears from what follows; and are formed into one word, *הוֹשַׁעְנָא*, *Hosana*, or *Hosanna*, in which form it frequently appears in the Jewish writings; and because of the often use of it at the feast of tabernacles, that feast was called *Hosanna*, and the seventh day of it was called *הוֹשַׁעְנָא רַבָּה*, *the great Hosanna*<sup>d</sup>. Moreover, the *Lulabs*, or the bundles made of branches of palm-trees, and boughs of willow and myrtle, which they carried in their hands at the feast of tabernacles, often go by this name: 'tis said<sup>e</sup>, "the Egyptian myrtle is right or fit *לְהוֹשַׁעְנָא*, for the *Hosanna*." That is, to be put into the *Lulab*, or bundle of boughs and branches, which was carried about, and shaken at the above feast. Again<sup>f</sup>, 'tis a tradition of R. Meir, "that it was the practice of the honourable men of Jerusalem, to bind their *Lulabs* with golden threads — says Rabbah, these are they *הוֹשַׁעְנָא*, that bind the *Hosanna*: the gloss on it is, that bind the *Lulabs*, of the house of the head of the captivity; for in binding the *Hosanna* of the house of the head of the captivity, they leave in it an hand's breadth — and says the same Rabbah, a man may not hold

"an *Hosanna* in a linen cloth." Once more<sup>g</sup>, "says R. Zera, a man may not prepare *הוֹשַׁעְנָא*, an *Hosanna* for a child, on a good day." Sometimes the *Hosanna* seems to be distinguished from the *Lulab*, and then by the *Lulab* is meant, only the branches of palm-tree; and by the *Hosanna*, the boughs of willow and myrtle; as when<sup>h</sup>, "Rabbah says, a man may not fix the *Lulab*, *בְּרוֹשַׁעְנָא*, in the *Hosanna*." And a little after says the same, "a man may not bind the *Lulab* with the *Hosanna*." Now these bundles might be so called, because they were lifted up and shaken, when the above words out of Psal. cxviii. 25. were recited: for thus it is said<sup>i</sup>, "when do they shake, that is, their *Lulabs*, or *Hosannas*?" At those words, *O give thanks unto the Lord*, Psal. cxviii. 1. the beginning and end; and at those words, *Save now I beseech thee*, ver. 25. The house of Hillel, and the house of Shammai say "also at those words, *O Lord I beseech thee, send now prosperity*: says R. Akiba, I have observed Rabbah Gamaliel and Rabbi Joshua, that all the people shook their *Lulabs*, but they did not shake, only at those words, *Save now I beseech thee, O Lord*." Hence some have thought, that these are meant by the *Hosanna* in this text; and that the sense is, that the multitude cried, saying, These branches of palm-trees we carry in our hands, and strow by the way-side, are in honour to the son of David, the true Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth: but then this sense will not agree with the following clause, *Hosanna in the highest*: it may therefore be further observed, that certain prayers and songs of praise, were called *Hosannas*: hence we read<sup>k</sup> of *הוֹשַׁעְנָא שֶׁל שַׁבָּת*, *the Hosannas of the sabbath*; which consisted of various sentences in praise of the sabbath, and thanksgiving to God for it, and are concluded with this word *Hosanna*; and of various petitions that God would save them, as he had done others; and at the end of each petition, is this word. As also of<sup>l</sup> *הוֹשַׁעְנָא שֶׁל רַבָּה*, *the Hosannas of the great Hosanna*; which are certain words of prayer and praise, used on the seventh day of the feast of tabernacles: and whereas at that feast the *Hallel*, or hymn, was sung, which concluded with the cxviii<sup>th</sup> Psalm, where the words, *Save now I beseech thee, O Lord*, stand, from whence this word is formed; the true sense and meaning of it here appears to be this; that the multitude that attended Christ to Jerusalem, as they went along, sung songs of praise to him, as the true Messiah; particularly, applying the above passage to him, and earnestly wished him all success and prosperity; and importunately prayed for salvation by him; adding, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*: which words are taken also out of Psal. cxviii. 26. and is an ascription of blessing and praise to Jesus, the Messiah; who being sent by God, came from him with his authority, as his apostle, and as representing him; and contains another petition for him, that he might be crowned with the blessings of divine goodness, for his people; and be blessed and

<sup>c</sup> Targum in Esther viii. 15.

<sup>d</sup> Seder Tephillot, fol. 298. 2.

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Succa, fol. 33. 1.

<sup>f</sup> Ib. fol. 37. 1.

<sup>g</sup> Ib. fol. 46. 2. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Lulab, c. 8. sect. 10.

<sup>h</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Lulab, fol. 37. 2.

<sup>i</sup> Misn. Succ. c. 3. sect. 9.

<sup>k</sup> Seder Tephillot, fol. 297. 1.

<sup>l</sup> Ib. fol. 298. 2.



praised by them, for all the spiritual blessings they are blessed with in him. And very properly and pertinently were those words used and applied to Christ, since the Psalm from whence they are taken belongs to him: the whole of it is, by some Jewish interpreters<sup>m</sup>, said to be spoken concerning him; and particularly, he is designed in ver. 22. by the stone the builders refused, as is clear from ver. 42. of this chapter, and from Acts iv. 11. and 1 Pet. ii. 7. and which is allowed by some Jewish writers, ancient and modern<sup>n</sup>; and ver. 27. the words following these, are by them interpreted of the days of the Messiah, the times of Gog and Magog, and the future age<sup>o</sup>. And others of them said, as Mark observes, ch. xi. 10. *Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord*; see the note there. Moreover, as it may be thought others of the people said, as Luke relates, ch. xix. 38. *Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of the Lord*; see the note there. To which is added, *Hosanna in the highest*; that is, let songs of praise be sung to God, who is in the highest heavens, for all his grace and goodness vouchsafed to the sons of men, through Christ his beloved son; or let not only all salvation, happiness, and prosperity attend the Messiah, David's son, here on earth, but all glory and felicity in the highest heavens, above which he will be exalted.

Ver. 10. *And when he was come into Jerusalem, &c.*] The metropolis of the nation, the seat of the ancient kings of Judah, and of his father David, entering into it in this very public manner; as he never did before; riding in the manner the ancient judges and kings of Israel did, attended with a numerous retinue, shouting as they went along, and singing their *Hosannas* to him: *all the city was moved*; as Bethlehem was, when Naomi with Ruth returned thither; and of which the same phrase is used, as here, Ruth i. 19. *all the city was moved about them*; which the Chaldee paraphrase renders, "all the inhabitants of the city were gathered in troops about them." And so here the sense is, that the inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem were in general alarmed at the uncommon apparatus, and shouting, and ran in great numbers to inquire what was the matter: *saying, who is this?* They knew him not; for though he had preached unto them, and wrought miracles among them, yet they had never seen him in any such pomp and state; and could not devise who he should be, that entered their city in such a manner, amidst the shouts and acclamations of so great a multitude: it seemed greatly to affect them, and fill them with concern, astonishment, and fear.

Ver. 11. *And the multitude said, &c.*] Or the people, as the Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read; the common people, that went before, and followed after him: these knew Christ better than the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Scribes and Pharisees, and rulers of the people. *This is Jesus the prophet*; that prophet Moses spoke of, in Deut. xviii. 15. and the nation of the Jews in general expected:

of Nazareth of Galilee; who, though he was not born there, yet being educated, and having lived much in that place, is said to be of it; and which was the common opinion of the people.

Ver. 12. *And Jesus went into the temple of God, &c.*] At Jerusalem, which was built by his order, and dedicated to his worship, and where the Shekinah, or the divine presence was. Christ went not to the tower of David, the strong hold of Zion, the palace of his father David; for he entered not as a temporal king; but he went to the house of his heavenly father, as the lord and proprietor of it, to preach in it, and purge it; whereby the glory of the latter house became greater than that of the former; and so several prophecies had their accomplishment, particularly Hagg. ii. 7, 9. Mal. iii. 1. though this was not the first time by many, of Christ's being in the temple; yet this his entrance was the most public and magnificent of any: after he had alighted from the colt, and sent back that and the ass to their proper owners, as is very probable, he went by the eastern gate, called the king's gate, 1 Chron. ix. 18. into the temple; *and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple*: not in the holy of holies, nor in the holy place, nor in the court of the priests, nor in the court of the Israelites, but in the court of the Gentiles, and in the mountain of the house, in which were shops, where various things were sold, relating to sacrifices. What these persons bought and sold, whom Christ cast out, is not said, but may be collected from John ii. 14. where besides *doves*, of which hereafter, mention is made of *sheep and oxen*; which were brought to be sold, on account of the passover, for it was then near their time of passover as now; for besides the lambs and kids, which were here also sold and bought for the passover-supper, sheep and oxen were here also killed and sold for the Chagiga, or feast<sup>p</sup>, which was the day following: here likewise the drink-offerings were bought and sold, of which take the following account. "There were fifteen presidents במקדש, in the sanctuary: Jochanan ben Phinehas was over the tickets, and Ahijah over the drink-offerings, &c.—He that inquired for drink-offerings, went to Jochanan, who was appointed over the tickets: he gave him the money, and took a ticket; he then went to Ahijah, that was appointed over the drink-offerings, and gave him the ticket, and received from him the drink-offerings; and in the evening they came together, and Ahijah produced the tickets, and took for them the money<sup>q</sup>." This was one way of buying and selling in the temple; and overthrew the tables of the money-changers; of which sort were they, who sat in the temple at certain times, to receive the half shekel, and change the money of such, who wanted one, by which they gained something to themselves. It was a custom in our Lord's time, for every Israelite, once a year, to pay half a shekel towards the temple charge and service, which was founded upon the orders given by

<sup>m</sup> Vid. Kimehi in Psal. cxviii. 1.

<sup>n</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 93. 3. Jarchi in Mic. v. 2.

<sup>o</sup> T. Hieros. Megilla, fol. 73. 1.

<sup>p</sup> Vid. R. Sol. Jarchi, in Deut. xvi. 2.

<sup>q</sup> Misa. Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 4. Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 7, sect. 10, 11, 12.

God to Moses in the wilderness; that upon his numbering the people, to take of every one that was twenty years of age and upwards, rich or poor, half a shekel, Exod. xxx. 13, 14, 15. though this does not seem to be designed as a perpetual rule. However, it now obtained, and was annually paid: "On the first day of Adar (which answers to our February) they proclaimed concerning the shekels." That is, they gave public notice, in all the cities in Israel, that the time of paying the half shekel was near at hand, that they might get their money ready, for every one was obliged to pay it: the Jews' say, "it is an affirmative command of the law, that every man in Israel should pay the half shekel every year; even though a poor man that is maintained by alms, he is obliged to it, and must beg it of others, or sell his coat upon his back and pay it, as it is said, Exod. xxx. 15. *The rich shall not give more*, &c. — All are bound to give it, priests, Levites, and Israelites, and strangers, and servants, that are made free; but not women, nor servants, nor children." Notice being thus given, "on the fifteenth day (of the same month), שולחנות, tables were placed in the province, or city (which Bartenora interprets of Jerusalem; but Maimonides\* says, the word used is the name of all the cities in the land of Israel, excepting Jerusalem), and on the twenty-fifth they sit, במקדש, in the sanctuary." The same is related by Maimonides\*, after this manner: "On the first of Adar they proclaim concerning the shekels, that every man may prepare his half shekel, and be ready to give it on the fifteenth; השולחנים, the exchangers sit in every province or city, and mildly ask it; every one that gives them it, they take it of them; and he that does not give, they don't compel him to give: on the twenty-fifth, they sit in the sanctuary to collect it; and henceforward they urge him that does not give, until he gives; and every one that does not give, they oblige him to give pledge, and they take his pledge, whether he will or no, and even his coat." This gives us a plain account of these money-changers; of their tables, and of their sitting at them in the temple, and on what account. Now these exchangers had a profit in every shekel they changed. "When a man went to an exchanger, and changed a shekel for two half shekels, he gave him an addition to the shekel; and the addition is called קלבון Kolbon; wherefore, when two men gave a shekel for them both, they were both obliged to pay the Kolbon." Would you know what this Kolbon, whence these exchangers are called, Κολυβισται, Collybistæ, in this text, or the gain which these men had, take this question and answer in their own words. "How much is the Kolbon? A silver meah, according to R. Meir; but the wise men say, half an one." Or as it is elsewhere expressed, "what is the value of the Kolbon? At

that time they gave two-pence for the half shekel; the Kolbon was half a meah, which is the twelfth part of a penny; and since, a Kolbon less than that is not given." Now a meah was the half of a sixteenth part of the half shekel, and the twenty-fourth part of a shekel, and weighed sixteen barley-corns: half a meah was the forty-eighth part of a shekel, and weighed eight barley-corns; a Meah was, of our money, the value of somewhat more than a penny, and half an one more than a halfpenny. This was their gain, which in so large a number that paid, must amount to a great deal of money. There seems to be nothing lie against these men being the very persons, whose tables Christ overturned, unless it should be objected, that this was not the time of their sitting; for it was now within a few days of the passover, which was in the month Nisan; whereas it was in the month Adar, that the half shekel was paid: but it should be observed, according to the above account, that they did not begin to sit in the temple to receive this money, until the twenty-fifth of Adar; and it was now but the tenth of Nisan, when Christ entered the temple and found them there: so that there was but fifteen days between the one and the other; and considering the large numbers that were obliged to pay, and the backwardness and poverty of many, they may reasonably be thought to be still sitting on that account: and what Maimonides before relates deserves notice, and will strengthen this supposition; that on the twenty-fifth of Adar, they sat in the temple to collect this money; and that henceforward they urged and compelled persons to pay it. Moreover, these men had other business, in a way of exchange, than this to do; and especially at such a time as the passover, when persons came from different parts to attend it; and who might want to have their foreign money changed for current coin; or bills of return, to be changed for money: add to all this the following account, which will shew the large and perpetual business of these men. "In the sanctuary there were before them, תמיד, continually, or daily, thirteen chests (and there were as many tables<sup>†</sup>); every chest was in the form of a trumpet: the first was for the shekels of the present year, the second for the shekels of the year past; the third for every one that had a Korban, or vow upon him to offer two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons; the one a burnt-offering, the other a sin-offering: their price was cast into this chest: the fourth for every one that had the burnt-offering of a fowl only on him, the price of that was cast into this chest. The fifth was for him, who freely gave money to buy wood, to be laid in order on the altar; the sixth, for him that freely gave money for the incense; the seventh, for him that freely gave gold for the mercy-seat; the eighth, for the remainder of the sin-offering; as when he separated the money for

\* Misn. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 1.

† Maimon. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 1. 7.

‡ Misn. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 3.

§ In ib.

¶ Hilch. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 9.

‡ In ib.

§ Misn. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 9.

¶ In ib.

‡ Misn. Shekalim, c. 6. sect. 1.

\* Misn. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 7.

† Maimon. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 3. sect. 7.

‡ Maimon. & Bartenora, in Misn. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 7. & Cholin, c. 1. sect. 7.

§ Maimon. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 2. sect. 2.

¶ Misn. Shekalim, c. 6. sect. 1.

“ his sin-offering, and took the sin-offering, and there remained of the money, the rest he cast into this chest; “ the ninth, for the remainder of the trespass-offering; “ the tenth, for the remainder of the doves for men and women in fluxes, and women after child-birth; the “ eleventh, for the remainder of the offerings of the Nazarite; the twelfth, for the remainder of the trespass-offering of the leper: the thirteenth, for him “ that freely gave money for the burnt-offering of “ a beast.” *And the seats of them that sold doves*, which were the offerings of the poor sort after child-bearing, and on account of running issues: which cases were very frequent, and sometimes raised the price of doves very high, of which what follows is an instance\*. “ It happened at a certain time, “ that doves were sold in Jerusalem for a golden penny each: said Rabban ben Simeon Gamaliel, by this “ habitation (or temple which he swore by) I will not “ lodge (or lie down) this night, until they are sold “ for a silver penny each: he went into the council- “ house and taught, that if a woman had five cer- “ tain births, or five certain issues, she should bring “ one offering, and eat of the sacrifices, nor should “ there remain any debt upon her; and doves were “ sold that day for two fourths.” That is, for a silver penny; now a golden penny was the value of twenty-five silver pence†; so that the price, by this means, was sunk very much: but not only doves were sold in the markets in Jerusalem, but in the temple itself. “ There was a president over the “ doves, which was he with whom they agreed, who “ sold doves for the offerings, so and so by the shekel; “ and every one that was obliged to bring a pair of “ turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, brought the “ price of them, למקדש, to the sanctuary; and the “ president gave the doves to the masters of the “ offerings, and made up the account with the treasurers.” Now at a feast-time as this was, there was a greater demand for doves than usual; for women who had lain-in, and such as had fluxes, whether men or women, who lived in distant parts, reserved their offerings till they came up to the feast‡; and which in consequence must occasion a greater call for these creatures, and furnishes out a reason, why there should be so many sitting at this time in the temple to sell doves. Some have thought, that those persons are here meant, which are often mentioned by the Jewish doctors\*, as an infamous sort of men, who are not admitted as witnesses in any case; and are reckoned among thieves, robbers, usurers, and players at dice; who מפרדיז יונים, teach doves to fly, either to decoy other doves from their dove-houses, or to out-fly others for money, or to fight one against another; and these sate in the temple to sell this sort of doves, which was still more heinous; but the other sense is more agreeable.

Ver. 13. *And said unto them, it is written, &c.* In Isa. lvi. 7. *My house shall be called the house of prayer.* These are the words of God, calling the

temple his house, which was built according to the plan he gave; and was the place of his worship, and where he dwelt, and vouchsafed his presence to his people; and signifying, that in time to come, it should be an house of prayer; not for the Jews only, but for the Gentiles also: *for all people*, as it is expressed by the prophet, and cited by Mark; and particularly this part of it, in which were the money-changers and sellers of doves; for that was the court of the Gentiles, where they were admitted to pray, and perform other parts of worship. These words are rightly applied by Christ to the temple; nor can the Jews themselves deny it; for their own Targum paraphrases it thus, בית מקדש, *the house of my sanctuary shall be called an house of prayer*; or shall be one; for the meaning is not that it should go by such a name, but should be for such use, and not for buying and selling, and merchandise, to which use the Jews now put it: hence it follows, *but ye have made it a den of thieves.* These are the words of Christ, affirming what is complained of in Jer. vii. 11. and applying it to the present case, on account of the wicked merchandise, unlawful gain, avarice and extortion, of the priests and other officers of the temple, who had a considerable share in these things; and to whom the temple was, and by them used, as a den is to and by thieves and robbers, where they shelter themselves; for these persons robbed both God and man, and the temple was a sanctuary to them: here they screened themselves, and, under the appearance of religion and devotion, devoured widows' houses, plundered persons of their substance, and were full of extortion and excess.

Ver. 14. *And the blind and the lame came to him, &c.* The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, *they brought unto him the blind and the lame.* The blind could not come to him unless they were led, nor the lame, unless they were carried: the sense therefore is, they came, being brought to him: *in the temple*; that part of it, the court of the Gentiles, and mountain of the house, out of which he had cast the buyers and sellers, &c. and in the room of them, were brought in these objects of his pity: *and he healed them*; to the blind he restored sight, and caused the lame to walk; which miracles he wrought in confirmation of the doctrine he preached: for all the other evangelists relate, that he taught in the temple.

Ver. 15. *And when the chief priests and Scribes, &c.* The inveterate enemies of Christ; who upon hearing the shouts of the people at Christ's entrance into the city, and passage through it to the temple; and understanding that it was Jesus of Nazareth that was come thither, they came also to awe the people; and pick up what they could against him: who, when they saw the wonderful things that he did; as the overturning the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of those that sold doves, without any opposition, when these traders were so many, and in great power,

\* Mian. Cerithot, c. 1. sect. 7.

† Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

‡ Maimon. Hilch. Cele Hamikdash, c. 7. sect. 9.

§ Gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 11. 1.

¶ T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 82. 1. T. Sanhedrin, fol. 25. 2. & Gloss. in

ib. Mian. Sanhedrin. c. 3. sect. 3. Maimon Bartenora, & Ez. Chayim in ib. & Edayot, c. 2. 7. & Bartenora in ib. Maimon. Hilch. Gazela vebada, c. 6. sect. 7. Toen usitan, c. 2. sect. 3. & Eduth, c. 10. sect. 4.

and he a single person, and unarmed; and that the blind received their sight, and the lame were cured, and the children crying in the temple; who came from the various parts of the city, with their parents, to see the sight; who, when the multitude had done, they began the same ditty: and saying, *Hosanna to the son of David*; proclaiming Jesus to be the Messiah, and ascribing praise and glory to him, and wishing him all happiness and prosperity: the form they had taken up from the people, and might be encouraged by their parents; and which they pronounced without fear of the high-priests, and Scribes, being disposed, directed, and overruled hereunto by the providence of God. It was indeed no unusual thing for children to sing the *Hosanna* at the feast of tabernacles; for, according to the Jewish canons\*, "a child that knew how to shake, was obliged to carry the *Lulab*," or bundle of myrtle, and willow-boughs, and palm-tree branches, at the shaking of which *Hosanna* was said: but that they should cry *Hosanna* to Jesus, as David's son, was very extraordinary, and what the high-priests, and Scribes, took notice of with great resentment: they were sore displeas'd; at the children, that so said, at their parents that suffered them, and especially at Christ, who did not forbid them. The Persic version renders it, *it displeas'd the priests*; the Arabic reads, *they murmured*; and the Ethiopic has it, *it was not pleasant to them*.

Ver. 16. *And said unto him, hearest thou what these say? &c.*] Suggesting, that if he did, he ought to reprove them, or else he would be a very vain, as well as a weak man, to take such things to himself, which did not belong to him, and that from such poor, little, silly creatures, so void of knowledge and understanding: and Jesus said unto them, *yea*: signifying he did hear, and well approved of what they said, and was ready to vindicate it; and did, by putting the following question to them, *have ye never read*; that passage of Scripture in Psal. vii. 2. *out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise*? in the original text it is, *thou hast ordained, or founded strength*; and which is rendered by the Septuagint, as it is by Matthew here; and glory and strength are mentioned together, as being to be given to God, Psal. xxix. 1. and so *strength and praise* by the Targumist in Isa. xiii. 3. by which is meant strong glory, or glory and praise expressed with a strong voice, or in a very vehement manner, as it was by these babes and sucklings; and this owing to God's disposing them hereunto, putting it into their mouths, and strengthening them to declare it in a very strong and powerful manner; so that his strength was made perfect in their weakness, and his praise the more glorious. In the Psalm 'tis added, *because of thine enemies, that thou might still the enemy, and the avenger*: by whom are meant the high-priests, the Scribes and Pharisees, the mortal enemies of Christ, who were full of enmity against him, and wanted to revenge themselves on him for spoiling their market at this time; but were

stilled by the *Hosannas* of the children, and Christ's defence of them. The Jews themselves seem to be conscious, that these words relate to the Messiah; for they say<sup>1</sup>, that "babes and sucklings, *הַבָּנִים וְהַסֻּלְמִים*, "shall give strength to the king Messiah;" manifestly referring to this passage.

Ver. 17. *And he left them, &c.*] The high-priests and Scribes, confounded and put to silence, and as unworthy of his company and conversation; and went out of the city; of Jerusalem, partly to prevent being apprehended by his enemies before his time, and partly to remove all suspicion of seizing the city and government, and setting himself up as a temporal prince; to *Bethany*; which was about fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, or almost two miles, John xi. 18. Hither he went to converse with his dear friends, Lazarus, and Martha, and Mary, who were all of this place, and where he could lodge and rest quietly. The name of the town is variously interpreted: according to some ancient writers<sup>2</sup>, it signifies the *house of obedience*; so Christ went from the disobedient and faithless city, to a place of obedience, where he had some faithful and obedient disciples: others read it, and so Munster's Hebrew Gospel, *בֵּית עֲנִיָּה*, the *house of affliction*; a suitable place for Christ to go to, who was about to suffer for the sins of his people. The Syriac version renders it *בֵּית עֲנִיָּה*; and which is interpreted *an house, or place of business*, as this town of Bethany was. We read<sup>3</sup> of *בֵּית דֹּוֹנִי שֶׁל בֵּית דֹּוֹנִי*, the *shops of Bethany*, which were destroyed three years before Jerusalem, because they made their affairs to stand upon the words of the law; that is, as the gloss explains it, they found that what was forbidden by the wise men, was free by the law: a great trade might be drove here for olives, dates, and figs, which grew hereabout in great plenty: mention is made in the Talmud of *פְּנֵי בֵּית דֹּוֹנִי*, the *figs of Bethany*: hence, as Christ departed from this place, the next morning he saw a fig-tree. But the true etymology and signification of the name is *בֵּית דֹּוֹנִי*, the *house, or place of dates*, the fruit of the palm-tree: hence they that came from Jerusalem to meet Christ, might have their palm-tree branches. One part of Mount Olivet abounded with olives, from whence it had its name; another part bore palm-trees, and that was called *Bethany*, from whence this town over-against it had its name; and another part had great plenty of fig-trees growing on it, and this was called *Bethphage*; and that part of Jerusalem which was nearest to it went by the same name. We read<sup>4</sup> also of *בֵּית דֹּוֹנִי שֶׁל מִרְדֵּחַ*, the *washing-place of Bethany*; which seems to me to be not a place for the washing and purification of unclean men and women, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, but for washing of sheep; for the story is, that "a fox tore a sheep in pieces at the washing-place of Bethany, and the affair came before the wise men;" that is, at Jerusalem, to know whether that sheep might be eaten or no, since that which was torn was forbidden. And some have interpreted *Bethany, an house, or place of sheep*: but so

\* T. Bab. Succa, fol. 49. 1. Erachin, fol. 2. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Lulab, c. 7. sect. 19.

<sup>1</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 4. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Jerom. in loc. Origen. in Joan. p. 131. T. 2. 3. & in Matt. p. 437, 446, 447. T. 1. Ed. Huet.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 88. 1.

<sup>4</sup> T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 53. 1. & Erubin, fol. 28.

<sup>5</sup> T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 52. 1.

much for this town, and what account is given of it. *And he lodged there*; either in the house of Lazarus, and his two sisters, or in that of Simon the leper; for it was even-tide when he went out of Jerusalem, as Mark observes. The Ethiopic version adds, *and rested there*; and so Origen<sup>4</sup> reads it; and, according to Harpocratian<sup>5</sup>, the word used by the evangelist signifies to lie down, and sleep, and take one's rest. Christ lodged here all night.

Ver. 18. *Now in the morning, &c.*] *Gr. in the first*, or morning-light, in the dawn, or break of day, the first spring of light; so the Latins<sup>6</sup> use *prima luce* for early in the morning, as soon as ever day breaks: so early did Christ rise, and return from Bethany to Jerusalem; and as he returned to the city. The Persic version renders it, *they returned*; which, though not a good version, gives a true sense; for, as Christ went with the twelve to Bethany, as Mark affirms, so these returned with him, as is clear from what follows. Thus Christ, day after day, went to and from Jerusalem: in the evening he went to Bethany, or to some part of the Mount of Olives, and there abode all night, and returned in the day-time to Jerusalem, and taught in the temple; for it does not appear that he was one night in Jerusalem, before the night of the passover. *He hungered*, rising so early before his friends were up, he had eaten nothing that morning, and so before he had got far from Bethany, found himself hungry; which proves the truth of his human nature, which was in all respects like to ours, excepting sin.

Ver. 19. *And when he saw a fig-tree, &c.*] In the Greek text 'tis one fig-tree, one remarkable fig-tree: he must see a great many, as he went along; for a large tract of the Mount of Olives was full of fig-trees, and therefore called *Bethphage*; and notice has been taken already of the figs of Bethany: but he saw none that had such large and spreading leaves as this; for it was the time when the fig-tree was just budding, and putting forth its leaves: wherefore he took notice of it; and though it was *afar off*, as Mark says, yet being hungry, he made up to it, expecting, from its promising appearance, to find fruit on it. This fig-tree was *in the way*; by the road-side, and probably had no owner; was common to any body, and so no injury was done to any person by losing it: *he came to it, and found nothing thereon but leaves only*: Mark says, *he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon*: which must be understood of him as man; for as he hungered as man, so he judged and expected as man, from the appearance of this fig-tree, that he might find fruit upon it; and which is no contradiction to his deity, and his having the spirit of God, as the Jew<sup>7</sup> objects; and especially since, as Bishop Kidder<sup>8</sup> observes, such an expectation is attributed to God himself, in Isa. v. 2, 4. and it may be added, and with regard to that people, of which this fig-tree was an emblem, and designed by Christ to be considered as such in what he did to it. The same evangelist further

observes, *and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for the time of figs was not yet*. The word *yet* is not in the original text; which last clause is a reason, either why he found no fruit, or nothing but leaves upon it, because it was not a time, or season of figs: it was not a good fig year, so Dr. Hammond interprets it; and yet though it was not, since this tree was so very flourishing, fruit might have been expected on it: and also, it furnishes out a reason why Christ took so much pains to go to it, seeing there were very few figs to be had elsewhere, and this bid very fair to supply him with some in this time of scarcity: or else, as a reason why, besides its promising appearance, he expected fruit upon it, because the time of figs, that is, of the gathering of the figs, was not come: in which sense the phrase is used in ver. 34. of this chapter; and is Bishop Kidder's interpretation of the passage: and since therefore the time was not come for the in-gathering of the figs, none had been taken off of it, the more might be expected on it. This sense would be very probable, did it appear that figs were usually ripe about this time; but the contrary seems manifest, both from Scripture, which represents the fig-tree putting forth its leaves, as a sign the summer is nigh, Matt. xxiv. 32. and from the Talmudists, who say<sup>9</sup>, that the beginning of leaves, or putting forth of the leaves of trees, is in the month Nisan, the month in which the passover was kept, and so the then present time of the year; and who, from this time, reckon three times fifty days, or five full months before the figs are ripe<sup>10</sup>: so that these words are rather a reason why Christ did not expect to find figs on other trees, which he saw in great abundance as he passed along, because the time of common, ordinary figs being ripe, was not come; and why he particularly expected to find some on this tree, because it being full of leaves, appeared to be of a different kind from other fig-trees: and was either of that sort which they call *בנות שור*, *Benoth Shuach*, as Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, which were a kind of white figs that were not ripe till the third year<sup>11</sup>. This tree put forth its fruit the first year, which hung on it the second, and were brought to perfection on the third: so that when it was three years old, it had fruit of the first, second, and third year on it: this being such a tree, by its being full of leaves, when others had none, or were just putting out, fruit of one year, or more might have been expected on it, when it had none at all, and therefore was cursed: or it might be one of that sort which brought forth fruit twice a year; for of such sort of fig-trees we read in the Jewish writings<sup>12</sup>: and therefore though it was not the time of the common figs being ripe, yet this being one of the seasons, in which this tree bore ripe fruit, and being so very flourishing, might reasonably be expected from it: but there being none, *he said unto it, let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever*; or, as it is expressed in Mark, *no man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever*: for if

<sup>4</sup> In Matt. p. 447.

<sup>5</sup> Lexic. Decem Orator. p. 55.

<sup>6</sup> Caesar. Comment l. 1. p. 14. & passim. Curtius, l. 5. c. 5. passim. Apulei Metamorph. l. 9. p. 134.

<sup>7</sup> R. Isaac, Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 30. p. 421.

<sup>8</sup> Demonstration of the Messiah, par. 2. p. 38.

<sup>9</sup> Jarchi & Bartenora in Misn. Sheviith, c. 4. sect. 10.

<sup>10</sup> T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 35. 4.

<sup>11</sup> Misn. Sheviith, c. 5. sect. 1. & Demai, c. 1. sect. 1. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>12</sup> Misn. Demai, c. 1. sect. 1. & Maimon. in ib. T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 18. 1.

none grew on it henceforward, no man could hereafter eat of it. Both expressions design the same thing, the perpetual barrenness of the fig-tree: *and presently the fig-tree withered away*: immediately, upon Christ's saying these words, its sap was dried up, it lost its verdure; its leaves were shrivelled and shrunk up, and dropped off, and the whole was blasted. This tree was an emblem of the Jews: Christ being hungry, and very desirous of the salvation of men, came first to them, from whom, on account of their large profession of religion, and great pretensions to holiness, and the many advantages they enjoyed, humanly speaking, much fruit of righteousness might have been expected; but, alas! he found nothing but mere words, empty boasts, an outward shew of religion, an external profession, and a bare performance of trifling ceremonies, and oral traditions; wherefore Christ rejected them, and in a little time after, the kingdom of God, the Gospel, was taken away from them, and their temple, city, and nation, entirely destroyed.

Ver. 20. *And when the disciples saw it, &c.*] The next day in the morning, as Mark says: they had heard what Christ had said to it the day before, as the same evangelist observes; but did not take notice of the immediate withering of the tree; but the next morning, as they returned from Bethany, they saw it dried up from the roots: *they marvelled*; not that Christ should curse it, but that it should wither away so soon, and upon his saying what he did; which was a considerable instance of his power and Godhead, all creatures, animate and inanimate, being at his command and disposal: *saying, how soon is the fig-tree withered away?* This was said by Peter, in the name of the rest, who recollecting what Jesus had said to it the day before, and observing how the event had answered his words so soon, addressed Christ after this manner: *master, behold the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away*; expressing his wonder at it, and ascribing it to the power of Christ; of which this was an amazing proof and evidence.

Ver. 21. *Jesus answered and said unto them, &c.*] His disciples wondering at his power, in causing the fig-tree to wither so suddenly: *verily I say unto you, if ye have faith*: that is, in God, in his power, which reaches to all things: the object of faith is expressed in Mark, and by way of exhortation, *have faith in God*, that he will enable you to perform whatsoever ye shall desire; which must be understood, not of spiritual faith in the promises of God, and person of Christ, but of the faith of miracles, or faith in the power of God to perform things that are above the strength of nature: *and doubt not*; either of the power, or will of God to do for you, and by you, the thing desired; for this kind of faith won't admit of the least degree of doubting: there must be no hesitation in the mind, no reasoning upon the thing, how it can be performed; the mind must not be divided between the power and will of God, and the difficulties and discouragements which attend the case, but must believe in hope against hope, with a full persuasion of accomplishment: for want of this faith, without doubting, the disciples could not cure the child that

was lunatic. *Ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree*; cause one to be dried up, and wither away by a word, as Christ had done to this, which, comparatively speaking, was but a lesser sort of miracle; *but also, if ye shall say to this mountain*; the Mount of Olives, where Christ and his disciples now were, and were passing over, or, at least, were very near it; or any other mountain wherever they might be, to which they should, upon any occasion, think fit to say, *be thou removed, and cast into the sea*; which was many miles off from Mount Olivet, and must be a very surprising performance for a mountain to be rooted up, so large as that was, and be carried several miles from its former situation, and be thrown into the sea; and yet, as difficult and amazing as this may seem, *it shall be done*: that is, provided the person doubts not; or, as it is said in Mark, *shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things, which he saith, shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith*: for this must not be confined to the particular instances of drying up a fig-tree, or removing a mountain, but the doing of any sort of miracle, how great soever. Nor is it our Lord's meaning that they should do these particular things; nor is it certain that they ever did: but his sense is, that, had they faith, they should be able not only to do such lesser miracles, as, comparatively speaking, the withering of the fig-tree was, but they should be able to perform things much more difficult and surprising, whenever the good of the souls of men, the propagation of the Gospel, and the glory of God required them.

Ver. 22. *And all things whatsoever, &c.*] Not only miracles, but any other thing which may be for the honour of God, the interest of religion, the spreading of the Gospel, the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ, their own spiritual good, and the welfare of immortal souls, *ye shall ask in prayer, believing*. Munster's Hebrew Gospel reads it, *in prayer, and in faith*; and the Arabic version renders it, *in prayer with faith*; both to the same purpose, and aptly express the sense of the words, which design the prayer of faith; or that prayer which is put up in the strength of faith; and is of great avail with God: for whatever is asked in faith, agreeable to the will of God, which is contained in his covenant, word, and promises, and makes for his glory, and the good of his people, shall be given, be it what it will; though to carnal sense and reason it may seem impracticable and impossible: *ye shall receive*; of God, through Christ, freely and fully, and shall have and enjoy them, either they themselves, if asked for themselves, or others, for whom they are asked.

Ver. 23. *And when he was come into the temple, &c.*] The day following the cursing the fig-tree: for the withering of it, and the notice the disciples took of it, and our Lord's discourse with them about it, were not in one and the same day, as is clear from the account the Evangelist Mark gives; but on the morning that Christ had conversed with his apostles by the way from Bethany to Jerusalem, concerning the strength of faith in prayer, and the success of it; when they

were come into the city, and to the temple, whither he directly went, and entered upon his work of preaching to the people, *the chief priests and elders of the people came unto him*. The *chief priests* were not the high-priest, and his *sagan*, or deputy, but the principal of the priesthood, who were chosen from the rest of their brethren, to sit in the sanhedrim; and the *elders of the people* were the laity that were chosen from among the people, to be members of the same grand council: in this sense the Jewish writers interpret the word *elders*, in Deut. xxi. 2. *thy elders, and thy judges*; that is, "thy elders, who are thy judges": it is a tradition, R. Eliezer ben Jacob says, "זה בית דין הגדול, וקנין; *thine elders; this is the great sanhedrim*." The other Evangelists Mark and Luke add to these, Scribes, who also were a part of this great assembly; so that the principal members of it, if not the whole sanhedrim, came in a body together, if possible, by their presence and authority, to daunt Christ, discourage his ministry, bring it into contempt with the people, and stop his proceedings and success. And this they did as *he was teaching*; the people, that is, preaching the Gospel to them, as Luke explains it: he was instructing them in the things relating to himself, and his kingdom, dispensing the mysteries of his grace, the doctrines of regeneration, justification, and salvation. Mark says, it was as *he was walking in the temple*; and at the same time teaching the people, who flocked about him in like manner, as the Peripatetic philosophers taught their scholars walking: whence they had their name. *And said, by what authority dost thou these things?* that is, drive out the buyers and sellers out of the temple, which greatly provoked them, their own gain and interest being concerned therein; and perform these miracles of restoring sight to the blind, and causing the lame to walk; which he had very lately wrought in the temple; and particularly preach these doctrines, the work in which he was then engaged: *and who gave thee this authority?* They don't object to his doctrines, or dispute whether they were true or false; nor examine his miracles, whether they were of God, or of the devil: in these points they might fear he would be able to put them to silence and confusion, of which some of them had had an experience before; but they proceed in another way, in which they might hope for success, and attack him about his commission and authority under which he acted, whether he pretended to derive his authority from God, or from men: by this they designed to ensnare him, and hoped they should gain their point, let him answer in what form he would. Should he say that God gave him the authority to do these things, they would charge him with enthusiasm and blasphemy, urging, that it was wickedness and presumption in any man to pretend to be sent immediately from God; since the order of the priesthood, and of teaching, was fixed, and none were to take upon them the office of a priest, or of a teacher of the people, but by their appointment; or none were called and

sent, but through them, or by their means: and if he should say, that he had his authority from men, they would confront him, and absolutely deny that he had any from them, who only had the power of giving men an authority of preaching in the temple; wherefore he must be an usurper of this office, and a turbulent, seditious person, that sought to destroy all order, civil and ecclesiastical.

Ver. 24. *And Jesus answered and said unto them, &c.*] Not by replying directly to their question, but by putting another question to them, whereby he escaped the snare he saw they laid for him: *I also will ask you one thing, word, or question, which if ye tell me; honestly, and plainly answer to it, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things:* which was putting the thing upon such a foot, and in such a form, as they could not well object to; for Christ promises, that if they would return a plain answer to the question he had to put to them, and which was no unreasonable, nor impertinent one, he would thoroughly satisfy them in this point; and expressly declare his commission and authority, what it was, and from whence he had it. The question is as follows:

Ver. 25. *The baptism of John, whence was it? &c.*] By *the baptism of John*, is meant the ordinance of water-baptism, which was first administered by him; from whence he took the name of John the Baptist: and the doctrine which he preached concerning it, and previous to it, and even the whole of his ministry; which is denominated from a principal part of it, and which greatly distinguished his ministry from all others: and the question put by Christ concerning it is, whence it was? by what authority did John administer the ordinance of water-baptism, which had never been administered before by any? who sent him to preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, a doctrine the world had never heard of before? who gave him a commission to discharge the several parts of his ministry, which he performed in such a wonderful and powerful manner? did he receive his authority from heaven, or of men? that is, from God or man? as the opposition requires; and as it was usual for the Jews to call God by the name of heaven: in this sense 'tis used by them, when they say<sup>b</sup>, that such have no part in the world to come, who affirm, that the law is not *מן השמים*, from heaven, that is, from God; which is exactly the phrase here: and when they observe<sup>c</sup>, that care should be taken that a man does not pronounce *שם שמים*, the name of heaven, that is, God, in vain: and when they tell<sup>d</sup> us of a certain man that built large buildings by the way-side, and put food and drink there, so that every one that came went in and eat, and drank, *וברך*, and blessed heaven; that is, blessed, or gave thanks to God; and when they speak of *מיתה לשמים*, death by heaven; that is, death which is immediately inflicted by God. So when Christ here asks, whether John's baptism was from heaven, or of men, his meaning is, whether it was of divine institution, and that

<sup>a</sup> T. Hieros. Sota, fol. 23. 3. Jarchi in Deut. xxi. 2.

<sup>b</sup> T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 3. Vid. ib. fol. 19. 3. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 1.

NEW TEST.—VOL. I.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 9. 1.

<sup>d</sup> Abot. R. Nathan, c. 7. fol. 2. 2.

<sup>e</sup> Ib. c. 11. fol. 4. 1. Vid. ib. c. 14. fol. 4. 4. & 5. 1. & c. 27. fol. 7. 1.

John acted by divine authority, and commission; or whether it was an human device of his own, or of other men, and that he took the office of preaching and baptizing upon himself of his own head, or by some human appointment: to this he requires a direct answer, as is said in Mark, *answer me*; whether it was from the one, or from the other; and they reasoned with themselves: either within themselves, as the Arabic version renders it, *in their own minds*, as the Syriac; or they took some little time and privately conferred together, what answer they should return; when they argued the point among themselves, *saying, if we shall say from heaven*; if we shall return for answer, that the baptism and ministry of John were of divine appointment, and that he acted by a divine authority, *he will say unto us, why did ye not believe him?* why did not ye believe the doctrine that he preached? and receive the testimony that he gave concerning the Messiah? and why were ye not baptized by him? why did ye reject the counsel of God against yourselves? They saw plainly, that if they owned the divine authority of John's baptism and ministry, they must allow Jesus to be the true Messiah, John bore witness to; and consequently, that it was by a divine authority he did what he did; and then there was an end of the question, and is the very thing that Christ had in view.

Ver. 26. *But if we shall say of men, &c.*] They reasoned with themselves, that should they give their answer in this form, and say, that the ministry and baptism of John were merely human, and what he took up of himself, or which he performed by an authority derived from men, *we fear the people*: that were then upon the spot, in the temple; who, as many of them were now the followers of Christ, more of them had been the admirers of John, and probably had been baptized by him: wherefore the sandedrim were afraid of them, lest if they should affirm, that the authority by which John acted was human, they would immediately rise up against them; and, as Luke says, *stone them*: so high a veneration had they for him, and so dear was his memory still unto them. *For all held John as a prophet.* These are the words of the high-priests and elders, and not of the evangelist, expressing the reason of their fears from the people, who, in general, were thoroughly persuaded, as Luke expresses it, and firmly believed that John was a prophet, that was raised up, and sent immediately by God; and did not derive his authority and commission to preach and baptize from any man, or set of men, whatever.

Ver. 27. *And they answered Jesus and said, we cannot tell, &c.*] They saw the dilemma they were brought into; they chose rather therefore to speak against their own consciences, and tell a wilful lye, and incur the reproach of ignorance: who, at other times, took upon them to judge of a prophet, whether he was a true or a false one, and by what authority he acted, whether of God, or man: but now being reduced to this wretched condition, contrary to their office and character, declare they did not know, and could not tell from whence John had his commission, and who gave him his authority: *and he said unto them, neither tell I you by what authority I do these*

*things*: since, according to the proposal of Christ, and the agreement he entered into with them, they did not give him a direct answer to his question, he looked upon himself under no obligation to inform them, what was his authority, and from whence he had it; though by the question he put to them he tacitly suggests, that he had his authority not from man, but from God; and by this his answer signifies, that since John preached and baptized without their authority and approbation, so might he; nor was he dependent on them, or accountable to them.

Ver. 28. *But what think you? &c.*] See the note on ch. xviii. 12. *a certain man had two sons.* This is a parable; the design of which is to shew the hypocrisy and deceit of the Scribes and Pharisees, in pretending to works of righteousness, and not doing them; and to prove them for their disbelief and rejection of John's ministry; and to make it appear, that the worst of sinners in the Jewish nation were preferable to them; and that many of them were, and would be, happy, when they would be miserable. By the *certain man*, in the parable, God is designed; who, though he is not a man, nor to be represented by any human form; yet, as man is the image of God, he is therefore, in an improper and figurative sense, compared to man, and set forth by him; which may be allowed in a metaphorical and parabolical way: and though the son of God only assumed human nature, and really became man; yet God, the father, seems rather to be here intended, who is sometimes compared to a husbandman and a vine-dresser; see John xv. 1, 2. and as appears from the relation of the *two sons* unto him; by whom are meant not Jews and Gentiles; for the latter can never be intended by the first son; for these were not sons in such sense as the Jews were, nor were upon an equal foot of sonship with them, as the parable supposes; much less were they called first, and bid to work in the vineyard: but, on the contrary John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles, were first, and only sent to the Jews; and God, as yet, was not come even in the external ministry of the word to the Gentiles; nor were they brought to repentance and obedience: but by them are meant two sorts of people, among the Jews, the Scribes and Pharisees, and publicans and sinners; as the application of the parable, by our Lord himself, most clearly shews: these were both the sons of God; not only by creation, as all men are, all having, in this sense, but one common father, whose offspring they be; but also by national adoption; for to all, who were Israelites, according to the flesh, whether good men, or bad men, alike belonged the general privilege of adoption, Rom. ix. 4. This publicans and sinners had an equal right to, as well as the Scribes and Pharisees, though they were not all the sons of God by special grace, or spiritual adoption: *and he came to the first*; the publicans and sinners among the Jews, by the ministry of John the Baptist, Christ, and his disciples, who first and chiefly preached to such sort of persons; *and said, son, go work to-day in my vineyard*: by the *vineyard*, is meant the kingdom of God, or of heaven, the Gospel church-state, the then present dispensation of things, which was set up, and which men were called to embrace and enter into; the doors



of which the Pharisees, who pretended to have the key of knowledge, did all they could to shut up, and hinder persons going in, as they refused to do themselves: this is called a *vineyard*; see the note on ch. xx. 1. To work in it signifies to hear the word preached, to believe in the Messiah, embrace his doctrines, and submit to his ordinances, particularly the ordinance of baptism, which was the then principal ordinance of that dispensation. The time of working in it is *to-day*; directly, immediately, and whilst it is day; for the hour cometh when no man can work, and when all these means and ordinances will be at an end, and attending on them will be over: the argument used to engage hereunto, is taken from the relation the person stood in as a *son*, highly favoured by God, with the blessing of national adoption, besides that of natural sonship common to all mankind.

Ver. 29. *He answered and said, I will not, &c.*] Which answer fitly expresses the language and practice of openly profane and unregenerate sinners, who will not come to Christ, that they may have life; nor will they serve the Lord, but are bent upon indulging their lusts; nor will they be subject to the law of God; nor will they hear and receive the Gospel of Christ, or submit to his ordinances, and are averse to every good work: where is man's free-will? this is the true picture of it; man has no will naturally to that which is good. *But afterward he repented, and went*: a change of mind was wrought in him, and this produced a change of life and conversation: so, many of the *publicans* and *sinners* repented of their sins of disobedience, and rebellion against God, under the ministry of John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles; not of themselves, for men do not naturally see their sin, or need of repentance; their hearts are hard and obdurate; nor have they any spiritual sense and feeling: nothing will bring them to repentance, not the most powerful ministry, the severest judgments, or the kindest mercies, without the grace of God: but it was of God, and owing to his powerful and efficacious grace, that they repented: 'twas his will they should come to repentance: he called them to it, and gave it to them, as a free-grace gift of his: and they repented not in a mere legal way, with a legal repentance, which lies in a mere conviction of the outward acts of sin; in an external sorrow for it, in horror and terror of mind about it, and in shedding tears for it, accompanied with a cessation from the grosser acts of sin, and an outward reformation of life and manners: but they repented in an evangelical manner, as such do, who are really converted, and spiritually instructed; who are true believers in Christ, have views, and, at least, hopes of pardoning grace and mercy; and have the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the spirit: the repentance of such lies in a spiritual sight and sense of sin, of the evil nature of in-dwelling sin, and the exceeding sinfulness of it, as well as of the outward actions of life; in a hearty, godly sorrow for it, because committed against a God of purity, grace, and goodness; in a loathing it, and themselves for it; in a holy shame, and blushing, on account of it; and is attended with an ingenuous confession of it, and forsaking it: the consequence of which is, that such go readily and cheerfully into the Lord's vineyard; hear

the word with all diligence, receive it with gladness; walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; and are taught, by the grace that has appeared to them, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world.

Ver. 30. *And he came to the second, &c.*] The Scribes and Pharisees, by the ministry of John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles also: *and said likewise*; the same things as to the other son, the publicans and sinners; calling them into the Gospel dispensation, to hear the word, embrace truth, attend on ordinances, and labour in promoting the kingdom, and interest of the Messiah; whilst they had the light of the Gospel with them. Urging also the relation they stood in to God, as a part of the Jewish body; to whom, among other external privileges, the adoption belonged: *and he answered and said, I go, sir, and went not*: the word *go* is not in the generality of the Greek copies; the phrase is only *I sir*, though it is rightly enough supplied as to the sense. Beza says, it was in his most ancient copy; and so it is in the Arabic and Persic versions, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; though it is not in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions. So, the Scribes and Pharisees seemed pleased with the ministry of John for a while, and at first were forward to submit to his baptism, and were very inquisitive about the Messiah: yet, when he was declared in John's ministry, and by his own doctrine, and miracles, they refused to give in to the belief of him; they would neither enter into the Gospel kingdom, embrace the doctrines, and obey the commands of it themselves, nor suffer others to enter in; but, as much as in them lay, by their reproaches, menaces, and excommunications, deterred them from it. They were like some other persons, who promise fair, and talk much of doing good works, but do none; teach the people to do them, but do not perform them themselves, though they would seem to do them; make great pretensions to them, boast of them, and trust in them; and therefore, of all men, ought to be careful to maintain them, and yet do the least.

Ver. 31. *Whether of them twain did the will of his father? &c.*] This is the question put by Christ, upon the preceding parable to the chief priests, elders, and Scribes; *they say unto him, the first*: an answer which natural reason, and common sense, directed them to; and therefore they give it out at once, directly, without staying upon it, and demurring about it; though they seemed not to be aware of the application of it to themselves, which follows: *Jesus saith unto them, verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots; that is, such who had been so; see the note on ch. ix. 10. go into the kingdom of God before you.* They are signified by the first son, who repenting went, and did the will of his father: these repented under John's ministry, were called, and brought to repentance by the preaching of Christ, and his apostles: these justified God, their father, by being baptized with John's baptism: these embraced the Messiah, believed in him, and were the first in his kingdom, and set an example to the chief among the Jews to follow: and it is easy to observe, that a poor profane sinner may, by the grace of God, be brought to repentance, that before was obstinate, rebellious, and disobedient, and

be made willing to go and work in the Lord's vineyard here, and be at last glorified; when a self-righteous person, notwithstanding all his fair promises and resolutions to do good, his professions of, and pretensions to religion, neither repents of his sins, nor believes in Christ; has no share in the kingdom of grace here, nor will he enter into the kingdom of glory.

Ver. 32. *For John came unto you in a way of righteousness, &c.*] He had a commission from God; he was no impostor; the doctrine he taught was true, and which he faithfully delivered; his life and conversation were unblamable; there was nothing in his credentials, ministry, and conduct, that could justly be found fault with: *and ye believed him not*; to be the forerunner of the Messiah, or the Elias that was to come; nor attended to the doctrine of repentance preached by him; nor were subject to the ordinance of baptism he administered; nor gave any assent, or credit, to the Messiah he so manifestly pointed out: *but the publicans and harlots believed him*; what he said concerning the wrath to come, and the miserable state and danger they were in; and they repented of their sins, and confessed them, and were baptized of him in Jordan; believing the testimony he gave of Jesus of Nazareth being the Messiah, and son of God: *and ye, when ye had seen it*; the repentance and faith of these persons, and what a wonderful reformation was wrought in them, *repented not afterwards*; of their disobedience, impenitence, and unbelief, after they had seen the effects of John's ministry on these very profligate sinners, and after the death of John; who, by his constancy, zeal, and faithfulness, had shewn himself to be a true, and upright minister of the word; and afterwards under the ministry of Christ, and his apostles, by whom the same doctrines were preached, and the same ordinances administered, *that ye might believe him*; the testimony he has left behind him concerning the Messiah.

Ver. 33. *Hear another parable, &c.*] Which, though Luke says was spoken to the people, who were gathered round about him, yet was directed to, and against the chief priests; who continued with him till it was delivered, and the application of it made; when they perceived it was spoken of them. The design of it is, to set forth the many favours and privileges bestowed on the Jewish nation; their unfruitfulness, and the ingratitude of the principal men among them; and their barbarous usage of the servants of the Lord, and particularly of the son of God himself: the consequence of which would be, the removal of the Gospel from them, and the miserable destruction of them. So that this parable is partly a narrative of some things past, and partly a prophecy of some things to come: *there was a certain householder*: by whom the great God of heaven and earth is meant; who may be so called, either with respect to the whole world, which is an house of his building, and the inhabitants of it are his family, who live, are nourished, and supplied by him; or to the church, the house of the living

God, the family in heaven and in earth, called the household of God, and of faith; or to the people of Israel, often called the house of Israel, the family, above all the families of the earth, God took notice of, highly favoured, and dwelt among. *Which planted a vineyard*: of the form of a vineyard, the manner of planting it, and the bigness of it, the Jews say many things in their Misna<sup>f</sup>. "He that plants a row of five vines, the school " of Shammai say, *it is a vineyard*; but the school " of Hillel say, it is not a vineyard, unless there " are two rows—he that plants two vines over- " against two, and one at the tail or end, *הרי זה* " *כרם, lo! this is a vineyard*; (it was a little vine- " yard); but if two over-against two, and one be- " tween the two, or two over-against two, and one " in the midst, it is no vineyard, unless there are " two over-against two, and one at the tail, or end." Again<sup>g</sup>, "a vineyard that is planted with less " than four cubits (between every row), R. Simeon " says, is no vineyard; but the wise men say it is " a vineyard." And the decision is according to them. Now by this vineyard is meant, the house of Israel and the men of Judah, the nation of the Jews, as in Isa. v. 7. from whence our Lord seems to have taken many of the ideas expressed in this parable; who were a people separated from the rest of the world, and set with valuable plants, from whom fruit might reasonably be expected: the planting of them designs the removing them out of Egypt, the driving out the natives before them, and settling them in the land of Canaan, where they were planted with choice vines, such as Joshua, Caleb, &c. and where they soon became a flourishing people, though for their iniquities, often exposed to beasts of prey, the neighbouring nations, that were suffered at times to break in upon them. The Jews often speak<sup>h</sup> of the house of Israel, as the vineyard of the Lord of hosts, and even call their schools and universities vineyards: hence we read<sup>i</sup> of *כרם ביבנה*, the vineyard in Jabneh, where the scholars were placed in rows, as in a vineyard. *And hedged it round about*; as it was usual to set a hedge, or make a wall round a vineyard, which according to the Jewish writers, was to be ten hands high, and four broad; for they ask<sup>k</sup>, "אי זה נדר, *what is a hedge?*" That which is "ten hands high." And elsewhere<sup>l</sup>, "An hedge " that encompasses a vineyard, which is less than " ten hands high, or which is ten hands high, but " not four hands broad, it has no circuit (or void " place between that and the vines)—an hedge " which is ten hands high, and so a ditch which is " ten hands deep, and four broad, lo! this is lawful " to plant a vineyard on one side of it, and herbs " on the other; even a fence of reeds, if there is " between the reeds the space of three hands, lo! " this divides between the vineyard and the herbs, "—as an hedge." By this *hedge* is designed, either the law, not the oral law, or the traditions of the elders, which the Jews<sup>m</sup> call *סיני לתורה, an hedge*

<sup>f</sup> Misna Kilaim, c. 4. sect. 5, 6. Maimon. Hilch. Kilaim, c. 7. sect. 7.

<sup>g</sup> Ib. c. 5. sect. 2. Maimon ib. sect. 1.

<sup>h</sup> Zeror Hammor, fol. 148. 2. Zohar in Exod. fol. 2. 1.

<sup>i</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 7. 4. T. Bab. Yebainot, fol. 42. 2.

<sup>k</sup> Misn. Kilaim, c. 4. sect. 3.

<sup>l</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Kilaim, c. 7. sect. 14, 15.

<sup>m</sup> Pirke Abot. c. sect. 1.

for the law, which was none of God's setting, but their own; but either the ceremonial law, which distinguished them from other people, was a middle wall of partition between them, and the nations of the world, and kept them from coming among them, and joining together; or the moral law, which taught them their duty to God and man, and was the means of keeping them within due bounds; or else the protection of them by the power of God, which was an hedge about them, is here intended; and which was very remarkable at the time of their three feasts of passover, pentecost, and tabernacles; when all their males went up to Jerusalem, and the whole country was left an easy prey to the nations about them; but God preserved them, and, according to his promise, suffered not their neighbours to have any inclination or desire after their land. *And digged a wine-press in it*; which is not *רריץ*, the ditch, that went through a vineyard; for this can't be said of a wine-press, and is Dr. Lightfoot's mistake<sup>1</sup>; but *נת*, the wine-fat, in which they squeezed the grapes and made the wine, and this used to be in the vineyard: the rule about it is this, "*הנת שבכרם*, the wine-press that is ten hands deep and four broad, R. Eliezer says, they may set in it; but the wise men do forbid it<sup>2</sup>." By this may be meant, the altar where the drink-offerings of wine were poured forth; and so the Targumist<sup>3</sup> renders it by *מדברי*, *my altar I have given them, to atone for their sins*: though one of their commentators<sup>4</sup>, by it, understands the prophets, who taught Israel the law, that their works might be good before God and men; they urged and pressed them to the performance of them, as grapes are squeezed in the wine-press: *and built a tower*; the same the Jews call *שומרה*, the watch-house; which was an high place, in which the watchman stood to keep the vineyard, and which, was built in the vineyard; of this they say, "*שומרה שבכרם*, the watch-house which is in the vineyard, that is ten hands high and four broad, they set in it<sup>5</sup>." By this is meant, either the city of Jerusalem, which stood in the midst, and on the highest part of the land of Israel; or the temple, which stood on the highest part of Jerusalem, where the priests and Levites kept their watch every night; and so the Targumist<sup>6</sup> interprets it, by *מקדשי*, *my sanctuary I built among them*; that is, the temple: *and let it out to husbandmen*: of which there were different sorts, as there were different methods of hiring and letting out fields and vineyards among the Jews: one sort was called *דושוכר*, and such was he, who hired of his neighbour a field to sow in it, or a vineyard to eat of the fruit of it, for a certain sum of money yearly; see Cant. viii. 11. another sort was called *דדוכר*, and this was one that hired a field, or a vineyard, and agreed to give the proprietor of it yearly, so many measures of the fruit thereof,

whether it yielded more or less; and there was a third sort, called *אריס*, or *מקבל*, and such was he, who agreed to give the owner half, or a third, or a fourth part of the increase of the field, or vineyard<sup>7</sup>. Now it is not of the former, but of the latter sort of letting out and farming, that this is to be understood; not of letting it out for money, but for fruit, as appears from ver. 34. and by the husbandmen are meant, the rulers of the Jews, civil and ecclesiastical, especially the latter; the priests, Levites, and Scribes, who were intrusted with the care of the Jewish people, to guide and instruct them, and cultivate the knowledge of divine things among them, that they might bring forth fruits of righteousness; and to offer their gifts and sacrifices, and the like, which are meant by letting out the vineyard to them: *and went into a far country*; which must be interpreted consistent with the omnipresence of God, who is every where, and can't be said properly to move from place to place; but fills heaven and earth with his presence, and cannot be contained in either: but this phrase seems to design his taking up his residence in the thick darkness, in the tabernacle and temple, when the civil and ecclesiastical state of the Jews was settled, and God did not appear to them in that visible manner he had done before; but having fixed their order of government, worship, and duty, left them to themselves and their rulers, for many years; in which he expressed much long-suffering and patience towards them.

Ver. 34. *And when the time of the fruit drew near, &c.*] Of gathering the fruit, when it was ripe, and might be eaten, or profit made of it, according to the law in Lev. xix. 23, 24, 25. The fruit of all manner of trees, for the first three years, was uncircumcised; it was not to be eaten, nor any profit made of it, and on the fourth year it was to be holy to praise the Lord with; being either given to the priests, or eaten by the owners before the Lord at Jerusalem; and on the fifth year it might be eaten, and made use of for profit, and henceforward every year; which law regarded the fruit of the vine, as any other fruit: hence 'tis said<sup>8</sup>, that "the grapes of the vineyard of the fourth year, the sanhedrim ordered that they should be brought up to Jerusalem, a day's journey on every side, so that they might crown or adorn the streets with fruits." To this time of fruit, and the custom of bringing it up to Jerusalem, the allusion seems to be here. Thus, God after a long time, after he had waited a great while for fruit from the Jewish nation, from whom much might have been expected, by reason of the advantages they enjoyed; *he sent his servants to the husbandmen*: by *his servants* are meant, the prophets of the Old Testament; who were sent by God from time to time, to the kings, priests, and people of

<sup>1</sup> Horæ in Mark xii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Misn. Kilaim, c. 5. sect. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Targum Jon. in Isa. v. 2. Vid. T. Hieros. Succa, fol. 54. 4.

<sup>4</sup> R. David Kimchi in loc.

<sup>5</sup> Maimon. in Misn. Kilaim, c. 5. sect. 3. Aben Ezra in Isa. v. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Misn. Kilaim, c. 5. sect. 3. Maimon. Hilch. Kilaim, c. 7. sect. 22.

<sup>7</sup> Targum Jon. in Isa. v. 2.

<sup>8</sup> T. Hieros. Demai, fol. 25. 1. Gloss in T. Bab. Moed. Katon, fol. 11. 2. & in Bava Metzia, fol. 103. 1. in Avoda Zara, fol. 21. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Shecirut, c. 8. sect. 1, 2. Bartenora in Misn. Pea, c. 5. sect. 5. & in Demai, c. 6. sect. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Maaser Sheni, c. 9. 5. Misn. Maaser Sheni, c. 3. sect. 2.

the Jews; to instruct them in their duty, to exhort them to the performance of it, to prove them for their sins, to stir them up to repentance, and to bring forth fruits meet for it, signified in the next clause: *that they might receive the fruits of it*; of the vineyard from the husbandmen, for the use of the owner; for fruits of justice and judgment, of righteousness and holiness, might be justly expected and demanded of such persons, to be brought forth by them, to the honour and glory of God.

Ver. 35. *And the husbandmen took his servants, &c.*] They seized and laid hold of them in a rude and violent manner: so far were they from treating these servants with respect, as they ought to have done; considering whose they were, from whom they came, and upon what account; and also so far from delivering to them the fruit due to their master, or excusing their inability to make a suitable return, as might be expected, they use them very roughly: *and beat one*: either with the fist, as Jeremiah was struck by Pashur, the son of Immer, the priest, one of these husbandmen, Jer. xx. 1, 2. and as Micaiah was smitten on the cheek by Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, the false prophet, 2 Chron. xviii. 23. or with a scourge, and may refer to the punishment of beating with forty stripes, save one, by which the skin was flayed off, as the word here signifies; for some of these servants had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, Heb. xi. 36. *And killed another*: that is, with the sword. There were four kinds of death in the power of the sanhedrim, of which this is one, and what follows is another; and were these, stoning, burning, killing (*i. e.* beheading with the sword), and strangling: the manner of executing this punishment here expressed, was this: "They cut off the person's head בסיף, *with a sword*, "in the manner the government orders it. R. Judah says, this is indecent (*i. e.* to cut off his head "standing, they do not do so), but they put his head "upon a block, and cut it off with an axe; they "reply to him, there's no death more abominable than "this." So the prophets, in the time of Elijah, were killed with the sword, 1 Kings xix. 14. see also Dan. xi. 33. *And stoned another*; as they did Zechariah, 2 Chron. xxiv. 21. and doubtless many others; since Jerusalem had the character of killing the prophets, and stoning them that were sent unto her, Matt. xxiii. 37. these seemed such that were stoned, but not killed; but as Mark says, were wounded in the head with the stones thrown at them, and shamefully handled, and sadly abused.

Ver. 36. *Again he sent other servants, &c.*] Meaning, perhaps, such as suffered in the times of the Maccabees: *more than the first*; their number was greater, though their office was the same, at least not higher: *and they did unto them likewise*; they beat them with rods, they killed them with the sword, and stoned them, Heb. xi. 36, 37.

Ver. 37. *But last of all, &c.*] In the last times, in the last days, in the end of the world, the Jewish world, at the close of their ecclesiastic and civil state; after all the prophets had been sent, and finished

their course, came the great prophet of all, to seal up the vision and prophecy: *he sent unto them his son*; not a servant as before, but a son; his own son, his only begotten son, the son of his love, his dearly beloved one; him he sent to these husbandmen the Jews. The son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, was sent only to the house of Israel: he was the minister of the circumcision; he was the great prophet raised up among them, and was sent to bless them, by turning them from their iniquities; he came to them, to his own, to them of his own nation, but they received him not: *saying, they will reverence my son*. The son of God is to be revered equally as his father, since he is in nature and glory equal to him; and it is the will of his father he should be so revered, as he is by the angels in heaven, and by the saints, both in heaven and in earth; but did these husbandmen reverence him? no; they despised and rejected him; they reproached and traduced him, as the vilest of men, and used him in the most cruel and barbarous manner. And did not his father know this? yes; this is certain from his omniscience, which reaches to all future events, the most minute and contingent; and from the predictions of the usage of these persons of him, delivered long before it came to pass. Luke says, *it may be they will reverence him*: so that it was not a positive affirmation, that they would do it, and which also is to be understood after the manner of men: that humanly speaking, it might be expected that they would give him reverence, in consideration of the dignity of his person, his character, and relation to God, which was his due and their duty; but he had a very different treatment from them.

Ver. 38. *But when the husbandmen saw the son, &c.*] Whom many of them knew, though some did not: some were entirely ignorant of him; some knew him, but durst not confess him, yet were not injurious to him; others acted against light and conscience, with spite and malice, as did these men. They expected the Messiah about this time; they knew, by prophecy, it could not be long ere he appeared: when they saw Jesus of Nazareth, they knew by various circumstances, by all the characters of the Messiah meeting in him, and by his miracles, that he must be the same. *They said among themselves*; privately, not openly to the people, *this is the heir*; as indeed he is of all things, as the son of God, and as the mediator of the new covenant: he is heir of all that his father has, as he is his natural, essential, and only begotten son; and as mediator, he is heir of all things, natural, spiritual, and eternal, for the use and benefit of his church and people, who are also his portion and inheritance: but here it seems to denote, his being heir to the throne of Israel, the government of the Jewish nation, as he was the son of David; and the Jews confess<sup>7</sup>, that because it was said that Jesus of Nazareth was קרוב למלכות, *near to the kingdom*, therefore they put him to death: *come let us kill him, and seize on his inheritance*: concluding, that could they be rid of him, their nation would be in peace, their temple would stand, and temple

<sup>7</sup> Mishn. Sanhedrin, c. 7: sect. 1, 3.

<sup>7</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1.

worship and service continue, and they remain in their office and authority undisturbed; the contrary of which they feared, should he be suffered to live; though what they feared from his life, befell them upon, and in consequence of his death, quite beyond all their counsels and expectations.

Ver. 39. *And they caught him, &c.*] Seized and laid hold of him, in a rude and violent manner, as they had some of the servants before. This regards their apprehending of Christ in the garden, by a band of soldiers and officers, sent by the chief priests and Pharisees, who with swords and staves took him, bound him, and led him away: *and cast him out of the vineyard*; which is not to be understood of their casting him out of the synagogue, which is never said of them; nor does it so much relate to the leading of him without the gates of Jerusalem, where they crucified him, though this is a sense not to be despised and rejected; but rather, to the delivery of him to those, that were without the vineyard of the Jewish church and nation, to the Gentiles; to be mocked, scourged, and put to death by them: *and slew him*; for though the sentence of death was pronounced on him by Pilate, an Heathen governor, and was executed by the Roman soldiers; yet it was through the instigation and at the pressing importunity of these husbandmen, the Jewish rulers; and who were afterwards frequently charged by the apostles with the murder of him.

Ver. 40. *When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, &c.*] In a way of providence, to call these husbandmen to an account; not only for the fruit they were to bring to him; but for their barbarity to his servants, the prophets, time after time; and especially, for the inhuman usage and murder of his own son; *what will he do unto those husbandmen?* This question is put to the chief priests, elders, and Scribes: and they themselves, who are designed hereby, are made judges in this case, just as the inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah are, in Isa. v. 4. which passage of Scripture our Lord had greatly in view when he spake this parable.

Ver. 41. *They say unto him, &c.*] Either the common people that were about him; or rather the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, to whom he put the question; little thinking then, that they were the persons intended in this parable: *he will miserably destroy those wicked men*: in saying which, they own that persons guilty of such crimes, as beating, killing, and stoning, servants sent to them by the proprietor of the vineyard, to receive his due and proper fruit, and at last murdering his son and heir, were very wicked persons, and deserved the severest punishments to be inflicted upon them, and that without mercy; nor could it be thought, but this must and would be unavoidably their case, when the Lord of the vineyard should come: thus tacitly did they condemn themselves as wicked men, and as deserving the worst of deaths, who in a few days after this, were concerned in the death of the son of God: *and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen*;

allowing it to be a very just thing, not only to put these men to the most miserable and tormenting death that could be devised, but to take the vineyard out of the hands of their posterity, and let it out to other persons; as it was a righteous thing with God, to remove the church-state, Gospel and ordinances from the Jews, and deliver them to the Gentiles: *which shall render him the fruits in their seasons*; that is, his due, and that in proper time. The other evangelists relate these words, as spoken by Christ: for the reconciliation of which let it be observed, that they were first spoken by the Jews, as is here signified; and after that were spoken by Christ, confirming what they said, and applying it to them; upon which they said, *God forbid*: that we should ever be guilty of such crimes, incur such punishment, and this should be our case: but in proof of it, that so it would be, our Lord alleges the following words.

Ver. 42. *Jesus saith unto them, did ye never read in the Scriptures, &c.*] The passage which stands in Psal. cxviii. 22, 23. *The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.* Very appositely is this Scripture cited, and applied to the present case; which expresses the rejection of the Messiah by the Jewish builders, priests, and Scribes: the whole Psalm may be understood of the Messiah. R. David Kimchi owns<sup>a</sup>, that there is a division among their Rabbins about it: some say that the Psalm is spoken of David, and others, that it is spoken of the days of the Messiah; and these are certainly in the right; and as for this particular passage, it is applied by some of them to the Messiah: so on mentioning Hos. iii. 5. they<sup>a</sup> say, "David was king in this world, and David shall be king in the time to come: wherefore 'tis said, *the stone which the builders refused, &c.*" And one of their noted commentators<sup>b</sup> on those words, *though thou be little among the thousands of Judah*, has this note: "It is fit thou shouldst be little among the families of Judah, because of the impurity of Ruth the Moabitess, which is in thee: out of thee shall come forth unto me, Messiah, the son of David; for so he saith, *the stone which the builders refused, &c.*" Christ is often in Scripture compared to a stone, and is called the stone of Israel; is said to be a stone of stumbling to some, and a precious tried stone to others: is represented as a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, and on which are seven eyes: and is fitly compared to one, for his usefulness in the spiritual building the church, where he is as both the foundation and corner-stone, and for his strength and duration. Christ is the sure, firm, and everlasting foundation, which God has laid in Zion, and the only one of any avail; nor can any other be laid to any purpose; and if he is neglected, and laid aside, in the ministration of the word, the building which men endeavour to rear, or exhort unto, will come to nothing. Whoever build on him are safe, and on nothing else: Christ is the foundation, on

<sup>a</sup> In Psal. cxviii. 1.

<sup>a</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 93. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Jarchi in Mic. v. 2.

which the church, and every believer, are built, and therefore will abide; for the gates of hell cannot prevail against them: the covenant of grace is immovable, being established in him; its mercies are sure, and its promises yea and amen: the salvation of immortal souls is certain, resting upon him; the faith and hope of the saints fail not, being directed to, and settled on him: the house not made with hands, which is in heaven, is an eternal one; and the city, which has foundations, is a continuing one, because of the concern that Christ has in it; and though he is of such eminent use and importance in the building, yet, as such, *the builders rejected him*: by the *builders* are meant, the Jewish rulers, both political and ecclesiastical, especially the latter, who pretended to instruct and build up the people in knowledge and understanding; but in a very bad way did they do it, and upon a very sandy foundation, upon their fleshly privileges, their moral righteousness, and the observance of the ceremonial law, and the traditions of the elders. The Jews used to call their doctors and their scholars *builders*: says R. Jochanan, "the disciples of the wise men are called **בניינים**, *builders*, "because they study in the building of the world all their days, which is the law." These rejected the Messiah, refused to receive, and acknowledge him as such: they disallowed and disapproved of him, as base and vile, and the most contemptible of mortals, and set him at nought, and had him in the utmost scorn and derision. And so he is rejected by some who bear the characters of builders among Christians: as when his proper deity, and eternal sonship are denied, and he is treated as a mere creature; when his satisfaction and atoning sacrifice are either wholly rejected, or little regarded, lessened, and depreciated, and repentance and good works are put in the room of them; when his imputed righteousness is opposed, and laid aside, and the righteousness of men preferred unto it, and cried up as the matter of justification in the sight of God; when his efficacious grace is represented as unnecessary to regeneration, conversion, and sanctification, and to the performance of good works; and when he is left out of public ministrations, as the way of life and salvation, as the fountain of all grace, and foundation of all happiness, and human power, free-will, and moral righteousness are put in his room. But notwithstanding the former and present rejection, and ill treatment of him, he is *become the head of the corner*: he is the corner-stone in the building which knits and cements it together, angels and men, Jews and Gentiles, Old and New Testament saints; saints above, and saints below, and in all ages and places, all meet, and are united together in this corner-stone; which also strengthens and supports the building, and holds it together, and is the ornament and beauty of it: he is the chief corner-stone; he is higher than the kings of the earth; he is superior to angels, and the chiefest among ten thousands of his saints; he is exalted above all creatures, angels, and men, who, by the Jewish builders, was despised and rejected, and scarce allowed to be worthy the name of a man:

*this is the Lord's doing*: this stone is laid in the building by him: the rejection of him is according to his determinate counsel and fore-knowledge; and the exaltation of him, above every name, is owing to him, and he is by, and at his own right hand: and *is marvellous in our eyes*: in the eyes of all the saints; there being in all this such a wonderful display of the wisdom, grace, mercy, power, and faithfulness of God.

Ver. 43. *Therefore I say unto you, &c.*] This is the application of the parable; and the words are directed to the chief priests, elders, Scribes, and people of the Jews; and are delivered as what would be in consequence of the builders rejecting the Messiah, the foundation and corner-stone of the building. *The kingdom of God shall be taken from you*: by which is meant, not their political estate, their civil government, which was of God, and in a short time was to depart from them, according to ancient prophecy, and which is come to pass, as the event shews; nor their legal national church-state and ordinances only, or the priesthood, and the appendages of it; all which, in a little while, were shaken and removed; but the Gospel, which had been preached among them by John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles; so called because it treats of the kingdom of God, and things pertaining to it, and shews men both their right and meetness for it; the one as in the righteousness of Christ, and the other in the regenerating and sanctifying grace of the spirit, which Gospel may be taken away from a people, as from the Jews, because of their contempt of it, and opposition to it, or lukewarmness and indifferency about it, or unfruitfulness under it; and when God has no more souls to gather in by it in such a place, and which is a very unhappy case, whenever it is the case of any people: for when the Gospel is taken away, the riches of a people are gone; the glory of a nation is departed; the light of it is put out; the spiritual bread of a people is no more; the means of conversion and spiritual knowledge cease: all which have a melancholy aspect on posterity. Moreover, the Gospel church-state, which was set up in Judea, may be here meant; which, though it continued and flourished a while, in process of time was to be removed: and which may be done elsewhere, as it has been in Judea, by God's suffering persecution to arise, as he did against the church of Jerusalem, whereby the ministers of the Gospel are driven into corners, or scattered abroad; or by ordering his ministers to preach no more unto such a people, as the apostles were ordered to turn from the Jews to the Gentiles; or by taking away ministers and members of churches by death, and not raising up others in their room; or by withholding a blessing from the word; or by permitting the growth of errors and heresies, which, in course of time, must issue in the dissolution of the church-state in such a place, and which necessarily follows upon the removing of the Gospel: *and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof*. Though God may take away the Gospel from a people, as he did from the Jews; yet he does not, nor

will be, as yet, take it out of the world: he gives it to another nation: to the Gentiles, to all the nations of the world, whither he sent his apostles to preach it, and where it must be preached before the end of the world comes, in order to gather his elect out of them: for not one particular nation is meant, unless the nation of God's elect, among all nations, can be thought to be designed. It may be observed, that the Gospel, wherever it comes, it comes as a gift; it is given: to have it only in the external ministration of it, is a favour; and more especially to understand it spiritually; this is an unmerited gift; as is also ability to preach it: and it is likewise a national mercy wherever it comes; for though it comes in power only to a few, in a nation, yet it is, more or less, a blessing to the whole: nor is it easy to say what temporal advantages a nation enjoys through the ministration of the Gospel in it: and where it is given, and comes in power, it brings forth fruit, as it did in all the world of the Gentiles; even the fruits of grace, and righteousness, and every good work; all which come from Christ, under the influence of his spirit, and by the word and ordinances, as means, and highly become the Gospel, and the professors of it; and for want of which it is removed sometimes from one nation to another: for this cause it was taken from the Jews, and given to the Gentiles. One of the Jewish commentators<sup>d</sup> on these words, in Jer. xiii. 17. *my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride*, has this note; "because of your grandeur, which shall cease; because of the excellency of *the kingdom of heaven*, שְׁמַרְתֶּם לְפָסִילִים, *which shall be given to the profane*;" i. e. the nations of the world.

Ver. 44. *And whosoever shall fall on this stone, &c.*] This is not to be understood of believing in Christ, or of a soul's casting itself on Christ, the foundation-stone; relying on him, and building all its hopes of happiness and salvation on him; which is attended with contrition and brokenness of heart, or repentance unto life, which needed not to be repented of: nor of a believer's offending Christ by evil works, whereby his conscience is wounded, his soul is grieved, and his faith shaken; and though he is hereby in great danger, he shall not be utterly destroyed, but being recovered by repentance, shall be preserved unto salvation; but of such to whom Christ is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence: for as he is the foundation and corner-stone to some, and is set for the rising of them, and to whom he is precious; so he is a stone set for the fall of others, and at which they stumble and fall, and fall upon it: and such are they who are offended at Christ's state of humiliation on earth; at the manner of his birth, the meanness of his parentage, and education; the despicable figure he made in his person, disciples, and audience; and at his sufferings and death: and these *shall be broken*: as a man that stumbles at a stone, and falls upon it, breaks his head, or his bones, or, at least, bruises himself, does not hurt the stone, but the stone hurts him; so all such as are offended at

Christ, injure their own souls, being filled with prejudices against him, and contempt and disbelief of him, which, if grace prevents not, will issue in their everlasting destruction: but whilst there is life, the means of grace continue, the kingdom of God is not taken away; there is hope that such may be recovered from their impenitence and unbelief: *but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder*. Just as if a mill-stone, or any stone of such-like weight and bulk, was to fall upon an earthen vessel; or, as the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, by which the Messiah, and his kingdom, are designed, brake in pieces the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, so that it became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor. As the former part of this verse expresses the sin of unbelievers, and the danger they are exposed unto by it, this sets forth their punishment; and has respect both to the vengeance of Christ, on the Jewish nation, at their destruction, which would fall heavy from him in his state of exaltation, for their evil treatment of him in his state of humiliation; and to his severe wrath, which will be executed at the day of judgment on all unbelievers, impenitent Christless sinners, who have both offended him, and been offended at him; when their destruction will be inevitable, their salvation irretrievable, and their souls irrecoverably lost, and ruined. Some have thought, that there is an allusion in these words to the manner of stoning among the Jews, which was this: "the place of stoning was two men's heights; one of the witnesses struck him on his loins, to throw him down from thence, to the ground: if he died, it was well; if not, they took a stone, which lay there, and was as much as two men could carry, and cast it, with all their might, upon his breast: if he died, it was well; if not, he was stoned by all Israel." Maimonides observes<sup>e</sup>, that "stoning, or throwing down from the high place, was, that he might fall upon the stone, or that the stone might fall upon him; and which of them either it was, the pain was the same."

Ver. 45. *And when the chief priests and Pharisees, &c.*] Which latter, though not before mentioned, were many of them of the grand sanhedrim, as well as the chief priests, Scribes, and elders: *had heard his parables*; that of the two sons being sent into the vineyard, and that of the letting out the vineyard to husbandmen, *they perceived that he spake of them*: they plainly saw that they were designed by the son, that promised to go into the vineyard, but did not; only talked of works, but did not do them: and that they were the husbandmen that acted the ungrateful part to the householder, and the cruel one to his servants, and would to his son, their own consciences told them they were the men. They knew that the whole was levelled against them, and designed for them, and exactly hit their case.

Ver. 46. *But when they sought to lay hands on him, &c.*] Not that they attempted by any outward action to apprehend him, and carry him off, or by any immediate act of violence to take away his life; but they

<sup>d</sup> Jarchi in Jer. xiii. 17.

<sup>e</sup> Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 4. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 45. 1. 2.

Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 15. sect. 1. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora pr. Affirm. 99.

<sup>f</sup> In Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 4.

secretly wished, and earnestly desired to do it: they were so irritated and provoked, that they could scarcely keep their hands off of him, and could have been glad of an opportunity of satiating their revenge upon him: and whereby they would but have fulfilled what he in this parable had prophetically said of them: and yet so hardened were they, though they understood his meaning, they were not deterred thereby, but on another account: *they feared the multitude*; which were now about Christ, lest there should be a tumult, and they should take the part of Christ against them, to which they seemed inclined; when their lives, had they attempted any thing of this nature, would have been in a great deal of danger: *because they took him for a prophet*; by the doctrines which he taught, by the

boldness and freedom of speech he used, and by the miracles he wrought: wherefore, though they might not all of them believe that he was the Messiah, or that prophet Moses spoke of; yet since it was exceeding manifest, that he was a teacher sent of God, and endowed with very wonderful gifts; and from whom many of them had received singular benefits, if not for their souls, yet for their bodies; being healed by him of their lameness, or blindness, or other diseases; therefore would not suffer him to be abused, and ill treated by them: so that, as Mark says, *they left him, and went their way*; to consult together what was proper to be done, and wait for a better opportunity to seize him.

## CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1. *AND Jesus answered and spake unto them again, &c.*] Not to the multitude only, but to the chief priests, elders, Scribes, and Pharisees: for though Mark seems to intimate, that upon the delivery of the last parable of the vineyard, they left him, and went their way; yet since he does not relate the following parable, they might not leave him until they had heard that, which is spoken with much the same design as the former, and might increase their resentment the more: or if the chief priests and elders did go away, the Pharisees remained behind, as is clear from ver. 15. to whom he spake *by parables*, similitudes, and comparisons, taken from earthly things, and against whom he directed the following one; *and said*, as hereafter related.

Ver. 2. *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, &c.*] The Gospel dispensation which had now taken place, the methods of divine grace in it, and the behaviour of men under it, may be fitly illustrated by the following simile, or parable; the design of which is to express the great love of God the father, who is represented by this *certain king*, in espousing any of the children of men to his own son: as, that he a king, who is the King of kings, and Lord of Lords, should concern himself in this manner; and especially, that he should espouse such mean and unworthy creatures to his own, his only, and beloved son, his equal, and his heir: also, the view of it is to set forth the plenteous provisions of grace made under the Gospel dispensation in the word and ordinances; the great neglect and contempt of these by the Jews, who were externally called unto them; the wrath of God upon them for their abuse of them, and ill usage of his servants; the calling of the vilest among them, or of the Gentiles, and how far persons may go in a profession of religion without the wedding-garment, and at last be lost: *which made a marriage for his son*: which may be understood either of contracting and bringing him into a marriage-relation, or of making a marriage-feast on that account: in the former sense, the persons concerned are the father, the bridegroom, and the bride: the parties contracted are the son of God and sinful creatures. The bridegroom is no other than the only-begotten of God the father, his only son and heir, the

Maker and Governor of the universe, who has all the perfections of the Deity, and fulness of the Godhead in him; and, as mediator, has all accomplishments and excellencies; he has all the riches of grace and glory; all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; all loveliness, beauty, and amiableness in his person, and every thing to recommend him as the chiefest among ten thousand: on the other hand, the bride is the church, which consists of a set of persons chosen by God, in Christ, before the foundation of the world; who were considered as sinless creatures, and viewed as such when first betrothed to Christ in the everlasting covenant: but for the further demonstration of his love to them, were suffered to fall in Adam, with the rest of mankind, and to be scattered abroad; when they lost the image of God, came short of his glory, passed under a sentence of condemnation, became liable to the curse of the law, and eternal death; were defiled and polluted in their nature, and in their estate became bankrupts and beggars; and yet this hindered not the consummation of the marriage between Christ and them. The person that contracted this relation between them, is the father of Christ, who chose them for him to be his spouse and bride; brought and presented them to him, as he did Eve to Adam before the fall; and gave them to him, and made them one body and flesh with him, in the everlasting covenant; and draws them, and brings them to him by his powerful grace, in effectual vocation; there was a secret betrothing of all these persons to him in eternity, at his own request, and the full consent of his father, who had the disposal of them; there is an open espousal of them, as particular persons, at conversion; and there will be a more public and general consummate marriage of them, at the last day, when they are all called by grace, and brought home: moreover, this may be understood of the marriage-feast which the father makes on this extraordinary account. So the Syriac version renders the word by *בשתותא, a feast*; and in this sense is it used by the Septuagint in Gen. xxix. 22. by which is meant, not the latter-day glory, or marriage-feast of the Lamb, to which only saints will be invited, and partake of; nor the ultimate glory, when all the elect shall go with Christ into the



marriage-chamber, and spend an eternity in endless joys and unspeakable felicity with him; nor the spiritual blessings of grace enjoyed by believers now; but the external ministry of the word and ordinances, which are a feast of fat things, a rich entertainment, the particulars of which are after given; which many are invited to, who never partake thereof, and others do, and yet destitute of the grace of God; for both good and bad were guests at this feast. The allusion is to the custom of the Jews, and of other nations, in making feasts and grand entertainments at such times. The Jews used to make feasts both at espousals, and at marriage: hence we<sup>s</sup> read of *סעודת אירוסין*, a feast of espousals, and of *סעודת נישואין*, a marriage-feast: the reference here is to the latter; and which used to be made at the charge of the father: for so runs one of their canons<sup>b</sup>: “ a father marries his son, *ועשה לו נישואה*, and makes a feast for him, and the expense is “ the father’s, &c.”

Ver. 3. *And sent forth his servants, &c.*] The ministers of the Gospel, who are the servants of the most high God, of his choosing and ordaining, of his calling and sending, and of his qualifying and employing, and who voluntarily and cheerfully serve him; and may intend John the Baptist, and the twelve apostles of Christ, who were sent to call them that were bidden to the wedding; *הקוראים*, those that were called, as in 1 Sam. ix. 13, 22. by whom are meant the Jews, who were the bidden, or called ones; called of God, and therefore styled *Israel my called*, Isa. xlviii. 12. and by the Targum interpreted *באכני*, my bidden. They were called by the name of God, and called the people of God, and the children of God, and were the children of the kingdom; and were called to many valuable and external privileges; and had previous notice of the Gospel dispensation, by the prophecies concerning Christ, and the blessings of his grace under the former dispensation; and by the ordinances and sacrifices of it, which in a very significant manner set him forth to that people; and now were called to embrace him, to receive his doctrines, and submit to his ordinances, by the ministry of John the Baptist, and the disciples of Christ. It seems, it was sometimes customary to give two invitations to a feast, or to send a second time to the persons bidden to the feast<sup>1</sup>; to which the allusion is here; and they would not come: which shews the insolence and ingratitude of men, their natural aversion to the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; the depravity of the will of man, with respect to things spiritual and evangelical; the insufficiency of outward means, to work with effect, upon the minds of men; and the necessity there is of efficacious and unfrustrable grace to bring men to believe in Christ, cordially to receive his truths, and be subject to his commands. There is a two-fold call by the ministry of the word; the one is internal, and that is, when the word comes not in word only, but in power; is the power of God unto salvation, and the savour of life unto life; for by the Gospel are the elect of God called to the obtaining of the glory of Christ; 2 Thess. ii. 14. This call is of grace; it springs from the free grace and

favour of God, and it is effected by the mighty power of his grace; and it is to special blessings of grace; it is a fruit of God’s everlasting love, and an evidence of it; and is according to the eternal purpose of God, which is never frustrated: it is a call to the enjoyment of spiritual blessings, as peace, pardon, righteousness, and everlasting happiness; by it men are called to light and liberty, to the grace of Christ, and communion with him; to all the privileges of God’s house here, and eternal glory hereafter; to which he that calls them, gives them a right and meetness, and infallibly brings them to it: and therefore it is styled an heavenly calling, and the high calling of God in Christ; for this call is ever effectual, and the ends of it are always answered; it is unchangeable, irreversible, and never repented of. But besides this, there is a bare external call to the sons of men, through the preaching of the word; which is not to make their peace with God, a thing impossible to be done by them, and which is contrary to the Gospel, and reflects dishonour on Christ, the peacemaker; nor to get an interest in him, which, wherever possessed, is given, and not gotten; nor to regenerate themselves; this is the work of the spirit of God, and in which men are as passive, as the infant in its natural generation, conception, and birth; nor to the exercise of evangelical grace, as faith, love, &c. which are not in them, and no man can exercise that which he has not, nor should he be called to it; nor to any spiritual vital act, since men are dead in trespasses and sins, and can’t put forth any: but this call in the word, is to the natural duties of religion, as to hear, read, and pray; to attend on the word, to wait at Wisdom’s gates, and watch at the posts of her door, and so lie in the way of being effectually called by the grace of God; but this call may be where election does not go before, and where sanctification does not follow, and where there may be no salvation, Matt. xx. 16. and is often slighted, neglected, and of no effect, which is the case here.

Ver. 4. *Again he sent forth other servants, &c.*] The seventy disciples, and other ministers of the Gospel, as Barnabas and Saul, and others that were joined to, and were helpers of the apostles, who were sent, and preached to the Jews, any time before the destruction of Jerusalem: saying, tell them which are bidden; for these preachers of the word were first sent to the Jews, and preached unto them, until they by their carriage and conduct, shewed themselves to be unworthy of the blessing. These men had notice of the Gospel-feast by the prophets, and were invited to it, by the forerunner of Christ, by him, and his disciples, and again by them, and others; which strongly expresses the goodness, grace, and condescension of God to these people, and aggravates their stupidity, ingratitude, and wickedness: *behold, I have prepared my dinner*. The ministry of the word and ordinances under the Gospel dispensation, is signified by a dinner; of God’s preparing and providing; which is a full meal at noon, and in it is plenty of food, and of that which is wholesome to the souls of men, sweet and savoury to a spiritual taste, and very nourishing and satisfying; and

<sup>s</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 43. 1. 2.

<sup>b</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Nechalot, c. 9. sect. 13. Vid. Misn. Sheviith, c. 7. sect. 4. & Juchasin, fol. 88. 1.

<sup>1</sup> Vid. Joseph. apud Grofium in loc.

this dinner is a feast, a rich banquet, a grand entertainment; in which are a variety of provisions, suited to all sorts of persons, and plenty of the richest dainties, attended with the largest expressions of joy; and this feast is a marriage one, and that not for an ordinary person, but for the king's son, the son of the King of kings; it is large, grand, and noble, rich and costly, and yet all free to the guests; it is kept in the king's palace, the banqueting-house, the church, is common to all, and of long continuance, it will last unto the end of the world. What privileges the patriarchs and prophets, and the people of the Jews enjoyed, in the morning of the world, before the coming of Christ, who made the bright and full day of the Gospel, were but as a *breakfast*, a short meal; the means of grace were not so rich and plentiful, and their knowledge of spiritual things not so large; they had but, as it were, a taste of what is plentifully bestowed under the Gospel dispensation, and therefore that is called a *dinner*; grace and truth in all their fulness, coming by Jesus, by whom God has delivered at once his whole mind and will; whereas, before, it was delivered by piecemeals, at sundry times and divers manners; and this is distinguishable from the *supper* of the Lamb, in the evening of the world, in the latter day, when the Jews will be converted, and will not act the part they are represented to do in the parable; and the fulness of the Gentiles will be brought in, and the Gospel will have a general spread all over the world. The dinner is the same with the feast of fat things, which God is said to make for all people, Gentiles as well as Jews, in his holy mountain the church, Isa. xxv. 6. and the table which wisdom has furnished, Prov. ix. 2. with all sorts of suitable food, proper to persons of every age: here's milk for babes, even the sincere milk of the word, that their souls may grow thereby, who are newborn babes, and have tasted of the grace of God; namely, the plainer and more easy truths of the Gospel, to be taken in, understood, fed upon, and digested; and meat for strong men, the more sublime doctrines of it, which such as are strong in faith, receive, relish, and live upon, and are greatly refreshed and edified with: here's the wine of God's everlasting love set forth, in the election, redemption, justification, pardon, adoption, regeneration, and salvation of his people; and fruits served up both new and old, for their comfort, delight, and pleasure; in the ordinances of the Gospel, are the flesh and blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, and fatted calf, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed: here's every thing for delight and nourishment, for faith to feed and live upon; and therefore may well be called a dinner, and what is worthy of him, who is the maker of it, and exceedingly well suited to the persons who are to partake of it. *My oxen and my fatlings are killed*; in allusion to feasts and large entertainments, when oxen and fatted calves, and the best of the flock were killed and dressed; or to the sacrifices of oxen and other creatures, under the law, as typical of the sacrifice of Christ; and may here represent Christ as crucified and slain, held forth in the ministry of the word and ordinances; who as such, is suitable food for believers, is spiritual, solid, and substantial, and greatly to be desired; is nourishing and strengthening, comforting and quickening, delightful

and satisfying: *and all things are ready*: for upon the crucifixion and death of Christ, and after the renewed commission of Christ to his disciples, to preach the Gospel, beginning at Jerusalem, it might be justly represented in the ministry of the word, that all things were now ready. Redemption was obtained by Christ; an everlasting righteousness was wrought out and brought in; pardon of sin was procured; peace and reconciliation were made; the sacrifice of Christ was offered up, and full satisfaction given to law and justice; the covenant of grace, with all the blessings and promises of it, were ratified and confirmed; and all were ready in Christ's hands to distribute, to as many as came to him; in whom are life and salvation, and every thing necessary for peace and comfort here, and eternal happiness hereafter. This shews the completeness and perfection of the Gospel dispensation, this being that better thing, which God has provided for his people in the last times, that former saints might not be perfect without them, Heb. xi. 40. The law made nothing perfect; there was nothing got ready by that; the works, sacrifices, rites, and ceremonies of it, could not justify men's persons, nor sanctify their hearts, nor purge the consciences of the worshippers, nor take away sin, nor pacify God, or give satisfaction to his justice, or procure peace, pardon and salvation; but now all these things are declared to be ready in the Gospel: but this is not owing to man, it is all of God; it is of his providing and preparing; and he is a rock, and his work is perfect; and nothing can be brought by the creature to be added to it, nor does it need it; there's every thing exhibited in the Gospel that a poor sinner stands in need of, or can desire, even that can make him comfortable here, and happy hereafter. *Come unto the marriage*; the marriage-feast; come into the Gospel dispensation, attend the word and ordinances: the invitation is pressing, the arguments are strong and moving, but the persons invited were averse, self-willed, stubborn, obstinate, and inflexible.

Ver. 5. *But they made light of it, &c.*] The invitation. They neglected the ministry of the Gospel; they did not care for it, nor shewed any regard to it: and this is the case, when either it is not attended on, though there is an opportunity, yet having no heart to embrace it, and no value for it, neglect attendance on it; and which often arises from an over-love of the world: or when it is attended on, but in a very negligent and careless manner; when men pull away the shoulder, or stop their ears; when they don't mind what they hear, let it slip and forget it; when they are unconcerned for it, and their thoughts are employed about other things: or when the Gospel and the ordinances of it are looked upon as things of no importance; not knowing the real worth and value of them; seeing no wisdom in them, having never tasted the sweetness, or felt the power of them, or seen the need of the things revealed by them: as also when there is an aversion to the Gospel, a loathing of it, as a novel, upstart doctrine, received but by a few, and these the meanest and most illiterate; as contrary to reason, and tending to licentiousness; and especially, when it is contradicted and blasphemed, as it was by the Jews, and its ministers despised: some men make

light of it, because of the loss of time from worldly employments; because of the charge attending it; because it teaches them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; and because they prefer their bodies to their souls, and things temporal, to things eternal. The aggravations of their sin, in slighting and neglecting the Gospel and Gospel ordinances, are, that this is a grand entertainment, a very expensive provision, as well as a very plentiful one; that it was a wedding-dinner, a feast of love, they were invited to; that it was prepared by so great a person as a king, and who is the King of kings, and the only potentate; who provided this dinner of his own sovereign good will and pleasure, in the everlasting council and covenant of grace and peace: for the things of which it consists, there was a scheme so early contrived to bring them about; and that this was made on the account of the marriage of his son, the Messiah, who had been so often spoken of by the prophets of the Old Testament, these men professed a value for; one so long expected by their forefathers, and is the messenger of the covenant, whose coming they themselves desired and sought for; and that they should be invited to it again and again, and one set of servants sent after another, and the most striking and moving arguments made use of; and yet they slighted and made light of all this, and were careless and unconcerned; to which may be added, that the things they were invited to, were such as concerned their immortal souls, and the spiritual and eternal welfare of them; in short, it was no other than the great salvation, wrought out by the great God, and our Saviour, for great sinners, at the expense of his blood and life, which they neglected; see Heb. ii. 3. *And went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise*: they all turned their backs on the Gospel, and the ministration of it, and pursued their own worldly inclinations, ways, and methods of life: those that were brought up in a rural way, lived a country life, and were concerned in meaner employments, went every one to their *village*, as the Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read it, and to their farms, there to manage their cattle, and till their ground; and others, that lived in larger towns and cities, and were concerned in greater business of life, betook themselves to trade at home, or traffic abroad; placing their happiness in the affluence of this life, which they preferred to the word and ordinances of Christ. Such a division of worldly employment is made by the Jews<sup>a</sup>; "the way of that host is like to a king, who makes a grand entertainment, and says to the children of his palace, all the rest of the days ye shall be every one in his house; this shall do his business, דָּתָא אִינִי בְּסוּרְתֵיהִי, and this shall go about his merchandise, דָּתָא אִינִי בְּחֻקֵיהִי, and this shall go to his field, except on my day."

Ver. 6. *And the remnant took his servants, &c.*] They that went to their several worldly callings and occupations of life, troubled themselves no further about the Messiah, his doctrines and ordinances; but others of them were more spiteful and injurious: they not only slighted the message, and took no notice of the invitation, but also abused the messengers; some of the servants they laid hold upon, and put them in the

common prison, and detained them there a while; as they did the apostles quickly after our Lord's ascension, particularly Peter and John: *and entreated them spitefully*; gave them very hard words, and reproachful language; menacing and threatening them what they would do to them, if they did not forbear preaching in the name of Jesus; though they were not intimidated hereby, but rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame on such an account; and even their malice and wickedness proceeded so far, as to take away the lives of some of them: *and slew them*; thus they stoned Stephen to death, the proto-martyr for Christ; and killed James, the brother of John, with the sword; which last, though he was put to death by Herod, yet with the consent and good liking of the Jews.

Ver. 7. *But when the king heard thereof, &c.*] Of this mal-treatment, and barbarous usage of his servants, their cries coming up into his ears, and their blood calling for vengeance at his hands; and he full well knowing what they did unto them, and upon what account, being the omniscient God; and observing their malignity and wickedness, *he was wroth*; who, though slow to anger, bears much, and suffers long; yet was now highly incensed and provoked, and stirred up all his wrath, determining to take vengeance on such a vile generation of men. Christ, when he was here on earth, was sometimes provoked by the Jews, through their unbelief, their obstinacy, and the hardness of their hearts, and was angry with them, being grieved for them, Mark iii. 5. but then was not the proper time to execute his wrath; he then appeared as the Lamb of God, to take away the sin of the world; he came to save men, and not to destroy their lives, nor to condemn the world: when his martyr Stephen was suffering, he was seen by him standing at the right hand of God, being risen from his seat, as one incensed at the usage his servant met with from the wicked Jews; but the time of his vengeance was not yet come, more patience and forbearance were to be exercised towards them: but now his kingdom came with power, and he appears as the Lion of the tribe of Judah; and pours out his wrath to the uttermost upon them, destroys their city and temple, and puts an end to their civil and ecclesiastical state, and cuts them off from being a nation; and now it was, that he ordered these his enemies, who would not have him to rule over them, brought before him, and slain in his presence; and in all this, he shewed his kingly power and authority; and by removing the sceptre from them, and all shew of dominion and government, made it fully appear that he, the Messiah, was come. Well had it been for them, had they taken the advice of the Psalmist, *Kiss the son, the son of God, believe in him as such, embrace him as the Messiah, yield subjection and obedience to his word and ordinances, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little*, Psal. ii. 12. But now his wrath was kindled very much, and was poured out like fire, and there was no standing before it; the day of the Lord burned like an oven, and destroyed the Jews root and branch: the manner and means, in and

<sup>a</sup> Zohar in Lev. fol. 40. 2.

by which this utter ruin was brought about, are as follow: *and he sent forth his armies*; not the angels, who are the armies and hosts of heaven; nor desolating judgments only, as pestilence and famine, though the latter was severely felt by the Jews, but chiefly the Roman armies are here meant; called *his*, because they came by the Lord's appointment and permission; and were used by him, for the destruction of these people: *and destroyed those murderers*; of Christ and his apostles, as their fathers had been of the prophets before them: *and burnt up their city*; the city of Jerusalem, the metropolis of the Jews, and where the principal of these murderers dwelt; and which was burnt and destroyed by the Roman army, under Titus Vespasian. And a worse punishment than this, even the vengeance of eternal fire, may all the neglecters of the Gospel, and persecutors of the ministers of it expect, from him, whose vengeance is, and who will repay it; for if judgment began at the house of God, the people of the Jews who were so called, what will be the end of them that obey not the Gospel of Christ? How sore a punishment shall they be thought worthy of, who trample under foot the son of God, count his blood a common thing, and do despite to the spirit of grace? If the law, when transgressed, demanded a just recompense of reward, or inflicted deserved punishment, how shall the neglecters of the great salvation revealed in the Gospel escape?

Ver. 8. *Then saith he to his servants, &c.*] That were preserved from their rage and malice, and outlived their implacable enemies, and saw their utter ruin and destruction: *the wedding is ready*; meaning not the marriage-contract, which was secretly performed in eternity; or the calling of God's elect among the Jews, and their open espousal to Christ, which for the present was now over; but the marriage-feast, or the Gospel dispensation, which was ushered in, and the ministry of it, to which nothing was wanting; all the promises, prophecies, types, and shadows, of the former dispensation, were now accomplished; the Lamb of God was slain, and all things to be done by him were now finished; the ministers of the Gospel, the apostles, were called, their commission enlarged, and they qualified with a greater measure of the spirit, and were sent to preach both to Jews and Gentiles: *but they which were bidden were not worthy*; that is, the Jews, who had notice of this dispensation by the prophets, were told by John the Baptist, that it was at hand; were once, and again externally called unto it by the ministry of the apostles; but they were not only unworthy in themselves, as all men are, of such a blessing and privilege, but they behaved towards it in a very unworthy manner; they were so far from attending on it in a diligent and peaceable way, as becomes all such persons that are blessed with the external ministry of it; who when they do so, may be said to behave worthily, and, in some sense, to be worthy of such a privilege being continued with them; see Matt. x. 13. compared with Luke x. 6. that they contradicted and blasphemed it, and by their own outrageous carriage, shewed plainly that they were unworthy of it; and were so judged by Christ and his apostles, who ordered them to turn from them, and go to the Gentiles, and which may be intended in the following words.

Ver. 9. *Go ye therefore into the highways, &c.*] Either of the city, which were open and public, and where much people were passing to and fro; or of the fields, the high-roads, where many passengers were travelling; and may design the Gentile world, and Gentile sinners, who, in respect of the Jews, were far off; were walking in their own ways, and in the high-road to destruction; and may denote their being the vilest of sinners, and as having nothing to recommend them to the divine favour, and to such privileges as this entertainment expresses: *and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage*; to the marriage-feast, not the marriage-supper, but the dinner, ver. 4. their orders were to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, Jew or Gentile, high or low, rich or poor, outwardly righteous, or openly profane, greater or lesser sinners, and exhort them to attend the Gospel ministry, and ordinances.

Ver. 10. *So these servants went out into the highways, &c.*] Turned from the Jews, and went among the Gentiles, preaching the Gospel to them; particularly the Apostle Paul, with Barnabas, and others: *and gathered together all, as many as they found, both good and bad*: the Persic version reads it, *known or unknown*. The Gospel ministry is the means of gathering souls to Christ, and to attend his ordinances, and into his churches; and of these that are gathered by it into churches, and to an attendance on outward ordinances, some are good and some bad, as the fishes gathered in the net of the Gospel are said to be, in ch. xiii. 47, 48. which may either express the character of the Gentiles before conversion, some of them being outwardly good in their civil and moral character; closely adhering to the law and light of nature, doing the things of it, and others notoriously wicked; or rather, how they proved when gathered in, some being real believers, godly persons, whose conversations were as became the Gospel of Christ; others hypocrites, empty professors, having a form of godliness, and nothing of the power of it; destitute of grace in their hearts, and of holiness in their lives; and the whole sets forth the diligence of the servants, in executing their master's orders, with so much readiness and exactness: *and the wedding was furnished with guests*: that is, the wedding-chamber, or the place where the wedding was kept, and the marriage-dinner was prepared, and eat; so the Syriac renders it, *בית משתתא*, *the house of the feast*, or where the feast was kept; and so the Ethiopic version: the Persic version reads it, *the house of the nuptial-feast*: which designs the house and church of God, into which large numbers of the Gentiles were brought, by the ministry of the apostles; so that it was filled with persons that made a profession of Christ and his Gospel.

Ver. 11. *And when the king came in to see the guests, &c.*] Professors of religion, members of churches, whom God takes particular notice of; he is an omniscient being, and his eyes are upon all men and their actions, and especially on such as are called by his name: he takes notice how they behave in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, and distinguishes hypocrites from real believers; the latter of which he has a special affection for, makes rich and large provisions for them, and protects and defends them; he

knows them that are his, and gives them marks of respect; and he spies out such as are not, and will in his own time discover them, to their utter confusion and ruin. There are certain times and seasons, when God may be said to come in to see his guests; as sometimes in a way of gracious visits to his dear children, when he bids them welcome to the entertainment of his house, and invites them to eat and drink abundantly; and sometimes in a way of providence, against formal professors and hypocrites; and at the last judgment, when he'll separate the sheep from the goats, and discern between the righteous and the wicked: *he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment*; by which is meant, not good works, or a holy life and conversation, nor any particular grace of the spirit, as faith, or charity, or humility, or repentance, or any other, nor the whole work of sanctification, nor the Holy Ghost, but the righteousness of Christ: for though good works are the outward conversation-garments of believers, and these greatly become them and adorn the doctrine of Christ, yet they are imperfect, and have their spots, and need washing in the blood of Christ, and can't in themselves recommend them to God; and though the Holy Spirit and his graces, his work of holiness upon the heart, make the saints all glorious within, yet not these, but the garment of Christ's righteousness, is their cloathing of wrought gold, and raiment of needle-work, in which they are brought into the king's presence: this, like a garment, is without them, and put upon them; and which covers and protects them, and beautifies and adorns them; and which may be called a wedding garment, because it is that, in which the elect of God were betrothed to Christ; in which they are made ready and prepared for him, as a bride adorned for her husband: and in which they will be introduced into his presence, and be by him presented, first to himself, and then to his father, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. This man had not on this garment; this robe of righteousness; it was not imputed to him; he had no knowledge of it; or if he had any, it was only a speculative one; he had no true faith in it; he had never put on Christ, as the Lord his righteousness; he had got into a church-state without it, though there's no entrance into the kingdom of heaven but by it.

Ver. 12. *And he saith unto him, friend, &c.*] Either in an ironical way, or because he professed to be a friend of God and Christ: *how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?* Which way didst thou come in hither? since he did not come in by faith, in the righteousness of Christ; intimating, that he climbed up some other way, and was a thief and robber; or with what face, or how couldst thou have the assurance to come in hither in such a dress, having nothing but the filthy rags of thine own righteousness? How couldst thou expect to meet with acceptance with me, or to be suitable company for my people, not being arrayed with the garments of salvation, and robe of righteousness, as they are? *And he was speechless*; or muzzled: his mouth was stopped, he had nothing to say for himself: not but that there will be pleas-

made use of by hypocrites, and formal professors, another day; who will plead either their preaching and prophesying in Christ's name; or their attendance on outward ordinances; or the works they have done, ordinary or extraordinary; but then these will all be superseded and silenced, their own consciences will condemn them, their mouths will be stopped, and they'll have nothing to say in vindication of themselves; their righteousness won't answer for them in a time to come. The Jews have a tradition<sup>1</sup>, that "Esau the wicked, will veil himself with his garment, and sit among the righteous in paradise, in the world to come; and the holy blessed God will draw him, and bring him out from thence, which is the sense of those words, Obad. v. 4. *Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord.*"

Ver. 13. *Then said the king to his servants, &c.*] By whom are meant, either the ministers of the Gospel, and pastors of churches, who by the order of Christ, and in the name of the churches, cast out all such as appear, by their bad principles and evil practices, to be without the grace of God, and righteousness of Christ; or rather, the angels, who will bind up the tares in bundles, and burn them, and gather out of Christ's kingdom all that offend and do iniquity; and sever the wicked from the just, and use them in the manner here directed to: *bind him hand and foot*; as malefactors used to be, to denote the greatness of his crime, his unparalleled insolence, and the unavoidable nature of his punishment; such methods being taken, that there could be no escaping it: *and take him away*; from hence, to prison; a dreadful thing, to go out of a church of Christ to hell. This clause is not in the Vulgate Latin, nor in the Syriac and Arabic versions, nor in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, but is in all the ancient Greek copies; and cast him into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; see the note on Mat. viii. 12.

Ver. 14. *For many are called, but few chosen.*] See the note on Matt. xx. 16.

Ver. 15. *Then went the Pharisees, &c.*] After they had heard the parables of the two sons being bid to go into the vineyard, of the vineyard let out to husbandmen, and of the marriage-feast; for it is clear from hence, that these staid and heard the last of these parables, in all which they saw themselves designed; and though they were irritated and provoked to the last degree, they were obliged to hide their resentments, nor durst they use any violence for fear of the people; wherefore they retired to some convenient place, to the council-chamber, or to the palace of the high-priest, or where the chief priests were gone, who seem to have departed some time before them: *and took counsel*; among themselves, and of others, their superiors; not how they should behave more agreeably for the future, and escape due punishment and wrath to the uttermost, which the King of kings would justly inflict on them, very plainly signified in the above parables; but *how they might entangle him in his talk, or take hold of his words*, as in Luke; or *catch him in his words*, as in Mark: they consulted to draw

<sup>1</sup> T. Hieros. Nedarim, fol. 38. 1.

him into a conversation, on a dangerous and ensnaring subject; when they hoped a word might drop unwarily from him, which they might catch at, lay hold on, and improve to his disadvantage; either with the common people, or the government, and especially the latter; as is to be learned from Luke, who expressly says their end was, *that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor*; the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, should he say any thing against Cæsar, which they endeavoured to ensnare him into; by which means, they doubted not of setting the populace against him, and of screening themselves from their resentments; and of gaining their main point, the delivery of him up into the hands of the civil government, who, for treason and sedition, would put him to death.

Ver. 16. *And they sent out unto him their disciples, &c.*] Who were trained up in the same way of thinking with themselves, had imbibed the same tenets, and were strenuous defenders of them; and no doubt they selected the most crafty and artful among them; and who were the best versed in their principles and sophistic method of arguing: these they the rather sent, imagining they would not be known, as they themselves were: and from their age and air of simplicity, might be taken for innocent persons, who in great sincerity, came to be instructed by him, *with the Herodians*: learned men are very much divided in their sentiments about these men; some think they were Gentiles under the government of Herod; but it is not likely that the Pharisees would join themselves with such, whose company they carefully shunned; others, that they were Gentile proselytes, as Herod was; but that on either of these accounts, they should be called by his name, there seems to be no reason: others say, they were Greeks, whom Herod brought out of a desert into his own country, and formed a sect, which from him were called Herodians: this way went Drusius, in which he was followed by several learned men, until the mistake was detected; who took it from a passage in the Hebrew Lexicon, called *Baal Aruch*, mistaking the word *יוני*, for *Greeks*, which signifies *doves*; the Jewish writer referring to a passage in the *Misna*<sup>m</sup>, which speaks of *יוני הרודיאנות*, *Herodian doves*; that is, tame ones, such as were brought up in houses: for that these are meant, is clear from the *Misnic* and *Talmudic* writers, and their commentators<sup>n</sup>; and were so called, because that Herod was the first that tamed wild doves, and brought up tame ones in his own palace; and so Josephus<sup>o</sup> says, that he had many towers stored with tame doves, which was a new thing in Judea. Others, that they were Sadducees, which carries some appearance of truth in it; since what is styled the leaven of the Sadducees, in Matt. xvi. 6. is called the leaven of Herod, in Mark viii. 15. And very probable it is, that Herod was a Sadducee, and that his courtiers, at least many of them, were of the same sect; but yet it is certain, that the Sadducees are spoken of, as distinct from these Herodians, in ver. 23. of this chapter. Others, that they were a set

of men, that formed a new scheme of religion, consisting partly of Judaism, and partly of Gentilism, approved and espoused by Herod, and therefore called by his name; and others, that they were such as held, that Herod was the Messiah; but it is certain, that Herod did not think so himself, nor the people of the Jews in common; and whatever flatterers he might have in his life-time, it can hardly be thought, that this notion should survive his death, who was so odious to the Jewish nation: others think, that they were such, who were not for paying tribute to Cæsar, but to Herod, and were encouraged and defended by him and his courtiers, as much as they could; since he and his family looked upon themselves to be injured by the Romans, and secretly grudged that tribute should be paid unto them: others, on the contrary, say, that these were such, who pleaded that tribute ought to be paid to Cæsar, by whose means Herod enjoyed his government, and was supported in it; and were just the reverse of the Pharisees, with whom they are here joined, in their attempts on Christ. The Syriac version renders the word by *רביית הרווד*, *those of the house, or family of Herod*, his courtiers and domestics: in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, they are called *עבדי הרווד*, *the servants of Herod*; and certain it is, that Herod was at Jerusalem at this time, Luke xxiii. 7. We read<sup>p</sup> of Menahem, who was one while an associate of Hillel, who with eighty more clad in gold, went *לעבודת המלך*, *into the service of the king*, that is, Herod, and hence might be called Herodians. Wherefore these seem rather to be the persons designed, whom the Pharisees chose to send with their disciples, though they were of Herod's party, and were on the other side of the question from them; being for giving tribute to Cæsar, by whom their master held his government; that should Christ be ensnared by them, as they hoped he would, into any seditious or treasonable expressions against Cæsar, these might either accuse him to Herod, or immediately seize him, and have him before the Roman governor. Luke observes, that these men, the disciples of the Pharisees and the Herodians, were sent forth as *spies*, *which should feign themselves just men*; men of religion and holiness, and who were upright and sincere in their question, and who had strong inclinations to become his disciples: the Jews themselves own, that they sent such persons to Jesus, whom they mention by name, in such a disguised manner to deceive him: their words are these<sup>q</sup>; "They (the Sanhedrim) sent unto him Ananiah and Ahaziah, honourable men of the lesser sanhedrim, and when they came before him they bowed down to him—and he thought that they believed in him, and he received them very courteously." *Saying, master*: as if they were his disciples, or at least were very willing to be so: however, they allow him to be a doctor or teacher, and a very considerable one: *we know that thou art true*; a true and faithful minister, that teachest truth, and speakest uprightly; one of great integrity, and to be depended upon: *and teachest the way of God in truth*; rightly opens the

<sup>m</sup> Cholin, c. 12. sect. 1.

<sup>n</sup> T. Bah. Cholin, fol. 129. a. & Betza, fol. 24. 1. & 25. 1. *Misn. Sabbat.* c. 24. 2. & Cholin, c. 12. sect. 1. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>o</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 13.

<sup>p</sup> Juchasin, fol. 19. 1.

<sup>q</sup> Toldor Jesu, p. 6.

word of God, gives the true and genuine sense of the law of God, faithfully instructs men in the worship of God; and with great sincerity, directs men to the way of coming to God, and enjoying eternal happiness with him; having no sinister ends, or worldly interest in view: *neither carest thou for any man*; be he ever so great and honourable, in ever so high a station, be he Cæsar himself; signifying, that he was a man of such openness and integrity, that he always freely spoke the real sentiments of his mind, whether men were pleased or displeased; being in no fear of man, nor in the least to be intimidated by frowns and menaces, or any danger from men: *for thou regardest not the person of men*: as he had not the persons of the high-priests and elders, the grand sanhedrim of the nation, who had lately been examining him in the temple: and seeing therefore he made no difference among men, whether learned or unlearned, rich or poor, high or low; whether they were in exalted stations and high offices, or not; he feared no man's face, and accepted no man's person, but gave his sense of things, without fear or flattery; they hoped he would give a direct answer to the following question, though Cæsar himself was concerned in it.

Ver. 17. *Tell us therefore what thinkest thou, &c.*] Since, as they suggested he was a person of great understanding and sincerity, they earnestly desire that he would be pleased, according to his usual frankness and openness, to give them his opinion; in which they intimate, they should sit down satisfied and contented: whether *is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?* Meaning, according to the law of God: this was a question among the Jews: the Herodians were for it, the Pharisees were against it, at least secretly; and, indeed, this latter was the general sense of the nation, who looked upon themselves to be, or however ought to be, a free people, being the children of God, and the seed of Abraham; and who urged, that according to their law, none but one of their own brethren, who was of their own nation and religion, was to be set as king over them; whereas Cæsar, the Roman emperor, was a stranger, one of another nation, and an idolater; and some openly refused it, and made mutinies and insurrections on account of it, as Theudas, and Judas of Galilee: now by putting this question to Christ, in the presence of different parties, they hoped to get an advantage of him either way; for had he been silent, they would have reproached him, as not being the honest, faithful, frank, and open man, they pretended to take him to be; and if he had answered either in the affirmative or negative, they were prepared to make use of it to his injury; had he said that it was lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, this being contrary to the general notions of the people, they would have improved it to draw them from him, and to set them against him; and had he affirmed it was not lawful to do it, they would then have accused him to the Roman governor, and delivered him up into his hands, to judge and condemn him, according to the Roman laws; which latter was what they were wishing for.

Ver. 18. *But Jesus perceived their wickedness, &c.*] Luke says, *their craftiness*; and Mark says, *knowing their hypocrisy*; for there was a mixture of malice, hypocrisy, and artfulness, in the scheme they had formed; but Christ being the omniscient God, saw the wickedness of their hearts, knew their hypocritical designs, and was well acquainted with all their artifice: he judged not according to the outward appearance of their affection for him, and opinion of him, of religion, righteousness, and holiness in themselves, and of a sincere desire to have their conscience satisfied about this matter; the snare they laid was visible to him, the mask they put on could not screen them from him, nor impose upon him: *and said, why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?* as he might well call them, who feigned themselves just persons, pretended a great deal of respect for him, call him master, compliment him with the characters of a faithful, sincere, and disinterested preacher; yet by putting the above question, designed no other than to ensnare him, and bring him into disgrace or trouble.

Ver. 19. *Shew me the tribute money, &c.*] Not any money, or any sort of coin that was current among them; but that in which the tribute was usually paid, which was Roman money: *and they brought unto him a penny*; not as being what was the usual sum that was paid for tribute at one time, but as a sample of what sort of money it was paid in, in Roman pence; one of which was seven-pence halfpenny of our money.

Ver. 20. *And he saith unto them, &c.*] Having the penny in one hand, and pointing to it with the other, *whose is this image and superscription? or inscription?* for the penny that was brought him had an image upon it, the form of a man's head struck on it, and round about it an inscription, or writing, shewing who it was the image of, and whose money it was, and when it was coined: this is enough to shew, that this penny was not a Jewish, but a Roman one; for the Jews, though they put inscriptions, yet no images on their coin; and much less would they put Cæsar's thereon, as was on this: it is asked, "What is the coin of Jerusalem? The answer is, David and Solomon on one side, and Jerusalem the holy city on the other side, *i. e.* as the gloss observes, David and Solomon were written on one side, and on the other side were written Jerusalem the holy city." It follows, "and what was the coin of Abraham our father? an old man and an old woman, (Abraham and Sarah,) on one side, and a young man and a young woman, (Isaac and Rebekah,) on the other side." The gloss on it is, "not that there was on it the form of an old man and an old woman on one side, and of a young man and a young woman on the other, for it is forbidden to make the form of a man; but so it was written on one side, an old man and an old woman, and on the other side, a young man and a young woman."

Ver. 21. *They say unto him, Cæsar's, &c.*] Either Augustus Cæsar's; for there was a coin of that emperor's, as Dr. Hammond reports, from *Occo*, which had his image or picture on it, and in it these words

<sup>r</sup> T. Bah. Bava Kama, fol. 97. 2. Vid. Beresbit Rabba sect. 39. fol. 34. 4. & Midrash Kohelet, fol. 95. 4.  
NEW TEST.—VOL. I.

written, Augustus Cæsar, such a year, *after the taking of Judæa*; which if this was the coin, was a standing testimony of the subjection of the Jews to the Romans; and this being current with them, was an acknowledgment of it by them, and carried in it an argument of their obligation to pay tribute to them; or it might be Tiberius Cæsar's, the then reigning emperor, in the nineteenth year of whose reign, Christ was crucified; and seeing he had reigned so long, it is reasonable to suppose, his money was very common, and most in use: we read in the Talmud <sup>1</sup>, of *דינר קיסרונה*, a Cæsarean penny, or Cæsar's penny, the same sort with this: now this penny having Cæsar's image and inscription on it, our Lord tacitly suggests, that they ought to pay tribute to him; since his money was allowed of as current among them, which was in effect owning him to be their king; and which perfectly agrees with a rule of their own, which runs thus <sup>2</sup>: "A king whose coin is current in any country, the inhabitants of that country agree about him, and it is their joint opinion, *שדוהא אדוניהם הוהם לו עבדים*, *that he is their Lord, and they are his servants.*" This being the case now with the Jews, Christ's advice is, *render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God, the things that are God's*: give Cæsar the tribute and custom, and fear, and honour, and obedience, which are due to him; which may be done without interfering with the honour of God, and prejudicing his interest and glory, when care is taken, that all the worship and obedience due to God are given to him: subjection to civil magistrates is not inconsistent with the reverence and fear of God; all are to have their dues rendered unto them, without intrenching upon one another. And the Jews themselves allow, that a king ought to have his dues, whether he be a king of Israel, or of the Gentiles: "a publican, or tax-gatherer, (they say <sup>3</sup>), that is appointed by the king, whether a king of Israel, or of the Gentiles, and takes what is fixed by the order of the government; 'tis forbidden to refuse payment of the tax to him, for *דינא דמלכותא דינא*, *the right of a king is right.*" Just and equitable, and he ought to have his right.

Ver. 22. *When they had heard these words, &c.*] This answer returned unto them, this advice which was given them, which they could not gainsay or deny to be good, *they marvelled*: were amazed and astonished, at his prudence and wisdom, in answering them, in such an unexpected and cautious manner: *they left him*: being silenced, confounded, and disappointed: *and went their way*: not being able to get any advantage against him, neither to bring him into contempt with the people, and alienate their affections from him; nor to charge him with sedition or treason to the Roman governor; and so had but a very indifferent account of their success, to report to them that sent them.

Ver. 23. *The same day came to him the Sadducees, &c.*] Quickly after the Pharisees and Herodians had left him; and which shews, that the Herodians and

Sadducees were not the same; but that the Sadducees were a distinct sect, both from the Pharisees and the Herodians. These understanding that the former had not succeeded, came with a knotty question, with which they had often puzzled the Pharisees, and hoped they should nonplus Christ with it, shewing the absurdity of the doctrine of the resurrection, an article which they denied; as it follows, *which say, that there is no resurrection of the dead*: they denied that there were angels and spirits, and the immortality of the soul; they affirmed, that the soul died with the body, and that there was no future state: the rise of this sect, and of these notions of their's, was this, as the Jews relate <sup>4</sup>. "Antigonus, a man of Socho, used to say, "be not as servants, that serve their master on account of receiving a reward, but be as servants that serve their master, not on account of receiving a reward; and let the fear of heaven (God) be upon you, so that your reward may be double in the world to come: this man had two disciples, who altered his words, and taught the disciples, and the disciples their disciples, and they stood and narrowly examined them, and said, what did our fathers see, to say this thing? Is it possible, that a labourer should work all day, and not take his reward at evening? But if our fathers had known that there is another world, and that there is *תחיית המתים*, *a resurrection of the dead*, they would not have said thus: they stood and separated from the law, and of them there were two parties, the Sadducees and Baithusites; the Sadducees on account of Sadoc, and the Baithusites on account of Baithus." The Syriac version reads, *and they said*, and the Ethiopic version also, *saying, there is no resurrection of the dead*; taking the sense to be, that they at this time declared their sense of this doctrine, and according to a settled notion of their's, affirmed before Christ, that there was no such thing; that never any was raised from the dead, nor never will; and they were desirous of entering into a controversy with him about it: *and asked him*: put the following question to him, in order to expose the weakness and absurdity of such a doctrine.

Ver. 24. *Saying, master, &c.*] Rabbi, or doctor, as he was usually called; *Moses said*, in Deut. xxv. 5. *if a man die having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother*; which, though not expressed in the self-same words, yet is the sense of the passage referred to, and was a practice in use before the times of Moses, as appears from the case of Er and Onan; the design of which was, to preserve families, and keep their inheritances distinct and entire. This law only took place, when a man died without children; for if he left any children, there was no need for his brother to marry his wife; yea, as a Jewish writer observes <sup>5</sup>, she was forbidden, it was not lawful for him to marry her, and was the case if he had children of either sex, or even grandchildren: for as another of their commentators notes <sup>6</sup>, his having no child, regards a son or a daughter, or a

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 6. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Gezala, c. 5. sect. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Nedarim, c. 9. sect. 4. & Maimon. Hilch. Gezala, c. 5. sect. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Abot R. Nathan, c. 5. fol. 3. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Aben Ezra in Deut. xxv. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Jarchi in ib. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Yebum, c. 1. sect. 2.



son's son, or a daughter's son, or a daughter's daughter; and it was the eldest of the brethren, or he that was next in years to the deceased, that was obliged by this law<sup>a</sup>, though not if he had a wife of his own; and accordingly in the following case proposed, each of the brethren married the eldest brother's wife in their turn, according to the course of seniority; and by this law, the first child that was born after such marriage, was reckoned the seed of the deceased, and was heir to his inheritance. The Jews in their Misna, or oral law, have a whole tract on this subject, called Yebamot, which contains various rules and directions, for the right observance of this law.

Ver. 25. *Now there were with us seven brethren, &c.*] That is, there was in the city, town or neighbourhood, where these Sadducees dwelt, probably at Jerusalem, a family, in which were seven sons, all brethren by the father's side; for brethren by the mother's side were not counted brethren, nor obliged by this law<sup>a</sup>; whether this was a feigned case which is here and in the following verses put, or whether it was real fact, which is possible, it matters not: *and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and having no issue, left his wife unto his brother:* the eldest of these seven brethren married a wife, and after some time died, having no children, son or daughter, by his wife; and therefore, according to the above law, leaves her to his next brother to marry her, and raise up seed unto him; which, according to the Jewish canons<sup>b</sup>, could not be done before ninety days, or three months after the decease of his brother; for so long they were to wait and see, whether she was with-child by his brother or no; for if she was, it was not necessary, yea, it was unlawful for him to marry her.

Ver. 26. *Likewise the second also, &c.*] The eldest of the surviving brethren, having married his brother's wife, after some time died also without children, and left her to his next brother to marry her; and the third brother accordingly did marry her, and in process of time died likewise, leaving no issue behind him; and thus they went on in course, *unto the seventh:* the fourth, fifth, and sixth, married her in turn, and so did the seventh; and all died in the same circumstances, having no children by her.

Ver. 27. *And last of all the woman died also.*] A widow and childless, having never married another person but these seven brethren; and the case with them being alike, no one having any child by her, upon which any peculiar claim to her could be formed, the following question is put.

Ver. 28. *Therefore in the resurrection, &c.*] As asserted by the Pharisees and by Christ, supposing that there will be such a thing, though not granting it; for these men denied it, wherefore the Ethiopic version reads it hypothetically, *if therefore the dead will be raised;* upon such a supposition, *whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her,* or were married to her. By putting this question, they thought to have got some advantage against Christ, and in favour of their notion; they hoped, either that he would give into their way of thinking, and relinquish the doctrine

of the resurrection upon this, and join with them against the Pharisees, and so there would be no need of an answer to the question; or they judged, that if he returned an answer, it would be either that he did not know whose wife she should be, and then they would traduce him among the common people, as weak and ignorant; or should he say, that she would be the wife of one of them only, naming which of them, or of them all, or of none of them, they fancied that such absurd consequences would follow on each of these, as would expose the doctrine of the resurrection to ridicule and contempt; but they missed their aim, and were sadly disappointed by Christ's answer and reasonings which follow.

Ver. 29. *Jesus answered and said unto them, &c.*] The Sadducees: as idle and impertinent as the case they put may seem to be and really was, our Lord thought fit to return an answer to them, thereby to expose their ignorance, and put them to silence and confusion: *ye do err;* not only in that they denied the immortality of the soul and the resurrection, but that supposing that there would be a resurrection; things in that state would be just they were in this; as particularly for instance, that there would be the same natural relation of husband and wife, which their question supposes. Mark reads these words by way of interrogation, *do ye not therefore err, because?* &c. And by Luke they are wholly omitted, as also what follows, *not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.* These two things were the spring and source of their errors: they had not a true knowledge, and right understanding of the Scriptures; which if they had had, it must have appeared to them, from many places in the Old Testament, that the soul remains after death, and that the body will be raised from the dead: they owned the authority of the Scriptures, and allowed of all the writings of the Old Testament; for it seems to be a mistake of some learned men, who think that they only received the five books of Moses, and that therefore Christ takes his proof of his doctrine from thence; but though they had the greater esteem for the law, and would admit of nothing that was not clearly proved from that; yet they did not reject the other writings, as what might serve to confirm and illustrate what was taught in the law; but then, though they approved of the Scriptures, and read them, yet they did not understand them, and so fell into those gross errors and sad mistakes; nor did they attend to the power of God, which, as it was able to make men out of the dust of the earth, was able to raise them again, when crumbled into dust; but this was looked upon by them, as a thing impossible, and so incredible; see Acts xxvi. 8.

Ver. 30. *For in the resurrection, &c.*] At the time of the resurrection, and in that state, when the bodies and souls of men shall be re-united, *they neither marry, nor are given in marriage;* neither the men marry wives, nor are the women given in marriage to men, which is done by their parents here, generally speaking, they having the right of disposing of children in marriage: *but, as Luke says, they which shall be accounted wor-*

<sup>a</sup> Jarchi in Deut. xxv. 5. Misn. Yebamot, c. 2. sect. 8. & 4, 5. Maimon. Hilch. Yebum, c. 2. sect. 6.

<sup>b</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Yebum, c. 1. sect. 7.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 47. 1. Maimon. ib. c. 1. sect. 19.

thy; not through their own works of righteousness, but through the grace of God and righteousness of Christ, to obtain the world, the world to come, a future state of happiness, and the resurrection of the dead, that which will be unto everlasting life and glory, neither marry nor are given in marriage; shall not enter into any such natural and carnal relation: and this agrees with the notion of the other Jews, who say <sup>c</sup>; that "In the world to come, there is neither eating nor drinking, *ולא פרייה ורביה*, nor fructification, nor increase (of children), no receiving and giving, (no commerce), nor envy, nor hatred, nor contention." But are as the angels of God in heaven; or, as in Luke, are equal unto the angels; and which he explains of their immortality: neither can they die any more; no more than the angels can: for this must not be extended to every thing; not in every thing will the saints be like, or equal to the angels; they will not be incorporeal, as the angels are, but then, even their bodies will be spiritual, and in some respects like spirits; they will not stand in any need of sustenance, by eating and drinking, any more than the angels; nor will there be any such things as marriage, and procreation of children among them, any more than among angels; for they are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection: they will then appear to be the children of God by adopting grace, through their enjoying the adoption, even the redemption of their bodies; and possessing, in soul and body, the heavenly inheritance they are heirs of: indeed, the souls of the saints before the resurrection, during their separate state, are in some sense like the angels, to which may be applied those words of Maimonides <sup>d</sup>. "In the world to come, there is no body, but the souls of the righteous only, without a body, *במלאכי השׁרית*, as the ministering angels; and seeing there is no body, there's no eating nor drinking in it, nor any of all the things which the bodies of the children of men stand in need of in this world; nor does any thing befall which happens to bodies in this world, as sitting or standing, or sleep or death, or grief, or laughter, or the like." And according to the sense of the Jews, they will be like to the angels after the resurrection: so God is by them introduced speaking <sup>e</sup>; "At the appointed time known by me, to quicken the dead, I will return to thee that body which is holy and renewed, as at the first, to be *במלאכים קדושים*, as the holy angels." This was an usual way of speaking with them, to compare saints in a state of immortality, to angels <sup>f</sup>. Christ, by making mention of angels, strikes at another notion of the Sadducees, that there were no angels, Acts xxiii. 8.

Ver. 31. *But as touching the resurrection of the dead, &c.*] In proof of that doctrine, and which will greatly serve to confirm and establish it, and that it may appear that the dead are, or will be raised, and to put it out of all doubt, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, as Mark adds, in the book of Moses; which was written by him, the book

of Exodus, ch. iii. 6. and though the words were spoke to Moses, yet were designed for the use, instruction, and comfort of the Israelites; not only at that time, but in succeeding ages, they being the posterity of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; whose God the Lord there declares himself to be. Moreover, whereas these words were spoken by God to Moses, there is some little difficulty occasioned, by Luke's representing them to be the words of Moses; for he says, *Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord, the God of Abraham, &c.* which may be removed by observing, that the sense is, that when Moses shewed to the children of Israel, what he heard and saw at the bush on Mount Sinai, he called the Lord by these names, in which he spoke of himself to him; he recited to them what the Lord said to him; and indeed he was bid to say to them these words; see Exod. iii. 14, 15, 16. saying, as follows,

Ver. 32. *I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, &c.*] The Sadducees expressly denied, that the resurrection could be proved out of the law. "Says R. Eliezer, with R. Jose <sup>g</sup>, I have found the books of the Sadducees to be corrupt; for they say that the resurrection of the dead is not to be proved out of the law: I said unto them, you have corrupted your law, and ye have not caused any thing to come up into your hands, for ye say the resurrection of the dead is not to be proved out of the law; lo! he saith, Numb. xv. 33. *That soul shall be utterly cut off, his iniquity shall be upon him; he shall be utterly cut off in this world; his iniquity shall be upon him*, is not this said with respect to the world to come?" Hence, in opposition to this notion of the Sadducees, the other Jews say <sup>h</sup>, that "Though a man confesses and believes that the dead will be raised, yet that it is not intimated in the law, he is an heretic; since it is a fundamental point, that the resurrection of the dead is of the law." Hence they set themselves, with all their might and main, to prove this doctrine from thence, of which take the following instances <sup>i</sup>. "Says R. Simai, from whence is the resurrection of the dead to be proved out of the law? From Exod. vi. 4. as it is said, *I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan: to you* it is not said, but to them; from hence then, the resurrection of the dead may be proved out of the law." The gloss upon it is, "the sense is, that the holy blessed God, promised to our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that he would give to them the land of Israel; and because he gave it to them, has he not given it to their children? But we learn from hence, that they shall be raised, and that God will hereafter give them the land of Israel." And which the learned Mr. Mede takes to be the sense of the words of this text, cited by our Lord; and this the force of his reasoning, by which he proves the resurrection of the dead. Again, "the Sadducees asked Rabban Gamaliel, from whence does it appear that the holy blessed God will

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 17. 1.

<sup>d</sup> Hilch. Teshuba, c. 6. sect. 9.

<sup>e</sup> Midrash Hanneclam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 66. 4.

<sup>f</sup> Vid. Abot. R. Nathan, c. 1. fol. 1. 3. Capator, fol. 18. 2. Philo de Sacrific. Abel & Cain, p. 131.

<sup>g</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 90. 2.

<sup>h</sup> Gloss. in ib. col. 1.

<sup>i</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 90. 2.

“ quicken the dead? He said unto them, out of the law, and out of the prophets, and out of the Hagiographa; but they did not receive of him (or regard him): out of the law, as it is written, *Thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, and rise up*, Deut. xxxi. 16.—And there are that say from this Scripture, Deut. iv. 4. *But ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God, are alive every one of you this day: as this day all of you stand, so in the world to come, all of you shall stand.*” Thus our Lord having to do with the same sort of persons, fetches his proof of the doctrine of the resurrection out of the law, and from a passage which respects the covenant-relation God stands in to his people, particularly Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and which respects not their souls only, but their bodies also, even their whole persons, body and soul; for God is the God of the whole: and therefore as their souls now live with God, their bodies also will be raised from the dead, that they, with their souls, may enjoy everlasting glory and happiness; which is the grand promise, and great blessing of the covenant of grace. *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living*; as all the saints are; for though their bodies are dead, their souls are alive, and their bodies will be raised in consequence of their covenant-interest in God, to enjoy an immortal life with him: so the Jews are wont to say, that the righteous, even in their death, are called living<sup>\*</sup>: “ from whence is it proved, (say they,) that the righteous, even in their death, קרוין חיים, are called living?” from Deut. xxxiv. 4. as it is written, *and he said unto him, this is the land which I have sworn to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying*. Menasseh ben Israel, a learned Jew, of the last century, has produced<sup>†</sup> this same passage of Scripture, Christ here does in proof of the immortality of the soul, and argues from it in much the same manner; having mentioned the words, he adds, “ for God is not the God of the dead, for the dead are not; but of the living, for the living exist; therefore also the patriarchs, in respect of the soul, may rightly be inferred from hence to live.”

Ver. 33. *And when the multitude heard this, &c.*] This wise and full answer of Christ to the posing question of the Sadducees, with which perhaps they had puzzled many, and never had met with their match before: *they were astonished at his doctrine*; concerning the pure, perfect, and angelic state of the righteous in the world to come; and how strongly and nervously he proved the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the dead, which were both denied by the Sadducees; and who were so confounded with his answer, proof, and reasonings, that Luke says, *after that they durst not ask him any question at all*: and the Scribes were so pleased therewith, that certain of them applauded him, saying, *master, thou hast well said.*

Ver. 34. *But when the Pharisees had heard, &c.*] Either with their own ears, they being some of them present: or rather from the relation of others, from the Scribes, who expressed their approbation of Christ's answer to the Sadducees; for the Pharisees,

with the Herodians, in a body, had left him, and were gone to their respective places of abode; or to them that sent them, being baffled and confounded by him: but now hearing that he had put the Sadducees to silence, or stopped their mouths, having nothing to reply, which, itself, was not disagreeable; for they were as opposite as could be to them in the doctrine of the resurrection, and in other things, and were their sworn and avowed enemies: and yet it sadly grieved them, that Christ should be too hard for, and get the victory over all sects among them. Wherefore, considering that should he go on with success in this manner, his credit with the people would increase yet more and more; and therefore, though they had been so shamefully defeated in two late attempts, yet *they were gathered together* in great hurry upon this occasion. The Ethiopic version reads it, *they were gathered to him*, that is, to Christ; and so reads the copy that Beza gave to the university of Cambridge: but the other reading, as it is general, so more suitable to the place: they gathered together at some certain house, where they consulted what to do, what methods to take, to put a stop to his growing interest with the people, and how they might bring him into disgrace with them; and they seemed to have fixed on this method, that one among them, who was the ablest doctor, and best skilled in the law, should put a question to him relating to the law, which was then agitated among them, the solution of which was very difficult; and they the rather chose to take this course by setting a single person upon him, that should he succeed, the victory would be the greater, and the whole sect would share in the honour of it; and should he be silenced, the public disgrace and confusion would only fall on himself, and not the whole body, as in the former instances. This being agreed to, they went unto him.

Ver. 35. *Then one of them, which was a lawyer, &c.*] Or that was learned, or skilful in the law, as the Syriac and Persic versions, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read. The Ethiopic version calls him, a *Scribe of the city*, of the city of Jerusalem; but I do not meet with any such particular officer, or any such office peculiar to a single man any where: mention is made of the *Scribes of the people* in Matt. ii. 4. and this man was one of them, one that interpreted the law to the people, either in the schools, or in the synagogues, or both; and Mark expressly calls him a *Scribe*; and so the Arabic version renders the word here; and from hence it may be concluded that the lawyers and Scribes were the same sort of persons. This man was by sect a Pharisee, and by his office a Scribe; or interpreter of the law, and suitable to his office and character, *asked him a question, tempting him; and saying*: he put a difficult and knotty question to him, and thereby making a trial of his knowledge and understanding of the law; and laying a snare for him, to entrap him if he could, and expose him to the people, as a very ignorant man: and delivered it in the following form.

Ver. 36. *Master, which is the great commandment in*

<sup>\*</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 4. 4. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 78. 2. Tzezor Hammor, fol. 158. 3.

<sup>†</sup> De Resurrect. Mort. l. i. c. 10. sect. 6.

the law ?] He calls him *master, Rabbi, or doctor*, as the Sadducees had in ver. 24. either because he was usually so called by his disciples, and by the generality of the people; or merely in complaisance to engage his attention to him, and his question: and might hereby suggest, that should he return a proper and satisfactory answer to it he should be his master. The question is not which of the laws was the greatest, the oral, or the written law: the Jews give the preference to the law delivered by word of mouth; they prefer the traditions of the elders before the written law of Moses; see the note on ch. xv. 2. but the question was about the written law of Moses; and not merely about the decalogue, or whether the commands of the first table were greater than those of the second, as was generally thought; or whether the affirmative precepts were not more to be regarded than negative ones, which was their commonly received opinion; but about the whole body of the law, moral and ceremonial, delivered by Moses: and not whether the ceremonial law was to be preferred to the moral, which they usually did; but what particular command there was in the whole law, which was greater than the rest: for as there were some commands that were light, and others that were weighty, a distinction often used by them<sup>m</sup>, and to which Christ alludes in ch. xxiii. 23. It was moved that it might be said which was the greatest and weightiest of them all. Some thought the commandment of the sabbath was the greatest: hence they say<sup>n</sup>, that he that keeps the sabbath is as if he kept the whole law: yea, they make the observance of the three meals, or feasts, which, according to the traditions of the elders, they were obliged to eat on the sabbath, to be at least one of the greatest of them. "These three meals (says one of their writers<sup>o</sup>) are a great matter, for it is one *המצות הגדולה שבמורה*, *הממצות הגדולה שבמורה*," *of the great commandments in the law.*" Which is the very phraseology used in this question. Others give the preference to circumcision, on which they bestow the greatest encomiums, and, among the rest<sup>p</sup>, say, it drives away the sabbath, or that is obliged to give place unto it. Others<sup>q</sup> say of the *phylacteries*, that the holiness of them is the greatest of all, and the command to be arrayed with them all the day, is more excellent than all others; and even of the fringe upon the borders of their garments, others observe<sup>r</sup>, that a man that is guilty of that command, is guilty of all others, and that single precept is equal to all the rest. In this multiplicity of opinions, Christ's is desired on this subject, though with no good intention.

Ver. 37. *Jesus said unto him, &c.*] Directly, without taking time to think of it; and though he knew with what design it was put to him, yet, as an answer to it might be useful and instructive to the people, as well as silence and confound his adversaries, he thought fit to give one; and is as follows, being what is expressed in Deut. vi. 5. *thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with*

*all thy soul, and with all thy mind*; that is, with all the powers and faculties of the soul, the will, the understanding, and the affections; in the most sincere, upright, and perfect manner, without any dissimulation and hypocrisy, and above all objects whatever, for this the law requires; and which man, in his state of innocence, was capable of, though now fallen, he is utterly unable to perform; so far from it, that without the grace of God, he has no true love at all to God, in his heart, soul and mind, but all the reverse; his carnal mind is enmity against God, and every thing that is divine and good, or that belongs unto him: and though this is now the case of man, yet his obligation to love the Lord in this manner is still the same; and when the spirit of God does produce the grace and fruit of love in his soul, he does love the Lord sincerely; because of the perfections of his nature, and the works of his hands, and because of the blessings of grace bestowed, and especially for Christ, the unspeakable gift of his love; and most affectionately does he love him, when he is most sensible of his everlasting and unchangeable love to him, and when that is shed abroad by the spirit; for *we love him, because he first loved us*, 1 John iv. 19. instead of, *with all thy mind*, as here, in Deut. vi. 5. 'tis read, *with all thy might*; and which clause is here added by the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, as it is in Mark xii. 30. The Hebrew phrase seems to denote the vehemency of affections, with which God is to be beloved. Though the Jewish writers<sup>s</sup> paraphrase and interpret it, *with all thy substance, or money*; and in the Misna<sup>t</sup>, the following interpretation is given of the whole; "*with all thy heart, with thy imaginations, with the good imagination, and with the evil imagination; and with all thy soul, even if he should take away thy soul; and with all thy strength, with all thy mammon, or riches; or otherwise, with all thy might, with every measure he measures unto thee, do thou measure unto him;*" that is, as one of the commentators says<sup>u</sup>, whether it be good or evil; or, as another<sup>v</sup>, in every case that happens give thanks to God, and praise him. And certain it is, that as God is to be loved in the strongest manner we are capable of, and with all we have, and are; so always, at all times, under all dispensations of his providence, and upon all accounts, and for all he does towards, in, upon, and for us.

Ver. 38. *This is the first and great commandment.*] Whether the object of it is considered, who is the first and chief good; or the manner in which it is to be observed, which requires and engrosses the whole heart, soul, and mind, and all the strength and power of man; or its being the principle from whence all the duties, and actions of men should flow, and the end to which all are to be referred; and is not only a compendium of the duties of the first table of the decalogue, but of all others that

<sup>m</sup> Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 1. & c. 4. sect. 2.

<sup>n</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 37. 1.

<sup>o</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 3. 3.

<sup>p</sup> Misn. Nedarim, c. 3. sect. 11.

<sup>q</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Tephillin, c. 4. sect. 25, 26.

<sup>s</sup> T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 43. 2.

<sup>t</sup> Targum Onk. & Jarchi in Deut. vi. 5.

<sup>u</sup> Berscot, c. 9. sect. 5. Vid. Targum Jon. in Deut. vi. 5.

<sup>v</sup> Bartenora in Misn. ib.

<sup>w</sup> Maimon. in ib.

can be thought to, and do, belong to God. This is the first command in order of nature, time, dignity, and causality; God being the first cause of all things, infinitely above all creatures, and love to him being the source, spring and cause of love to the neighbour; and it is the greatest in its object, nature, manner, and end. That this command, and these words our Lord cites, are so full and comprehensive, the Jews themselves cannot deny. A noted writer of their's<sup>2</sup> says, "the root of all the commandments is, when a man loves God with all his soul, and cleaves unto him." And, says<sup>3</sup> another, "in this verse only, *thou shalt love the Lord thy God*, &c. *עשרת הדברות*, כללים, the ten words, or decalogue, are comprehended."

Ver. 39. *And the second is like unto it*, &c.] For there is but a second, not a third: this is suggested in opposition to the numerous commandments in the law, according to the opinion of the Jews, who reckon them in all to be six hundred and thirteen; of which there are three hundred and sixty-five negative ones, according to the number of the days of the year; and two hundred and forty-eight affirmative ones, according to the members of a man's body<sup>4</sup>. Christ reduces all to two, love to God, and love to the neighbour; and the latter is the second in order of nature, time, dignity, and causality; the object of it being a creature; and the act itself being the effect of the former, yet like unto it: for though the object is different, yet this commandment regards love as the former, and requires that it be as that, true, hearty, sincere, and perfect; that it be with singleness of heart, always, and to all men; and that it spring from love to God, and be performed to his glory: and which is expressed in the words written in Liv. xix. 18. *thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*; as heartily and sincerely, and as a man would desire to be loved by his neighbour; and do all the good offices to him he would choose to have done to himself by him. This law supposes, that men should love themselves, or otherwise they cannot love their neighbour; not in a sinful way, by indulging themselves in carnal lusts and pleasures: some are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; but in a natural way, so as to be careful of their bodies, families, and estates; and in a spiritual way, so as to be concerned for their souls, and the everlasting happiness of them: and in like manner should men love their neighbours, in things temporal do them all the good they can, and do no injury to their persons or property; and in things spiritual pray for them, instruct them, and advise as they would their own souls, or their nearest and dearest relations. And this is to be extended to every man; though the Jews restrain it to their friend and companion, and one of their own religion. "*Thy neighbour*: that is, (say they<sup>5</sup>;) thy friend in the law; and this is the great comprehensive rule in the law, to shew that it is not fit there should be any division, or separation, between a man and his companion,

"but one should judge every man in the balance of equity: wherefore, near unto it is, *I am the Lord*: for as I the Lord am one, so it is fit for you that ye should be one nation without division; but a wicked man, and one that does not receive reproof, it is commanded to hate him; as it is said, *do not I hate them that hate me?*" But our Lord intends by it to include, that love, benevolence, and good will, which are due to every man; and suggests, that this comprehends not only all that is contained in the second table of the decalogue, but all duties that are reducible thereunto, and are obligatory on men one towards another whatever; all which should spring from love, and be done heartily and sincerely, with a view to the neighbour's good, and God's glory: and with this Maimonides agrees, saying<sup>6</sup>, that "all the commands, or duties, respecting a man, and his neighbour, נכנסות בכללית חסידים, are comprehended in beneficence."

Ver. 40. *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*] Not that all that is contained in the five books of Moses, and in the books of the prophets, and other writings of the Old Testament, is comprehended in, and is reducible to these two precepts; for there are many things delivered by way of promise, written by way of history, &c. which cannot, by any means, be brought into these two general heads: but that every thing respecting duty that is suggested in the law, or is more largely explained and pressed in any of the writings of the prophets, is summarily comprehended in these two sayings: hence love is the fulfilling of the law; see Rom. xiii. 8, 9. Gal. v. 14. The substance of the law is love; and the writings of the prophets, as to the preceptive part of them, are an explanation of the law, and an enlargement upon it: hence the Jews have a saying<sup>7</sup>, that all the prophets stood on Mount Sinai, and received their prophecies there, because the sum of them, as to the duty-part, was then delivered. Beza thinks, that here is an allusion to the phylacteries, or frontlets, which hung upon their foreheads and hands, as a memorial of the law. And certain it is, that the first of these commands, and which is said to be the greatest, was written in these phylacteries. Some take the phrase, *on these—hang all the law and the prophets*, to be a mere Latinism, but it is really an Hebraism, and often to be met with in the Jewish writings: so Maimonides says<sup>8</sup>, "the knowledge of this matter is an affirmative precept, as it is said, *I am the Lord thy God*: and he that imagines there is another God besides this, transgresses a negative, as it is said, *thou shalt have no other Gods before me*; and he denies the fundamental point, for this is the great foundation, שדכל תלוי בו, on which all hang:" and so the word is used in many other places<sup>9</sup>. The sense is plainly this, that all that are in the law and prophets are consistent with, and dependent on these things; and are, as the Persic version renders the word, com-

<sup>2</sup> Aben Ezra in Exod. xxxi. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 138. 1.

<sup>4</sup> T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 23. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Torā pr. affirm. 9.

<sup>6</sup> In Misn. Peah, c. 1. sect. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Jarchi in Isa. xviii. 16. & in Mal. i. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Hillel. Yeode Hatorah, c. 1. sect. 6.

<sup>9</sup> Vid. Abkath Rokel. l. 1. p. 3.

prehended in them, and cannot be separated from them.

Ver. 41. *While the Pharisees were gathered together, &c.*] Or rather, *when they were gathered together, and while they continued so, before they left him:* for this is to be understood not of their gathering together, to consult privately about him; this is expressed before in ver. 34. but of their gathering together about Christ, to hear what answer he would return to the question their learned doctor would put to him: and he having given an answer to that, which the Scribe was obliged to allow was a good one; and he having no more to say, Christ directs his discourse not to him singly, but to all the Pharisees before he parted with them, and puts a question to them, in his turn; and which would lead on to another they could not answer, and they must therefore leave him once more with great shame and confusion. *Jesus asked them:* as the lawyer put a question to him suitable to his office and character, Christ puts another to the Pharisees suitable to his office and character, as a Gospel-preacher; suggesting by it, that salvation was not by the law, and the works of it, which they set up for doctors and interpreters of, and advocates for, but by the Messiah, who was promised to their fathers, and they expected.

Ver. 42. *Saying, what think ye of Christ, &c.*] Or the Messiah; he does not ask them whether there was, or would be such a person in the world. He knew, that he was so plainly spoken of in the writings of the Old Testament, which they had in their hands, that they could not be ignorant, that such a person was prophesied of: he knew that they believed that he would come, and that they were in continual expectation of his coming; wherefore he asks them what they thought of him, what were their sentiments and opinions concerning him; as about his person, whether they thought him to be divine, or human, a mere man, or God, as well as man; what they thought of his work and office he came to perform, whether it was a spiritual, or temporal salvation, they expected he should be the author of; and so of his kingdom, whether it would be of this world or not; and particularly, what thoughts they had of his sonship, and who was his father; *whose son is he?* and which the Pharisees understanding only as respecting his lineage and descent as man, as of what family he was? who were his ancestors and progenitors? *they say unto him, the son of David.* This they said directly, without any hesitation, it being a generally-received notion of their's, and was very right, that the Messiah should be of the seed and family of David: and hence he is frequently, in their writings, called by no other name, than the son of David; see the note on ch. i. 1. If this question was put to some persons, it would appear, that they have no thoughts of Christ at all. The atheist has none; as God is not in all his thoughts, nor in any of them, for all his thoughts are, that there is no God; so neither is Christ the son of God. The deist thinks nothing of him, for he does not believe the revelation concerning him. The epicure, or voluptuous man, he thinks only of his carnal lusts and pleasures: and the worldling, or covetous man, thinks nothing but of

his worldly substance, and of the much good things he has laid up for many years: to say nothing of the Heathens, who have never heard of him; others, and such as bear the Christian name, have very wrong thoughts of Christ, mean, and under-valuing. The Arrian thinks he is a created God, of a like, but not of the same nature with the father. The Socinian thinks he is a God by office, and did not exist until he was born of the Virgin Mary; and has no notion of his sacrifice, and satisfaction for the sins of men. The Arminian thinks meanly of his righteousness, and denies the imputation of it to them that believe. And indeed, all such think wrongly of Christ, who divide their salvation between their works and him, and make them their Christ, or their frames their Christ, or their graces, and particularly their believing in him; that is, that ascribe that to them, which properly belongs to him. And as for those who do not bear the name of Christians, it is no wonder that they entertain wrong and low thoughts of Christ. The Jews thought him to be a mere man, and the carpenter's son. The Pharisees thought that he was an Antinomian, a libertine, a loose, and licentious person, that had no regard to the law, and good works: hence those words of his, *think not that I am come to destroy the law,* Matt. v. 17. Yea, they thought him to be a Samaritan, and to have a devil, and to cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. The Mahometans, though they allow him to be a prophet, yet think that he is inferior to Mahomet their prophet. There are others that think well of Christ, admire the loveliness of his person, and the fulness of his grace, but are afraid Christ does not think well of them: they think well of the suitableness there is in Christ, of his righteousness to justify, of his blood to cleanse and pardon, and of the fulness of his grace to supply all wants, but think these are not for them: they often revolve in their minds his ability to save, and firmly believe it, but question his willingness to save them: they often think of Christ, what he is to others, but can't think of him for themselves; only believers in Christ, have a good thought of him, to their own joy and comfort: faith is a good thought of Christ; to them that believe, he is precious; and such, through believing in him, are filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; such think often, and well, of the dignity of Christ's person, of the excellency and usefulness of his offices, of the virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, and of the sufficiency of his grace for them: they think well of what he did for them in eternity, as their surety, in the council and covenant of peace; and of what he has done for them in time, by suffering and dying for them in their room and stead; and of what he is now doing for them in heaven, as their advocate and intercessor.

Ver. 43. *He saith unto them, &c.*] Not denying it to be a truth they affirmed; but rather granting and allowing it: he argues upon it, though he tacitly refuses their sense and meaning of the phrase, thus, *how then doth David in spirit call him Lord?* that is, if he is a mere man, if he is only the son of David, according to the flesh, if he has no other, or higher descent than from him, how comes it to pass, that David, under the inspiration of the spirit of God, by which he wrote his book of Psalms, see 2 Sam. xxiii.

1, 2. where the passage, after cited, stands, to call him Lord; which supposes him to be more than barely his son, and to be a greater person than himself, one superior in nature and dignity to him? for the phrase *in spirit*, is not to be connected with the word Lord; as if the design of it was to shew, that the Messiah was Lord, or God, in spirit, or with respect to his divine nature, but, with the word *call*, expressing the influence of the spirit of God, under which David wrote; otherwise the Pharisees would have had a direction how to have answered the question, which so much puzzled them: *saying*, as in Psal. cx. 1.

Ver. 44. *The Lord said unto my Lord, &c.*] By the Lord that said, is meant *Jehovah* the father, who said the following words at the time of Christ's ascension, and entrance into heaven, after he had finished the great work of man's salvation; prophetically delivered by the Psalmist, under the inspiration of the spirit of God, being what was before purposed and promised: by *my Lord*, the person spoken to, the Messiah is designed, who was David's *Adon*, or Lord, by right both of creation and redemption: as God, he made him: and as the Messiah and Saviour, redeemed him; and on both accounts had a right to rule over him. The words said unto him are, *sit thou on my right hand*; which is a figurative phrase, and expressive of the exaltation, dignity, power, and authority of the Messiah; and of an honour done to him, which was never granted to the angels, nor to any mere man: *till I make thine enemies thy footstool*: till all the enemies of him, and his people, are subdued under him; carnal professors, as the Pharisees, and profane sinners, who neither of them would have him to rule over them; the world, the devil, antichrist, and all the powers of darkness, and the last enemy, death itself. That these words were spoken of the Messiah, and therefore pertinently cited, and properly applied to him, by Jesus, is evident from the silence of the Pharisees; for had it not been the generally-received sense of the Jewish church, they would, at once, have objected it to him; which might, in some measure, have relieved them under that distress, into which they were brought by this passage proposed unto them: but by their silence they acknowledged, that the Psalm was wrote by David; that it was wrote by him under the inspiration of the spirit of God; and that the Messiah was the subject of it. And the same is owned by some of their doctors, ancient, and modern. "Says R. Joden, in the name of R. Chijah, in time to come the holy blessed God will cause the king Messiah to sit at his right hand; "as it is said, *the Lord said unto my Lord, &c. i.*" And the same says, R. Berachiah, in the name of R. Levi, elsewhere<sup>1</sup>. And, says another of their writers<sup>2</sup>, "we don't find any man, or prophet, whose birth was prophesied of before the birth of his father and mother, but Messiah our righteousness; and of him it is intimated, *from the womb of the morning, &c. i. e.* before the womb of her that bore thee was

created, thy birth was prophesied of: and this these words respect, *before the sun, his name is Yinnon*, Psal. lxxii. 17. *i. e.* before the creation of the sun, the name of our Messiah was strong and firm, and he shall sit at the right hand of God; and this is what is said, *sit at my right hand.*" In some writings of the Jews, esteemed by them, very ancient<sup>3</sup>, the *Adon* or Lord, to whom these words are spoken, is interpreted of Messiah ben Joseph, whom they make to sit at the right hand of Abraham; which, though a false interpretation of the words, carries in it some marks and traces of the ancient sense of them: yea, even some of the more modern Jews<sup>4</sup> have owned, that they belong to the Messiah, and apply them to him. Though others, observing what confusion their forefathers were thrown into by Jesus, and what improvement his followers have made of this sense of the words since, have quitted it, and introduced strange and foreign ones. Some<sup>5</sup> of them would have Abraham the patriarch to be the subject of this Psalm; and that it was composed either by Melchizedek or by Eliezer, the servant of Abraham; or by David, on account of the victory Abraham obtained over the four kings, in rescuing his kinsman Lot: but Melchizedek could not be the author of it, because he was a far greater person than Abraham; he blessed him, and took tithes of him, and therefore would not call him Lord. Eliezer might indeed, as being his servant; but then he could not assign to him a seat at the right hand of God, or say of him, that he had an everlasting priesthood, after the order of Melchizedek: and though the Psalm was composed by David, yet not on the above account, for the same reasons. Nor is David the subject of it, as others<sup>6</sup> have affirmed; for it cannot be thought that David would say this of himself, or call himself his Lord, which this sense of the words makes him to do: and whereas others of them say, that it was wrote by one of the singers concerning him; it may be replied, that the title declares the contrary: besides, David is not ascended into heaven, nor is he set down at the right hand of God, nor had he any thing to do with the priesthood, much less was he a priest after the order of Melchizedek, and that for ever: but all is true of the Messiah Jesus, of whose kingdom and priesthood, sufferings, and exaltation, conquest of his enemies, and success of his Gospel, this whole Psalm is a very plain and manifest prophecy.

Ver. 45. *If David then call him Lord, &c.*] That is, the Messiah, which is taken for granted, nor could the Pharisees deny it, *how is he his son?* The question is to be answered upon true and just notions of the Messiah, but unanswerable upon the principles of the Pharisees; who expected the Messiah only as a mere man, that should be of the seed of David, and so his son; and should sit upon his throne, and be a prosperous and victorious prince, and deliver them out of the hands of their temporal enemies: they were able to make answer to the question, separately considered,

<sup>1</sup> Midrash Tillin in Psal. xviii. 35. apud Galatin. de Cath. ver. arcan. 1. 8. c. 24.

<sup>2</sup> R. Moses Hadarsan in Gen. xviii. 1. apud ib.

<sup>3</sup> R. Isaac Aramin in Gen. xlvii. 6. apud ib. l. 3. c. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Zohar in Nuun. fol. 99. 2. & Raya Mebinna, in ib. in Gen. fol. 97. 3.

<sup>5</sup> R. Suadiah Gaon in Dan. vii. 13. Nachman. disp. cum Paulo. p. 36. 5c.

<sup>6</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 60. 3. Jarchi in Psal. cx. 1. Vet. Nizzachon, p. 179, 180.

<sup>7</sup> Kimchi & Aben Ezra in Psal. cx. 1. R. Isaac Chizuk Emuna, par. 1. c. 40. p. 321.

as that he should be of the lineage and house of David ; should lineally descend from him, be of his family, one of his offspring and posterity, and so be properly and naturally his son ; but how he could be so, consistent with his being David's Lord, puzzled them. Had they understood and owned the proper divinity of the Messiah, they might have answered, that as he was God, he was David's Lord, his maker, and his king ; and, as man, was David's son, and so both his root and offspring ; and this our Lord meant to bring them to a confession of, or put them to confusion and silence, which was the consequence.

Ver. 46. *And no man was able to answer him a word, &c.*] They saw the dilemma they were reduced to,

either to acknowledge the deity of the Messiah, or confess their ignorance ; and neither of them they cared to do, and therefore judged it to be the wisest part to be silent. *Neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions : neither Pharisees nor Sadducees, for the same is observed by Luke xx. 40. of the Sadducees particularly, and was true of all sorts, and every sect of men among them : and thus our Lord was freed from a cavilling, captious, and troublesome generation of men, from this time forward, to the time of his sufferings, which was not very long after ; for this was the third day before the passover, as appears from ch. xxvi. 1, 2.*

### C H A P. XXIII.

Ver. 1. *THEN spake Jesus to the multitude, &c.*] To the common people that were about him in the temple ; the high-priests and elders, Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, having left him, being all nonplussed and silenced by him : and now, lest on the one hand, the people seeing the ignorance and errors of these men detected by Christ, should be tempted to conclude there was nothing in religion, and to neglect the word and worship of God, on account of the concern these men had in it ; and on the other hand, because of their great authority and influence, being in Moses's chair, lest the people should be led into bad principles and practices by them, he directs them in what they should observe them, and in what not : that they were not altogether to be rejected, nor in every thing to be attended to ; and warns them against their ostentation, pride, hypocrisy, covetousness, and cruelty ; and, at the same time, removes an objection against himself, proving that he was no enemy to Moses, and the law, rightly explained and practised : *and to his disciples ; not only the twelve, but to all that believed in him, and were followers of him.*

Ver. 2. *Saying, the Scribes and Pharisees, &c.*] The Persic version adds, *the priests* : but Christ does not here speak of the sanhedrim, or grand council of the nation, and of their legislative power ; but of those that were the teachers of the people, and the interpreters of the law ; and of those, who, though they corrupted the word with their glosses and traditions, yet retained some truth, and at least came nearer truth, than the Sadducees ; who therefore are omitted, and only Scribes and Pharisees mentioned, who gave the literal and traditional sense of the Scriptures ; of whom he says, they *sit in Moses's seat* : not that they were his successors in his office as a legislator and mediator ; though the Persic version reads it, *sit in the place and chair of Moses* ; but they read his law, and explained it to the people : this post and place, as yet, they kept in the office they were, and were to continue ; and the people were to regard them so far as they spoke consistent with the law, until it had its full accomplishment in Christ. The allusion is not to the chairs in which the sanhedrim sat in trying and

determining causes, but to those in which the doctors sat when they expounded the law ; for though they stood up when they read the law, or the prophets, they sat down when they preached out of them : this custom of the synagogue was observed by our Lord ; see Luke iv. 16, 20.

Ver. 3. *All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, &c.*] This must be restrained to things that were agreeable to the chair of Moses, in which they sat, to the law of Moses, which they read and explained, to other parts of Scripture and truth in general ; for otherwise many of their glosses and traditions were repugnant to the law, and ought not to be observed, as appears from ch. v. and ch. xv. 6. The word *observe*, in this clause, is omitted by the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel ; and Beza says, 'tis wanting in one ancient copy, but is in others ; and is retained in the Syriac and Persic versions : *that observe and do* ; hearken to what they say, give diligent heed unto it, take notice of it, and act according to it : *but do not ye after their works* ; let their doctrine be the rule of your lives, so far as it agrees with the law of Moses ; but let not their actions be drawn into an example by you ; conform to their instructions, but don't imitate their practices : *for they say, and do not* ; they talk of good works, but do none ; they bid others do them, but don't practise them themselves ; they very strictly and severely enjoin them on others, but are very careless themselves to observe them ; and of this the Jews are so conscious, that they suggest the same doctrine". "The daughter of Ahar (a wicked man) came before Rabbi ; she said to him, Rabbi, supply me with the necessaries of life : he replied to her, daughter, who art thou ? she answered him, the daughter of Ahar : he said to her, is there any of his seed in the world ? for lo ! it is written, Job xviii. 19. *He shall neither have son, nor nephew, among his people, nor any remaining in his dwellings* : she replied to him, זכור לתורתו ואל תזכור מעשיו ; *remember his law, or doctrine, but don't remember his works.*—Says R. Jochanan, what is that which is written, Mal. ii. 7. *For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth ;*



"for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. If the doctor is like to an angel, or messenger of the Lord of hosts, they should seek the law at his mouth; and if not, they should not seek the law at his mouth. Says Resh Lekish, R. Meir found and explained that Scripture, Prov. xxii. 17. *Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart to my knowledge*: to their knowledge it is not said, but to my knowledge. R. Chanina says, hence, Psal. xlv. 10. *Hearken, O daughter! and consider, incline thine ear, forget thine own people, and thy father's house*: on which the gloss is, forget their works, and do not learn them: he that knows how to take care not to learn their works, may learn the law from their mouths."—And a little after, "the disciples of the wise men are like to a nut; as a nut, though it is defiled with mire and filth, yet that which is within it is not to be rejected; so a scholar, or a disciple of a wise man, though he act wickedly, his law, or doctrine, is not to be despised." Good doctrine is not the worse for being taught by bad men; nor are good works to be slighted and neglected, because they are not done by all that teach them; but it must be owned that examples are very useful and forcible, and practice greatly recommends doctrine; and it is to be wished, that they both always went together.

Ver. 4. *For they bind heavy burdens, &c.*] Meaning not the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses, circumcision, and other rituals, which obliged to the keeping of the whole law, which was a yoke men were not able to bear; but the traditions of the elders, which the Scribes and Pharisees were very tenacious of, and very severely enjoined the observance of, and are called their *heavy things*. "It is a tradition of R. Ishmael, there are in the words of the law, that which is bound or forbidden, and that which is loose or free; and there are in them light things, and there are in them heavy things; but the words of the Scribes, כבדן חמורין דון, *all of them are heavy*." And a little after, "the words of the elders, חמורין, *are heavier* than the words of the prophets." Hence frequent mention is made of "the light things of the school of Shammai, וכדומרי, *and of the heavy things of the school of Hillel*;" two famous doctors, heads of two universities, in being in Christ's time: these are also called, מכות פרושין, *the blows, or wounds of the Pharisees*; not as Bartenora explains them, the wounds they gave themselves, to shew their humility; or which they received, by beating their heads against the wall, walking with their eyes shut, that they might not look upon women, under a pretence of great chastity; but, as Maimonides says, these are their additions and heavy things, which they add to the law. Now the binding of these heavy things, means the imposing them on men, obliging them to observe them very strictly, under great penalties, should they omit them. The allusion is, to those frequent sayings in use among them, such a thing is

bound, and such a thing is loosed; such a Rabbi binds, and such an one looses; that is, forbids, or allows of such and such things; see the note on Matt. xvi. 19. *and grievous to be borne*. This clause is left out in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; but is in all the Greek copies, and serves to illustrate and aggravate the burdensome rites and institutions of these people: and *lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers*: the sense is, not that they were so rigid and hard-hearted, that they would not move a finger to remove these burdens from the shoulders of men, or ease them in the least degree, or dispense with their performance of them in the least measure, upon any consideration, though this also was true in many respects; but that they were so slothful and indolent themselves, that though they strictly enjoined the observance of their numerous and unwritten traditions on the people, yet in many cases, where they could without public notice, they neglected them themselves, or at least, made them lighter and easier to them, as in their fastings, &c. In the Misna', mention is made of a *crafty wicked man*, along with a woman Pharisee, and the blows of the Pharisees before spoken of; and in the Gemara', is explained by R. Hona, of one, "that makes things light for himself, and makes them heavy for others." Such crafty wicked men were the Scribes and Pharisees; though R. Meir pretended that he made things light to others and heavy to himself.

Ver. 5. *But all their works they do for to be seen of men, &c.*] All their prayers, alms-deeds, and fastings, were all done in a public manner, that men might behold them, and they might have applause and glory from them: they sought neither the glory of God, nor the good of their fellow-creatures, nor any spiritual advantage and pleasure to themselves, in their performances; they neither attended to moral duties, nor ceremonious rites, nor the traditions of their fathers, any further than they could be seen by men in them, and keep up their credit and esteem among them. Hence, *they make broad their phylacteries*: these were four sections of the law, wrote on parchments, folded up in the skin of a clean beast, and tied to the head and hand. The four sections were these following, viz. the *first*, was Exod. xiii. 2. to ver. 11. the *second*, was Exod. xiii. 11. to ver. 17. the *third*, was Deut. vi. 4. to ver. 10. the *fourth*, was Deut. xi. 13. to ver. 22. Those that were for the head, were written and rolled up separately, and put in four distinct places, in one skin, which was fastened with strings to the crown of the head, towards the face, about the place where the hair ends, and where an infant's brain is tender; and they took care to place them in the middle, that so they might be between the eyes. Those that were for the hand, were written in four columns, on one parchment, which being rolled up, was fastened to the inside of the left arm, where it is fleshy, between the shoulder

<sup>o</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 3. 2.

<sup>p</sup> T. Hieros. Sota, fol. 19. 2. Yom Tob. fol. 60. 2. & Beracot, fol. 3. 2.

<sup>q</sup> Misn. Sota, c. 3. sect. 4.

<sup>r</sup> Ubi supra.

<sup>s</sup> T. Bab. Sota, fol. 21. 2.

<sup>t</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 3. 1.

and the elbow, that so it might be over-against the heart<sup>a</sup>. These, they imagined, were commanded them by God, in Exod. xiii. 16. and Deut. vi. 8. whereas the sense of these passages only is, that the goodness of God in delivering them out of Egypt, and the words of the law, should be continually before them, in their minds and memories, as if they had tokens on their hands, and frontlets between their eyes; but they understood them literally, and observed them in the above manner. These the Jews call *Tephillin*, because they use them in time of prayer, and look upon them as useful, to put them in mind of that duty: they are here called *phylacteries*, because they thought they kept them in the fear of God, preserved in them the memory of the law, and them from sin; yea, from evil spirits, and diseases of the body. They imagined there was a great deal of holiness in, and valued themselves much upon the use of them<sup>b</sup>; and the Pharisees, because they would be thought to be more holy and religious, and more observant of the law than others, wore these things broader than the rest of the people; and enlarge the borders of their garments. These were the fringes which they put upon the borders of their garments, and on them a riband of blue, to put them in mind of the commandments, to obey them, Numb. xv. 38. Deut. xxii. 12. The observance of this law is of so much consequence with the Jews, that they make all the commandments to depend on it<sup>c</sup>; and say, that it is equal to them all, and that he that is guilty of the breach of it, is worthy of death<sup>d</sup>: they ascribe the like virtue to these fringes, as to their phylacteries, and think themselves much the better for the wearing them; and the Pharisees, because they would appear with a greater air of sanctity and devotion than others, made their's larger. We<sup>e</sup> read of one Ben Tzitzith Hacceseeth, a man of this complexion, who was so called, because his Tzitzith, or fringes, were drawn upon a pillow; and there are some that say, that the pillow was bore between the great men of Rome: it was drawn after him, not upon the ground, but upon a cloth or tapestry, and the train supported by noblemen, as is pretended. This was one of those, that enlarged the Tzitzith, or fringes, beyond the ordinary size; hence Mark calls it, *long clothing*.

Ver. 6. *And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, &c.*] Or the first and chief places to sit, or lie down on, at ordinary meals, and especially at large entertainments, where the great ones sat, as in 1 Sam. ix. 22. where Jarchi on the place observes, that by the manner of their sitting, it was known who was the greatest; and this the Scribes and Pharisees affected. With the Romans, the most honourable place was at the upper end of the table: some think it was more

honourable to sit in the middle, but the master of the feast sat at the lower end; and to senior men, and who were venerable with age, or excelled in prudence and authority, the first sitting down, and the more honourable place, were given; and when the table was taken away, they used to rise first<sup>f</sup>: the middle place was the more honourable with the Numidians<sup>g</sup>, and so it seems to be with the Romans<sup>h</sup>, and also with the Jews; and this the Scribes and Pharisees loved, desired, sought for, and were not pleased if they had not it. It is said<sup>i</sup> of Simeon ben Shetach, a noted Pharisee, about, or rather before the time of Christ, that having fled upon a certain account from king Jannai, he sent for him, and when he came, "he sat himself between the king and the queen: the king said to him, why dost thou mock me? he replied to him, I don't mock thee, thou hast riches and I have learning, as it is written, *Wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence*, Eccl. vii. 12.—He said to him, but why dost thou sit between the king and queen? He replied, in the book of Ben Sira, it is written, *Exalt her and she shall promote thee, and cause thee to sit among princes*. He ordered to give him a cup, that he might ask a blessing; he took the cup and said, blessed be the food that Jannai and his friends eat." Thus on account of their wisdom and learning, they thought they had a right to take the upper hand of kings themselves: and the chief seats in the synagogues; for these were different; the seats of the senior men were turned towards the people, and the backs of them were towards the ark or chest, in which the holy books were put; and these seem to be what the Scribes and Pharisees coveted, that they might be in the full view of the people. And so says Maimonides<sup>k</sup>, "How do the people sit in the synagogues? The elders sit, i. e. first, and their faces are towards the people, and their backs are to the temple, or holy place; and all the people sit in rows, and the faces of one row are to the backs of the row that is before them; so that the faces of all the people are to the holy place, and to the elders, and to the ark."

Ver. 7. *And greetings in the markets, &c.*] They used to stroll about the markets, being public places, where there was a great concourse of people, on purpose to be taken notice of before multitudes, with singular marks of respect; as stretching out the hand, uncovering the head, and bowing the knee: and to be called of men *Rabbi, Rabbi*: because of their great authority, and largeness of their knowledge: the repetition of the word *Rabbi*, is not made in the Vulgate Latin, nor in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, nor in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, but is in all the Greek copies, and very justly; since it was usual in the salutations of them, to double the word. It is reported<sup>l</sup> of R. Eleazar ben

<sup>a</sup> Targ. Jon. Jarchi, & Baal Hatturim in Exod. xiii. 16. & Deut. vi. 8. Maimon. Hilch. Tephillin, c. 1. sect. 1. & c. 2. sect. 2. & c. 3. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. & c. 4. sect. 1, 2.

<sup>b</sup> Maimon. ib. c. 4. sect. 25, 26. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. affirm. 3. 23. Targ. in Cant. viii. 3.

<sup>c</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Tzitzith, c. 3. sect. 19.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 25. 1. Shebuot, fol. 29. 1. & Menachot, fol. 43. 2.

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 56. 1.

<sup>f</sup> Alex. ab Alex. Genial Dier, l. 5. c. 21.

<sup>g</sup> Sallust. Bell. Jugurth. p. 45.

<sup>h</sup> Vid. Alstorph. de lect. vet. p. 117. Minut. Felix, p. 3, 4.

<sup>i</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 11. 2. Beresh. Rabba, sect. 91. fol. 79. 4.

<sup>j</sup> Hilchot Tephilla, c. 11. sect. 4.

<sup>k</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 20. 2.

Simeon, of Migdal Gedur, that having reproached a deformed man he met in the road; when he came to the city where the man lived, "the citizens came out to meet him, and said to him, peace be upon thee, רבי רבי מורי מורי, *Rabbi, Rabbi, Master, Master*;" he (Eleazar) said to them, who do you call "*Rabbi, Rabbi?*" They replied to him, he who followed thee: he said unto them, if this be a "*Rabbi*, let there not be many such in Israel." The Jews pretend, that king Jehoshaphat used to salute the doctors with these titles; though they forget that they were not in use in his time, as will be hereafter observed: they say<sup>k</sup>, "whenever he saw a disciple of the wise men, he rose from his throne, and embraced and kissed him, and called him, אבי אבי רבי רבי מורי מורי, *Father, Father, Rabbi, Rabbi, Master, Master*." Where you have the three different words used by our Lord in this and the following verses, by which these men loved to be called, and he inveighed against; nay, they not only suggest, that kings gave them these honourable titles, and they expected them from them, but even they liked to be called kings themselves. It is said<sup>l</sup> of R. Hona and R. Chasda, that as they were sitting together, one passed by them, "and said to them, *peace be to you kings*, שלומא עליכי מלכי, *peace be to you kings*:" they said to him, from whence does it appear to thee, that the Rabbins are called kings? He replied to them, from what is written, *by me kings reign*, &c. They said to him, from whence hast thou it, that we are to double or repeat peace, or salutation to kings? He answered them, that R. Judah said, that Rab said from hence, 1 Chron. xii. 18. *Then the spirit came upon Amasai, &c.*" This title began but to be in use in the time of our Lord, or a very little while before: none of the prophets had it, nor Ezra the Scribe, nor the men of the great synagogue, nor Simeon the Just, the last of them; nor Antigonus, a man of Socho, a disciple of his: and it is observed by the Jews themselves<sup>l</sup>, that "the five couple are never called by the name of Rabban, nor by the name of Rabbi, only by their own name." By whom are meant, Joseph ben Joezer, and Joseph ben Jochanan; Joshua ben Perachia, said to be the master of Jesus of Nazareth, and Nittai the Arbelite; Judah ben Tabai, and Simeon ben Shetach; Shemaiah and Abtalion; Hillel and Shammai. The sons, or disciples of the two last, first took these titles. Rabban Simeon, the son of Hillel, thought by some to be the same Simeon that had Christ in his arms, is<sup>k</sup> said to be the first that was called by this name; and it is also observed by them<sup>l</sup>, that Rabban was a name of greater honour than Rabbi, or Rab, and that Rabbi was more honourable than Rab; and to be called by a man's own name, was more honourable than any of them. The Karaites make much the same complaint, and give much the same account of the pride and vanity of the Rabbinical doctors, as Christ here does; for so one of them says<sup>m</sup>; "The Karaites don't use to act according

"to the custom of the wise men among the Rabbans, to make to themselves gods of silver, and guides of gold, with this view, לוקרין רב, *to be called Rabbi*; and also to gather wealth and food to fulness, &c."

Ver. 8. *But be not ye called Rabbi, &c.*] Don't be ambitious of any such title, fond of it, or affect it, or be elated with it, should it be given you; nor look upon yourselves as men of power and authority over others; as having the dominion over men's faith, a power to make laws for others, impose them in a magisterial way, and bind and loose men's consciences at pleasure, as these men do: *for one is your master, even Christ*; meaning himself, the true Messiah, the head of the church, King of saints, and Lord of all; who had all power in heaven and in earth, to make laws, appoint ordinances, and oblige men to receive his doctrines, and obey his commands: the word *Christ*, is left out in the Vulgate Latin, the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; but is in the Arabic version, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and in all the ancient Greek copies Beza consulted, excepting two: no other indeed can be meant; he is the great Rabbi, and doctor, that is to be hearkened to, and the master we are all to obey: *and all ye are brethren*; not merely as the descendants of Adam, but as being in a spiritual relation, the children of God, and disciples of Christ, and so have no superiority one over another: this may regard the disciples, both as believers and Christians, partakers of the same grace, and standing in the same relation to God, Christ, and one another, and having an equal right to the same privileges: and as apostles and ministers, one as such, no, not Peter, having no pre-eminence over the other, having the same commission, doctrine, and authority, one as the other.

Ver. 9. *And call no man your father upon the earth, &c.*] Not but that children may, and should call their natural parents, fathers; and such who have been instrumental in the conversion of souls, may be rightly called by them their spiritual fathers; as servants and scholars also, may call those that are over them, and instruct them, their masters: our Lord does not mean, by any of these expressions, to set aside all names and titles, of natural and civil distinction among men, but only to reject all such names and titles, as are used to signify an authoritative power over men's consciences, in matters of faith and obedience; in which, God and Christ are only to be attended to. Christ's sense is, that he would have his disciples not fond of any titles of honour at all; and much less assume an authority over men, as if they were to depend on them, as the founders of the Christian religion, the authors of its doctrines and ordinances; and to take that honour to themselves, which did not belong to them; nor even choose to be called by such names, as would lead people to entertain too high an opinion of them, and take off of their dependence on God the father, and himself, as these titles the Scribes and Pharisees loved to be called by, did: and who were called not only by the name of

<sup>k</sup> T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 24. 1. & Cetubot, fol. 103. 2.

<sup>l</sup> T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 62. 1.

<sup>l</sup> Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 21. 1.

<sup>k</sup> Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 1.

<sup>l</sup> Ib.

<sup>m</sup> Elishah Adderet, c. 6. apud Trigland. de Sect. Kar. c. 10. p. 164.

Rabbi, but Abba, *father*, also: hence we read of Abba Saul, or *Father Saul*<sup>a</sup>; Abba Jose ben Jochanan, a man of Jerusalem<sup>b</sup>, Abba Chanan<sup>c</sup>, Abba Chelphetha, a man of the village of Hananiah<sup>d</sup>; Abba Gorion<sup>e</sup>, and others; and this name was כבוד רבין לשון כבוד, *a name of honour, even as Rabbi*<sup>f</sup>, and of great authority: the wise men are said to be אבות הכול, *the fathers of all*<sup>g</sup>, to whom all gave heed, and upon whom all depended, as so many oracles. There is a whole treatise in their Misna, called Pirke Abot, which contains some of the oracles, and peculiar sayings of these *fathers*, the Misnic doctors, and which are preferred to the writings of Moses, and the prophets. In this sense, and upon this score, our Lord inveighs against them, and cautions his disciples against giving or taking all such titles, in such sense. *For one is your father, which is in heaven*: who is so, both by creation and adoption, and is possessed of all paternal authority; and is to be honoured and obeyed by all; from whom all wisdom and knowledge is derived, and who has the care and government of all in heaven and in earth.

Ver. 10. *Neither be ye called masters, &c.*] Or guides and leaders; not but that the ministers of the word are in a sense such; it is their business to lead and direct souls to Christ, to guide their feet in the way of peace, and to go before them, as examples to them, in word, in conversation, faith, and purity; but then they are to guide them according to the word of God, and not their own dictates; and teach them to observe the rules, and obey the ordinances of Christ, and not what are of their own inventing and prescribing; and to enforce the authority of their great Lord and Master, and not their own; and direct men to a dependence on Christ, as head of the church, who is the one Lord, as his faith is one, and his baptism one also: *for one is your master, even Christ*; which is said before, in ver. 8. but being a matter of so much importance to the honour of Christ, and men being so apt to set up for masters themselves, in opposition to him, or in conjunction with him, or above him, it was necessary to repeat it; for in an authoritative sense he is the one, and only master of the assemblies.

Ver. 11. *But he that is greatest among you, &c.*] Either who really is so, having more grace, and greater gifts bestowed upon him, than others; which doubtless was the case of some of the disciples, or who desired to be the greatest, was ambitious of, and affected a superiority over others, and to be in the highest post and place, as it is certain some of them did. This was what they were often contending about among themselves, who should be greatest: and Christ here seems to have regard to that vain spirit, which appeared among them; and his view is, to check and restrain it: *shall be your servant*; or *let him be your servant*. Service is the way to honour; he that would be most esteemed, ought to do the most work; and the man that has the most grace, and the greatest gifts, ought to employ them for the use and benefit of others; see the note on ch. xx. 27.

Ver. 12. *And whosoever shall exalt himself, &c.*] Above his fellow-Christians, or fellow-ministers, by entertaining too high an opinion of himself, by boasting of his gifts, as preferable to others, and as if he had not received them; by assuming, or eagerly coveting titles of honour among men, or by affecting honour that don't belong to him, or abusing what he has: *shall be abased*; or humbled by God, or men, or both; such shall lose the honour they have, and come greatly short of what they are ambitious of; they shall fall into disgrace with men, and are abominable in the sight of God: *and he that shall humble himself*; by entertaining low thoughts, and a mean opinion of himself, behaving modestly among men; not being elated with his gifts, but acknowledging that they are owing to the grace and goodness of God; and using them in an humble manner, for the advantage of others; not coveting honour from men, nor lifted up with what is conferred on him: *shall be exalted*; by God, or men, or both; if not in this world, yet in the world to come: and indeed, generally speaking, such modest, humble persons, are most esteemed among men; and God gives more grace unto them, and will at last give them glory. This is a saying, often used by our Lord on different accounts, both with respect to his disciples, for their instruction, and with regard to the Scribes and Pharisees, for their mortification; see Luke xiv. 11. and xviii. 14. It seems to be a proverbial expression, and much in use among the Jews: it is said in so many words in the Talmud<sup>a</sup>, as here; "whosoever shall humble himself, the holy blessed God shall exalt him; and whosoever shall exalt himself, the holy blessed God shall humble him."

Ver. 13. *But woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, &c.*] It seems from hence, that the Scribes and Pharisees had not left him, at least not all of them, notwithstanding the confusion they were thrown into; but were still about him, observing what he said to the people, and watching an opportunity to take every advantage against him; whom he addresses in a very awful manner, calling them *hypocrites*, as he truly might; for they were such, both to God and men: he had detected them already before the people, in several instances of hypocrisy; and gives sufficient reasons, in the following part of this chapter, to support the character he gives of them, and his charge against them; denouncing a woe upon them in this world, and that which is to come, no less than eight times; expressing his abhorrence of their wickedness, his commiseration of their case, and their certain destruction: *for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men*: not eternal life and happiness, the entrance into which can neither be opened nor shut by men: those whom God determines to bring thither, shall have an entrance abundantly ministered to them, in spite of the opposition of men and devils; though these men did all that in them lay, to hinder persons enjoying everlasting glory. But the Gospel dispensation is here meant, which was

<sup>a</sup> Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 8.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 53. 2.

<sup>c</sup> Ib. fol. 64. 1.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 94. 1. & Bava Bathra, fol. 56. 2.

<sup>a</sup> Massech Sopherim, c. 15. sect. 10.

<sup>b</sup> Juchasin, fol. 31. 2 & 61. 2.

<sup>c</sup> Maimon in Misn. Peah, c. 1. sect. 1.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 13. 2. & 24. 1. & Nedarim, fol. 55. 1.

opened by the ministry of John the Baptist, Christ and his disciples, and which the Scribes and Pharisees did all they could to shut; by discouraging the preaching of the Gospel, and the administration of ordinances, in which this dispensation lay; and prejudicing the minds of men against it, that they might not embrace the doctrines of it, nor submit to its ordinances: they, by their office, ought to have opened and explained the Scriptures, the prophecies of the Old Testament relating to the Messiah, and led the people into a knowledge of the mysteries of his kingdom, and encouraged them to enter into this new state of things; which, according to the true intent of Scripture, was to take place, and now did: but instead of this, they shut up the Scriptures, took away the key of knowledge, and laid it aside; and darkened the Scriptures by their false glosses, and obliged the people to observe the traditions of the elders, and which they call סִיג לְתוֹרָה, *an hedge for the law*”; to which Beza thinks, the allusion is here, and by which men were shut up, and kept from the true knowledge both of law and Gospel: *for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in*: they neither believed in the Messiah themselves, nor embraced the doctrines relating to his person and office: have any of the Pharisees believed on him? No; they received him not, they rejected him, and also the counsel of God, against themselves, not being baptized with the baptism of John, the forerunner of Christ; nor would they suffer others, that were inclined to profess their faith in him, and be baptized, to do it; but discouraged them all they could, by their reproachful treatment of the person, miracles, and ministry of Christ, and by their threatenings and menaces, and by their excommunications of such as made a confession of him.

Ver. 14. *Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, &c.*] The same character is given as before, and the same woe denounced, and a fresh reason given of it: *for ye devour widows' houses*: that is, the goods in the houses of such as were left with fatherless children, and but little to support them; who being left alone, and none to advise them, and being weak, and prone to superstition; these greedy dogs, as Isaiah calls them, who could never have enough, easily imposed upon them, wormed them out of their substance, stripped them bare of the necessities of life, prevailed on them to sell their houses and goods, and bestow them on them; or got their little estates into their hands, pretending to take care, and dispose of them for them, to their advantage: *and for a pretence make long prayers*: as if they were very holy, good men; or pretended that the substance of these widows, which they got into their hands, was for their long prayers for them; or they made long prayers for them in return for their substance. Maimonides<sup>a</sup> says, that “the ancient saints, or good men, used to stay an “hour before prayer, and an hour after prayer,

“ומאריכם בתפלה שעה, and *prolonged, or held an “hour in every day*.” and this being three times a-day, nine hours every day, as is observed in the Talmud<sup>b</sup>, were spent in this manner; and on this account they got the character of very devout and religious men, and hereby covered all their avarice, rapine, and oppression of the poor: but God will not be mocked; *therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation*; both on account of their plundering and distressing the poor, the widows, and the fatherless; and also because of their hypocrisy in doing this under the cover of religion and holiness. Hence it appears, that there are degrees of punishment in hell, and that hypocrites, and all such who oppress the poor, under the mask of godliness, supposing gain to be that, will be partakers of the greatest degree of it. In Munster's Hebrew Gospel it is called כִּשְׁפֵי אֲרוּךְ, *a long judgment, or damnation*, in allusion to their long prayers: and is the very reverse of what they expect on account of them: they say<sup>c</sup> “three things prolong a man's days and “-years, הַמְאֲרִיךְ בְּתַפְלָתוֹ, *he that is long in his prayer*” is the first mentioned; and he that is long at his prayer, it is an excellency, they say; but instead of a long and happy life, he shall have a long damnation. This verse is left out in some copies, and in others it stands before the former; in which order 'tis read in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions.

Ver. 15. *Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, &c.*] The same character, and woe, are still continued, and a new reason added, confirming the justness of them, in order to awaken and convince them, or, however, to caution the people against them: *for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte*: that is, to the Jewish religion, and their particular sect. There were two sorts of proselytes among them; one was called גֵּר תוֹשֵׁב *proselyte of the gate*, one that might dwell in any of their towns, and cities, and who is thus described<sup>d</sup>; “who “is a proselyte of the gate? whosoever takes upon “him, before three neighbours, that he will not “commit idolatry. R. Meir, and the wise men, say, “whosoever takes upon him the seven precepts “which the sons of Noah took upon them: others “say, these don't come into the general rule of “a proselyte of the gate: who is then a proselyte “of the gate? this is a proselyte, that eats what “dies of itself, but takes upon him to fulfil all “the commandments said in the law, except that “which forbids the eating of things that die of “themselves.” But the usual account of such an one is, who agrees to the seven precepts commanded the children of Noah<sup>e</sup>, which were these<sup>f</sup>; the first forbad idolatry, the second blasphemy, the third murder, the fourth uncleanness, the fifth theft, the sixth required judgment, or punishment on malefactors, the seventh forbad eating the member of any creature alive. The other proselyte was called גֵּר צִדֵק

<sup>a</sup> Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Hilch. Tephillah, c. 4. sect. 16.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 38. 2.

<sup>d</sup> Ib. fol. 54. 2.

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 64. 2.

<sup>b</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Obede Cochabim, c. 10. sect. 6. & Mascalot Asurot, c. 11. sect. 7. & Isure Biab, c. 14. sect. 7.

<sup>c</sup> Ib. Hilch. Melachim, c. 9. sect. 1.

a proselyte of righteousness; and he was one that submitted to circumcision<sup>d</sup>, and the rest of the ceremonies of the law; and was in all respects as an Israelite himself; and of this sort is the text to be understood. The Ethiopic version reads the words, *baptize one proselyte, and when he is baptized*; referring to a custom among the Jews, who baptized, or dipped their proselytes in water, as well as circumcised them; about which there are great disputes in their writings; some alleging, that the dipping of them was necessary to the making them proselytes; others affirming, that it was not: "a proselyte that is circumcised, and not dipped, dipped, and not circumcised, the whole follows after, or depends on circumcision, says R. Eliezer." R. Joshua says, even dipping delays it; (*i. e.* the want of it, hinders a man from being a proselyte;) but R. Joshua ben Levi says, it should go according to the tradition of Bar Kaphra; for the tradition of Bar Kaphra is, "that he that is circumcised, and not dipped, lo! he is right; for there is no proselyte but what is dipped, because of the pollutions that happen to him." And elsewhere<sup>e</sup> this is debated in the following manner: "a proselyte that is circumcised, and not dipped, R. Eliezer says, lo! this is a proselyte; for so we find concerning our fathers, that they were circumcised, but not dipped. "One that is dipped, and not circumcised, R. Joshua says, lo! this is a proselyte; for so we find concerning our mothers, that they were dipped, but not circumcised. The wise men say, one that is dipped, and not circumcised, or circumcised, and not dipped, is no proselyte, until he is both circumcised and dipped." So the dispute ended, and it became a settled point, that one should never be reckoned a proselyte, unless he was both circumcised and dipped. And after this it became customary to receive proselytes by circumcision, dipping, and sacrifice; and the manner was this: "a stranger that comes to be made a proselyte at this time, they say unto him, what dost thou see, that thou comest to be made a proselyte? dost thou not know that the Israelites at this time are miserable, banished, drove about, and plundered, and chastisements come upon them? If he says, I know this, but it does not satisfy me, they receive him immediately, and make known some of the light commands, and some of the heavy commands to him; and they acquaint him with the business of gleanings, the forgotten sheaf, the corner of the field left standing, and the poor's tithe: they also inform him of the penalties of the commands, and say unto him, know thou, that before thou camest into this way, thou didst eat fat, and was not punished with cutting off; thou didst profane the sabbath, and was not punished with stoning? but now if thou eatest fat, thou'lt be punished with cutting off; and if thou profanest the sabbath, thou'lt be punished with stoning: and as they

inform him of the penalties of the precepts, so they acquaint him with the giving of the rewards of them; saying to him, know thou that the world to come is not made but for the righteous; and the Israelites at this time can't receive neither much good, nor much punishment? but they don't multiply words, nor critically inquire of him; if he receives these things, they immediately circumcise him; and if there remain in him obstructions, hindering circumcision, they circumcise him a second time; and when he is healed they immediately dip him; and two disciples of the wise men stand over him, and acquaint him with some of the light commands, and some of the heavy commands; then he dips, and comes up, and is as an Israelite in all respects: if a woman, the women set her in water up to her neck, and two disciples of the wise men stand by her without, and inform her of some of the light commands, and some of the heavy commands." And, as Maimonides<sup>h</sup> adds, who gives a larger account of this matter, "she sits in the water, and after that dips herself before them; and they turn away their faces, and go out, so that they do not see her, when she comes out of the water." From all which it appears, that this affair was moved after our Lord's time; was not a settled point till a good while after; and is a custom that has obtained since the Jews were drove out of their own land; though they pretend to say it was an ancient practice of their fathers, of which they can give no sufficient proof; wherefore there could be no regard had to it in this text, and consequently the Ethiopic version of it is not a right one; nor can the dipping of proselytes by the Jews be what Christian baptism takes its rise from, or in any respect be modelled according to it, between which, in many things, there is a wide difference. Now the Jews were very diligent and industrious, which is meant by *compassing of sea and land*: they used all kinds of methods, ways, and means, to gain such a point, and sometimes very wicked ones. "Rabbenu Tam<sup>i</sup> allowed a daughter of Israel to change her religion, and a stranger to lie with her, that she might confirm it, when he became a proselyte." And this they were so exceeding fond of, not out of any regard to the glory of God, or the good of the souls of men; nor did they really love the proselytes: and it is often said by them<sup>k</sup>, that "proselytes are hard, or uneasy to Israel, as the itch or scab." The gloss says, because they were not expert in the commandments, and were the cause of punishment, and the Israelites were apt to imitate their works; but they coveted to make them, because hereby either they strengthened their own party, or filled their purses with their substance, or got applause and credit among the common people; for the making a proselyte was reckoned a very great action, and is ascribed to the patriarchs Abraham and Jacob, and made equal to

<sup>d</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 36. 1.

<sup>e</sup> T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 64. 4.

<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 46. 1, 2.

<sup>g</sup> Ib. fol. 47. 1, 2.

<sup>h</sup> Hilch. Issure Biah, c. 14. sect. 6.

<sup>i</sup> Pitke Toseph. Cetubot, art. 7.

<sup>k</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 47. 2. & 109. 2 Kiddushin, fol. 70. 2. & Nidda, fol. 13. 2.

creation'. "Says R. Eliezer, in the name of R. Jose ben Zimra, if all that come into the world were gathered together to create even one fly, they would not be able to put breath into it: but you'll object what he saith, *the souls they made in Haran*, Gen. xii. 5. but these are the proselytes whom Abraham proselyted; but why does he say *made*, and not proselyted? to teach thee, that whoever brings near a stranger, and proselytes him, *is as if he created him*. You will say Abraham made proselytes, but not Sarah: the text is, *the souls which they made in Haran*: which he made is not written, but which they made: Abraham proselyted the men, and Sarah proselyted the women." And a little after, "Jacob made proselytes, as it is written, Gen. xxxv. 2. *Jacob said unto his household, &c.*" And in imitation of these they might be fond of making proselytes, but no further than their own interest was some way or other concerned: and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves; for to their former errors in Heathenism, some of which they might still retain, they added new ones, they received from them, equally as bad, and were but more and more deserving of hell, and even more than their masters; and besides, were trained up by them in the most bitter prejudices against Christ, and his Gospel; and many of them proved more violent persecutors of the followers of Christ, than the original Jews themselves: see Acts xv. 50. and xiv. 2. 19. Our Lord here seems to oppose a common notion and saying of their's, that when "one was made a proselyte, he became entirely like a new-born babe;" but so far from being like one in innocence and harmlessness, that he became a child of hell, filled with wrath and malice, and fitted for destruction; and so opposes another notion of their's, that hell-fire has no power over their disciples, nor even over the transgressors of Israel: but they'll find it, by experience, that neither their descent from Abraham, nor their learning, nor their religion, will save them from the devouring flames, which their sins have made them so deserving of, and so are בני גיהנום, *children of hell*; a Talmudic phrase; the meaning of which they understood well enough, and which was applicable to them, and more so to their proselytes; and that as owing to them, which was an aggravation of their own guilt and condemnation.

Ver. 16. *Woe unto you, you blind guides, &c.* Meaning the same persons, the Scribes and Pharisees, as before, though not named, who pretended to be guides of the blind, Rom. ii. 19. but were themselves blind, and so very unfit to be guides of others; they were as they were born, ignorant of divine things, of God in Christ, of the true Messiah, of the true meaning of the Scriptures, of the spirituality of the law, and of the Gospel of Christ, and the way of salvation by him; and their minds

were blinded by the God of this world, and with a greedy and insatiable covetousness after the things of it, of which Christ here gives an instance: *which say, whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing*; meaning, either that it was no sin to use such an oath, or it was not binding upon a man: he might choose whether he would abide by what he swore by the temple he would do; and thus they ignorantly and wickedly encouraged vain swearing and perjury. It was usual with them to swear by the temple: take an instance or two. "Says R. Jochanan, דריכלא, *by the temple*, it is in our hands; but what shall I do?" The gloss upon it is; "it is an oath by the temple of God, that it is in our power to reveal the illegitimacy of the families of the land of Israel." "Says R. Zechariah ben Hakatzab, דרובן דרובן, *by this habitation* (meaning the temple), her hand was not removed from my hand from the time the Gentiles entered into Jerusalem, to the time they went out." Jarchi and Bartenora's note on it is, this is an oath. Again, "says R. Simeon ben Gamaliel, דרובן דרובן, *by this habitation*; I will not rest this night until they (doves) are sold for pence apiece." The gloss on it is, "he swore by the sanctuary." *But whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is guilty*; or is bound, or is a debtor, to make good his oath; he cannot be excused, but must be obliged to fulfil it; or if he does not, he is guilty of perjury. This is to be understood not of the gold that covered any part of the temple; nor of the golden vessels in it; but of the gold, or money, or gifts which were offered for the service of the temple: and the sense is, that whosoever swore by *Korban*, and that this, or that should be as *Korban*, he should not go back from it; he was obliged to give it. This shewed the covetous disposition of these men, who made nothing of oaths that were sworn by the temple; but those that were made by the *Korban*, or the gifts of it, were binding, because their interest was in it; it was for their gain.

Ver. 17. *Ye fools, and blind, &c.* That argue after so ridiculous a manner, that make use of such thin sophistry, that every body may see through it; who must be stupid and sottish to the last degree, and their minds foolishly blinded with avarice, as to please and satisfy themselves with so poor a distinction; that would by no means serve them, but make against them: *for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?* the temple, to be sure: for that was the seat of the divine majesty, built for him to dwell in, and in which he took up his residence; and was dedicated to his service, and in it was divine worship performed unto him. The temple was sanctified by the presence of God in it; and the gold sanctified by the temple, being devoted to the service of it: whatever holiness it had, it had it from the temple, and therefore the temple must be greater than that; and consequently it must be most extravagantly ridiculous and

<sup>1</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 39. fol. 35. 1. & sect. 84. fol. 72. 3. 4.

<sup>m</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 22. 1. & 48. 2 & 62. 1. & 97. 2. Maimon. Hillel. Issure Biah, c. 14. sect. 11. & Eduth, c. 13. sect. 2.

<sup>n</sup> T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 27. 1.

<sup>o</sup> T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 17. 1.

<sup>p</sup> T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 71. 1.

<sup>q</sup> Misn. Cetubot, c. 2. sect. 9. Juchasin, fol. 56. 1.

<sup>r</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 166. 1. Misn. Crisot, c. 1. sect. 7. Vid. c. 6. sect. 3.

foolish in them, to make oaths by the gold of the temple, and gifts dedicated to its service, and on that score sanctified by it, more binding and sacred than such as were by the temple itself.

Ver. 18. *And whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing, &c.*] These are again the words or sayings of the Scribes and Pharisees, and express their sentiments and practice: it was usual with them to swear by the altar; and this was reckoned either no sin at all, or such an oath was not accounted binding on a man; he might break, or keep it as he thought fit: of this kind of swearing, we have the following instances. One said to another, "swear to me that thou wilt not discover me, and he swore to him; by what did he swear?" says R. Jose bar Chanina, *במזבוח הפנימי*, by "the innermost altar." Again, it is said of Zedekiah, "that he (Nebuchadnezzar) made him to swear; by what did he make him to swear?" says R. Jose, by the covenant he made him to swear; Rabbi says *במזבוח*, by the altar he made him to swear." And elsewhere it is said of him, "and he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who made him swear by God," 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13. By what did he make him swear? says R. Jose bar Chanina, *by the horns of the innermost altar he made him swear.* "But whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty; of perjury, if he does not make good his oath; he is bound to perform it, it is obligatory; whatever he swore should be a gift for the altar, he was indispensably obliged to bring it; for whatever he swore by *Korban*, or the gift, could never be put to any other use.

Ver. 19. *Ye fools, and blind, &c.*] This is very justly repeated, since this is no less an instance of their folly, blindness, and stupidity. In three copies of Beza's the word *fools* is not; nor is it in the Vulgate Latin, nor in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; but the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions have it: *for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?* The gift, or offering, before it was devoted to sacred use, and brought, and laid upon the altar, was common, had no ceremonial sanctity in it, and might be put to any use; but when it was brought, and laid upon the altar, it became holy; for, according to the law, whatever touched the altar, and indeed all, or any of the vessels of the sanctuary, was holy, Exod. xxix. 37. and xxx. 29. Christ speaks the sense of the law, and their own traditions, and in their own language, and argues from the same to the confutation of them: *המזבוח מקדש*, the altar, they say, sanctifies that which is fit for it; that is, that which is proper to be offered up upon it: "as the altar sanctifies that which is fit for it, so the ascent unto it sanctifies; and as the altar, and the ascent, sanctify what is fit for them, so the vessels sanctify; the vessels for liquids sanctify the liquids, and the dry measures sanctify the dry; the vessels for liquids don't sanctify the dry, nor the dry measures sanctify the liquids; the holy vessels, which are bored, (or broken,) when they do the service they used to do, when whole,

"sanctify, if not, they do not sanctify; nor does any thing sanctify but in the sanctuary." Now, since this is a clear case, that the altar sanctifies the gift, and not the gift the altar, our Lord's question is, which is the greater? A man that has the least share of common sense will easily see, that the altar must be the greater: wherefore these Scribes and Pharisees must be wretchedly stupid to give out, that an oath made by the altar was not binding, when one that was made by the gift, or *Korban*, was binding; seeing the gift, or offering, received its sanctity from the altar: hence, of the two, an oath made by the altar should be more sacred and obligatory than one made by the gift.

Ver. 20. *Whosoever therefore shall swear by the altar, &c.*] Not that Christ allowed of swearing by the altar, or by the temple, or by heaven, or by any creature, animate or inanimate; for such swearing is elsewhere disapproved of by him, and forbid; but if a man did swear by the altar, he ought to know, and consider, that he not only sweareth by it, but by all the gifts and offerings that are brought, and laid upon it, and by all things thereon; whatever gifts and sacrifices are offered upon it; which, by being put there, become holy, as the altar itself: so that he that swears by the altar, swears also by the gifts of the altar; and consequently, according to their own traditions, such oaths must be binding.

Ver. 21. *And whoso shall swear by the temple, &c.*] As we have before seen they used to do, and as appears from what the poet says \*:

*Ecce negas, jurasque mihi per templa tonantis  
Non credo: jura, verpe, per Anchialum.*

In which he intimates, that if the Jew swore by the temple, he would not believe him; as well he might not, since such an oath was accounted nothing; but bids him swear by Anchialus, that is, by *אליהו*, *Chi Eloah*, or *דו עלין*, *Chi Alon*, or *Eliou*, the living God, or *דו העולם*, *Chi Haolam*, he that lives for ever<sup>†</sup>; and suggests, that he should then believe him. Now our Lord, though he did not allow of such swearing, yet justly argues, that he that sweareth by the temple, not only sweareth by it, which could not be a witness of what was sworn; but he must be interpreted to swear by the inhabitant of it, and by him that dwelleth in it: that is, God, for whom it was built, to whom it was dedicated; where he was worshipped, and where he vouchsafed to reside; taking up his dwelling between the cherubim upon the mercy-seat, in the most holy place; from whence he communed with men, and gave tokens of his presence; and who only could be the proper witness of the truth, or falsehood, of what was sworn; and therefore an oath, by the temple, ought to be looked upon as if made by God himself, and so to be sacred and binding.

Ver. 22. *And he that shall swear by heaven, &c.*] As the Jews were wont to do in common, but did not look upon such an oath as obligatory on them; see the

\* Echa Rabbati, fol. 54. 1.

† Midrash Kohelet, fol. 78. 1.

‡ Midrash Megillat Esther, fol. 89. 1.

\* Misen. Zebachim, c. 9. sect. 7.

† Martial. Epigr. l. 11. Ep. 60.

‡ Vid. Selden. Prolegomena ad lib. de Successionibus.



note on Matt. v. 34. though such an one *swareth by the throne of God*; for heaven is God's throne, where he sits, and, in an eminent manner, displays the glory of his majesty: *and by him that sitteth thereon*, by God himself. Thus swearing by any thing that has any relation to God, is implicitly swearing by him; and therefore ought to be considered as binding, as if he was expressed in it; since an appeal can't be made to things inanimate, nor indeed to any creature, but to God, the searcher of hearts.

Ver. 23. *Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, &c.*] Christ returns to the former epithets he had very rightly given to these men, and very pertinently repeats them here; and which are confirmed by the instances of their conduct and practice here alleged, which abundantly shew their hypocrisy and deceit; since they were very strict in observing some outward things, which gave them credit with the people, and especially the priests and Levites, some little trifling ceremonies and traditions of their elders, whilst they neglected internal religion, and those things which were of the greatest moment and importance: *for ye take tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin*; which though not commanded by the law, they were obliged to by the traditions of the elders. *Mint* is an herb well known, and has its name in the Greek from its sweet smell; on account of which the Jews used to strow it on the floors of their synagogues<sup>7</sup>. This was one of the herbs that was subject to the law of the seventh year<sup>8</sup>, and is mentioned with those which were to be tithed<sup>9</sup>. The Ethiopic version, instead of mint reads *hyssop*; and which also was an herb that was obliged to be tithed<sup>10</sup>. *Anise* is a seed also well known, and which the Jews call שבת; and of which they often observe, that it is subject to tithing, both seed, herb, flowers, or stalks<sup>11</sup>: instead of this Munster's Hebrew Gospel has פניח, *rue*; and which, in the Misna<sup>12</sup>, is mentioned along with mint, as it is by Luke, ch. xi. 42. and said to be one of the things the Pharisees gave tithe of; though in their oral law it is reckoned among the things that are free from tithe<sup>13</sup>: and therefore this must be a sort of work of supererogation, to give tithe of that, which they were not obliged to. *Cummin* is a sort of anise; its seed is much like fennel-seed, and which pigeons are very fond of: mention is made of it in Isa. xxviii. 25, 27. and is reckoned with figs, dates, carobes, or Egyptian figs, and rice, which were obliged to be tithed<sup>14</sup>, and was what was also bound to the offering of the first-fruits to the priest<sup>15</sup>. Christ mentions these particular herbs and seeds, as a specimen of what they paid tithes of. In Luke, 'tis added, *and all manner of herbs*: for, according to the traditions of the elders, they were in general subject to tithes: and it is a common saying, or maxim of the Jews, that the tithing of corn is from the law, but כמעשר ירק דרבנן, *the tithing of herbs is from the Rabbins*<sup>16</sup>: 'tis a consti-

tution of their's, and not of Moses: *and have omitted the weightier matters of the law*. The distinction of the commandments of the law into lighter and heavier, or weightier, to which Christ here refers, is frequent with the Jews. When one comes to be made a proselyte, they acquaint him with some of מצות קלות, *the light commands*, and some of מצות כבדות, *the heavy, or weighty commands*<sup>17</sup>. So again, they paraphrase the words in Isa. xxxiii. 18. *where is the Scribe?* he that numbers all the letters in the law. *Where is the receiver?* who weighs the light things, חמורין שבתורה, *and heavy, or weighty things in the law*<sup>18</sup>. Again<sup>19</sup>, "in the words of the law there are some things light, and some things heavy, or weighty:" but those weighty things they omitted, and regarded those that were light; yea, that had no foundation in the law at all: and no wonder, since, in the place last cited, they say<sup>20</sup>, that "the words of the Scribes are all of them weighty, and that the sayings of the elders are more weighty than the words of the prophets." The things our Lord refers to, and instances in, are as follow: *judgment, mercy, and faith*. *Judgment* may mean the administration of justice in courts of judicature; the putting in execution good judgments, righteous laws and statutes; protecting, and relieving the injured and oppressed, and doing that which is right and equitable between man and man: but, on the contrary, these men devoured widows' houses, and oppressed the poor and fatherless. *Mercy* includes all acts of compassion to the distressed, relieving the necessitous, distributing to their wants, and shewing all kindness and beneficence to the poor and needy; which the Scribes and Pharisees very little practised, being a set of cruel, hard-hearted, and covetous persons. *Faith* may not only design faithfulness in a man's keeping his word and promise, and fidelity to a trust reposed in him; but also faith in God, as the God of providence, and as the God of grace and mercy; believing in his word and promises, and worshipping him, which the law requires; and the rather this seems to be intended, because Luke, instead of *faith*, puts *the love of God*, which faith includes, and works by, and is the end of the commandment, arising from faith unfeigned: so that Christ instances in the weightier matters of both tables of the law, which these men neglected, and the latter, as well as the former: not believing the revelation of the Gospel, nor the Messiah, who was promised, and prophesied of by God, in the writings of the Old Testament: *these ought ye to have done*: more especially, and in the first place, as being of the greatest use and importance: *and not to leave the other undone*; meaning either the lighter matters, and lesser commands of the law; or even their tithes of herbs: if they thought themselves obliged to them, Christ would not dispute the matter with them; if they thought fit

<sup>7</sup> Jarchi in Misn. Oketzim, c. 1. sect. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Misn. Sheviith, c. 7. sect. 1, 2.

<sup>9</sup> T. Hieros. Demai, fol. 29. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Misn. Maaserot, c. 3. sect. 9.

<sup>11</sup> Ib. c. 4. sect. 5. T. Hieros. Maaserot, fol. 51. 2. T. Bab. Avoda

Zara, fol. 7. 2. Jarchi & Maimon. in Misn. Oketzim, c. 3. sect. 4.

<sup>12</sup> Oketzim, c. 1. sect. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Misn. Sheviith, c. 9. sect. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Misn. Demai, c. 2. sect. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Misn. Trumot, c. 10. sect. 4.

<sup>16</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 83. s. & T. Hieros. Challah, fol. 60. s. & Maaserot, fol. 48. 3.

<sup>17</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 47. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Issure Bia, c. 14. sect. 3, 6, 9. Moses Kotsensis Mitsvot Torah, pr. neg. 116.

<sup>18</sup> T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 15. 2. & Sanbedriu, fol. 106. 2.

<sup>19</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 3. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Ib.

to observe them, they might, so long as they did not interfere with, and take them off from things of greater moment. But alas! these men preferred the rituals of the ceremonial law, and the traditions of the elders, above the duties of the moral law; and reckoned that the latter were nothing, if the former were wanting; for they say, that “the words of the Scribes, are more lovely than the words of the law.” And also, that “he that profanes the holy things, and despises “the solemn feasts, and makes void the covenant of “Abraham our father (circumcision), and behaves “impudently towards the law (ceremonial), although “the law and good works are in his hands, he has “no part in the world to come.” The Persic version renders the words thus; *these ought ye to do, and not them*; as if it was our Lord’s sense, that they ought to observe the weightier matters of the moral law, and not regard their tithing of herbs, and other traditions of their fathers.

Ver. 24. *Ye blind guides, &c.*] As in ver. 16. *who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel*: the Syriac and Persic versions read the words in the plural number, *gnats and camels*. The Jews had a law, which forbid them the eating of any creeping thing, Lev. xi. 41. and of this they were strictly observant, and would not be guilty of the breach of it for ever so much. “One “that eats a flea, or a gnat, they say <sup>פ</sup> is <sup>פ</sup> *בטור*, an apostate;” one that has changed his religion, and is no more to be reckoned as one of them. Hence they very carefully strained their liquors, lest they should transgress the above command, and incur the character of an apostate; and at least, the penalty of being beaten with forty stripes, save one; for, “whoever eats a “whole fly, or a whole gnat, whether alive or dead, “was to be beaten on account of a creeping flying “thing <sup>י</sup>.” Among the accusations Haman is said to bring against them to Ahasuerus, and the instances he gives of their laws being different from the king’s, this is one; that “if a fly falls into the cup of one of “them, ווריק ושורוק, *he strains it, and drinks it*; but “if my lord the king should touch the cup of one of “them, he would throw it to the ground, and would not drink of it.” Maimonides says <sup>י</sup>, “*He that “strains wine, or vinegar, or strong liquor, and eats “Jabchushin* (a sort of small flies found in wine-cellar’s <sup>י</sup>, “on account of which they strained their wine), or “gnats, or worms, which he hath strained off, is to be “beaten on account of the creeping things of the water, “or on account of the creeping flying things, and the “creeping things of the water.” Moreover, ‘tis said <sup>י</sup>, “a man might not pour his strong liquors through a “strainer, by the light (of a candle or lamp), lest he “should separate and leave in the top of the strainer “(some creeping thing), and it should fall again into “the cup, and he should transgress the law, in Lev. “xi. 41.” To this practice Christ alluded here; and so very strict and careful were they in this matter, that to strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel, became at length a proverb, to signify much solicitude about

little things, and none about greater. These men would not, on any consideration, be guilty of such a crime, as not to pay the tithe of mint, anise, and cummin, and such like herbs and seeds; and yet made no conscience of doing justice, and shewing mercy to men, or of exercising faith in God, or love to him. Just as many hypocrites, like them, make a great stir, and would appear very conscientious and scrupulous, about some little trifling things, and yet stick not, at other times, to commit the grossest enormities, and most scandalous sins in life.

Ver. 25. *Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, &c.*] Our Lord cannot be thought to bear too hard upon these men; nor does he continue this character of them, and denunciations of woe against them, without a reason: *for ye make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess*. The allusion is to their traditions about washing their cups and pots, and brazen vessels; see Mark vii. 4. which they strictly observed. In their oral law is a whole tract, called *Mikwoot*, which gives rules about the places where they washed, the things to be washed, and the manner of washing them; about which they were very nice, pretending to much outward cleanness, but had no regard to inward purity. Christ’s sense is, that they took much pains, and were very careful, that the cup they drank out of, and the platter, or dish they ate out of, should be very clean; when at the same time, the food and drink that were within them, were got by oppression and rapine; by devouring widows’ houses, by making undue claims upon, and extorting unjust sums from the fatherless, the poor, and the needy; and were abused by them, to luxury and intemperance. In like manner the Jews themselves say of hypocrites <sup>י</sup>; “They make shew of “a pure and clean soul, but under it lies hid a leprosy: “they are like to vessels full of uncleanness; they are “outwardly washed with the water of fraud and craftiness; but whatsoever is within, in the midst of them, “is unclean.” The Vulgate Latin version of the text, instead of *excess*, reads *uncleanness*, and so does Munster’s Hebrew Gospel: many copies read *unrighteousness*. *Excess* is thought to be a sin the Pharisees were not guilty of, though they were of extortion, injustice, and uncleanness.

Ver. 26. *Thou blind Pharisee, &c.*] Well might Christ call such an one a blind Pharisee, who was so scrupulously careful to cleanse his cup and platter; and yet made no conscience of filling them with what was gotten in an unjust way, and so defiled himself and them: *cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also*: get food and drink in an honest way, remove all extortion and oppression out of thine hands, and luxury and intemperance from thy table; and so shall the outward cleanness of thy cup and dish, be no reproach unto thee, or testimony against thee, of thine hypocrisy. So the great concern of all men should be, inward purity; that their hearts be purified by faith in the

<sup>י</sup> T. Hieros. Bernacet, fol. 3. 2.

<sup>י</sup> T. Hieros. Pesechim, fol. 23. 2.

<sup>י</sup> T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 26. 2. & Horaiot, fol. 11. 1.

<sup>י</sup> Meimon. Hilch. Maacolat Aсурt, c. 9. sect. 29.

<sup>י</sup> T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 13. 2. Vid. T. Hieros. Sota, fol. 17. 1.

<sup>י</sup> Ubi supra, sect. 20.

<sup>י</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 67. 1.

<sup>י</sup> Ib.

<sup>י</sup> R. Sol. Gabirol in Cethar Malcuth apud L. Capell. in loc.

blood of Christ, and sprinkled from an evil conscience by the same; that principles of grace and holiness be formed in them by the spirit of God; and then their outward lives and conversations being influenced thereby, will be honourable and agreeable to their professions. Otherwise, an external reformation, or an outward shew of holiness, and bare pretensions to it, without internal grace, will never be of any avail in the sight of God.

Ver. 27. *Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, &c.*] 'Tis much these men could bear to hear themselves so often called by this name; and it shews great courage in our Lord, so freely to reprove them, and expose their wickedness, who were men of so much credit and influence with the people: for ye are like unto whited sepulchres; or covered with lime, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, render it. For the Jews used to mark their graves with white lime, that they might be known; that so priests, Nazarites, and travellers, might avoid them, and not be polluted with them. This appears from various passages in their writings: "The vineyard of the fourth year, they marked with clods of earth, and an uncircumcised one with dust, *בסיד קברות*, and graves with chalk, mixed (with water) and poured (on them \*.)" Of this marking of the graves, the reason of it, the time and manner of doing it, Maimonides † gives us this account: "Whoever finds a grave, or a dead carcass, or any thing for the dead that defiles, by the tent he is obliged to put a mark upon it, that it may not be a stumbling to others; and on the intermediate days of a feast, they go out from the sanhedrim, to mark the graves.—With what do they mark? *בסיד*, with chalk infused in water, and poured upon the unclean place: they don't put the mark upon the top of the unclean place, (or exactly in it,) but so that it may stand out here and there, at the sides of it, that what is pure may not be corrupted; and they don't put the mark far from the place of the uncleanness, that they may not waste the land of Israel; and they don't set marks on those that are manifest, for they are known to all; but upon those that are doubtful, as a field in which a grave is lost, and places that are open, and want a covering." Now because when the rains fell, these marks were washed away, hence on the first of Adar (February) when they used to repair the highways, they also marked the graves with white lime, that they might be seen and known, and avoided; and so on their intermediate feast-days ‡: the reason why they made use of chalk, or lime, and with these marked their graves, was because it looked white like bones §; so that upon first sight, it might be thought and known what it was for, and that a grave was there: hence this phrase, *whited sepulchres: which indeed appear beautiful outward; especially at a distance, and when new marked: but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness; worms and rottenness, which arise from the putrefied carcasses, and are very nauseous and defiling.*

\* Misn. Maaser Shevi, c. 5. sect. 1.

† Hilch. Tumath Meth, c. 8. sect. 9.

‡ Misn. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 1. & Moed Katon, c. 1. sect. 2. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Ver. 28. *Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous, &c.*] By making broad their phylacteries, enlarging the borders of their garments, praying long prayers, compassing sea and land to make one proselyte, paying tithes of all manner of herbs, and cleansing the outside of the cup and platter, and doing all their works, prayers, fastings, and alms-deeds, to be seen of men. This is the accommodation of the above simile; by reason of these things they looked like whited sepulchres, outwardly beautiful: so these appeared outwardly righteous, they looked like righteous persons, and were not; they were what Hagar, as the Jews say, charged her mistress with being; for so they interpret these words, *her mistress was despised in her eyes*, Gen. xvi. 4<sup>b</sup>. "She said, this Sarah is not secretly, what she is openly; she appears *כאילו היא צדקת*, as if she was righteous, and she is not righteous." The same they say of Leah. This was a misrepresentation; but the representation Christ gives of these men, is right; they were of that sort of the Pharisees, which they call *הרובותין*, *the dyed, or coloured ones*: it is said of Jannai the king, that he should say to those of his family †; "Don't be afraid of them that are Pharisees, (that are truly so,) nor of them that are not Pharisees; but of them that are, *הרובותין*, *dyed*, for they are like to Pharisees; for their works are as the works of Zimri, (adulterers, as these were,) and they expect the reward as Phinehas." The gloss upon it is, "the Pharisees hated him, because he had slain many of their wise men, and was turned Sadducee; and when he was dying, his wife was afraid of them, lest they should take away the kingdom from her sons, and she desired him to seek their favour for her; but he said unto her, don't be afraid of the Pharisees, for they are righteous, and will not render evil to thee, nor to thy sons; for they have not sinned against them; nor of them that are not Pharisees, for they are their friends; but of the *dyed ones*: as if he had said, their appearance is not according to their nature, but they are dyed without, *ואין תיכם ככרם*, and their inside is not as their outside; for their works are as the work of Zimri, for they are ungodly; and they expect the reward as Phinehas, saying to men, to honour them as Phinehas." But this outward shew and appearance of righteousness, was only unto men, not unto God: they did not appear so to him, who is the searcher of hearts, and knows what is in man, and knew all the secret wickedness that was in them; for though they imposed upon, and deceived men, they could not deceive God; nor was their iniquity hid from Christ, who adds, *but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity*: and which was evident from their ambition and vain glory, in desiring the uppermost rooms at feasts, the chief places in the synagogue, greetings in the markets, and titles of honour and grandeur; from their avarice and cruel oppression of the widows, and fatherless, under a pretence of long prayers; from their neglecting the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and

‡ Jarchi in Misn. Moed Katon, c. 1. sect. 2. & Bartenora in Misn. Maaser Shevi, c. 5. sect. 1.

† Bereshit Rabba, sect. 45. fol. 40. 3. Jarchi in Gen. xvi. 4.

‡ Bereshit Rabba, sect. 71. fol. 63. 2.

§ T. Bab. Seta, fol. 22. 2.

faith, and practising extortion and excess: that saying of their's<sup>c</sup>, may be applied to themselves; "every disciple of a wise man, שְׂמֵן תּוֹכוֹ כְּבֵרוֹ, whose inside is not as his outside, is no disciple of a wise man." And it is expressly ascribed by some of their writers to one sort of the Pharisees, of whom they say<sup>f</sup>, "they are desirous to appear to men to be holy, but their inside is not as their outside;" which is much the same Christ here says of them. What our Lord charges these men with, is owned by their own doctors; they say<sup>e</sup>, that "the iniquity of those that were under the first temple, was open and manifest, but the iniquity of those that were under the second temple, was not open." But as the gloss says, "the children of the second temple, רְשָׁעִים הָיוּ בְּסֵתֵר, were secretly wicked."

Ver. 29. *Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, &c.*] This is the seventh and last time, in which these words are delivered in this exact form by our Lord, in this chapter; and expresses the certainty, both of their sin and punishment: and the instance annexed to it, no less discovers the hypocrisy of these persons, and supports the character given of them; as also furnishes out a sufficient reason, why a woe is denounced upon them; because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous; meaning by the prophets and righteous men, the same persons, the prophets, who were righteous men; or else the prophets, and also other righteous men besides them. Rightly is the word *build*, used of tombs and sepulchres; the Jews have a canon, which runs thus<sup>b</sup>; "they don't dig graves nor sepulchres, on a feast-day." The commentators<sup>1</sup> on it say, that the graves are the holes which they dig in the earth, and the sepulchres are the buildings over the graves. In the Gemara it is asked<sup>k</sup>, "what are the graves? and what are the sepulchres? says R. Judah, the graves are made by digging, and the sepulchres or tombs בְּבִנְיָ, by building;" and these edifices which they built over the graves of some of their prophets, and righteous men, were very grand and beautiful. The Cippi Hebraici furnish us with many instances of this kind: in Hebron, in the land of Canaan, which is Kirjath Arba, is the cave of Macpelah; in which were buried the fathers of the world, Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah; and over it is a wonderful, נִמְאָה, and beautiful building, and it is the building of David the king; and over-against the city, in the mountain, is a beautiful building, and there was buried Jesse, the father of David the king: in the way from Hebron to Jerusalem, is Chalchul, where Gad, David's seer, was buried; and Tekoah, where Isaiah the prophet was buried, and over him a beautiful structure: at the Mount of Olives is a beautiful fabric, which they say is the sepulchre of Huldah, the prophetess; at the bottom of the mount is a very great cave, attributed to Haggai the prophet, and in the middle of it are many caves; near it, is the sepulchre of Zechariah the prophet, in a cave shut up,

and over it is כִּיפָה נִמְאָה, a beautiful arch, or vault of one stone: between Rama and Jerusalem are caves ascribed to Simeon the just, and the seventy (elders of the) sanhedrim: at Rama, Samuel was buried, also his father Elkana, and Hannah his mother, and in a cave shut up, and over the cave buildings: at Cheres, which is Timnath Cheres, in Mount Ephraim, are buried Joshua the son of Nun, and Nun his father, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and over them are trees: At Avarta is the school of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, and Eleazar is buried upon the mountain; and below the village, between the olive-trees, Ithamar, and over him a large monument: at the barns is a temple of the Gentiles, with a vault and a cave, where they say are buried seventy elders. At Belata, a village about a sabbath-day's journey from Shechem, Joseph the righteous was buried: at Mount Carmel, is the cave of Elijah the prophet, and there was buried Elisha, the son of Shaphat the prophet: at Jordan was buried Iddo the prophet, and over it is a great elm-tree, and it is in the form of a lion; and there was buried Shebuel, the son of Gershon, the son of Moses, over whom is a great oak-tree: at Geba, in Mount Lebanon, is buried Zephaniah the prophet, in the middle of a cave shut up. On a mountain, a sabbath-day's journey from Zidon, Zebulon was buried, in a beautiful vault; at Cephar Noah, was buried Noah the just; and at Kadesh Nephtalim, Barak the son of Abinoam, and Deborah his wife, and Jael; and at Timnath, Shamgar the son of Anath, over whom are two marble pillars. At Cephar Cana, is buried Jonah, the son of Amittai, on the top of a mountain, in a temple of the Gentiles, in a beautiful vault: at Jakuk, was buried in the way, Habakkuk the prophet; and at the north of the village of Raam, was buried Obadiah the prophet: at Susan the palace, was buried Mordecai the Jew, and over him a beautiful stone statue; and on it written, this is the sepulchre of Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a man of Jemini; and near the river Hiddekel, Ezekiel the prophet was buried. In this account, many things may be observed, which confirm and illustrate the words of the text. And certain it is, that it was accounted very honourable and laudable in persons, to beautify the sepulchres of the patriarchs and prophets. Among the excellent characters given of Benaah, R. Jochanan's master, it is said<sup>l</sup>, "that he was a very wise man, and a judge, and understood mysteries and parables; וַיִּצְיַן מְעַרָה, and painted the cave of Adam the first, and the cave of Abraham." Though perhaps this is to be understood of him in a figurative sense, but yet must allude to a literal one: the sepulchres of the prophets, were especially very sacred: "all sepulchres (they say)" might be removed, but the sepulchres of a king, and the sepulchres of a prophet; they say unto him, "were not the sepulchres of the sons of David removed? and the sepulchres of the sons of Huldah were in Jerusalem, and a man might not touch them, to remove them for ever. R. Akiba replied

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 72. 2.

<sup>d</sup> Bartenora in Misn. Sota, c. 3. sect. 4.

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 9. 2.

<sup>f</sup> Misn. Moed Katon, c. 1. sect. 6.

<sup>1</sup> Waimon. & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>k</sup> T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 8. 2.

<sup>l</sup> Juchasin, fol. 46. 1.

<sup>m</sup> T. Hieros. Nazir, fol. 57. 4.

“to them, because of decency it was forgiven (or “allowed) there, and from thence the uncleanness “being channelled, went out to the brook Kidron.” Now our Lord must not be understood as blaming them for barely building the tombs of the prophets, and garnishing the sepulchres of the righteous, which they might have done without blame. But because they did all this, that they might be thought to be very innocent and holy men, and far from being guilty of the crimes their forefathers were; when they were of the very self-same blood-thirsty, persecuting spirit; and did, and would do the same things to the prophets and apostles of the New Testament, their fathers had done to the prophets of the Old. They have a saying<sup>1</sup>, that “they don’t erect monuments for the righteous; “for their words are their memorial.” But this can only mean, that there is no need of monuments for them; since their sayings are sufficient to keep up the memory of them. Hence Dr. Lightfoot thinks, that our Lord reproves them out of their own mouths, for despising the words of the prophets; imagining they performed piety enough, by bestowing cost in adorning their sepulchres; when they themselves own, their sayings are the best remembrances of them, and therefore ought to be regarded more than their tombs.

Ver. 30. *And say, if we had been in the days of our fathers, &c.*] Their ancestors and predecessors: signifying, that if they had lived in the times they did, or had been in the same post and office with them, they should have opposed, at least not consented to their measures: *we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets*; would not have joined them in persecuting the prophets, and in shedding their blood, and putting them to death; but would have received them as the prophets of the Lord, have hearkened to their advice and message, and have honoured and obeyed them as such; and this they thought they sufficiently declared, by building and adorning their tombs.

Ver. 31. *Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, &c.*] Or *against yourselves*, as the Syriac reads; for what they said was a plain acknowledgment, and a full confession, what their fathers had done, and whose offspring they were; and from whom better things were not to be expected; since they were their fathers’ own children, and of the same temper and disposition with them: *that ye are the children of them that killed the prophets*. They plainly owned, that their fathers killed the prophets, and that they descended from them; though they meant not so much to reproach their ancestors, as to give themselves a greater character; yet it did not with those, that knew them; not with our Lord: for as their own words testified against them, that they were a seed of evil-doers; their practices shewed them to be of the same spirit and principles with their progenitors.

Ver. 32. *Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.*] Of their sins; for there were bounds and limits set how far they should proceed, and no further; as yet they

had not got to the end of their iniquity: their fathers had gone great lengths in sin, but their iniquity was not yet full, as is said of the Amorites, Gen. xv. 16. these their sons were to fill it up. They had shed the blood of many of the prophets; and indeed there were none of them but they had persecuted and abused, in one shape or another: some they entreated shamefully, others they beat: some they stoned, and others they put to death with the sword, or otherwise; and now their children were about to fill the measure brimful, by crucifying the son of God, which they were at this time meditating and contriving; and by persecuting and slaying his apostles, and so would bring upon them the vengeance of God. The Jews well enough understood these words, which were spoken to them in an ironical way, and expressing what they were about, and what they would hereafter do, and what would be the issue and consequence of it: they have a saying<sup>2</sup>, that “the holy blessed God does not take “vengeance on a man, עד שרתמלא סאתו, *until his “measure is filled up*; according to Job xx. 22.” Which the Chaldee paraphrase renders, “when his “measure is filled up, then shall he take vengeance “on him;” and that this is Christ’s sense, appears from what follows.

Ver. 33. *Ye servants, ye generation of vipers, &c.*] The latter of these names, John the Baptist calls the Sadducees and Pharisees by, in ch. iii. 7. and Christ, in ch. xii. 34. both express their craft and subtlety, their inward poison, and venomous nature; their fair outside, and specious pretences; their hypocrisy, malice, and wickedness; in which they were like to the old serpent, their father the devil, and to their ancestors, that murdered the prophets; nor could any good thing be expected, from such a viperous generation: *how can ye escape the damnation of hell?* signifying, that it was impossible that they should; nor could they surely expect it themselves, who must be conscious to themselves of their wickedness, malice, and deceit. The Persic version reads it, *where can ye escape?* &c. and so Beza says it was read, in one ancient copy of his; and the sense is, whither can ye flee? to whom, or what can you have recourse to, to screen you from the wrath to come? Rocks and mountains, caves and dens, will be of no service. The phrase, *דינה של גיהנום, the judgment, or damnation of hell*, is a phrase often used in the Talmud<sup>3</sup>, and Midrashes<sup>4</sup> of the Jews; and intends future torment, and the everlasting vengeance and wrath of God, the unquenchable fire prepared for the devil and his angels, and which impenitent unbelieving sinners cannot escape.

Ver. 34. *Wherefore, behold I send unto you prophets, &c.*] To try them, whether they would shew the respect to prophets, they pretended to have for them; by building and beautifying their sepulchres; by exclaiming against their forefathers for shedding their blood; and by declaring, that had they lived in their days, they would not have joined with them in it; and to make it appear, that these were all empty

<sup>1</sup> T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 47. 1.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Sota, fol. 9. 1.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 61. 1. Erubin, fol. 18. 2. Yebamot, fol. 109. 2. Sota, fol. 4. 2. & 5. 1. & Bava Bathra, fol. 10. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 205. 1. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 14. 2. & Midrash Kohelet, fol. 76. 1.

words, and specious pretences; and that they had the same malicious and bloody principles in them; and would be guilty of the same practices, and so fill up the measure of their fathers' sins; and bring upon them the punishment of everlasting burnings hereafter, as well as ruin and destruction on their nation, city, and temple now. Christ here speaks, as one having power and authority, to qualify and send forth men, under the several characters here mentioned, and of what he should do after his resurrection: for notwithstanding the people of the Jews would crucify him, and use him as they did, in a barbarous manner; yet after all this, he would send his ministers to them, to gather his elect out from among them, to render the rest inexcusable, and to shew his long-suffering and patience. The persons designed by *prophets, wise men, and Scribes*, are his apostles: called *prophets*: because they were divinely inspired to write, and preach in his name; had the gift of foretelling future events, and of explaining with the greatest clearness and exactness, the prophecies of the Old Testament; shewing their respect unto, and accomplishment in Christ: *wise men*: because they were made wise unto salvation, and capable of instructing others: they were filled with all spiritual and evangelical wisdom, and preached the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom: and *Scribes*: because they were well instructed in the kingdom of heaven, and had the true knowledge of the law, and could rightly interpret it, as well as make known the Gospel of the grace of God. Christ chooses to use these names and titles, because the Jews pretended to have great veneration for the ancient prophets, and these he should send, would not be a whit inferior to them, but in many things exceed them; and they had great esteem for their wise men and Scribes, who would be vastly exceeded by these ministers of his, and yet would be used very badly by them: *and some of them ye shall kill*; as Stephen, the first martyr, who was stoned to death by them; and James, the brother of John, whom Herod, to their good liking, killed with the sword; and the other James they threw headlong from off the pinnacle of the temple, and killed him with a fuller's club. *And crucify*; so Simeon, the son of Cleophas, was crucified at the instigation of the Jews, as Eusebius relates\*. *And some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues*; as John, Peter, and Paul: *and persecute them from city to city*; as they did Paul and Barnabas, as the Acts of the Apostles testify.

Ver. 35. *That upon you may come all the righteous blood, &c.*] Or *the blood of all the righteous men*, as the Syriac, Arabic, Persian, and Ethiopic versions read; for there is no righteousness in blood, nor any conveyed by it: all men are of one blood, and that is tainted, they that are righteous, are not so naturally, nor by any righteousness of their own, but by the righteousness of Christ: and such were the persons here meant, whose blood being shed in the cause of righteousness, God would revenge; and the punish-

ment for such a crime, and the vengeance of God for it, were to come upon the nation of the Jews by this means, through their crucifying of Christ, and killing, and persecuting his apostles; whereby they would make it manifest, that they approved of, and consented to, what others had done to all the righteous men, whose blood had been *shed upon the earth*; whether in Judea, or elsewhere; and continued in the same wicked practices, or committed worse, and so justly incurred the wrath of God to the uttermost; which would quickly come upon them, when the measure of their fathers' sin were filled up by them, from the beginning of time, to the present age: even from *the blood of righteous Abel*: who was the first person in the world that was killed, and that for righteousness sake too, because his works were righteous, his person being so; not by his works, but through the righteousness and sacrifice of the Messiah, which were to be brought in; in the faith of which he offered up his sacrifice, whereby he obtained a testimony from God, that he was righteous, having respect to his person in Christ, and so to his offering. This epithet of *righteous* seems to be what was commonly given him by the Jews: hence, with a peculiar emphasis, he is called *הַבֵּל הַצַּדִּיק*, *Abel the righteous*<sup>†</sup>; as he is also said to be *רֹאשׁ לְנֹהַרְיָם*, *the head of them that are killed*<sup>‡</sup>; he being the first man that was slain; for which reason he is mentioned here by Christ; and also, because his blood cried for vengeance, and still continued to do, upon all such persons that should commit the like crime. 'Tis an observation frequently made by the Jews, on those words in Gen. iv. 10. *the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me*, that "it is not said in the Hebrew text, *the blood of thy brother*, but *the bloods of thy brother*; his blood, "and the blood of his seed"; and that from hence "may be learned, that the blood of his children, "and of his children's children, and of all his "offspring, to the end of all generations, that "should proceed from him, all stood and cried before "the Lord". The Jerusalem Targum paraphrases the words in this remarkable manner: "the price of "the bloods of the multitude of the righteous, that shall "spring from Abel thy brother." And Onkelos thus "the voice of the blood of the seed that shall rise "from thy brother, &c." *unto the blood of Zecharias, son of Baruchias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar*. Learned men are very much divided about this person, who he was. Some think our Lord speaks prophetically of Zechariah, the son of Baruch; who, as Josephus says<sup>§</sup>, was slain in the middle of the temple, just before the siege of Jerusalem; and who was, as he also relates, a rich man, of an illustrious family, a hater of wickedness, and a friend to liberty: and because, as Abel was the first man that was slain, and this man being killed in the temple, at the close of the Jewish state; and because the words may be rendered, *whom ye shall have slain*, therefore he is thought to be intended: but there are several things that don't agree with him, besides its

\* Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 23.

† Ib. l. 3. c. 29.

‡ Tzeror Hammor, fol. 8. 2.

§ Juchasin, fol. 5. 2.

¶ Bereshit Rabba, sect. 29. fol. 20. 1. Mian. Sanhedria, c. 4. sect. 5. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora pr. affirm. 98.

\* Abot. R. Nathan, c. 31.

† De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 1.

being a narration of a fact, as past, according to the usual rendering of the word: for this Zecharias was the son of Baruch, and not Barachias, which are two different names; he was killed in the middle of the temple, not between the temple and the altar; nor does he appear to be a man of such great character, as to be distinguished in this manner; and besides, his death was what the Jews did not consent to in general, and therefore could not be charged with it; he was acquitted by the sanhedrim of the charge of treachery laid against him, and was assassinated by two zealots. Others have thought that Zecharias, the father of John the Baptist, is meant, who is supposed to be murdered by the Jews very lately; and it being a recent action, is mentioned by our Lord: the reason of it is a tradition, which several ancient writers<sup>2</sup> speak of, and is pretended to be this; that there was a place in the temple appropriated to virgins, and that Mary, the mother of our Lord, after his birth, came and took her place here, as a virgin, when the Jews, knowing her to have a child, objected to it; but Zechariah, who was acquainted with the mystery of the incarnation, ordered her to keep her place, upon which the Jews slew him upon the spot: but this tradition is not to be depended on; nor does it appear that there ever was any such particular place in the temple assigned to virgins; nor that the father of this Zecharias was Barachias; or that the son was slain by the Jews, and in this place. Others have been of opinion, that Zechariah the prophet is designed; and indeed, he is said to be the son of Barachiah, the son of Iddo, Zech. i. 1. and the Jewish Targumist speaks of a Zechariah, the son of Iddo, as slain by the Jews in the temple. His words are these<sup>3</sup>; "as ye slew Zechariah, the son of Iddo, the high-priest, and faithful prophet, in the house of the sanctuary of the Lord, on the day of atonement; because he reproved you, that ye might not do that evil which is before the Lord." And him the Jews make to be the same with Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, in Isa. viii. 2. and read Berechiah<sup>4</sup>: but the Targumist seems to confound Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, with him; for the prophet Zechariah was not an high-priest, Joshua was high-priest in his time; nor does it appear from any writings, that he was killed by the Jews; nor is it probable that they would be guilty of such a crime, just upon their return from captivity; and besides, he could not be slain in such a place, because the temple, and altar, were not yet built: it remains, that it must be Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, who was slain in the court of the house of the Lord, 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21, 22. who, as Abel was the first, he is the last of the righteous men whose death is related in the Scriptures, and for whose blood vengeance was required, as for Abel's. He was slain in the court of the house of the Lord; and so the Ethiopic version here renders it,

in the midst of the holy house. 'Tis often said by the Jewish writer<sup>5</sup>, that "R. Joden (sometimes 'tis "R. Jonathan) asked R. Acha, whether they slew Zechariah, in the court of the Israelites, or in the court of the women? he answered him, neither in the court of the Israelites, nor in the court of the women, but in the court of the priests." And elsewhere they say<sup>6</sup>, that they "slew a priest and a prophet in the sanctuary; this is Zechariah the son of Jehoiada." Now it should be observed, that the temple, or sanctuary, is sometimes put for the whole sacred building, with all its courts and appurtenances; and sometimes, as in this text, for that part of it that was covered, between which, and the altar of burnt-offerings, in the court of the priests, which must be here meant, and not the altar of incense, in the most holy place, was a space of twenty-two cubits<sup>7</sup>, frequently called, in Jewish writings, the space between the porch and the altar; that is, the porch which led into the temple, and the brazen altar in the court of the priests, which was open to the air, and is the very spot here intended. Now this was a very sacred place, and is mentioned as an aggravation of the sin of the Jews, that they should enter where none but priests might; nor these neither that had any defect in them; and defile it also by shedding innocent blood. "The court of the Israelites is holier than the court of the women; because those that wanted atonement might not enter there; and a defiled person that entered there, was obliged to be cut off: the court of the priests was holier than that, because the Israelites might not enter there, but in the time of their necessities, for laying on of hands for atonement, for killing and waving: the place between the porch and the altar was holier than that; for such that had any blemishes, or were bareheaded, or had their garments rent, might not enter<sup>8</sup>." Hence they say<sup>9</sup>, that "the Israelites committed seven transgressions on that day: they slew a priest, and a prophet, and a judge; and they shed innocent blood, and they blasphemed God, and defiled the court, and it was a sabbath-day, and the day of atonement." The chief objections to its being this Zechariah are, that the names do not agree; the one being the son of Jehoiada, the other the son of Barachias; and the killing of him was eight hundred years before this time; when it might have been thought our Lord would have instanced in a later action: and this he speaks of, he ascribes to the men of that generation: to which may be replied, that as to the difference of names, the father of this Zechariah might have two names, which is no unusual thing; besides, these two names signify much the same thing; Jehoiada signifies praise the Lord, and Barachias bless the Lord; just as Eliakim and Jehoiakim, are names of the same person, and signify the same thing, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 4. Moreover, Jerom

<sup>2</sup> Origen. in Matth. T. 3. Homil. 26. fol. 44. Greg. Nyssen. in diem nat. Christ. Vol. 3. p. 777. Basil. de human. gen. Christ. & Theophylact. in loc.

<sup>3</sup> Targum in Lam. ii. 20.

<sup>4</sup> T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 24. 2.

<sup>5</sup> T. Hieros. Taanioth, fol. 69. 1. Prefat. ad Echa Rabbati, fol. 36. 4. & Echa Rabbati, fol. 52. 4. & 58. 3. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 68. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Echa Rabbati, fol. 55. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Misn. Middot, c. 3. sect. 6.

<sup>8</sup> Maimon. Beth. Habbecchira, c. 7. sect. 18, 19, 20. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 7. fol. 188. 4.

<sup>9</sup> T. Hieros. Taanioth, fol. 69. 1. Echa Rabbati, fol. 53. 1. & 58. 2. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 68. 4.

tells us, that in the Hebrew copy of this Gospel used by the Nazarenes, he found the name Jehoiada instead of Barachias: and as to the action being done so long ago, what has been suggested already may be an answer to it, that it was the last on record in the writings of the Old Testament; and that his blood, as Abel's, is said to require vengeance: and Christ might the rather pitch upon this action, because it was committed on a very great and worthy man, and in the holy place, and by the body of the people, at the command of their king, and with their full approbation, and consent: and therefore, though this was not done by the individual persons in being in Christ's time, yet by the same people; and so they are said to slay him, and his blood is required of them: and their horrible destruction was a punishment for that load of national guilt, which had been for many hundreds of years contracting, and heaping upon them.

Ver. 36. *Verily I say unto you, &c.*] An usual form of introducing something of moment to raise attention to it, and to ascertain the truth of it: *all these things shall come upon this generation*; all the things which Christ had foretold should come to pass in the present age; as that the apostles and ministers of the word he should send to them, some of them they would kill and crucify, and others they would scourge in their synagogues, or persecute from place to place; and all the horrible murders and bloodshed in any age, committed by that people, would be placed to the account of the men of that generation; and the guilt of them imputed to them, and the punishment due unto them be inflicted on them. And which came to pass, and had its full accomplishment about forty years after this, in the utter destruction of Jerusalem, and the whole nation; so that many now living were personally involved in that temporal ruin, as well as escaped not the damnation of hell, ver. 33.

Ver. 37. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, &c.*] The metropolis of Judea, the seat of the kings of Judah, yea, the city of the great king; the place of divine worship, once the holy and faithful city, the joy of the whole earth; wherefore it was strange that the following things should be said of it. The word is repeated to shew our Lord's affection and concern for that city, as well as to upbraid it with its name, dignity, and privileges; and designs not the building of the city, but the inhabitants of it; and these not all, but the rulers and governors of it, civil and ecclesiastical; especially the great sanhedrim, which were held in it, to whom best belong the descriptive characters of *killing the prophets*, and *stoning them* that were sent by God unto them; since it belonged to them to take cognizance of such who called themselves prophets, and to examine, and judge them, and, if false, to condemn them<sup>b</sup>; hence that saying of Christ, Luke xiii. 33. which goes before the same words, as here, *it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem*: and who are manifestly distinguished from their *children*: it being usual to call such as were the heads of the people, either in a civil or ecclesiastical sense,

*fathers*, and their subjects and disciples *children*: besides, our Lord's discourse throughout the whole context is directed to the Scribes and Pharisees, the ecclesiastical guides of the people, and to whom the civil governors paid a special regard. *Thou that killest the prophets*; that is, with the sword, with which the prophets in Elijah's time were slain by the children of Israel, 1 Kings xix. 10. and which was one of the capital punishments inflicted by the Jewish sanhedrim<sup>c</sup>; and also that which follows was another of them. *And stonest them which were sent unto thee*; as particularly Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, before mentioned. The Jews themselves are obliged to own, that this character belongs to them: say<sup>d</sup> they, "when the word of God shall come, who is his messenger, we will honour him." Says R. Saul, did not the *prophets* come, והרננים, "and we killed them, and shed their blood, and how shall we receive his word? or how shall we believe?" And a celebrated writer of their's, on those words<sup>e</sup>, but now murderers, has this note; "they have killed Uriah, they have killed Zechariah." How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Christ here speaks as a man, and the minister of the circumcision, and expresses an human affection for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and an human wish, and will for their temporal good; which he very aptly signifies by the hen, which is a very affectionate creature to its young, and which it endeavours to screen from danger, by covering with its wings. So the *Shekinah* with the Jews is called, צפרה קדישה, the holy bird<sup>f</sup>; and that phrase, לקחת תורת כנפי השכינה, to betake one's self, or to come to trust under the wings of the *Shekinah*, is often used<sup>g</sup> for to become a proselyte to the true religion, and worship of God, as Jethro, and Ruth the Moabitess did. An expression much like to this here is used by an apocryphal writer, 2 Esdras i. 30. *I gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but now, what shall I do unto you? I will cast you out from my face.* It seems to be a simile much in use with that people. Our Lord is to be understood not of his divine will, as God, to gather the people of the Jews internally, by his spirit and grace, to himself; for all those whom Christ would gather, in this sense, were gathered, notwithstanding all the opposition made by the rulers of the people; but of his human affection and will, as a man, and a minister, to gather them to him externally, by, and under the ministry of his word, to hear him preach; so as that they might be brought to a conviction of, and an assent unto him as the Messiah; which, though it might fall short of faith in him, would have been sufficient to have preserved them from temporal ruin, threatened to their city and temple, in the following verse. Instances of the human affection, and will of Christ, may be observed in Mark x. 21. Luke xix. 41. and xxii. 42. which will of his, though not contrary to the divine will, but subordinate to it, yet not always the same with it, nor always fulfilled: whereas his divine will,

<sup>b</sup> Mian. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 5.

<sup>c</sup> Ib. c. 7. sect. 1.

<sup>d</sup> R. Isaac Arama in Gen. xlvi. apud Galatin. Arcan. Cath. ver. l. 3. c. 5.

<sup>e</sup> Jarchi in Isa. i. 21.

<sup>f</sup> Zohar in Numb. fol. 106. 3. & Imre binah in ib.

<sup>g</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 77. 4. & 115. 2. Vid. Targum in Ruth ii. 12. Zohar in Exod. fol. 23. 3. & 29. 2.



or his will as God, is always fulfilled: *who hath resisted his will?* this cannot be hindered, and made void; he does whatsoever he pleases: and further, that this will of Christ to gather the Jews to himself, is to be understood of his human, and not divine will, is manifest from hence, that this will was in him, and expressed by him at certain several times, by intervals; and therefore he says, *how often would I have gathered, &c.* whereas the divine will is one continued, invariable, and unchangeable will, is always the same, and never begins or ceases to be, and to which such an expression is inapplicable; and therefore these words do not contradict the absolute and sovereign will of God, in the distinguishing acts of it, respecting the choice of some persons, and the leaving of others. And it is to be observed, that the persons whom Christ would have gathered, are not represented as being unwilling to be gathered; but their rulers were not willing that they should, and be made proselytes to him, and come under his wings. It is not said, *how often would I have gathered you, and you would not!* nor, *I would have gathered Jerusalem, and she would not;* nor, *I would have gathered thy children, and they would not;* but, *how often would I have gathered thy children, and ye would not!* Which observation alone is sufficient to destroy the argument founded on this passage in favour of free-will. Had Christ expressed his desire to have gathered the heads of the people to him, the members of the Jewish sanhedrim, the civil and ecclesiastical rulers of the Jews: or had he signified how much he wished, and earnestly sought after, and attempted to gather Jerusalem, the children, the inhabitants of it in common, and neither of them would not; it would have carried some appearance of the doctrine of free-will, and have seemed to have countenanced it, and have imputed the non-gathering of them to their own will: though had it been said, *they would not*, instead of, *ye would not*, it would only have furnished out a most sad instance of the perverseness of the will of man, which often opposes his temporal, as well as his spiritual good; and would rather shew it to be a slave to that which is evil, than free to that which is good; and would be a proof of this, not in a single person only, but in a body of men. The opposition and resistance to the will of Christ were not made by the people, but by their governors. The common people seemed inclined to attend his ministry, as appears from the vast crowds, which, at different times and places, followed him; but the chief priests, and rulers, did all they could to hinder the collection of them to him, and their belief in him as the Messiah; by traducing his character, miracles, and doctrines, and by menacing the people with curses, and excommunications, making a law, that whoever confessed him should be turned out of the synagogue. So that the plain meaning of the text is the same with that of ver 13. and consequently is no proof of men's resisting the operations of the spirit and grace of God; but only shews what obstructions and discouragements were thrown in the way of attendance on the external ministry of the word.

In order to set aside, and overthrow the doctrine of grace, in election, and particular redemption, and effectual calling, it should be proved that Christ, as God, would have gathered, not Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of it only, but all mankind, even such as are not eventually saved, and that in a spiritual, saving way and manner, to himself; of which there is not the least intimation in this text: and in order to establish the resistibility of the grace of God, by the perverse will of man, so as to become of no effect; it should be shewn that Christ would have savingly converted persons, and they would not be converted; and that he bestowed the same grace upon them, he does bestow on others who are converted: whereas the sum of this passage lies in these few words, that Christ, as man, out of a compassionate regard for the people of the Jews, to whom he was sent as the minister of the circumcision, would have gathered them together under his ministry, and have instructed them in the knowledge of himself, as the Messiah; which if they had only notionally received, would have secured them, as chickens under the hen, from impending judgments, which afterwards fell upon them; but their governors, and not they, would not; that is, would not suffer them to receive him, and embrace him as the Messiah. So that from the whole it appears, that this passage of Scripture, so much talked of by the Arminians, and so often cited by them, has nothing to do with the controversy about the doctrines of election and reprobation, particular redemption, efficacious grace in conversion, and the power of man's free-will. This observation alone is sufficient to destroy the argument founded on this passage, in favour of free-will.

Ver. 38. *Behold your house is left unto you desolate.*] Signifying that the city in which they dwelt, where they had their ceiled houses, and stately palaces, would, in a little time, within the space of forty years, be destroyed, and become a desert; and the temple, formerly the house of God, but now only their's, and in which they trusted, would be abandoned by God, he would grant his presence no more in it; and the Messiah, the proprietor of it, and who was now in it, would then take his leave of it, and never more return to it; and that also should share the same fate as the city, and at the same time. Our Lord seems to have in view those passages in Jer. xii. 7. and xxii. 5. and which the Jewish<sup>o</sup> writers understood of the temple. The author of the apocryphal book of Esdras 2. in ch. i. 33. has much such an expression as this: *thus saith the Almighty Lord, your house is desolate, I will cast you out as the wind doth stubble.*

Ver. 39. *For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, &c.*] Meaning in a very little time after the passover, from the time of his crucifixion and death; otherwise they saw him many times after this, as in the palace of the high-priest, in Pilate's judgment-hall, and on the cross; but not after his resurrection. This shews the reason of their house being desolate, and in what sense it should be so, and immediately became so; namely, by being then directly, and ever

<sup>o</sup> Targum & Kimchi in Jer. xii. 7.

after, destitute of his presence: and though they might afterwards seek for, and expect the Messiah in it, yet they would never be able to see him, nor throughout their long captivity: *till ye shall say, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*: that is, until the time comes, that the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in, and all Israel shall be saved, the Jews shall be converted, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; when they shall readily and cheerfully say these words to Christ, who will then appear in his glory; which they were now displeas'd at in the multitude that followed him,

and the children in the temple. Though some think this is said by way of threatening, since the rest that is spoken to them by Christ is of that sort, and regards the men of that generation; and is given as a reason of their house being left desolate: and the sense is, that they should never see him with joy and pleasure; since, though they would be obliged to confess that he was Lord and Christ, they would never say the above words to him in faith, and holy reverence of him. The Cambridge exemplar of Beza's, and the Persic versions, read, *in the name of God*.

## C H A P. XXIV.

Ver. 1. *AND Jesus went out, and departed from the temple, &c.*] He not only went out of it for that time, but took his final leave of it, never to return more to it; having foretold its desolation, which he, in part, by so doing, immediately fulfilled: this the disciples observing, and being intent on the outward splendour, and worldly grandeur of it, were concerned that so beautiful a structure should be deserted; and almost thought it incredible, that so strong, and firm a building could be destroyed. *And his disciples came unto him*: as he went, and as soon as he was come out of the temple, and whilst in view of it: *for to shew him the buildings of the temple*; the walls of it, and courts adjoining to it, how beautiful and firm they were: whether this was done by them to raise in him admiration or commiseration, in hopes he might change the sentence he had passed upon it, is not easy to say; or whether this did not express their incredulity about the desolation of it; which Christ's answer, in the next verse, seems to imply. Mark says, it was *one of the disciples* that observed these to him, who might be accompanied with the rest, and in their name address him; and who, probably, might be Peter, since he was generally their mouth; and that he should speak to him in this manner: *master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings are here!* Luke says, *how it was adorned with goodly stones, and gifts*. The Jews give very great encomiums of the second temple, as repaired by Herod; and it was undoubtedly a very fine structure. They say<sup>p</sup>, that he built the house of the sanctuary, *an exceeding beautiful building*; and that he repaired the temple, in beauty *greatly exceeding* that of Solomon's<sup>q</sup>. They moreover observe<sup>r</sup>, that "he who has not seen the building of Herod, has never seen בְּנֵי נְאֻם, a beautiful building. With what is it built? says Rabbah, with stones of green and white marble. And there are others say, that it was built with stones of spotted green and white marble." These, very likely, were the very stones the disciples

pointed to, and admired; and were of a prodigious size, as well as worth. Some of the stones were, as Josephus<sup>s</sup> says, "forty-five cubits long, five high, and six broad." Others of them, as he elsewhere affirms<sup>t</sup>, "were twenty-five cubits long, eight high, and twelve broad." And he also tells us, in the same place, that there were, "in the porches, four rows of pillars: the thickness of each pillar was as much as three men, with their arms stretched out, and joined together, could grasp; the length twenty-seven feet, and the number of them an hundred and sixty-two, and beautiful to a miracle." At the bigness of those stones, and the beauty of the work, 'tis said<sup>u</sup>, Titus was astonished, when he destroyed the temple; at which time his soldiers plundered it, and took away *the gifts*, with which it is also said to be adorned. These were rich and valuable things which were dedicated to it, and either laid up in it, or hung upon the walls and pillars of it, as it was usual in other temples<sup>v</sup>. These may intend the golden table given by Pompey, and the spoils which Herod dedicated; and particularly the golden vine, which was a gift of his<sup>w</sup>; besides multitudes of other valuable things, which were greatly enriching and ornamental to it. Now the disciples suggest, by observing these, what a pity it was such a grand edifice should be destroyed; or how unaccountable it was, that a place of so much strength, could easily be demolished.

Ver. 2. *And Jesus said unto them, see ye not all these things? &c.*] *These great buildings*, as in Mark; all these goodly stones, so beautiful and large, and so firmly put together: *verily, I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down; or broken*, as Munster's Hebrew Gospel reads it: which prediction had a full and remarkable accomplishment; and which is not only attested by Josephus<sup>x</sup>, who relates, that both the city and temple were dug up, and laid level with the ground; but also by other Jewish writers; who tell us<sup>y</sup>, that "on the

<sup>p</sup> Juchasin, fol. 189. 1.

<sup>q</sup> Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 24. 2.

<sup>r</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 4. 1. & Succa, fol. 51. 2.

<sup>s</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 5.

<sup>t</sup> Antiq. Jud. l. 15. c. 14.

<sup>u</sup> Egesippus, l. 5. c. 43.

<sup>v</sup> Vid. Ryckium de Capitol. Rom. c. 21, &c.

<sup>w</sup> Joseph. Antiq. l. 15.

<sup>x</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 7. c. 7.

<sup>y</sup> Maimon. Hiltch. Taaniot, c. 5. sect. 3. T. Bab. Taathit, fol. 29.

1. & Gloss. in ib.

“ninth of Ab, a day prepared for punishments, Turnus Rufus the wicked, כָּרַשׁ אֶת דֹּרְיֶלֶק, *ploughed up the temple*, and all round about it, to fulfil what is said, *Zion shall be ploughed as a field.*” Yes, and to fulfil what Christ here says too, that not one stone should be left upon another, which a plough would not admit of.

Ver. 3. *And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, &c.]* Which was on the east of the city of Jerusalem<sup>a</sup>, *over-against the temple*, as Mark says, and where he could sit and take a full view of it; for the wall on the east side was lower than any other, and that for this reason; that when the high-priest burnt the red heifer on this mount, as he did, and sprinkled the blood, he might have a view of the gate of the temple. <sup>Tis said</sup><sup>b</sup>, “all the walls which were there, were very high; except the eastern wall; for the high-priest, when he burned the heifer, stood on the top of the mount of Olives, and directed himself, and looked to the gate of the temple, at the time he sprinkled the blood.” This place, very probably, our Lord chose to sit in, that he might give his disciples an occasion to discourse more largely with him on this subject; and that he might take the opportunity of acquainting them with what would be the signs and forerunners of this desolation, and so it proved: *the disciples came to him privately*; these four at least, Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, as Mark relates; and that either separately from the rest of the disciples, or from the multitude: it might not be thought so proper, to ask the following questions before them, and they might suppose that Christ would not be so ready to give an answer to them plainly, before the common people; when they might hope to be indulged with one by him, in private: *saying, tell us, when shall these things be?* That this house will be left desolate, these buildings will be destroyed, and not one stone left upon another? This first question relates purely to the destruction of the temple, and to this Christ first answers, from ver. 4. to the 23d. *And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?* Which two are put together, as what they supposed would be at the same time, and immediately follow the destruction of the temple. That he was come in the flesh, and was the true Messiah, they firmly believed: he was with them, and they expected he would continue with them, for they had no notion of his leaving them, and coming again. When he at any time spake of his dying and rising from the dead, they seemed not to understand it: wherefore this coming of his, the sign of which they inquire, is not to be understood of his coming a second time to judge the world, at the last day; but of his coming in his kingdom and glory, which they had observed him some little time before to speak of; declaring that some present should not die, till they saw it: wherefore they wanted to be informed, by what sign they might know, when he would set up his temporal kingdom; for since the temple was to be destroyed, they might hope a new one would be built, much more magnificent than this, and which is a Jewish notion;

and that a new state of things would commence; the present world, or age, would be at a period; and the world to come, they had so often heard of from the Jewish doctors, would take place; and therefore they ask also, of the sign of the end of the world, or present state of things in the Jewish economy: to this Christ answers, in the latter part of this chapter, though not to the sense in which they put the questions; yet in the true sense of the coming of the son of man, and the end of the world; and in such a manner, as might be very instructive to them, and is to us.

Ver. 4. *And Jesus answered and said unto them, &c.]* Not to indulge their curiosity, but to instruct them in things useful to be known, and which might be cautions to them and others, against deceivers; confirm them in the faith of himself, when they should see his predictions accomplished; and be directions to them, of what might shortly be expected. *Take heed that no man deceive you*: by pretending to come from God with a new revelation, setting himself up for the Messiah, after my departure; suggesting himself to be the person designed by God to be the deliverer of Israel, and to be sent by him, to set up a temporal kingdom, in great worldly splendour and glory; promising great names, and high places of honour and trust in it; things which Christ knew his disciples were fond of, and were in danger of being ensnared by; and therefore gives them this suitable and seasonable advice, and caution.

Ver. 5. *For many shall come in my name, &c.]* Not by his orders, or with delegated powers and authority from him; but should assume the name of the Messiah, which was peculiarly his, to themselves; and take upon them his office, and challenge the honour and dignity which belonged unto him: *saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.* This is the first sign, preceding the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem; as there was a general expectation among the Jews of a Messiah; that is, of one that should arise and deliver them from the Roman yoke, which was the common idea tacked to that word; in this period of time, many set up themselves to be deliverers and redeemers of the people of Israel: who had each of them their followers in great numbers, whom they imposed upon, and brought to destruction. Of this sort was Theudas, not he that Gamaliel speaks of, Acts v. 36. for he was before this time; but one that was in the time of Claudius Cæsar, when Cuspius Fadus was governor of Judea; who persuaded a great number to follow him to the river Jordan, which he promised to divide, by a word of command, and give them a passage over; and thereby, as the historian observes, πολλοὺς ἠπάτησεν, *he deceived many*; which is the very thing that is here predicted: but he and his company were routed by Fadus, and his head cut off. There was another called the Egyptian, mentioned in Acts xxi. 38. who made an uproar, and led four thousand cut-throats into the wilderness; and this same man persuaded thirty thousand men to follow him to Mount Olivet, promising a free passage into the city; but he being vanquished by Felix, then governor of Judea, fled, and many of his

<sup>a</sup> Bartenora in Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Migg. ib. c. 2. sect. 4.

<sup>c</sup> Joseph. Antiq. l. 20. c. 2.

followers were killed and taken<sup>d</sup>; and besides, there were many more magicians and impostors, that pretended to signs and wonders, and promised the people deliverance from their evils, by whom they were imposed upon to their ruin. There were others also besides these, that set up for deliverers, who called themselves by the name of the Messiah. Among these, we may reckon Simon Magus, who gave out that he was some great one; yea, expressly, that he was the word of God, and the son of God<sup>e</sup>, which were known names of the Messiah; and Dositheus the Samaritan, asserted himself to be Christ<sup>f</sup>; and also Menander affirmed, that no man could be saved, unless he was baptized in his name<sup>g</sup>; these are instances before the destruction of Jerusalem, and confirm the prophecy here delivered.

Ver. 6. *And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, &c.*] This is the second sign of the destruction of Jerusalem: it is observable that this, and some of the following signs, are given by the Jews, as signs of the Messiah's coming; whereas they were forerunners of their ruin, for the rejection of him who was already come. They suppose the Messiah will come in the seventh year, or the year of rest and release: "On the seventh year (they say<sup>h</sup>) will be מלחמות, wars: "and in the going out, or at the close of the seventh year, the son of David will come." Which wars, the gloss says, will be between the nations of the world, and Israel. Here wars may mean the commotions, insurrections, and seditions, against the Romans, and their governors; and the intestine slaughters committed among them, some time before the siege of Jerusalem, and the destruction of it. Under Cumanus the Roman governor, a sedition was raised on the day of the passover, in which twenty thousand perished; after that, in another tumult, ten thousand were destroyed by cut-throats: in Ascalon two thousand more, in Ptolemais two thousand, at Alexandria fifty thousand, at Damascus ten thousand, and elsewhere in great numbers<sup>i</sup>. The Jews were also put into great consternation, upon hearing the design of the Roman emperor, to put up his image in their temple: see that ye be not troubled; so as to leave the land of Judea as yet, and quit the preaching of the Gospel there, as if the final destruction was just at hand; for all these things must come to pass; these wars, and the reports of them, and the panic on account of them; these commotions and slaughters, and terrible devastations by the sword, must be; being determined by God, predicted by Christ, and brought upon the Jews by their own wickedness; and suffered in righteous judgment, for their sin: but the end is not yet; meaning not the end of the world, but the end of Jerusalem, and the temple, the end of the Jewish state; which were to continue, and did continue after these disturbances in it.

Ver. 7. *For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, &c.*] This seems to be a distinct and third sign, foreboding the general calamity of the Jews; that there should be not only seditions and intestine wars, in the midst of their country, but there should be wars in other nations, one with another; and with the Jews, and the Jews with them: and this also is made a sign of the Messiah's coming by them, for so they say<sup>k</sup>; "when thou seest, מלכות מלכות, kingdoms stirred up one against another, look for the feet of the Messiah: know thou, that so it shall be; for so it was in the days of Abraham: "by the means of kingdoms stirred up one against another, redemption came to Abraham." Poor blinded creatures! when these very things were the forerunners of their destruction. And so it was, the Jewish nation rose up against others, the Samaritans, Syrians, and Romans: there were great commotions in the Roman empire, between Otho and Vitellius, and Vitellius and Vespasian; and at length the Romans rose up against the Jews, under the latter, and entirely destroyed them; compare 2 Esdras xiii. 31. and xvi. 13. and ix. 3. *And there shall be famines: a fourth sign of the desolation of the city and temple, and which the Jews also say, shall go before the coming of the Messiah: "in the second year (of the week of years) in which the son of David comes, they say<sup>l</sup>, there will be arrows of famine sent forth; and in the third year, רעב גדול, a great famine: and men, women, and children, and holy men, and men of business, shall die." But these have been already; they followed the Messiah, and preceded their destruction: one of these famines was in Claudius Cæsar's time, was foretold by Agabus, and is mentioned in Acts xi. 28. and most dreadful ones there were, whilst Jerusalem was besieged, and before its utter ruin, related by Josephus. *And pestilences: a pestilence is described by the Jews after this manner:* "a city that produces a thousand and five hundred footmen, as Cephar Aco, and nine dead men are carried out of it in three days, one after another, לו זה דבר, this is a pestilence; but if in one day, or in four days, it is no pestilence; and a city that produces five hundred footmen, as Cephar Amiko, and three dead men are carried out of it in three days, one after another, "lo! this is a pestilence" These commonly attend famines, and are therefore mentioned together; and when the one was, the other may be supposed sooner or later to be: and earthquakes in divers places of the world; as, at Crete, and in divers cities in Asia, in the times of Nero: particularly the three cities of Phrygia, Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colosse; which were near to each other, and are all said to perish this way, in his reign<sup>m</sup>; "and Rome itself felt a tremour, in the reign of Galba<sup>n</sup>."*

Ver. 8. *All these are the beginning of sorrows, &c.*]

<sup>d</sup> Joseph. Antiqu. l. 20. c. 6.

<sup>e</sup> Jerom in loc. Iren. adv. Heres. l. 1. c. 20.

<sup>f</sup> Origen contr. Cels. l. 1. p. 44.

<sup>g</sup> Tertull. de prescript. Hæret. c. 46.

<sup>h</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1. & Megilla, fol. 17. 2. Zohar in Exod.

fol. 3. 3, 4.

<sup>i</sup> Vid. Joseph. Antiqu. l. 20. c. 6. & de Bello Jud. l. 2. & c.

<sup>k</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 42. fol. 37. 1.

<sup>l</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1. Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 15.

<sup>m</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 21. & 19. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Taanot, c. 2. sect. 5.

<sup>n</sup> Philostrat. in vit. Apollon. l. 4. c. 11.

<sup>o</sup> Sueton. in vit. Nero, c. 48.

<sup>p</sup> Orosius, l. 7. c. 7.

<sup>q</sup> Sueton. in vit. Galba, c. 18.

They were only a prelude unto them, and forerunners of them; they were only some foretastes of what would be, and were far from being the worst that should be endured. These were but light, in comparison of what befell the Jews, in their dreadful destruction. The word here used, signifies the sorrows and pains of a woman in travail. The Jews expect great sorrows and distresses in the times of the Messiah, and use a word to express them by, which answers to this, and call them *חבלי הכשיח*, *חבלי הכשיח*, the sorrows of the Messiah; חבלי, they say<sup>7</sup>, signifies the sorrows of a woman in travail; and the Syriac version uses the same word here. These they represent to be very great, and express much concern to be delivered from them. They ask, "what shall a man do, to be delivered from the sorrows of the Messiah?" He must employ "himself in the law, and in liberality." And again<sup>8</sup>, "he that observes the three meals on the sabbath-day, shall be delivered from three punishments; from the sorrows of the Messiah, from the judgment of hell, and from Gog and Magog." But alas! there was no other way of escaping them, but by faith in the true Messiah, Jesus; and it was for their disbelief and rejection of him, that these came upon them.

Ver. 9. *Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, &c.*] Our Lord proceeds to acquaint his disciples, what should befall them in this interval; and quite contrary to their expectations, who were looking for a temporal kingdom, and worldly grandeur, assures them of afflictions, persecutions, and death; that about these times, when these various signs should appear, and this beginning of sorrows take place; whilst these will be fulfilling in Judea, and other parts of the world; the Jews continuing in their obstinacy and unbelief, would deliver them up to the civil magistrates, to be scourged and imprisoned by them; either to their own sanhedrim, as were Peter and John; or to the Roman governors, Gallio, Festus, and Felix, as was the Apostle Paul. *And shall kill you*; as the two James', Peter, Paul, and even all the apostles, excepting John, who suffered martyrdom, and that before the destruction of Jerusalem: *and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake*; as the apostles and first Christians were, both by Jews and Gentiles; the latter being stirred up against them by the former, wherever they came, and for no other reason, but because they professed and preached in the name of Christ, as the Acts of the Apostles shew: and their hatred proceeded so far, as to charge all their calamities upon them; as war, famine, pestilence, earthquakes, &c. as the apologies of the first Christians declare.

Ver. 10. *And then shall many be offended, &c.*] That is, many who had been hearers of the apostles, and professors of the Christian religion; who were highly pleased with it, and were strenuous advocates for it, whilst things were tolerably quiet and easy; but when they saw the apostles, some of them beaten, and imprisoned, others put to death, and others forced to fly from place to place; and persecutions and affliction, because of Christ and his Gospel, likely to befall them-

selves, would be discouraged hereby, and stumble at the cross; and fall off from the faith of the Gospel, and the profession of it: *and shall betray one another*; meaning, that the apostates, who would fall off from the Christian religion, would prove treacherous to true believers, and give in their names to the persecutors, or inform them where they were, that they might take them, or deliver them into their hands themselves: these are the false brethren, the Apostle Paul was in perils among: *and shall hate one another*; not that the true Christians should hate these false brethren, any more than betray them; for they are taught to love all men, even their enemies; but these apostates should hate them, in whose communion they before were, and to whom they belonged; and even to a very great degree of hatred, as it often is seen, that such who turn their backs on Christ, and his Gospel, prove the most bitter enemies, and most violent persecutors of its preachers and followers.

Ver. 11. *And many false prophets shall rise, &c.*] Out of, from among the churches of Christ; at least under the name of Christians; for false teachers are here meant, men of heretical principles, pretending to a spirit of prophecy, and to new revelations, and a better understanding of the Scriptures; such as Simon Magus, Ebion, and Cerinthus, who denied the proper deity, and real humanity of Christ; Carpocrates, and the Gnostics his followers, the Nicolaitans, Hymeneus, Philetus, and others: *and shall deceive many*; as they all of them had their followers, and large numbers of them, whose faith was subverted by them; and who followed their pernicious ways, being imposed upon and seduced by their fair words, specious pretences, and licentious practices.

Ver. 12. *And because iniquity shall abound, &c.*] Meaning either the malice and wickedness of outrageous persecutors, which should greatly increase; or the treachery and hatred of the apostates; or the errors and heresies of false teachers; or the wickedness that prevailed in the lives and conversations of some, that were called Christians: for each of these seem to be hinted at in the context, and may be all included, as making up the abounding iniquity here spoken of; the consequence of which would be, *the love of many shall wax cold*. This would be the case of many, but not of all; for in the midst of this abounding iniquity, there were some, the ardour of whose love to Christ, to his Gospel, and to the saints, did not abate: but then there were many, whose zeal for Christ, through the violence of persecution, was greatly damped; and through the treachery of false brethren, were shy of the saints themselves, not knowing who to trust; and through the principles of the false teachers, the power of godliness, and the vital heat of religion, were almost lost; and through a love of the world, and of carnal ease and pleasure, love to the saints was grown very chill, and greatly left; as the instances of Demas, and those that forsook the Apostle Paul, at his first answer before Nero, shew. This might be true of such, who were real believers in Christ; who might fall under great decays, through the prevalence of

<sup>7</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 118. 2.  
<sup>8</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 98. 2.

<sup>8</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 118. 2.

iniquity; since it does not say their love shall be lost, but wax cold.

Ver. 13. *But he that shall endure to the end, &c.*] In the profession of faith in Christ, notwithstanding the violent persecutions of wicked men; and in the pure and incorrupt doctrines of the Gospel, whilst many are deceived by the false teachers that shall arise; and in holiness of life and conversation, amidst all the impurities of the age; and shall patiently bear all afflictions, to the end of his life, or to the end of sorrows, of which the above-mentioned were the beginning: *the same shall be saved*; with a temporal salvation, when Jerusalem, and the unbelieving inhabitants of it shall be destroyed: for those that believed in Christ, many of them, through persecution, were obliged to remove from thence; and others, by a voice from heaven, were bid to go out of it, as they did; and removed to Pella, a village a little beyond Jordan<sup>u</sup>, and so were preserved from the general calamity; and also with an everlasting salvation, which is the case of all that persevere to the end, as all true believers in Christ will.

Ver. 14. *And this Gospel of the kingdom, &c.*] Which Christ himself preached, and which he called and sent his apostles to preach, in all the cities of Judah; by which means men were brought into the kingdom of the Messial, or Gospel dispensation; and which treated both of the kingdom of grace and glory, and pointed out the saints' meetness for the kingdom of heaven, and their right unto it, and gives the best account of the glories of it: *shall be preached in all the world*; not only in Judea, where it was now confined, and that by the express orders of Christ himself; but in all the nations of the world, for which the apostles had their commission enlarged, after our Lord's resurrection; when they were bid to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; and when the Jews put away the Gospel from them, they accordingly turned to the Gentiles; and before the destruction of Jerusalem, it was preached to all the nations under the heavens; and churches were planted in most places, through the ministry of it: *for a witness unto all nations*; meaning either for a witness against all such in them, as should reject it; or as a testimony of Christ and salvation, unto all such as should believe in him: *and then shall the end come*; not the end of the world, as the Ethiopic version reads it, and others understand it; but the end of the Jewish state, the end of the city and temple: so that the universal preaching of the Gospel all over the world, was the last criterion and sign, of the destruction of Jerusalem; and the account of that itself next follows, with the dismal circumstances which attended it.

Ver. 15. *When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, &c.*] From signs, Christ proceeds to the immediate cause of the destruction of Jerusalem; which was, *the abomination of desolation*, or the desolating abomination; or that abominable thing, which threatened and brought desolation upon the city, temple, and nation: by which is meant, not any statue

placed in the temple by the Romans, or their order; not the golden eagle which Herod set upon the temple-gate, for that was before Christ said these words; nor the image of Tiberius Cæsar, which Pilate is said to bring into the temple; for this, if true, must be about this time; whereas Christ cannot be thought to refer to any thing so near at hand; much less the statue of Adrian, set in the most holy place, which was an hundred and thirty years and upwards, after the destruction of the city and temple; nor the statue of Titus, who destroyed both, which does not appear ever to be set up, or attempted; nor of Caligula, which, though ordered, was prevented being placed there: but the Roman army is designed; see Luke xxi. 20. which was the *כנה שקוצים משכום*, *the wing, or army of abominations making desolate*, Dan. ix. 27. Armies are called wings, Isa. viii. 8. and the Roman armies were desolating ones to the Jews, and to whom they were an abomination; not only because they consisted of Heathen men, and uncircumcised persons, but chiefly because of the images of their gods, which were upon their ensigns: for images and idols were always an abomination to them; so the *filthiness* which Hezekiah ordered to be carried out of the holy place, 2 Chron. xxix. 5. is by the Targum called, *רדוקא, an abomination*; and this, by the Jewish writers<sup>v</sup>, is said to be an idol, which Ahaz had placed upon the altar; and such was the abomination of desolation, which Antiochus caused to be set upon the altar, 1 Maccab. i. 54. And so the Talmudic writers, by the abomination that makes desolate, in Dan. xii. 11. and ix. 27. to which Christ here refers, understand an image, which they say<sup>x</sup> one Apostomus, a Grecian general, who burnt their law, set up in the temple. Now our Lord observes, that when they should see the Roman armies encompassing Jerusalem, with their ensigns flying, and these abominations on them, they might conclude its desolation was near at hand; and he does not so much mean his apostles, who would be most of them dead, or in other countries, when this would come to pass; but any of his disciples and followers, or any persons whatever, by whom should be seen this desolating abomination, *spoken of by Daniel the prophet*: not in Dan. xi. 31. which is spoken of the abomination in the times of Antiochus; but either in Dan. xii. 11. or rather in Dan. ix. 27. since this desolating abomination is that, which should follow the cutting-off of the Messiah, and the ceasing of the daily sacrifice. It is to be observed, that Daniel is here called a prophet, contrary to what the Jewish writers say<sup>y</sup>, who deny him to be one; though one of<sup>z</sup> no inconsiderable note among them affirms, that he attained to the end, *הגבול הנבואי, of the prophetic border*, or the ultimate degree of prophecy: when therefore this that Daniel, under a spirit of prophecy, spoke of should be seen, *standing in the holy place*; near the walls, and round about the holy city Jerusalem, so called from the sanctuary and worship of God in it; and which, in process of time, stood in the midst of it, and in the holy temple, and destroyed both; then

<sup>u</sup> Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 5.

<sup>v</sup> R. David Kimchi, & R. Sol. ben Melech, in 2 Chron. xxix. 5.

<sup>x</sup> T. Bab. Taauith, fol. 28. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

<sup>y</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 1. & Megilla, fol. 3. 1. & Tzeror Hamor, fol. 46. 4. Zohar in Num. fol. 61. 1.

<sup>z</sup> Jacchiades in Dan. i. 17.

whoso readeth, let him understand: that is, whoever then reads the prophecy of Daniel, will easily understand the meaning of it, and will see and know for certain, that now it is accomplished; and will consider how to escape the desolating judgment, unless he is given up to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart; which was the case of the greater part of the nation.

Ver. 16. *Then let them which be in Judea, &c.*] When this signal is given, let it be taken notice of and observed; let them that are in the city of Jerusalem, depart out of it; or who are in any other parts of Judea, in any of the towns, or cities thereof; let them not betake themselves to Jerusalem, imagining they may be safe there, in so strong and fortified a place, but let them flee elsewhere; see Luke xxi. 21. and accordingly 'tis observed, that many did flee about this time; and 'tis remarked by several interpreters, and which Josephus<sup>a</sup> takes notice of with surprise, that Cestius Gallus having advanced with his army to Jerusalem, and besieged it, on a sudden, without any cause, raised the siege, and withdrew his army, when the city might have been easily taken; by which means a signal was made; and an opportunity given to the Christians, to make their escape: which they accordingly did, and went over Jordan, as Eusebius says<sup>b</sup>, to a place called Pella; so that when Titus came a few months after, there was not a Christian in the city, but they had fled as they are here bidden to *flee into the mountains*; or any places of shelter and refuge: these are mentioned particularly, because they are usually such; and design either the mountains in Judea, or in the adjacent countries. The Syriac and Persic versions read in the singular number, *into the mountain*; and it is reported that many of them did fly, particularly to Mount Libanus<sup>c</sup>.

Ver. 17. *Let him which is on the house-top, &c.*] Who should be there either for his devotion or recreation; for the houses of the Jews were built with flat roofs and battlements about them, which they made use of both for diversion and pleasure, and for private meditation and prayer, for social conversation, and sometimes for public preaching; see Matt. x. 27. Acts x. 9. *not come down to take any thing out of his house*: that is, let him not come down in the inner way, but by the stairs, or ladder, on the outside of the house, which was usual. They had two ways of going out of, and into their houses; the one they call<sup>d</sup>, דרך פתוחים, *the way of the doors*; the other, דרך גגין, *the way of the roof*: upon which the gloss is, "to go up" on the outside, דרך סולם, *by way, or means of a ladder*, fixed at the entrance of the door of the upper room, and from thence he goes down into the house "by a ladder;" and in the same way they could come out; see Mark ii. 4. and let him not go into his house to take any of his goods, or money, or food along with him necessary for his sustenance in his flight; lest, whilst he is busy in taking care of these, he loses his life, or, at least, the opportunity of making

his escape; so sudden is this desolation represented to be.

Ver. 18. *Neither let him which is in the field, &c.*] Ploughing, or sowing, or employed in any other parts of husbandry, or rural business, *return back to take his clothes*: for it was usual to work in the fields without their clothes, as at ploughing and sowing. Hence those words of Virgil<sup>e</sup>,

*Nudus ara, sere nudus, hyems ignava colono.*

Upon which Servius observes, that in good weather, when the sun warms the earth, men might plough and sow without their clothes: and it is reported by the historian<sup>f</sup> of Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, that the messengers who were sent to him, from Minutius the consul, whom he had delivered from a siege, found him ploughing naked beyond the Tyber: not that he was entirely naked, but was stripped of his upper garments: and it is usual for people that work in the fields to strip themselves to their shirts, and lay their clothes at the corner of the field, or at the land's end; and which we must suppose to be the case here: for our Lord's meaning is not, that the man working in the field, should not return home to fetch his clothes, which were not left there; they were brought with him into the field, but put off, and laid aside in some part of it while at work; but that as soon as he had the news of Jerusalem being besieged, he should immediately make the best of his way, and flee to the mountains, as Lot was bid to do at the burning of Sodom; and he might not return to the corner of the field, or land's end, where his clothes lay, as Lot was not to look behind; though if his clothes lay in the way of his flight, he might take them up, but might not go back for them, so sudden and swift should be the desolation. The Vulgate Latin reads, in the singular number, *his coat*; and so do the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel; and so it was read in four copies of Beza's, in three of Stephens's, and in others; and may design the upper coat or garment, which was put off whilst at work.

Ver. 19. *And woe unto them that are with-child, &c.*] Not that it should be criminal for them to be with-child, or a judgment on them; for it was always esteemed a blessing to be fruitful, and bear children: but this expresses the miserable circumstances such would be in, who, by reason of their heavy burdens, would not be able to make so speedy a flight, as the case would require; or would be obliged to stay at home, and endure all the miseries of the siege: so that these words, as the following are not expressive of sin, or punishment, but of pity and concern for their misery and distress: *and to them that give suck in those days*; whose tender affection to their infants will not suffer them to leave them behind them; and yet such their weakness; that they will not be able to carry them with them; at least, they must be great hindrances to their speedy flight. So that the case of these is much

<sup>a</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 19. sect. 7.

<sup>b</sup> Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 5. p. 75.

<sup>c</sup> Joseph. ib.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Bava Metzja, fol. 117. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Georgic. l. 1.

<sup>f</sup> Aurel. Victor. de illustr. viris, c. 20.

worse than that of men on the house-top, or in the field, who could much more easily leave their goods and clothes, than these their children, as well as had more agility and strength of body to flee. So עִירֵי וְנִיּוֹת, *women with-child, and that give suck*; are mentioned together in the Jewish writings, as such as were excused from certain fasts, though obliged to others \*.

Ver. 20. *But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, &c.*] When days are short, and unfit for long journeys, and roads are bad, and sometimes unpassable, through large snows, or floods of water; and when to dwell in desert places, and lodge in mountains, must be very uncomfortable: wherefore Christ directs to pray to God, who has the disposal of all events, and of the timing of them, that he would so order things in the course of his providence, that their flight might not be in such a season of the year, when travelling would be very difficult and troublesome. Dr. Lightfoot observes, from a Jewish writer †, that it is remarked as a favour of God in the destruction of the first temple, that it happened in the summer, and not in winter; whose words are these: "God vouchsafed a great favour to Israel, for they ought to have gone out of the land on the tenth day of the month Tebeth; as he saith Ezek. xxiv. 2. *son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this same day*: what then did the Lord, holy and blessed? If they shall now go out in the winter, (saith he,) they will all die; therefore he prolonged the time to them, and carried them away in summer." And since therefore they received such a favour from him at the destruction of the first temple, there was encouragement to pray to him, that they might be indulged with the like favour when Jerusalem should be besieged again: *neither on the sabbath-day*: the word *day* is not in the Greek text; and some † have been of opinion, that the *sabbatical* year, or the seventh year, is meant, when no fruits would be found in the fields, and a great scarcity of provisions among people; who would not have a sufficiency, and much less any to spare to strangers fleeing from their native places; but rather the sabbath-day, or *day of the sabbath*, as the Persic version reads it, is designed; and Beza says, four of his copies read it in the genitive case: and so four of Stephens's. And the reason why our Lord put them on praying, that their flight might not be on the sabbath-day, was, because he knew not only that the Jews, who believed not in him, would not suffer them to travel on a sabbath-day more than two thousand cubits; which, according to their traditions †, was a sabbath-day's journey; and which would not be sufficient for their flight to put them out of danger; but also, that those that did believe in him, particularly the Jerusalem Jews, would be all of them fond of the law of Moses, and scrupulous of violating any part of it, and especially that of the sabbath; see Acts xxi. 20. And though the Jews did allow, that the sabbath might be violated where life was in danger, and that

it was lawful to defend themselves against an enemy on the sabbath-day; yet this did not universally obtain; and it was made a question of, after the time of Christ, whether it was lawful to flee from danger on the sabbath-day; of which take the following account †. "Our Rabbins teach, that he that is pursued by Gentiles, or by thieves, may profane the sabbath for the sake of saving his life: and so we find of David, when Saul sought to slay him, he fled from him, and escaped. Our Rabbins say, that it happened that evil writings (or edicts) came from the government to the great men of Tzipore; and they went, and said to R. Eleazar ben Prata, evil edicts are come to us from the government, what dost thou say? בָּרַח, *shall we flee?* and he was afraid to say to them *flee*; but he said to them with a nod, why do you ask me? go and ask Jacob, and Moses, and David; as it is written, of Jacob, Hos. xii. 12. *and Jacob fled*; and so of Moses, Exod. ii. 15. *and Moses fled*; and so of David, 1 Sam. xix. 18. *and David fled, and escaped*: and he (God) says, Isa. xxvi. 20. *come my people, enter into thy chambers.*" From whence, 'tis plain, 'twas a question with the doctors in Tzipore, which was a town in Galilee, where there was an university, whether it was lawful to flee on the sabbath-day or no; and though the Rabbi they applied to was of opinion it was lawful, yet he was fearful of speaking out his sense plainly, and therefore delivered it by signs and hints. Now our Lord's meaning, in putting them on this petition, was, not to prevent the violation of the seventh-day sabbath, or on account of the sacredness of it, which he knew would be abolished, and was abolished before this time; but he says this with respect to the opinion of the Jews, and Judaizing Christians, who, taking that day to be sacred, and fleeing on it unlawful, would find a difficulty with themselves, and others, to make their escape; otherwise it was as lawful to flee and travel on that day, as in the winter season; though both, for different reasons, incommodious.

Ver. 21. *For then shall be great tribulation, &c.*] This is urged as a reason for their speedy flight; since the calamity that would come upon those who should remain in the city, what through the sword, famine, pestilence, murders, robberies, &c. would be such as was not since the beginning of the world, to this time, no, nor ever shall be. The burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, the bondage of the children of Israel in Egypt, their captivity in Babylon, and all their distresses and afflictions in the times of the Maccabees, are nothing to be compared with the calamities which befell the Jews in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. Great desolations have been made in the besieging and at the taking of many famous cities, as Troy, Babylon, Carthage, &c. but none of them are to be mentioned with the deplorable case of this city. Whoever reads Josephus's account will be fully convinced of this; and readily join with him, who was an eye-witness of it, when he says †, that "never

\* T. Hieros. Taanith, fol. 64. 3. Maimon. Hilch. Taanith, c. 5. sect. 10.

† Tanchuma, fol. 57. 2.

‡ Vid. Reland. Antiq. Heb. par. 4. c. 10. sect. 1. & Hammond in loc.

‡ Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat, c. 27. sect. 1.

‡ Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 231. 4.

‡ De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 11.



“ did any city suffer such things, nor was there ever any generation that more abounded in malice or wickedness.” And indeed, all this came upon them for their impotence and infidelity, and for their rejection and murdering of the son of God; for as never any before, or since, committed the sin they did, or ever will, so there never did, or will, the same calamity befall a nation, as did them.

Ver. 22. *And except those days should be shortened, &c.*] That is, those days of tribulation which commenced at the siege of Jerusalem; and therefore cannot refer to the times before it, and the shortening of them by it, which were very dreadful and deplorable through the murders and robberies of the cut-throats and zealots; but to those after the siege began, which were very distressing to those that were within; and which, if they had not been shortened, or if the siege had been lengthened out further, *there should no flesh be saved*; not one Jew in the city of Jerusalem would have been saved; they must every one have perished by famine, or pestilence, or sword, or by the intestine wars and murders among themselves: nor indeed, if the siege had continued, would it have fared better with the inhabitants of the other parts of the country, among whom also many of the same calamities prevailed and spread themselves; so that, in all likelihood, if these days had been continued a little longer, there had not been a Jew left in all the land. *But for the elect's sake*; those who were chosen in Christ, before the foundation of the world, to believe in him, and to be saved by him with an everlasting salvation; both those that were in the city, or, at least, who were to spring from some that were there, as their immediate offspring, or in future ages, and therefore they, and their posterity, must not be cut off; and also those chosen ones, and real believers, who were at Pella, and in the mountains, and other places, for the sake of these, and that they might be delivered from these pressing calamities, *those days shall be shortened*: for otherwise, if God had not preserved a seed, a remnant, according to the election of grace, that should be saved, they had been as Sodom and as Gomorrhah, not one would have escaped. The shortening of those days is not to be understood literally, as if the natural days, in which this tribulation was, were to be shorter than usual. The Jews indeed often speak of the shortening of days in this sense, as miraculously done by God: so they say, that “ five miracles were wrought for our father Jacob, when he went from Beersheba to go to Haran. The first miracle was, that *אֲתַקְצֵר לְיָהוּ שְׁעֵי יְרֵימָה*, *the hours of the day were shortened for him*, and the sun set before its time, because his word desired to speak with him.” They also say, “ that the day in which Ahaz died, was shortened ten hours, that they might not mourn for him; and which afterwards rose up, and in the day that Hezekiah was healed, ten hours were added to it.” But the

meaning here is, that the siege of Jerusalem, and the calamities attending it, should be sooner ended: not than God had determined, but than the sin of the Jews deserved, and the justice of God might have required in strict severity, and might be reasonably expected, considering the aggravated circumstances of their iniquities. A like manner of speech is used by the Karaites Jews, who say, “ if we walk in our law, why is our captivity prolonged, and there is not found balm for our wounds? and why are not *יְמֵי מִלְחָמָה*, *the days of the golden and silver kingdom lessened*, for the righteousness of the righteous, which were in their days?”

Ver. 23. *Then if any man shall say unto you, &c.*] Either at the time when the siege shall be begun, and the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place; or during the days of tribulation, whilst the siege lasted; or after those days were shortened, and the city destroyed, and the Roman army was gone with their captives: when some, that were scattered up and down in the country, would insinuate to their countrymen, that the Messiah was in such a place: saying, *lo! here is Christ, or there, believe it not*: for both during the time of the siege, there were such that sprung up, and pretended to be Messiahs, and deliverers of them from the Roman power, and had their several abettors; one saying he was in such place, and another that he was in such a place; and so spirited up the people not to fly, nor to deliver up the city; and also, after the city was taken and destroyed, one and another set up for the Messiah. Very quickly after, one Jonathan, a very wicked man, led many into the desert of Cyrene, promising to shew them signs and wonders, and was overthrown by Catullus, the Roman governor; and after that, in the times of Adrian, the famous Barcochab set up for the Messiah, and was encouraged by R. Akiba, and a multitude of Jews.

Ver. 24. *For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, &c.*] Such as the above-mentioned: these false Christs had their false prophets, who endeavoured to persuade the people to believe them to be the Messiah, as Barcochab had Akiba, who applied many prophecies to him. This man was called Barcochab, which signifies the son of a star, in allusion to Numb. xxiv. 17. he was crowned by the Jews, and proclaimed the Messiah by Akiba; upon which a Roman army was sent against him, and a place called Bitter was besieged, and taken, and he, and a prodigious number of Jews were destroyed. This deceiver was afterwards, by them, called Barcoziba, the son of a lie: and shall shew great signs and wonders; make an appearance of doing them, though they really did them not: so that Jonathan, before mentioned, pretended to shew signs and sights; and Barcochab made as if flame came out of his mouth; and many of the Jewish doctors in these times, and following, gave themselves up to sorcery, and the magic art; and are, many of them, often said\*

\* Targum Jonathan ben Uzziel, & Targum Hieros. in Gen. xviii. 10.

° R. Sol. Jarchi in Isa. xxxviii. 8.

† Chilluk M. S. apud Trigland. de sect. Karæorum, c. 9. p. 147.

‡ Joseph. Antiq. l. 7. c. 12.

† Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 28. 2.

‡ T. Bab. Meila, fol. 17. 2. Juchasin, fol. 20. 1, 2. & 42. 2. & 56. 2. & 77. 1. & 96. 2.

to be מְלִמְדֵי בְּנֵי אֱדֹמִים, *expert in wonders*, or miracles: *if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect*. By whom we are to understand, not the choicest believers, or the persevering Christians: not but that such who are truly converted, are choice believers in Christ, and persevering Christians are undoubtedly the elect of God; but then the reason why they are elect, and why they are so called, is not because they are converted, are choice believers, and persevering Christians; but, on the contrary, the reason why they are converted, become true believers, and persevere to the end, is, because they are elected; conversion, faith, and perseverance being not the causes or conditions, but the fruits and effects of election: besides to talk of the final seduction of a persevering Christian, is a contradiction in terms. Such an interpretation of the phrase must be absurd and impertinent; for who knows not that a persevering Christian cannot be finally and totally deceived? But by the elect are meant, a select number of particular persons of Adam's posterity, whom God, of his sovereign good-will and pleasure, without respect to their faith, holiness, and good works, has chosen, in Christ, before the foundation of the world, both to grace and glory: and to deceive these finally and totally, is impossible, as is here suggested; not impossible, considering their own weakness, and the craftiness of deceivers, who, if left to themselves, and the power of such deception, and the working of Satan with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, might easily be seduced; but considering the purposes and promises of God concerning them, the provisions of his grace for them, the security of them in the hands of Christ, and their preservation by the mighty power of God, their final and total deception is not only difficult, but impossible. They may be, and are deceived before conversion; this is one part of their character whilst unregenerate, *foolish, disobedient, deceived*, Tit. iii. 3. yea, they may be, and oftentimes are, deceived after conversion; but then this is in part only, and not totally; in some lesser, and not in the greater matters of faith; not so as to let go their hold of Christ their head, and quit the doctrine of salvation by him, or fall into damnable heresies: they may be seduced from the simplicity of the Gospel, but not finally; for they shall be recovered out of the snare of the devil, and not to be left to perish in such deceivings. This clause, as it expresses the power of deceivers, and the efficacy of Satan, so the influence and certainty of electing grace, and the sure and firm perseverance of the saints, to the end, notwithstanding the cunning and craft of men and devils; for if these, with all their signs and wonders, could not deceive them, it may be pronounced impossible that they ever should be finally and totally deceived.

Ver. 25. *Behold, I have told you before.*] Meaning not before in this discourse, though he had in ver. 5, 11. signified also, that false Christs, and false prophets should arise, but before these things came to

pass; so that they had sufficient notice and warning of them, and would be inexcusable if they were not upon their guard against them; and which, when they came to pass, would furnish out a considerable argument in proof of him, as the true Messiah, against all these false ones, shewing him to be omniscient; and so would serve to establish their faith in him, and be a means of securing them from such deceivers.

Ver. 26. *Wherefore if they shall say unto you, &c.*] Any of the false prophets, or the deluded followers of false Christs: *behold, he is in the desert, go not forth*: that is, should they affirm, that the Messiah is in such a wilderness, in the wilderness of Judea, or in any other desert place, don't go out of the places where you are to see, or hear, and know the truth of things; lest you should, in any respect, be stumbled, ensnared, and brought into danger. It was usual for these impostors to lead their followers into deserts, pretending to work wonders in such solitary places: so, during the siege, Simon, the son of Giora, collected together many thousands in the mountainous and desert parts of Judea; and the above-mentioned Jonathan, after the destruction of the city, led great multitudes into the desert: *behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not*: or should others say behold, or for certain, the Messiah is in some one of the secret and fortified places of the temple; where, during some time of the siege, were John and Eleazar, the heads of the zealots; don't believe them. Some reference may be had to the chamber of secrets, which was in the temple\*; "for in the sanctuary there were two chambers; one was called לְשֵׁכֶת הַשְּׂמֵימִים, *the chamber of secrets*, and the other the chamber of vessels." Or else some respect may be had to the notions of the Jews, concerning the Messiah, which they imbibed about these times, and ever since retained, that he was born the day Jerusalem was destroyed, but is hid, for their sins, in some secret place, and will in time be revealed<sup>x</sup>. Some say, that he is hid in the sea; others, in the walks of the garden of Eden; and others, that he sits among the lepers at the gates of Rome<sup>y</sup>. The Syriac version here reads in the singular number, *in the bedchamber*; in some private apartment, where he remains till a proper time of shewing himself offers, for fear of the Romans: but these are all idle notions, and none of them to be believed. The true Messiah is come, and has shewed himself to Israel; and even the giving out these things discovers a consciousness, and a conviction that the Messiah is come.

Ver. 27. *For as the lightning cometh out of the east, &c.*] The eastern part of the horizon, and *shineth even unto the west*; to the western part of it, with great clearness; in a moment; in the twinkling of an eye, filling the whole intermediate space; *so shall also the coming of the son of man be*; which must be understood not of his last coming to judgment, though that will be sudden, visible, and universal; he will at once come to, and be seen by all, in the clouds of heaven, and not in deserts and secret

\* Joseph de Bello. Jud. l. 5. c. 7.

<sup>x</sup> Ib. c. 6. l. 4.

<sup>y</sup> Misn. Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 6.

<sup>x</sup> Aben Ezra in Cant. vii. 5. Targum in Mic. iv. 8.

<sup>y</sup> Vid. Buxtorf. Synag. Jud. c. 50.

chambers: nor of his spiritual coming in the more sudden, and clear, and powerful preaching of the Gospel all over the Gentile world; for this was to be done before the destruction of Jerusalem: but of his coming in his wrath and vengeance to destroy that people, their nation, city, and temple: so that after this to look for the Messiah in a desert, or secret chamber, must argue great stupidity and blindness; when his coming was as sudden, visible, powerful, and general, to the destruction of that nation, as the lightning that comes from the east, and, in a moment, shines to the west.

Ver. 28. *For whersoever the carcass is, &c.*] Not Christ, as he is held forth in the Gospel, crucified and slain, through whose death is the savour of life, and by whom salvation is, and to whom sensible sinners flock, encouraged by the ministry of the word; and much less Christ considered as risen, exalted, and coming in great glory to judgment, to whom the word *carcass* will by no means agree, and but very illy under the former consideration: but the people of the Jews are designed by it, in their fallen, deplorable, miserable, and lifeless state, who were like to the body of a man, or any other creature, struck dead with lightning from heaven; being destroyed by the breath of the mouth, and brightness of the coming of the son of man, like lightning, just as antichrist will be at the last day: *there will the eagles be gathered together*: not particular believers here, or all the saints at the day of judgment; though these may be, as they are, compared to eagles for many things; as their swiftness in flying to Christ, their sagacity and the sharpness of their spiritual sight, soaring on high, and renewing their spiritual strength and youth: but here the Roman armies are intended, whose ensigns were eagles; and the eagle still is, to this day, the ensign of the Roman empire: formerly other creatures, with the eagle, were used for ensigns; but C. Marius, in his second consulship, banished them, and appropriated the eagle only to the legions: nor was it a single eagle that was carried before the army, but every legion had an eagle went before it, made of gold or silver, and carried upon the top of a spear<sup>2</sup>: and the sense of this passage is this, that wherever the Jews were, whether at Jerusalem, where the body and carcass of them was, in a most forlorn and desperate condition; or in any other parts of the country, the Roman eagles, or legions, would find them out, and make an utter destruction of them. The Persic version, contrary to others, and to all copies, renders it *vultures*. Though this creature is of the same nature with the eagle, with respect to feeding on carcasses: hence the proverb, *cujus vulturis hoc erit cadaver?* *what vulture shall have this carcass?* It has a very sharp sight, and quick smell, and will, by both, discern carcasses at almost incredible distance: it will diligently watch a man that is near death; and will follow armies

going to battle, as historians relate<sup>a</sup>: and it is the eagle which is of the vulture kind, as Aristotle<sup>b</sup> observes, that takes up dead bodies, and carries them to its nest: And Pliny<sup>c</sup> says, it is that sort of eagles only which does so; and some have affirmed that eagles will by no means touch dead carcasses: but this is contrary not only to this passage of Scripture, but to others; particularly to Job xxxix. 30. *her young ones also suck up blood, and where the slain are, there is she*: an expression much the same with this in the text, and to which it seems to refer; see also Prov. xxx. 17. Though Chrysostom<sup>d</sup> says, both the passage in Job, and this in Matthew, are to be understood of vultures; he doubtless means the eagles that are of the vulture kind, the Gypætos, or vulture-eagle. There is one kind of eagles, naturalists say<sup>e</sup>, will not feed on flesh, which is called the bird of Jupiter; but, in common, the eagle is represented as a very rapacious creature, seizing, and feeding upon the flesh of hares, fawns, geese, &c. and the rather this creature is designed here; since, of all birds, this is the only one that is not hurt with lightning<sup>f</sup>, and so can immediately seize carcasses killed thereby; to which there seems to be an allusion here, by comparing it with the preceding verse: however, the Persic version, though it is not literally a proper one, yet from the several things observed, it is not to be overlooked and slighted.

Ver. 29. *Immediately after the tribulation of those days, &c.*] That is, immediately after the distress the Jews would be in through the siege of Jerusalem, and the calamities attending it; just upon the destruction of that city, and the temple in it, with the whole nation of the Jews, shall the following things come to pass; and therefore cannot be referred to the last judgment, or what should befall the church, or world, a little before that time, or should be accomplished in the whole intermediate time, between the destruction of Jerusalem, and the last judgment: for all that is said to account for such a sense, as that it was usual with the prophets to speak of judgments afar off as near; and that the apostles often speak of the coming of Christ, the last judgment, and the end of the world, as just at hand; and that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, will not answer to the word *immediately*, or shew that that should be understood of two thousand years after: besides, all the following things were to be fulfilled before that present generation, in which Christ lived, passed away, ver. 34. and therefore must be understood of things that should directly, and immediately take place upon, or at the destruction of the city and temple. *Shall the sun be darkened*: not in a literal, but in a figurative sense; and is to be understood not of the religion of the Jewish church; nor of the knowledge of the law among them, and the decrease of it; nor of the Gospel being obscured by heretics and false teachers; nor of the temple of Jerusalem, senses

<sup>a</sup> Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 4. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 2.

<sup>b</sup> Elian. de Animal. Natura, l. 2. c. 46.

<sup>c</sup> De Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 32.

<sup>d</sup> Hist. Nat. l. 10. c. 3.

<sup>e</sup> In Matt. Homil. 49.

<sup>f</sup> Elian. de Animal. l. 9. c. 10.

<sup>g</sup> Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 55.

which are given into by one or another; but of the Shekinah, or the divine presence in the temple. The glory of God, who is a sun and a shield, filled the tabernacle, when it was reared up; and so it did the temple, when it was built and dedicated; in the most holy place, Jehovah took up his residence; here was the symbol of his presence, the mercy-seat, and the two cherubim over it: and though God had for some time departed from this people, and a voice was heard in the temple before its destruction, saying, *let us go hence*; yet the token of the divine presence remained till the utter destruction of it; and then this sun was wholly darkened, and there was not so much as the outward symbol of it: *and the moon shall not give her light*; which also is to be explained in a figurative and metaphorical sense; and refers not to the Roman empire, which quickly began to diminish; nor to the city of Jerusalem; nor to the civil polity of the nation; but to the ceremonial law, the moon, the church is said to have under her feet, Rev. xii. 1. so called because the observance of new moons was one part of it, and the Jewish festivals were regulated by the moon; and especially, because like the moon, 'twas variable and changeable. Now, though this, in right, was abolished at the death of Christ, and ceased to give any true light, when he, the substance, was come; yet was kept up by the Jews, as long as their temple was standing; but when that was destroyed, the daily sacrifice, in fact, ceased, and so it has ever since; the Jews esteeming it unlawful to offer sacrifice in a strange land, or upon any other altar than that of Jerusalem; and are to this day without a sacrifice, and without an ephod: *and the stars shall fall from heaven*; which phrase, as it elsewhere intends the doctors of the church, and preachers falling off from purity of doctrine and conversation; so here it designs the Jewish Rabbins and doctors, who departed from the word of God, and set up their traditions above it, fell into vain and senseless interpretations of it, and into debates about things contained in their Talmud; the foundation of which began to be laid immediately upon their dispersion into other countries: *and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken*; meaning all the ordinances of the legal dispensation; which shaking, and even removing of them, were foretold by Haggai, chap. ii. 6. and explained by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. xii. 26, 27. whereby room and way were made for Gospel ordinances to take place, and be established; which shall not be shaken, so as to be removed, but remain till the second coming of Christ. The Jews themselves are sensible, and make heavy complaints of the great declensions and alterations among them, since the destruction of the temple; for after having taken notice of the death of several of their doctors, who died a little before, or after that; and that upon their death ceased the honour of the law, the splendour of wisdom, and the glory of the priesthood, they add: "the time that the temple was destroyed, the wise men, and sons of nobles, were put to shame, and

" they covered their heads; liberal men were reduced to poverty; and men of violence and calamity prevailed; and there were none that expounded, or inquired, or asked. R. Eliezer the great, said, from the time the sanctuary were destroyed, the wise men began to be like Scribes, and the Scribes like to the Chazans, (or sextons that looked after the synagogues,) and the Chazans like to the common people, and the common people grew worse and worse, and there were none that inquired and asked;" that is, of the wise men; there were no scholars, or very few that studied in the law.

Ver. 30. *And then shall appear the sign of the son of man in heaven, &c.*] Not the sound of the great trumpet, mentioned in the following verse; nor the clouds of heaven in this; nor the sign of the cross appearing in the air, as it is said to do in the times of Constantine: not the former; for though to blow a trumpet is sometimes to give a sign, and is an alarm; and the feast which the Jews call the day of blowing the trumpets, Numb. xxix. 1. is, by the Septuagint, rendered *ἡμέρα σημασίας, the day of signification*; yet this sign is not said to be sounded, but to appear, or to be seen, which does not agree with the sounding of a trumpet: much less can this design the last trumpet at the day of judgment, since of that the text does not speak; and, for the same reason, the clouds cannot be meant in which Christ will come to judgment, nor are clouds in themselves any sign of it: nor the latter, of which there is no hint in the word of God, nor any reason to expect it, nor any foundation for it; nor is any miraculous star intended, such as appeared at Christ's first coming, but the son of man himself: just as circumcision is called the sign of circumcision, Rom. iv. 11. and Christ is sometimes called a sign, Luke ii. 34. as is his resurrection from the dead, Matt. xii. 39. and here the glory and majesty in which he shall come: and it may be observed, that the other evangelists make no mention of the sign, only speak of the son of man, Mark xiii. 26. Luke xxi. 27. and he shall appear, not in person, but in the power of his wrath and vengeance, on the Jewish nation; which will be a full sign and proof of his being come: for the sense is, that when the above calamities shall be upon the civil state of that people, and there will be such changes in their ecclesiastical state; it will be as clear a point, that Christ is come in the flesh, and that he is also come in his vengeance on that nation, for their rejection and crucifixion of him, as if they had seen him appear in person in the heavens. They had been always seeking a sign, and were continually asking one of him; and now they'll have a sign with a witness; as they had accordingly. *And then shall the tribes of the earth, or land, mourn*; that is, the land of Judea; for other lands, and countries, were not usually divided into tribes, as that was; neither were they affected with the calamities and desolations of it, and the vengeance on the son of man upon it; at least not so as to mourn on that account, but rather were glad and

rejoiced: and they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. The Arabic version reads it, *ye shall see*, as is expressed by Christ, in ch. xxvi. 64. where the high-priest, chief priests, scribes, and elders, and the whole sanhedrim of the Jews are spoken to: and as the same persons, namely, the Jews, are meant here as there; so the same coming of the son of man is intended; not his coming at the last day to judgment; though that will be in the clouds of heaven, and with great power and glory; but his coming to bring on, and give the finishing stroke to the destruction of that people; which was a dark and cloudy dispensation to them: and when they felt the power of his arm, might, if not blind and stupid to the last degree, see the glory of his person, that he was more than a mere man, and no other than the son of God, whom they had despised, rejected, and crucified; and who came to set up his kingdom and glory in a more visible and peculiar manner, among the Gentiles.

Ver. 31. *And he shall send his angels, &c.*] Not the angels, *i. e.* ministering spirits, so called, not from their nature, but their office, as being sent forth by God and Christ; but men-angels, or messengers, the ministers and preachers of the Gospel, whom Christ would call, qualify, and send forth into all the world of the Gentiles, to preach his Gospel, and plant churches there still more, when that at Jerusalem was broken up and dissolved. These are called *angels*, because of their mission, and commission from Christ, to preach the Gospel; and because of their knowledge and understanding in spiritual things; and because of their zeal, diligence, and watchfulness. *With a great sound of a trumpet*, meaning the Gospel; see Isa. xxvii. 13. so called in allusion either to the silver trumpets which Moses was ordered to make of one piece, and use them for the calling of the assembly, the journeying of the camps, blowing an alarm for war, and on their solemn and festival days, Numb. x. 1.—10. The Gospel being rich and precious, all of a piece, useful for gathering souls to Christ, and to his churches; to direct saints in their journey to Canaan's land; to encourage them to fight the Lord's battles; and is a joyful sound, being a sound of love, grace, and mercy, peace, pardon, righteousness, life and salvation, by Christ: or else so called, in allusion to the trumpet blown in the year of *jubilee*; which proclaimed rest to the land, liberty to prisoners, a release of debts, and restoration of inheritances; as the Gospel publishes rest in Christ, liberty to the captives of sin, Satan, and the law, a payment of debts by Christ, and a release from them upon that, and a right and title to the heavenly inheritance. The Vulgate Latin reads it, *with a trumpet, and a great voice*; and so does Munster's Hebrew Gospel; and so it was read in four of Beza's copies: and they shall gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other; that is, by the ministration of the Gospel; the spirit of God accompanying it with his power. and grace, the minis-

ters of the word should gather out of the world unto Christ, and to his churches, such persons as God had, before the foundation of the world, chosen in Christ, unto salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth; wherever they are under the whole heavens, from one end to another; or in any part of the earth, though at the greatest distance; for in Mark, ch. xiii. 27. 'tis said, *from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of the heaven*. The Jews<sup>b</sup> say, that "in the after-redemption (*i. e.* by the Messiah) all Israel shall be gathered together by the sound of a trumpet, from the "four parts of the world."

Ver. 32. *Now learn a parable of the fig-tree, &c.*] Take a similitude, or comparison from the fig-tree, which was a tree well known in Judea; and the putting forth of its branches, leaves, and fruit, fell under the observation of every one: *when its branch is yet tender*; through the influence of the sun, and the motion of the sap, which was bound up, and congealed in the winter season: *and putteth forth leaves*; from the tender branches, which swell, and open, and put forth buds, leaves, and fruit: *ye know the summer is nigh*; spring being already come: the fig-tree putting forth her green figs, is a sign that the winter is past, the spring is come, and summer is at hand; see Cant. ii. 11, 13.

Ver. 33. *So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, &c.*] That are mentioned above, relating to the signs of the destruction of the temple and city, and the destruction itself, with all those several things that should directly take place upon it; this is an accommodation of the above parable, similitude, or comparison: *know that it is near, even at the doors*; meaning, either that *he is near*, as the Ethiopic version reads it, the son of man is near, even at the doors; or as the Vulgate Latin renders it, *in the gates, or doors*, and so does Munster's Hebrew Gospel; and signifies, that he was already come; for to be in the doors, or within the gates, is more than to be at the doors, or at the gates: and thus the fig-tree putting forth its leaves, is a sign that summer is not only nigh, but is already come, even that part of it we call spring; for the Scripture divides the whole year only into two parts, summer and winter; so these calamities and desolations on the Jews, were a sign that the son of man was come, was in the gates, displaying his power and his glory: or the redemption and deliverance of the people of God was at hand, from the persecutions of the Jews; for till the destruction of Jerusalem, the persecutions of the Christians were chiefly from the Jews, or occasioned by them; but now, they being destroyed, the summer of deliverance was at hand: or else the kingdom of God, or a more enlarged state of the Gospel dispensation was near; the winter of the legal dispensation was over, the spring of the Gospel dispensation was come, through the preaching of John the Baptist, Christ and his apostles; and now the summer of it was at hand, through the general spread of it, all over the Gentile world. So the second coming of Christ, will be a summer

<sup>b</sup> Zohar in Lev. fol. 47. 1.

of joy and comfort to the saints: Christ will appear most lovely and amiable to them, he will be glorified by them, and admired in them; great grace will be brought unto them, and great glory will be put upon them; they'll then enjoy full redemption and salvation: the winter of sorrows, afflictions, and persecutions, and of coldness, darkness, and desolation, will be over; the sun shall no more go down, nor the moon withdraw itself, but the Lord will be the everlasting light of his people.

Ver. 34. *Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, &c.*] Not the generation of men in general; as if the sense was, that mankind should not cease, until the accomplishment of these things; nor the generation, or people of the Jews, who should continue to be a people, until all were fulfilled; nor the generation of Christians; as if the meaning was, that there should be always a set of Christians, or believers in Christ in the world, till all these events came to pass; but it respects that present age, or generation of men then living in it; and the sense is, that all the men of that age should not die, but some should live *till all these things were fulfilled*; see Matt. xvi. 28. as many did, and as there is reason to believe they might, and must, since all these things had their accomplishment, in and about forty years after this: and certain it is, that John, one of the disciples of Christ, outlived the time by many years; and, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, many of the Jewish doctors now living, when Christ spoke these words, lived until the city was destroyed; as Rabban Simeon, who perished with it, R. Jochanan ben Zaccai, who outlived it, R. Zadoch, R. Ishmael, and others: this is a full and clear proof, that not any thing that is said before, relates to the second coming of Christ, the day of judgment, and end of the world; but that all belong to the coming of the son of man, in the destruction of Jerusalem, and to the end of the Jewish state.

Ver. 35. *Heaven and earth shall pass away, &c.*] This is either an assertion, which will be true at the end of time; not as to the substance of the heavens and earth, which will always remain, but as to the qualities of them, which will be altered: they will be renewed and refined, but not destroyed; the bad qualities, or evil circumstances, which attend them through the sin of man, will be removed and pass away, but they themselves will continue in being: or is a comparative expression, and the sense is, that the heavens and the earth, and the ordinances thereof, than which nothing can be more firm and strong, being fixed and supported by God himself, shall sooner pass away, than any thing asserted and predicted by Christ shall: *but my words shall not pass away*; be vain and empty, and unaccomplished; which is true of any thing, and every thing spoken by Christ; and especially here regards all that he had said concerning the calamities that should befall the Jews, before, at, or upon the destruction of their nation, city, and temple; and the design of the expression, is to shew

the certainty, unalterableness, and sure accomplishment of these things; see Jer. xxxi. 36.

Ver. 36. *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, &c.*] Which is to be understood, not of the second coming of Christ, the end of the world, and the last judgment; but of the coming of the son of man, to take vengeance on the Jews, and of their destruction; for the words manifestly regard the date of the several things going before, which only can be applied to that catastrophe, and dreadful desolation: now, though the destruction itself was spoken of by Moses and the prophets, was foretold by Christ, and the believing Jews had some discerning of its near approach; see Heb. x. 25. yet the exact and precise time was not known: it might have been calculated to a year by Daniel's weeks, but not to the day and hour; and therefore our Lord does not say of the year, but of the day and hour no man knows; though the one week, or seven years, being separated from the rest, throws that account into some perplexity; and which perhaps is on purpose done, to conceal the precise time of Jerusalem's destruction: nor need it be wondered at, notwithstanding all the hints given, that the fatal day should not be exactly known beforehand; when those who have lived since, and were eye-witnesses of it, are not agreed on what day of the month it was; for, as Dr. Lightfoot<sup>1</sup> observes, Josephus<sup>2</sup> says, "that the temple perished the tenth day of *Lous*, a day fatal to the temple, as having been on that day consumed in flames, by the king of Babylon." And yet Rabbi Jochanan ben Zaccai, who was also at the destruction of it, as well as Josephus, with all the Jewish writers, say it was on the ninth of *Ab*; for of this day they<sup>1</sup> say, five things happened upon it: "On the ninth of *Ab* it was decreed concerning our fathers, that they should not enter into the land (of Canaan), the first and second temple were destroyed, Bithers was taken, and the city ploughed up." Though the words of R. Jochanan, cited by the doctor, refer to the first, and not to the second temple, and should have been rendered thus: "If I had been in the generation (which fixed the fast for the destruction of the first temple), I would not have fixed it but on the tenth (of *Ab*); for, adds he, the greatest part of the temple was burnt on that day; but the Rabbins rather regarded the beginning of the punishment." And so the fasting of Rabbi, and R. Joshua ben Levi, on the ninth and tenth days, were on account of the first temple; for they were under the same difficulty about the one, as the other: *no, not the angels of heaven*; who dwell there, always behold the face of God, stand in his presence ready to do his will, and are made acquainted with many of his designs, and are employed in the executing of them, and yet know not the time of God's vengeance on the Jews; to this agrees the sense that is given of the day of vengeance in Isa. lxxiii. 4. 'tis asked, "what's the meaning of these words, *the day of vengeance is in my heart*?" Says R. Jochanan, to my heart I have

<sup>1</sup> In Mark xiii. 32.

<sup>2</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 26.

<sup>1</sup> Misn. Taanith, c. 4. sect. 7. T. Hieros. Taanith, fol. 68. 3. & Maimon. Hilch. Taanith, c. 5. sect. 2.

<sup>m</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 29. 1.

<sup>n</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 1.

“ revealed it, to the members I have not revealed it : says R. Simeon ben Lakish, to my heart I have revealed it, למלאכי השרת לא גלית, *to the ministering angels I have not revealed it.*” The Ethiopic version adds here, *nor the son, and so the Cambridge copy of Beza's; which seems to be transcribed from Mark xiii. 32. where that phrase stands; and must be understood of Christ as the son of man, and not as the son of God; for as such, he lay in the bosom of the father, and knew all his purposes and designs; for these were purposed in him: he knew from the beginning who would betray him, and who would believe in him; he knew what would befall the rejecters of him, and when that would come to pass; as he must know also the day of the last judgment, since it is appointed by God, and he is ordained to execute it: but the sense is, that as he, as man and mediator, came not to destroy, but to save; so it was not any part of his work, as such, to know, nor had he it in commission to make known the time of Jerusalem's ruin: but my father only; to the exclusion of all creatures, angels and men; but not to the exclusion of Christ as God, who, as such, is omniscient; nor of the Holy Spirit, who is acquainted with the deep things of God, the secrets of his heart, and this among others.*

Ver. 37. *But as the days of Noe were, &c.]* So Noah is usually called *Noe* by the Septuagint: the sense is, as were the practices of the men of that generation, in which Noah lived, so will be the practices of the men of that age, in which the son of man comes; or as the flood, which happened in the days of Noah, was sudden and unexpected; it came upon men thoughtless about it, though they had warning of it; and was universal, swept them all away, excepting a few that were saved in the ark: *so shall also the coming of the son of man be: to take vengeance on the Jews, on a sudden, at an unawares, when they would be unthoughtful about it; though they were forewarned of it by Christ and his apostles, and their destruction be as universal; all would be involved in it, excepting a few, that were directed a little before, to go out of the city of Jerusalem to Pella; where they were saved, as Noah and his family were in the ark.*

Ver. 38. *For as in the days that were before the flood, &c.]* Not all the days before the flood, from the creation of the world; but those immediately preceding it, a century or two before it: *they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage: not that these civil actions of life were criminal in themselves, had care been taken that they were not abused. It is lawful to eat and drink, provided it be in moderation, and not to excess; and to marry, and give in marriage, when the laws, rules, and ends thereof, are observed: and therefore this must be understood, either of their wholly giving themselves up to the pleasures of life, and lusts of the flesh, without any concern about the affairs of religion, the worship and glory of God, the welfare of their souls and their approaching danger, of which Noah had given them warning; or of their luxury and intemperance, in eating and drinking, and of their libidinous and un-*

lawful marriages; for the word here used for eating, signifies eating after the manner of brute beasts: they indulged themselves in a brutish way, in gluttony and drunkenness; and it is certain from the account given of them, in Gen. vi. 2, 4. that they entered into unlawful marriages, and unclean copulations: wherefore these things may be spoken of them, as what were really sinful and wicked, and denote a course of sinning, a constant practice of these sins of intemperance and lust, and which is still more fully expressed in the next clause: *until the day that Noe entered into the ark.* The Arabic version renders it, *the ship; the vessel which God directed him to make, for the saving of himself and family.* Now the men of that generation persisted in their wicked course of living, after, and notwithstanding, the warning God had given them by Noah, of the flood that would come upon them; and all the while the ark was building, even to the very day that Noah and his family, by the order of God, went into the ark.

Ver. 39. *And knew not until the flood came, &c.]* That is, they did not advert or give heed to what Noah said to them about it: they slighted and despised his warnings; they did not believe, that what he said of the flood was true; they had notice of it, but they would not know it, and therefore God gave them up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart; and so they remained, until it came upon them at once: *and took them all away; the whole world of the ungodly, every man, woman, and child, except eight persons only; Noah and his wife, and his three sons and their wives; for the deluge was universal, and reached to all the inhabitants of the world, who all perished in it, excepting the above persons. So shall also the coming of the son of man be: such shall be, as it was, the case of the Jews, before the destruction of Jerusalem: they gave themselves up to all manner of wickedness and uncleanness; they disregarded the warnings of Christ and his apostles; they were careless and secure of danger; they would not believe their ruin was at hand, when it was just upon them; they buoyed themselves up to the very last, that a deliverer would arise, and save them; they cried peace, peace, when sudden destruction was nigh; even of them all, their nation, city, and temple, a few only excepted, as in the days of Noah: and though they were so much like the men of that generation, yet they themselves say of them, that “the generation of the flood have no part in the world “to come, nor shall they stand in judgment, according to Gen. vi. 3.”*

Ver. 40. *Then shall two be in the field, &c.]* About their proper business, of husbandry, ploughing, or sowing, or any other rural employment: *the one shall be taken; not by the preaching of the Gospel, into the kingdom of God, or Gospel dispensation; though such a distinction God makes, by the ministry of the word, accompanied by his spirit and power; nor by angels, to meet Christ in the air, and to be introduced into his kingdom and glory; but by the eagles, the Roman army, and either killed or carried captive by them: and the other left; not in a state of nature and*

unregeneracy, as many are, to whom the Gospel is preached; nor with devils at the last day, to be thrust down by them into the infernal regions; but by the Romans, being by some remarkable providence, or another, delivered out of their hands; which was the case of some few, and these of the meaner sort; and therefore persons of a rural life and occupation are instanced in.

Ver. 41. *Two women shall be grinding at the mill, &c.*] Though the word *women* is not in the Greek text, yet it is rightly supplied by our translators, as it is in the Persic version; for the word rendered *grinding*, is in the feminine gender, and was the work of women, as appears both from the Scripture, Exod. xi. 5. Isa. xlvi. 1, 2, and from several passages in the Jewish writings, concerning which their canons run thus<sup>p</sup>; "These are the works which a woman is to do for her husband, שֹׁמֵרֶת, *she must grind*, and "bake, and wash, and boil, and make his bed, &c." And elsewhere 'tis asked<sup>q</sup>, "how does she grind?" she sits at the mill, and watches the flour, but she does not grind, or go after a beast, that so the mill may not stop; but if their custom is to grind at a hand-mill, she may grind. The sanhedrim order this to poor people; for if she brings one handmaid, or money, or goods, sufficient to purchase, she is not obliged to grind, &c." Frequent mention is made, of women grinding together at the same mill: a case is put concerning two women grinding at an hand-mill<sup>r</sup>, and various rules are given about it; as, that "a woman may lend her neighbour that is suspected of eating the fruits of the seventh year after time, a meal-sieve, a fan, a mill, or a furnace, but she may not winnow, nor grind with her." Which it supposes she might do, if she was not suspected: again<sup>s</sup>, "the wife of a plebeian, שֹׁמֵרֶת, may grind with the wife of a learned man, in the time that she is unclean, but not when she is clean." Nor was 'tis the custom of the Jews only, for women to grind, but also of other countries, as of the Abyssines<sup>t</sup>, and of both Greeks and Barbarians<sup>u</sup>: *the one shall be taken, and the other left*; as before, one shall be taken by the Romans, and either put to death, or carried captive; and the other shall escape their hands, through the singular providence of God. The Ethiopic version, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel add, *two shall be in one bed, one shall be taken, and the other left*: but these words are not in the copies of Matthew in common, but are taken out of Luke xvii. 34. though they are in the Cambridge copy of Beza's, and in one of Stephens's.

Ver. 42. *Watch therefore, &c.*] Since the time of this desolation is so uncertain, and since it will come upon the Jews unawares, and some will escape, whilst others perish; for the words are plainly an inference from what precedes, and clearly relate to things going before, and are not a transition to a new subject: *for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come*; to avenge

himself of the unbelieving Jews, and fulfil what he in person, and by his apostles, had predicted and warned them of: though I will not deny, but that what follows may be much better accommodated and applied to the second coming of Christ, and the last judgment, and the behaviour of men with regard to both, than any thing said before; and it may be our Lord's intention, to lead his disciples gradually, and as it were imperceptibly, to the last scene of things on earth, to make way for the parables and description of the future judgment, in the next chapter; still keeping in view, and having reference to, the subject he had been so long upon.

Ver. 43. *But know this, &c.*] Or you do know this: this may be illustrated by supposing a case well known to men, and in which common prudence would direct a man how to behave: *that if the good man of the house, or householder, or master of the family, had known in what watch the thief would come*: whether at the first, second, third, or fourth watch; for the night was divided into four watches; had he any previous notice given by any of the associates of the thief, or by those that had overheard, or by any means had got intelligence of his design and measures, and the time of his pursuing them, *he would have watched*; in every watch either in person, or by employing others, or both: *and would not have suffered his house to be broken up, or dug through*; see Job. xxiv. 16. concerning which, there is a law in Exod. xxii. 2. and is explained by the Jewish canonists thus: "He that comes in by digging, whether by day or by night, there's no blood for him (*i. e.* to be shed for him, if he is killed); but if the master of the house, or any other man kill him, they are free; and every man has power to kill him, whether on a week-day, or on a sabbath-day; and with whatsoever death he can put him to, as it is said, *there's no blood for him*, Exod. xxii. 2. And one that comes in, בְּמִחְרָת, *by digging*, or a thief that is found in the midst of a man's roof, or in his court, or within his hedge, whether in the day or in the night, (may be killed;) and wherefore is it called digging? because it is the way of most thieves to come in by digging in the night<sup>v</sup>." Wherefore no doubt since the master of the house had such a law on his side, he would never suffer, if possible, his house to be entered by digging, when he had, especially, any previous notice of it. Now the application of this case, or parabolical way of speaking, is to the coming of Christ, and the watchfulness of every good man who has notice of it, that he may not be surprised with it, but be in a readiness to receive him. The coming of the son of man, is here represented by the coming of the thief in the night: but when he is compared to a thief, this is not to be understood in a bad sense, in which Satan is called one, who comes to kill and to destroy the souls of men; and likewise heretics and false teachers, and every one that climbs up, and gets into the church of God in a wrong way; but this only

<sup>p</sup> Misn. Cetubot, c. 5. sect. 5. Vid. T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 47. 2. & 48. 1.

<sup>q</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, c. 21. sect. 5. 6.

<sup>r</sup> T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 60. 2.

<sup>s</sup> Misn. Sheviith, c. 5. 9. & Gittin, c. 5. sect. 9.

<sup>t</sup> T. Hieros. Terunnot, fol. 46. 3. T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 61. 2. & Cholin, fol. 6. 2. Misn. Taharot, c. 7. sect. 4.

<sup>u</sup> Ludolph. Hist. Eithiop. l. 4. c. 4.

<sup>v</sup> Plutarch. apud Beza in loc.

<sup>x</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Genibah, c. 9. sect. 7. 8.



respects the manner of Christ's coming, which is like that of a thief, secretly, suddenly, and at unawares. The *good man of the house*, or householder, is every Christian, or believer in Christ, who has a house to look after, his own soul, the spiritual affairs and everlasting salvation of it, things of moment and concern unto him: and as the Christians, before the destruction of Jerusalem, had notices of Christ's coming in that way, by our Lord's predictions, by the hints the apostles gave, to refresh their memories with them, and by the signs of the times and voices that were heard; so the saints have of Christ's coming to judgment: wherefore as it became the one, so it does the other, to *watch*, to be upon their guard, to be in a readiness, to have their loins girt about, and their lights burning, and they like men that wait for their Lord; that so when he comes, their houses may not be broken up, may not be surprised, and the several powers and faculties of their souls may not be thrown into disorder and confusion: wherefore it follows,

Ver. 44. *Therefore be ye also ready, &c.*] Or prepared for the coming of the son of man; which as it is said to be like a thief in the night, expresses the suddenness of it, may excite to watchfulness and readiness; which readiness is to be understood, not of a readiness to do the will and work of God, though this is absolutely necessary; as to watch and pray, to hear the word preached, to confess Christ, and give a reason of the hope that is in us, to communicate to the support of the cause and interest of Christ, and to suffer for his sake; but of a preparedness to meet the Lord in the way of his judgments, when desolating judgments are coming on the earth, such as these in Jerusalem; by faith and trust in the power, providence, and care of God; by humiliation before him, and resignation to his will: and if this can be applied to a readiness for a future state after death; for the second coming of Christ, and last judgment; this lies not in a dependence on the absolute mercy of God; nor in an external humiliation for sin; nor in an abstinence from grosser sins, or in mere negative holiness; nor in any outward, legal, civil, and moral righteousness; nor in a submission to Gospel ordinances; nor in a mere profession of religion; but in being in Christ, having on his righteousness, and being washed in his blood; and also in regeneration and sanctification, in having true knowledge of Christ, and faith in him; for all which it becomes men to be concerned, as also all believers to be actually, as well as habitually ready; being in the lively exercise of grace, and cheerful discharge of duty, though without trusting to either. And such a readiness in either branch of it, is not of themselves, but lies in the grace of God, which gives a meetness for glory; and in the righteousness of Christ, the fine linen, clean and white, which being granted by him, his people are made ready for him: and as for their faith, and the exercise of it, and their constant performance of duty, these are not from the strength of nature and the power of free-will, but from the spirit of God and his grace; who makes ready a people prepared for the Lord, and all according to the ancient settlements of

grace, in which provision is made for the vessels of mercy, afore prepared for glory: though there should be a studious concern in men for such readiness, for nothing is more certain than death, and nothing more uncertain than when it will be; and after death, no readiness can be had, but he that is then righteous, shall be righteous still, and he that is filthy, shall be filthy still, and a death-bed is by no means to be trusted to; and though a person may not be snatched away suddenly, but may have space given him to repent, yet if grace is not given him, to repent and believe in Christ, he never will; the grave is ready for men, and in a little time all will be brought to this house, appointed for all living, where there is no wisdom, knowledge, and device; and therefore whatever we are directed to do, should be now done, with all that might, and strength, and grace, that is given us; to which may be added, that after death comes judgment; the day is fixed, the judge is appointed, and all must stand before his judgment-seat; and nothing is more sure than that Christ will come a second time, to judge both quick and dead; and happy will those be that are ready; they will be received by Christ into everlasting habitations, and be for ever with him: and miserable will those be, who will not be ready, who will not have the oil of grace in their hearts with their lamps, nor the wedding garment on them; they'll be shut out, and bid to depart into everlasting burnings: how fit and proper is such an advice and exhortation as this, *be ye also ready*. A readiness the Jews report Bath Kol, or the voice from heaven, gave out concerning the Israelites. "Bath Kol (say<sup>1</sup>) they went out, and said to them, כולכם מוכנים לדוי העולם הבא, *ye are all of you ready for the life of the world to come.*" And elsewhere 'tis said of Bath Kol, that it went forth and affirmed of some particular Rabbins, that they were ready for eternal life; as of Ketiah bar Shalom, R. Eleazar ben Durdia, and R. Chanina<sup>2</sup>: *for in such an hour as ye think not, the son of man cometh*: this is true of his coming in power to destroy Jerusalem, and of his second coming to judgment. The Jews say much the same of the coming of the Messiah, whom they expect: "there are three things, they say<sup>3</sup>, which come, בדיסח דדעת, *without knowledge*, or unthought of, at an unawares; and they are these, the Messiah, any thing that is found, and a scorpion."

Ver. 45. *Who then is a faithful and wise servant, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin adds, *do you think?* and is a question put to the disciples, which they might apply to themselves: in Luke xii. 42. 'tis spoken in answer to a question of Peter's, in relation to the above exhortation, whether it was spoken to them, or to all; and by this answer, it looks as if it was more especially designed for them, though it may be applied to others. The *servant* is there called a *steward*, for such a servant is meant; and a name that is very proper for the apostles and ministers of the word, who are stewards of the mysteries of Christ, and of the manifold grace of God; and whose characters are, that they are *faithful*: for this is required in stewards, that they be faithful to the trust reposed in them; as ministers are, when

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 9. 1.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 10. 2. & 17. 1. & 18. 1. & Callah, fol. 17.

<sup>3</sup> & Cetubot, fol. 103. 2.

<sup>4</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1.

they preach the pure Gospel of Christ, and the whole of it; conceal no part, nor keep any thing of it; seek not to please men, but God; neither seek their own things, their ease, honour, and profit, but the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the good of souls; and abide by the truths, cause, and interest of a Redeemer, at all hazards. And they are *wise*, who know and are well instructed in divine things; who make Christ the main subject of their ministry; who improve their talents and time for their master's use, and the advantage of those that are under their care; who seek for, and deliver acceptable words and matter; and manage their whole trust, so as to be able to give in a good account of their stewardship another day. The post that such a person is put in, and the work he is to do, follow: *whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household*; or *family*, the church of God, which is the household of God, and of faith, in which are believers of various growths and sizes; some fathers, some young men, some children; and over these, the ministers are, by their Lord, made and placed as rulers; not as lords and tyrants over God's heritage, to govern them in an arbitrary way, but as over them in the Lord, to rule them according to the word of God, and the laws of his house; by preaching the Gospel, administering ordinances, and keeping up his worship and the discipline of the church; and whose principal business it is, *to give them meat in due season*: even *their portion* of it, as in Luke: for the word of God is to be cut and rightly divided, and every one in the family, according to his age, appetite, and digestion, is to have his proper part and portion given him: it must be meat, proper food, such as is solid, substantial, and nourishing; even the wholesome words of Christ Jesus, that must be given them, and not husks and empty trash; and all in due season, in its proper time, as their cases and circumstances require, and call for; as whether weary, or uncomfortable, or in the dark, or under temptations and afflictions: for a word fitly and seasonably spoken, how useful is it!

Ver. 46. *Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, &c.*] Whether in a way of judgment, as against Jerusalem; or at death, when he comes to remove him out of time, into eternity; or at the day of judgment, when he, the righteous judge, will give the crown of righteousness to him: *shall find so doing*; acting the faithful and wise part, ruling the household of God well; *giving to all wholesome food, a proper portion of it, and that in the right time.*

Ver. 47. *Verily I say unto you, &c.*] Nothing is a greater truth, more certain, or to be depended on, than this; all such wise, faithful, diligent, and industrious servants may expect it: *that he shall make him ruler over all his goods*: will honour him with greater gifts, bestow a larger degree of Gospel light and knowledge on him, make him more useful in the church below, and at last cause him to inherit all things in the other world, all glory, happiness, and bliss.

Ver. 48. *But and if that evil servant, &c.*] Or should there be an evil servant, an unwise and faithless one, who though he may have gifts and talents, yet destitute of the grace of God; and though he may be in the highest post and office in the church of God; for sometimes wicked and graceless men are in such places;

yet if he *shall say in his heart*; secretly to himself, and with pleasure to his mind, and strengthen himself in a full persuasion of this, *my Lord delayeth his coming*; and begins to think that either he will not come at all, to call him to an account for the use of his time, gifts, and talents; or if he does, it will be long first ere he will come, and visit the people of the Jews, by desolating calamities; or by death, to summon him to his bar; or at judgment, to give in his account of his stewardship.

Ver. 49. *And shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, &c.*] By abusing the power lodged in him, usurping a dominion over their faith, and imposing on their consciences things which Christ has never commanded; vexing and burdening them with trifling rites and ceremonies, and other unnecessary things; wounding, grieving, offending weak minds by his conduct and example; or persecuting the saints, such of them as cannot come into every thing in his way of believing and practising: *and to eat and drink with the drunken*; giving himself up to luxury and intemperance; feeding himself instead of the family; serving his own belly, and not his Lord and Master Christ; living an ungodly and licentious life, altogether unbecoming the Gospel of Christ: such servants and stewards have been, and are in the church of God; but sad will be their case, when their Lord comes, as follows. Respect seems to be had either to the ecclesiastical rulers among the Jews, who went under the name of the servants of the Lord, but persecuted the apostles, and those that believed in Christ; or the *Judaizing* Christians, and false teachers, that were for imposing the ceremonies of the law upon believers; or Simon Magus, and his followers, a set of licentious men; or all of them; who lived in this period of time, between the death of Christ, and the destruction of the temple.

Ver. 50. *The lord of that servant, &c.*] Not by redemption and grace, but by creation and profession; *shall come in a day when he looked not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of*: suddenly and unexpectedly: such was his coming in wrath and vengeance on the Jewish nation; and such is his coming oftentimes by death; and such will be his coming at the day of judgment.

Ver. 51. *And shall cut him asunder, &c.*] The Persian version renders it, *he shall separate him from himself*: he shall separate soul and body by death; he shall take away all his gifts and talents from him; and remove him from his place and office, and from the church of God, and communion of the saints, and out of this world. Some think the allusion is to the cutting up of the sacrifices, and dividing them into pieces; and the sense is, that this wicked servant should have no share in the sacrifice of Christ; but should fall himself a victim to divine justice, and be used as sacrifices were; or, in other words, be severely punished for his sins; though the allusion seems rather to be to the manner of punishing treacherous and unfaithful persons, by dismembering them, cutting them in pieces, or in two: and so the Arabic version renders it, *he shall cut him in the middle*: this was certainly a way of putting persons to death; though some say it was not known to the Jews; but the following instances shew the contrary. Mention is made of some that were

sawn asunder, Heb. xi. 37. and the Jews say <sup>b</sup>, that Isaiah was sawn asunder by Manasseh; and such a kind of death is spoken of in the Targum <sup>c</sup>; where it is said, that “the priests went before Mordecai, and “proclaimed, saying, whoever does not salute, or “wish prosperity to Mordecai, and to the Jews, “*הרמץ יתעבד*, *he shall be cut into pieces*, and his “house be made a dunghill.” And elsewhere <sup>d</sup> it is said of a wicked man, that they put him upon a carpenter’s block, and *מנסרים בו*, *sawed him asunder*; and he cried out, woe, woe, woe, that I have provoked my Creator. This was also a punishment used among the Heathens, as Gataker <sup>e</sup>, and others out of Heathen writers, have shewn. It must not here be understood literally, that this wicked servant should be put to such a corporeal death; but that he should be punished

in the severest manner, and should be the object of the fierce wrath and sore displeasure of God; and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. Luke says, with the unbelievers: very likely both phrases were used by Christ; intimating, that such as make a profession of him, and have only a form of godliness, without the power of it, and are wicked and hypocritical men, will share the same fate with those that believe not; and the portion of these is the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; see Rev. xxi. 8. or all such persons are intended, who put on the mask of religion, and do not answer to the character they bear: and are unfaithful to the trust reposed in them, and therefore will be made examples of righteous judgment, and have their part in the lowest hell: *there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*: see the note on ch. xiii. 42.

## C H A P. XXV.

Ver. 1. *THEN shall the kingdom of heaven, &c.*] The Gospel church-state; see the note on ch. xiii. 24. either as it would be a little before the coming of the son of man to take vengeance on the Jews; or as it will be a little before his second coming to judgment: for the parable is manifestly connected with, and refers to the preceding chapter, which chiefly treats of Jerusalem’s destruction: but though the Jews were in great security before their utter ruin, yet it does not appear that the Christian church was then in such a lukewarm, drowsy, and sleepy condition, as this parable represents; and since, in the latter part of the preceding chapter, there are some hints of Christ’s second and last coming; when the servant found doing his Lord’s will, will be greatly honoured, and the wicked, cruel, and licentious servant will be severely punished; and since, at the close of this and the following parable, there is a very lively description given of the last judgment; as also, because it appears elsewhere, that such will be the formal, lukewarm, cold, indifferent, secure, and sleepy state of the church, before the second coming of Christ: it seems right and best to understand this parable, and the following, as having respect to that: and that the design of it is to shew, what will be the case of professors at that time; the difference between nominal and real Christians; how far persons may go in a profession of religion, and yet, at last, be shut out of heaven: as also the suddenness of Christ’s coming; the necessity of being ready for it; and how watchful the saints should be, that they be not surprised with it. Now some time before this, the Gospel church-state, or the body of professing Christians, will be likened unto ten virgins; to virgins for quality; being betrothed ones to Christ, at least in profession; and because of the singleness of their love, and chaste adherence to him, however, as they will declare, and which, in some of them, will be fact; and for their beauty, comeliness, and gay attire, being, as they will profess, clothed with the righteousness of Christ; with that fine linen, clean and white, with cloth of gold, and raiment of needle-work, and so perfectly comely

through his comeliness: and for their purity and incorruptness of doctrine, worship, and conversation, at least in appearance, and which will be true of many of them; and all, from their profession, will bear the same character: these for their quantity and number, are compared to ten virgins; which may, perhaps, denote the small number of professors at this time; see Gen. xviii. 32. that there will be but few, that will then name the name of Christ, and fewer still who will not have defiled their garments, and be virgins indeed. The number ten was greatly taken notice of, and used among the Jews: a congregation, with them, consisted of ten persons, and less than that number did not make one <sup>f</sup>; and wherever there were ten persons in a place, they were obliged to build a synagogue <sup>g</sup>. Ten elders of the city were witnesses of Boaz’s taking Ruth to be his wife, Ruth iv. 2, 9, 10. Now it may be in reference to the former of these, that this number ten is here expressed, since the parable relates to the congregated churches of Christ, or to Christ’s visible church on earth: moreover, they say, that “with less than ten they did not divide the *shema*, (i. e. *hear O Israel*, and say any part of the blessings that went before it;) nor did (the messenger of the congregation) go before the ark (to pray); nor did (the priests) lift up their hands (to bless the people); nor did they read in the law (in the congregation); nor did they dismiss (the people) with (a passage out of one of) the prophets; nor did they make a standing, and a sitting (when they carried the dead to the grave, which used to be done seven times, to weep over the dead); nor did they say the blessing of the mourners, nor the comforts of the mourners (when they returned from the grave, and stood in a row to comfort the mourner; and there was no row less than ten); *וברכת התנים*, *nor the blessing of the bridegrooms*,” which consisted of seven blessings, and this was not said but in the presence of ten persons <sup>h</sup>: to which there may be an allusion here: for the whole alludes to the solemnities of a marriage among the Jews, when the bridegroom

<sup>1</sup> T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 28. 3. & T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 49. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Targum in Esth. viii. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 65. fol. 58. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Adversaria, p. 485.

<sup>f</sup> Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 6. T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 11. 3.

<sup>g</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Tephillah, c. 11. sect. 1.

<sup>h</sup> Misn. Megilla, c. 4. sect. 3. Maimon, Hilch. Tephilla, c. 8. sect. 4, 5.

fetched home his bride from her father's house, attended with his friends, the children of the bride-chamber, and which was usually done in the night: and, at the same time, the bride was waiting for him, accompanied with virgins, or bride-maids; see Psal. xlv. 14. who, when they perceived the bridegroom coming, went out with lamps, or torches, to meet him, and conduct him to her; hence it follows, *which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.* The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions, add, *and the bride*, contrary to the *Greek* copies, excepting the Cambridge copy of Beza's. Nor do the Arabic and Ethiopic versions so read; nor Munster's Hebrew Gospel; nor does it agree with the above custom. By *the bridegroom* is meant Christ, who stands in this relation to his church and people; he saw them in the glass of the purposes and decrees of God, and loved them, and asked them of his father to be given him as his spouse and bride; and who did give them to him, when he secretly betrothed them to himself, in the everlasting covenant, as he does their particular persons at conversion, and will consummate the marriage of them all at the last day; and, in the mean while, acts the part of a bridegroom to them; he loves them as a bridegroom loves his bride, with a love prior to their's, free and unmerited; with a love of complacency and delight, which is single and chaste, strong and affectionate; constant and perpetual, wonderful, matchless, and inconceivable: he sympathizes with them, nourishes, and cherishes them as his own flesh; providing spiritual food, and rich clothing for them; and indulging them with intimate communion with himself, and interests them in all he has; and when he comes again a second time, he'll appear under this character. His first appearance was mean, in the form of a servant, in the likeness of sinful flesh, in garments rolled in blood; but when he comes a second time, he'll appear as a bridegroom in his nuptial robes; all his elect will be prepared for him, beautified and adorned as a bride for her husband; when he'll come and take them home to himself, and will avow them to be his before his father, and his holy angels; and which will be a time of great glory, and great joy. Now these virgins are said to take their lamps, and go forth to meet him: by their *lamps* are meant, either the word of God, the Scriptures of truth, particularly the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; which, like a lamp, were lighted in the evening of the Jewish dispensation, and will shine the brightest towards the end of the world: these are like lamps both to walk by, and work by, and were a light to all these virgins; some were savingly enlightened into them, and by them; and others only notionally, but were taken up, owned, and professed, as the rule of faith and practice, by them all; and that in order to meet and find the bridegroom, for they testify of him: or rather an external profession of religion is designed by the lamps, which is distinct from the oil of grace, and the vessel of the heart, in which that is; and is that into which the oil is put and burns, so as to become visible: and must be daily recruited, and trimmed

with fresh supplies of grace from Christ, without which it can't be kept up, nor will be of any use and service; and is what may go out, or be dropped and lost, as some of these lamps. Now this was what was taken up by them all; they all made a profession of Christ, and his Gospel: some of them took it up aright, upon an experience of the grace of God, and principles of grace wrought in their souls; others, without any experience, and without considering the nature, importance, and consequences of a profession: and so they all went forth to meet the bridegroom: some in the exercise of faith on him, and in his coming; in love to him, and his appearance; desiring, and longing to see him; expecting, and waiting for him: others only in a way of a visible profession of religion, and an outward attendance on ordinances. The custom here alluded to of meeting the bridegroom, and attending the bride home to his house in the night, with lighted torches, or lamps, and such a number of them as here mentioned, was not only the custom of the Jews, but of other eastern nations<sup>1</sup>. Jarchi says<sup>2</sup>, it was the custom of the Ishmaelites; his words are these: "it was a custom in the land of Ishmael, to bring the bride from her father's house to her husband's house, בלילה, *in the night*, before she entered the nuptial-chamber; and to carry before her בעשר קנרסין, *about ten staves*; and upon the top of the staff was the form of a brazen dish, and in the midst of it, pieces of garments, oil, and pitch, which they set fire to, and lighted before her." Something like this is the custom of the East-Indians now, which is thus related<sup>1</sup>: "on the day of their marriage, the husband and wife being both in the same *palki*, or *palanquin*, (which is the ordinary way of carriage in the country, and is carried by four men upon their shoulders,) go out between seven and eight o'clock at night, accompanied with all their kindred and friends; the trumpets and drums go before them; and they are lighted by a multitude of *massals*, which are a kind of flambeaux; immediately behind the *palanquin* of the new-married couple, walk many women, whose business is to sing verses, wherein they wish them all kind of prosperity.—The new-married couple go abroad in this equipage, for the space of some hours; after which they return to their own house, where the women and domestics wait for them: the whole house is enlightened with little lamps, and many of these *massals*, already mentioned, are kept ready for their arrival, besides those that accompany them, and go before their *palanquin*. This sort of lights are nothing else, but many pieces of old linen squeezed hard against one another, in a round figure, and forcibly thrust down into a mould of copper; those who hold them in one hand, have, in the other, a bottle of the same metal, with the mould copper, which is full of oil; and they take care to pour out of it, from time to time, upon the linen, which otherwise gives no light."

Ver. 2. *And five of them were wise, &c.*] The order of these words is inverted in some versions, as in the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic, and in Munster's

<sup>1</sup> Bartenora in Mian. Megilla, c. 4. sect. 3. T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 8. 2.

<sup>2</sup> In Mian. Celim, c. 9. sect. 8.

<sup>1</sup> The Agreement of Customs between the East-Indians and Jews, art. 17. p. 68, 69.

Hebrew Gospel, which read, *and five of them were foolish, and five of them were wise*: but this is of no great consequence. There is a parable of R. Jochanan ben Zaccai<sup>a</sup>, who lived before, and after the destruction of the second temple, which bears some likeness to this part of the parable, and others in it, and is this; “a certain king invited his servants, but did not fix any time for them; those of them that were חכמים, *wise*, adorned themselves, and sat at the gate of the king’s house, and said, is there any want at the king’s house? but those of them that were טפשים, *fools*, went and did their work, and said, is there any feast without trouble? on a sudden, the king inquired after his servants: the wise went in before him, as they were, adorned; but the fools went in before him, as they were, filthy: the king rejoiced at meeting the wise, and was angry at meeting the foolish; and ordered, that those who had adorned themselves for the feast should sit and eat, and those that had not adorned themselves for the feast should stand.” The wise virgins are such, who are wise, not in their own conceits, which is the case of natural men, and empty professors; nor in the things of nature, or in the things of the world, of which the saints are oftentimes less knowing than others; nor in notional and speculative knowledge, much less in things that are evil: but they are such who are wise unto salvation; who not only know the scheme of it, but are sensible of their need of it; apply to Christ for it; venture their souls on him, and commit them to him: they trust in his righteousness for justification; in his blood for pardon; in his sacrifice for atonement; in his fulness for daily supplies; in his grace and strength to perform every duty; and expect eternal life in, and from him: they know him, prize him, and value him as their Saviour; rejoice in him, and give him all the glory; and they are such who are also wise in the business of a profession, as well as in the affair of salvation; they are such who take up a profession of religion aright, upon principles of grace, and after mature thought and deliberation; and when they have so done, hold it fast without wavering, walk becoming in it in their lives and conversations; and yet do not depend on it, or trust to it: *and five were foolish*; not in their own apprehension, in which they might be wise enough; nor in the judgment of others; nor in natural knowledge; or with respect to the things of the world; nor in speculative notions of the Gospel; nor merely so called, because unconverted; every unconverted man being a foolish man: but they were so in the business of salvation; as all are who build their hopes of it on birth-privileges; on a carnal descent from good men; on a religious education; on their own righteousness; or on the absolute mercy of God; and not on Christ, the one only, and sure foundation: they are such who know not themselves; the impurity of their hearts, and nature; their impotency to that which is spiritually good; and the imperfection and insufficiency of their own righteousness: they know not Christ, and his salvation, neither the worth, nor want of him, or that; and are altogether strangers to the power of godliness, and spiritual experience: and are also as foolish in the

affair of a profession, which they take up without a work of the spirit of God upon their souls, and without considering the cost and charge of it; and either in a little time wholly drop it, or, if they hold it, they foolishly depend upon it, or lead lives unsuitable to it. The number of wise and foolish virgins being equal, does not imply that there will be just the same number of nominal, as of real believers in the churches, in the latter day, a little before the coming of Christ; only that there will be a large number of such among them.

Ver. 3. *They that were foolish took their lamps, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel, read, *the five foolish*, whose folly is here exposed; and which lay not merely, or only in taking up the lamps of a profession in a wrong way, and upon a wrong bottom, but chiefly in what follows; *and took no oil with them*: by *oil* is meant, not temporal blessings, nor spiritual ones, nor the Gospel, nor the gifts of the spirit, all which are sometimes signified by oil; but either the spirit of God himself, who is the oil of gladness, and the anointing which teacheth all things; or the regenerating and sanctifying grace of the spirit, even all the graces which are implanted by him in conversion: this is so called, in allusion to the anointing oil under the law, in its excellent nature, its costly matter, its curious make, and particular application; and in the use of it to anoint both things, the tabernacle and its vessels, and persons, prophets, priests, and kings; see Exod. xxx. 23, &c. The grace of the spirit being of an holy and sanctifying nature, exceeding valuable and precious, and a curious piece of workmanship, and what is only applied unto, and bestowed on the elect of God; and with which all the vessels of mercy, small and great, are anointed, and are made prophets, priests, and kings, and is what is, as that was, lasting and abiding: or else with respect to the precious oil, or ointment poured on Aaron’s head, which was emblematical of the grace of the spirit, which was poured forth, without measure, on Christ, and from him descends to all his members: or to the lamp-oil for the candlestick in the tabernacle, which was oil-olive, pure, beaten, and was for light, to cause the lamp to burn always; and fitly represented grace, which comes from Christ, the true olive-tree: is pure, and of a purifying nature; and comes through a bruised, crucified Christ; and being put into the heart, causes the light of good works, and a becoming conversation, to shine forth: or else to oil in common, which is of a cheering and refreshing nature, is beautifying and adorning, supplying and healing, feeding and fattening, searching and penetrating, and will not mix with any thing else; upon all which accounts grace may be compared to it. Now these foolish virgins, though they took up a lamp of a profession, yet were unconcerned for the oil of grace, to fill, maintain, and trim this lamp: they were ignorant of the nature and use of true grace; they saw no need of it, and therefore did not ask for it, or about it; they neglected it, made light of it, and denied it as useless; and being destitute of it, took up their profession without it; and in this lay their folly.

Ver. 4. *But the wise took oil, &c.*] They were concerned for the true grace of God, being enlightened

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 159. 1. Vid. E. David Kimchi in Isa. lxx. 13.

by the spirit of God; they saw their need of the grace of God, and being directed by him where it was to be had, went to Christ for it; and having received it from him, through the power of the Holy Ghost, exercised it on him; and herein lay their wisdom: for a stock of this in the heart, daily renewed by Christ, will supply the lamp of a profession well. This they had *in their vessels*, their oil-vessels; by which are meant their hearts; so called in allusion either to the vessels in which the oil was put, when pressed out of the olives, Jer. xl. 10. or to the oil-vessels of the candlestick, Numb. iv. 9. These are vessels of God's making, though through sin are become impure, and empty of all spiritual good: they are indeed large and capacious; here's room for Father, Son, and Spirit, and for abundance of grace; they are capable of comprehending much of the love of God, and besides natural, a great deal of spiritual knowledge: here, *in these vessels*, sanctified by the spirit of God, the wise virgins had the oil of grace, which is an internal thing: it is nothing in the head, in the tongue, or in the hand, but something in the heart: it does not lie in notion, in talking, nor in doing; a man may know much, say a great deal, and do many external works, and yet be destitute of the grace of God; nothing external is that: it is not a mere outward reformation of life, an external humiliation for sin, an abstinence from the grosser sins of life, or a conformity to the ordinances of the Gospel, or a profession of religion: it is a principle of light, life, love, and holiness wrought in a man's heart; it has its seat in the mind, understanding, and judgment, in the will, conscience, and the affections. This oil of grace was not naturally in them; nor was it obtained by the power of their free-will; but was freely given unto them, and powerfully wrought in them: the case is this; all grace was put into Christ's hands for them; the spirit of God was sent down to apply it to them, and work it in them; which is generally done by means, which they made use of by his direction and assistance, and so may be said to take it: *with their lamps*, of an external profession; they did not take up a profession before they had grace, or without it; but when they received the one, they took up the other; and which was acting the wise part.

Ver. 5. *While the bridegroom tarried, &c.*] The space of time here referred to, is either from the ascension of Christ, to his coming to take vengeance on the Jews; or from thence to his second coming; or rather from the time of some general expectation by the saints, of the near approach of Christ, till such time he does come: for as there was a general expectation of the coming of Christ before he came in the flesh, so there will be a general expectation of Christ being near at hand some time before his second coming; and because such an expectation will not be answered, or Christ will not come so soon as was hoped for, and expected, a general drowsiness, and security, and unconcernedness, especially about the coming of Christ, will fall upon the churches. Thus, in the last century, there was among the people of God, in these kingdoms, a general expectation of Christ's speedy coming; but being in this disappointed, professors of all sorts are fallen asleep, and do not at all, or very little, at least very few, concern themselves about it: in a word, this

interval of time seems to regard that period which is pointed out by the Laodicean church-state, which will usher in the coming of Christ, and the last judgment. Now Christ, the bridegroom, may be said to tarry, not with respect to the time fixed by the father and himself; for as this is settled, though unknown to man, it will not be passed by him; he does not, nor will he tarry beyond the appointed time: but either with respect to the time fixed by men; or with respect to the declaration of Christ, and his apostles, that he would come *quickly*, and the length of time since; or rather with respect to the expectations of the saints, and their impatience. The reason why he tarries is, because his time is not come, and there are many things to be done first; there is to be a glorious spread of the Gospel all over the world; all the elect must be gathered in, both among Jews and Gentiles; and the man of sin must be destroyed; and the ungodly must fill up the measure of their iniquities; and Christ tarries to try the graces of his people, who should exercise faith in his coming, by looking, watching, and waiting for it, desirous of it, and hastening unto it; being ready for him, prepared to receive him, and to go with him to the nuptial-chamber; but instead of this *they all slumbered and slept*: which is not to be understood as if that one only slumbered, and the other slept; that is, that the wise virgins slumbered, and the foolish virgins slept; for the wise virgins, or true believers, are elsewhere said to sleep, and formal professors to slumber; but both these are spoken of them all: and by this slumber, and sleep, is not meant a natural death; though that is sometimes called a sleep, and to which true believers are subject, as well as others; yet all at the coming of Christ will not be asleep in this sense: and were this intended, their resurrection would be designed by their *arising*, in the seventh verse; and so the resurrection of the saints, and of others, would be together, which is not true, for the dead in Christ will rise first; and would be also before the coming of Christ, whereas the resurrection of the saints is not till at his coming; and it would look, by the account in some following verses, as if grace might be had, or, at least, be thought to be had, after the resurrection: nor is this to be understood of the dead sleep of sin: a death in sin may be signified by sleeping, and be so called, and conviction be an awakening out of it; but the foolish virgins were always asleep in this sense, and were never truly and thoroughly awakened; and wise virgins never do, nor can, fall into this sleep; for being quickened by Christ, they never die again: nor of a judicial slumber and sleep, which the saints are never given up to; but a dead, lifeless, and sleepy frame of spirit in the wise virgins: which lies in grace not being in exercise; in a slothfulness to perform religious duties; in taking up a satisfaction with the outward parts of religion; in an indifference about the interest of Christ; in an unconcernedness at the omission of duty, or commission of sin; and in an entire ease of mind with regard to such a frame and state: the causes of it are a body of sin; an anxious care of the world; a being weary of spiritual exercises, and a leaving them off; abstaining from an awakening ministry, and spiritual conversation; and keeping company with sleepy and slothful professors, or the men of the

world : and often it arises from ease, peace, and liberty ; and sometimes from long watchfulness, and waiting for the bridegroom's coming ; in which, being disappointed, such a frame of spirit ensues : and also in the foolish virgins it intends great carnal security in themselves ; a rest and confidence in their external profession ; and a laying aside all thoughts of Christ, and his coming to judgment : for a difference there is between the sleep and slumbering of the one and of the other ; the wise virgins are children of the day, and not of the night ; though they sleep, their hearts wake, and they sleep with grace in their hearts ; neither of which can be said of the foolish virgins, or formal professors : as to the phraseology here used, the Jews would distinguish upon it, for they make a difference between slumbering and sleeping : " they do not dismiss (the company) after the passover with the sweet-meats : " if some of them sleep, they may eat, but if all of them, they may not eat. R. Jose says, *נרדמו, if they slumber they may eat ; נרדמו, if they sleep they may not eat* : " which Maimonides thus explains, " *if they slumber* : that is, if they begin to sleep, but are not yet overwhelmed with sleep, but hear when others speak to them, and answer immediately to them that call them : *if they sleep* : if they are oppressed with a deep sleep." Though the phrase *נרדמו ושכבו*, which I should choose to render, *he slumbered and slept*, is often said<sup>p</sup> of the same person, without any distinction, as here.

Ver. 6. *And at midnight there was a cry made ; &c.*] Which is no other than the following notice of the bridegroom's coming, expressed in these words : *behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him* ; which supposes that then all things will be ready for his coming : all things respecting this world ; all the strange and surprising events that were to come to pass, before the coming of Christ, will now be accomplished ; an end put to all the monarchies of the earth ; and all the preparations in nature, for the burning of the world finished : all things respecting the ungodly of the world : they will have filled up the measure of their iniquities, and finished their persecutions of the saints : and all things respecting the elect of God, they will be all born, and born again ; they will have gone through all their sufferings for Christ, and have all their graces tried and perfected ; for when the bridegroom comes, he will come to espouse them openly to himself, for which they must be prepared and adorned, and to take them to himself, that they may be for ever with him. It also supposes, that his coming will be very nigh at hand ; it was so represented long ago ; it is greatly desired by the saints to be quickly ; and it will be in a very short time after this notice : and it signifies that there will be some notice given of it, a little before he comes ; and that partly for the glory of his majesty ; and that his own people, the wise virgins, may be ready ; and that the foolish ones may be left without excuse : and this being prefaced with a *behold*, shews the certainty of his coming, than which nothing is more certain, and to be depended on ; as

appears from Enoch's prophecy, and others of the Old Testament ; from Christ's own promise ; from the testimony of angels : from the words of the apostles ; and from the ordinance of the Lord's supper : and also the importance of it ; for things of the greatest moment will follow on it ; such as the resurrection of the dead, the judgment of the whole world, the complete happiness of the saints, and the destruction of the wicked : and likewise, that it will be wonderful and astonishing ; Christ will come in amazing glory, in his own, in his father's, and in the glory of the holy angels, and of his power and authority, as the judge of quick and dead. And in this notice advice is given to the virgins, *go ye out to meet him* ; see Cant. iii. 11. and may intend either a going forth internally, as the wise virgins did in the exercise of grace, of faith in the coming of Christ, of love of his appearance, and earnest desire after it ; or a going forth externally, as all the virgins did in a way of visible profession, taking up and trimming their lamps ; or literally and corporeally, as the saints will, that will be found alive at Christ's coming. Now this notice is called a *cry* ; and refers not to the voice of Christ in raising the dead, for this will be before the coming of Christ, whereas that will be when he is come ; and for the same reason, not to the voice of the archangel, if he can be thought to be distinct from Christ. Some think it regards a secret general impulse, that will be upon the spirits of the people of God, with respect to the bridegroom's coming, but this don't seem to answer to a cry ; rather it should intend some remarkable providence, as the earthquake in Rev. xi. 13. when a tenth part of the city shall fall, seven thousand men of note be slain, and the rest affrighted ; or the sounding of the seventh angel, ver. 15. or, what is most likely, the voice of a great multitude, as of many waters, and of mighty thunderings, declaring, that the marriage of the Lamb was come, and the bride ready, ch. xix. 6, 7. and will be a very loud one : it will awaken all the virgins, and will be the cry, not of one, but of many ; and will be very sudden and surprising, though joyful to the saints : this cry will be made, not by the virgins, for they'll be asleep ; nor by Christ himself, for he'll not be come ; nor by the angels, for they'll come with him, and not before ; rather by the ministers of the Gospel, who are the angels so often spoken of in the book of the Revelations, who sound the trumpets at different times, and on different occasions ; who also will sound this trumpet, and give this last and general notice of Christ's coming ; who will be all at once apprized of it, and give an universal alarm of it together in all the churches : thus, as the notice of Christ's first coming was made by the prophets, the notice of his second coming will be made by the ministers of the Gospel : and this will be *at midnight* : which expresses the state of the church a little before the coming of Christ : it will be a night-season with it, a time of darkness both with respect to Gospel-light, and the presence of

<sup>p</sup> In Misa. Perachim, c. 10. sect. 8. & Maimon. Hilch. Chametz Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 14.

<sup>o</sup> In Misa. ib.

<sup>p</sup> T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 47. 2. & 65. 1. & 67. 2.

God with his people; a time of coldness and lukewarmness, as to zeal for God, love to his people, and concern for the interest of Christ; a time of drowsiness and sleep, of insensibility and security, of indolence and inactivity: so as the coming of Christ will be later than was first expected; it will be sudden, and at unawares, and like a thief in the night; but whether it will be literally in the night-season, as his first coming, is not certain. The Jews expect<sup>3</sup>, that at the end of the world Moses and Messiah will come in the night, the one from the wilderness, and the other from Rome: and they make frequent mention of God's going into the garden of Eden, or paradise, at midnight, and there rejoicing with good men. It is said<sup>4</sup>, that R. Eliezer and R. Jose "were sitting one night, and studying "in the law, and about midnight, a man cried (or "the cock crowed), bless ye the blessing; says "R. Eliezer, now is the time that the holy, blessed "God goes into the garden of Eden, to rejoice with "the righteous."

Ver. 7. *Then all these virgins arose, &c.*] Not out of their graves; for the righteous and wicked will not rise together; the dead in Christ will rise first, and this first resurrection will not be till Christ is come; nor will grace be to be had, or be thought to be had after the resurrection; nor will there be any trimming of lamps then, in order to meet the bridegroom, for he will be come: nor out of the graves of sin; for the wise virgins were not in such a state, and the foolish virgins were never brought out of it: but the meaning is, that they arose out of their sleepy and slumbering frame. True believers may fall into a very low condition, with respect to the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty; but they shall arise again, for they are held and upheld by the right hand of God: it is sometimes midnight with them, and they are fallen fast asleep, but they shall be awaked, and arise; which arising here, as it respects them, signifies, that they were thoroughly awaked, that they quitted their former place and posture, were upon their feet, and ready to meet the bridegroom. The foolish virgins also arose; which may intend some awakenings of conscience, and reformation of life, and a more diligent attendance on duties and ordinances; all which they did to make them meet for Christ, and to obtain salvation; but after all it appears, they were destitute of the oil of grace: *and trimmed their lamps*; both wise and foolish: the former by removing what hindered the clear burning of them; by casting off the works of darkness, and causing the light of good works to shine before men, in the discharge of them, from a principle of grace; and chiefly by applying to Christ for fresh supplies of the oil of grace, to fill their lamps, revive their light and heat, and keep them burning: and the latter, only by a few outward decorations, and external performances; to make their outward profession of religion look as bright as possibly they could.

Ver. 8. *And the foolish said unto the wise, give us of your oil, &c.*] A graceless person may be able to see

the grace of God in others, be convinced of it, and acknowledge it, as these foolish virgins did: they saw that the wise virgins had oil, that is, grace; this they knew by the bright burning of their lamps, by their readiness in trimming them, and that in a different way from them; by their sedate composure of mind, and confidence of soul, notwithstanding the midnight cry; and by their ardent and affectionate desire to meet the bridegroom. A graceless person may also see a need of grace: these foolish virgins had no such sense, when they first took up their profession; they went on a long time in a course of religion, without any thoughts of it; and the sense they had now was not of the need of it, in the vessels of their hearts, but in their lamps only; nor was it from the spirit of God, but through the surprise and terror of the midnight cry. Such persons may also be desirous of the grace of God; not because of the intrinsic nature and worth of it, nor for the service and glory of God, but from a mere principle of self-love; and when they can go on no longer with the lamp of profession; and then they desire to have it any where, rather than from Christ, as did these foolish virgins; and who betrayed their folly by applying to saints for it. Had they asked their advice in this their distress, it would have been wisely done; or had they desired their prayers for them; or that they would impart some spiritual instructions to them; but to ask their grace of them was exceeding foolish; when grace only comes from God, who is the God of all grace, through Christ as mediator, in whom the fulness of it dwells, and by the spirit, who is a spirit of grace and of supplication; but is never to be had from men, no, not from the best men on earth, nor from the angels in heaven. The reason of this their request follows, *for our lamps are gone out*; which may be said to be when professors neglect the duties of religion, drop, or deny the doctrines of the Gospel formerly professed by them, become bad in their principles, and scandalous in their lives, or withdraw themselves from the churches of Christ; though neither of these seem to be the case here: wherefore this going out of their lamps seems to intend the insufficiency of an external profession of religion to meet the bridegroom, and support a person with confidence and intrepidity in his presence: these foolish virgins now saw, when too late, that their lamps availed them nothing; they were gone out, and become useless and unprofitable, because they had not the oil of grace with them; or what they had was only counterfeit grace, or only an appearance of it; a mere form of godliness, without its power; or only gifts which are perishable, and now failed, ceased, and were vanishing away; wherefore this is no instance of the loss of true grace, nor at all militates against the perseverance of the saints.

Ver. 9. *But the wise answered, saying, not so, &c.*] A flat denial; and which sprung not from want of compassion; for the saints are taught not only to compassionate one another, and to pity fallen professors, but even to regard their very enemies in

<sup>3</sup> Targum Hieros. in Exod. xii. 42.

<sup>4</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 76. 4. & in Lev. fol. 21. 1. & 23. 2.



distress: nor from a narrow, niggardly spirit, since such are directed and exhorted to communicate freely, both in things temporal and spiritual, they are capable of, to them that are in need, and even to lay down their lives for the brethren; nor from an uncivil, morose, and churlish disposition; or from a careless and indolent one, as being unconcerned what became of these persons; but from an indignation at the honour put upon them, and the slight put upon God and Christ, and the spirit of grace: saints know that all grace comes from Father, Son, and Spirit; and frankly own, that what they have is from thence; and they give God all the glory of it, and can't bear any such application to them for it, as this; but shew the same spirit, as Paul and Barnabas did, when the Lystrians were going to sacrifice to them. Moreover, this denial arose from a consciousness of insufficiency to help them in this respect: it is the saints' mercy that they can't lose the grace they have, nor can any take it away from them, and it is not in their power to give it away; nor can any be sanctified, or justified, or saved, by another man's grace: the reason alleged by them is, *lest there be not enough for us and you*; saints have a large abundance of grace communicated to them; some have more, others less; at least it so appears, as to exercise; but they that have the most, have none to spare, and see their need of more; and ask for more, being sensible that present grace in them, is not sufficient for time to come, but grace in Christ only; wherefore their answer, and the reason of it, were like themselves, wise; and this destroys the notion of supererogation; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. This advice is thought by some, to be ironical and sarcastic; but it seems rather to be serious, and in good earnest; directing them to go to proper persons for grace; not to men, even ministers of the Gospel, nor to angels; but to God the father, the father of mercies, and God of all comfort, who sits on a throne of grace, and gives it liberally to them that come to him for it through Christ, and ask it of him; and to Christ the mediator, who is full of grace and truth, and counsels persons to buy of him gold tried in the fire, grace more precious than the purest gold; and to the spirit of grace, who gives it to all severally as he will: who are said to sell, and men to buy; not in a proper sense, by giving any valuable consideration for the grace of God, which is impossible to be done; but in an improper sense, without money and without price; or in other words, by giving and receiving freely.

Ver. 10. *And while they went to buy, &c.*] The foolish virgins so far took the advice of the wise, as to go forth to buy oil for themselves: they not only had some thoughts about it, and resolutions to do it, but they really did go out to buy; which may design their attendance on the word and ordinances, where they stopped: they did not go to Christ for grace, for if they had gone directly to him, they had met him; but they went another way, and missed him; they took buying in a proper sense, and thought to have obtained

grace by their own works: wherefore, though they went to buy, they did not, nor could they, their attempts were vain and fruitless; and while they were employing themselves in this way, to no purpose, *the bridegroom came*; in person, to raise the saints that were dead, to change the living ones, to espouse them all openly, and take them all to himself, and to judge the world; for this must be understood of his second and personal coming: *and they that were ready*; not by a mere profession of religion, or submission to Gospel ordinances, or by an external righteousness, or negative holiness, and abstinence from the grosser sins of life, or an outward humiliation for them, or by a dependence on the absolute mercy of God; but through being clothed with the wedding garment, washed in the blood of Christ, being regenerated and sanctified, and having the oil of grace in their hearts, a spiritual knowledge of Christ, faith in him, and interest in him: such are ready for every good work, and to give a reason of their faith and hope, to confess Christ, and suffer for his sake; and are ready for death and eternity, and to meet the bridegroom, and for the marriage of the Lamb, to enter into the new Jerusalem. The Jews say<sup>†</sup>, that "the Jerusalem of the world to come, is not as the Jerusalem of this world: the Jerusalem of this world, every one may go into it that will; but the Jerusalem of the world to come, none may go into it, but *הַמְּזוּמָּנִין לָהּ*, those that are prepared for it." And these went in with him to the marriage: the Syriac reads it, *into the wedding-house*, and the Persic, *the nuptial parlour*; the marriage-chamber, where the bridegroom and bride celebrated their marriage; kept their marriage-feast; and where were received the bride-maids, and friends of the bridegroom, called in Talmudic language, *בְּנֵי עֲלִיָּה*, the children of the bride-chamber<sup>†</sup>. Such as were these that went in: and the marriage may here denote, either heaven, Christ's father's house, and the mansions of glory in it, which the saints shall enter into along with Christ; or the act of celebrating the marriage between Christ and the Lamb, and the whole body of the elect; when these virgins will not be bare spectators and witnesses, but parties concerned; and which will only be a publication before his father and the holy angels, of what has been already done: for these were secretly betrothed to him from everlasting, and were particularly espoused to him, one by one, in conversion; but it now will be declared of them all together, that they are his spouse and bride: or the marriage-feast, or supper, is here intended; and which designs not the provision of the Gospel in Christ's house, or church on earth, in general, nor the ordinance of the Lord's supper in particular, nor the feast in the latter day, but the heavenly glory; and happy are those, who are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, and who will be ready when he comes; these shall partake of it: they'll go in with Christ, and be for ever with him, and never return more. *And the door was shut*; which expresses both the happy and comfortable case of the wise virgins, and the sad and miserable state of the foolish ones. The door being shut, the

<sup>†</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 75. 2.

<sup>†</sup> T. Bab. Succa, fol. 45. 2. & Saabedrin, fol. 97. 2.

wise virgins will at once be freed from the disagreeable company of profane sinners, and formal professors; their state and condition will be everlastingly settled, their communion with Christ will be free and uninterrupted, and that for ever; no enemy of their souls can follow them, to give them any disturbance; and they shall never return to a state of sin, sorrow, and imperfection: and it also represents, the woeful and miserable condition of the foolish virgins, in whatsoever sense the word *door* is taken. The church is a door, Cant. viii. 9. and an open one, to receive in proper persons, and will be so more especially in the latter day; but this will be shut, when all the elect of God are called and gathered in; there will be no longer a church-state on earth, or ordinances. Christ himself is called a door, John x. 7. he is the door into the church and into the blessings of grace, and into heaven itself; and which stands open in the ministry of the word, to receive sinners, but will now be shut; Christ will be no more preached, and held forth in the word, as God's salvation: and there is the door of faith, Acts xiv. 27. which is the Gospel, so called, because faith is hereby let into the soul, and souls are by it let into the doctrine of faith; and this is sometimes an open door, when ministers have a fair opportunity of preaching it, and have freedom and liberty in it; when attention is given to it, and many souls are gathered in by it; and this will be shut when Christ comes; there will be no more preaching; and there is also the door of hope, Hosea ii. 15. which now stands open, whilst the Gospel church-state lasts: whilst Christ is preached, the word and ordinances administered, and whilst there is life, and Christ not yet come, there is hope of salvation, pardon, and eternal life; but when Christ comes, either by death, or at judgment, and finds persons in a graceless state, there's then no hope: add to all this, that the door of Christ's heart is now open, to receive all coming sinners; but then will be shut, against all their cries, entreaties, and importunities: it will be shut by himself, who opens and no man shuts, shuts and no man opens; and that against all wicked and profane sinners, all hypocrites and formal professors; even all without his righteousness, and the grace of the spirit of God.

Ver. 11. *Afterwards came also the other virgins, &c.*] The *other five virgins*, as the Persic version reads. The *other*; that were only virgins in name, not in reality; they were different from the wise, they were foolish ones; they were other than those that were ready, they were unprepared ones; and in another situation than those that entered in; they were without, they were now separated from the company of the wise virgins, with whom they had been so long; and what was worst of all, they were to be so for ever. These *also came*; from buying oil: they went about, and came just as they went, without any; they came to the door of the bride-chamber, being desirous to be let in, and hoping to partake of the marriage-feast, and join in the solemnity: but alas! they came too late, they came *afterwards*; after the bridegroom was come, after they that were ready had entered in, and after the door was shut; *saying, Lord, Lord, open to us*. They do not call him their Lord, for they had

no interest in him, nor could they claim any; though the Syriac version reads it, *our Lord, our Lord*: they give him the title, and the bare title, without having yielded that obedience, which was due unto him. They double the word, to shew their importunity, earnestness, sense of danger, and confusion: this title or character is the rather used, because Christ will then appear more clearly to be Lord and God, and every tongue shall confess him to be such: their request to him is, that he would *open* the door unto them, and let them in: they were sensible that the door was shut, and that none but Christ could open it; they did not at once conclude that their case was desperate, but were willing to hope the door might be opened, through their entreaties, and what they had to say for themselves; for though no pleas or arguments are here mentioned, yet, as elsewhere, such as these will be made by the foolish virgins; namely, prophesying in the name of Christ, casting out devils in his name, doing many wonderful works in his name, hearing his word preached, and eating and drinking in his presence; but all in vain, and to no purpose.

Ver. 12. *But he answered and said, &c.*] The Lord and bridegroom from within, thought fit to give them an answer, but an unexpected and awful one to them: *verily I say unto you, I know you not*: which must be understood in consistence with the omniscience of Christ: he knew their persons, conduct, and state; he knew they were foolish virgins, graceless professors, who had made no account of him and his righteousness; but had trusted to, and depended upon, their external profession of religion: they were none of the people whom he fore-knew, or knew as his own, and loved with an everlasting love; he never knew them as his father's choice in him, or as his father's gift to him; he never knew them in the everlasting covenant, or as his sheep, for whom he died; he never knew them believe in him, or love him; nor ever exalt his person, blood and sacrifice, at his table, nor do any good work with a single eye to his glory; he never approved of them, liked their persons, or their conduct; or ever owned them as the true companions, either of his bride, or of himself: which answer implies, that as the door was shut, so it should remain; there was no admittance for them, nor any to be hoped for; and it is all one as if he had said, *begone, and depart hence*. The Persic version adds such a clause, *begone from my door*.

Ver. 13. *Watch therefore, &c.*] In ordinances, in prayer, public and private, in hearing the word, at the Lord's supper, and in every religious exercise; over the heart, the thoughts and affections of it; over words, actions, life, and conversation; and against all sin and unbelief, Satan's temptations, the world, and its charms and snares, false teachers and their doctrines, and for the bridegroom's coming. This is the use and application of the whole parable, and shews the general design of it; the reason to enforce watchfulness follows: *for ye know neither the day nor the hour*; of death, or of judgment, or of the coming of the son of man, of one or the other; for 'tis added, *wherein the son of man cometh*: that he will come is certain, and that quickly; the time is fixed, but when it will be is unknown; and therefore it becomes us to be on

our watch and guard. This last clause is not in the Vulgate Latin, nor in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and was wanting in three of Beza's copies, but is in most Greek copies, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and seems to be necessary.

Ver. 14. *For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling, &c.*] Our Lord adds another parable to illustrate the Gospel dispensation, or its visible church-state; or the state of things respecting the church of Christ, before, and at his second coming, and during the interval between his ascension and that: for by the *man* here, is meant Christ, who in the everlasting covenant agreed to become man, was prophesied of as such, frequently appeared in human form, under the Old-Testament dispensation; and in the fulness of time, really became man; though he was not a mere man, but was God as well as man; having all the perfections and fulness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in him: this man is said to travel *into a far country*; by which heaven is designed, and is so called, not only because of its great distance from the earth, and which is very great indeed; but because the better country and land afar off, is out of sight; and what views we have of it, are very distant ones; and is afar off, in respect of our state of pilgrimage in this world, in which whilst Christ was here, he was a pilgrim and a stranger too; who might be said to be as a *man travelling*, whilst he was in it, and when going out of it, and ascending to heaven: he came from thence, and staid here a while, walking up and down, and doing good; and when he had finished what he came about, he ascended on high, went to his God and father, entered into heaven, where he is received until the times of the restitution of all things: *who called his own servants*; before he took his journey, to commit some things to their trust and management; and to give them some instructions how to behave during his absence: for, according to the Jewish canons, "a master that had a mind to go out of the land (of Israel) could not take his servant with him, unless he pleased; and this is a rule at all times, even at this time, that the land is in the hand of the Gentiles." And here no mention is made of any going with him, only how they were to be employed whilst he was gone: by *his own servants* are meant, not all mankind; for though they are all in some sense his servants, or ought to be, yet they are not so called in Scripture, much less with such an emphasis, his *own servants*; and besides, more than what are in the kingdom of heaven, or Gospel church-state, cannot be intended; since the parable reaches to, and concerns no other: nor all the elect of God only, or all are not the elect of God that are designed; for though these are the servants of Christ, and his own peculiarly, yet all intrusted with talents, are not such; one of these was wicked, slothful, graceless, and at last was eternally lost, and perished; which is not true of any one of the elect: but ministers of the word are here meant, who are eminently the servants of Christ, his own, whom he has called, qualified, commissioned, and sent forth; for the ministers of the word, whether faithful or slothful, good or bad, are in a very lively manner described in this parable, which is a distinct

one from the former; for whereas that gives an account of the different members of the visible church, this describes the several ministers of it: nor can it be any objection to this sense of it, that these servants are all of them said to be his own servants, and called, commissioned, and gifted by him; since Judas, as well as the rest, was called, ordained, qualified, and sent forth by Christ, as an apostle. *And delivered unto them his goods*: the Gospel, that rich treasure of divine truths, the dispensation of it, and gifts to preach it; all which are Christ's goods and his gifts, and not man's; and which was in a very eminent manner done, when Christ ascended on high, and received gifts for, and gave them unto men. Just before it, as he was ready to go, he gathered his disciples together; he renewed and enlarged their commission to preach the Gospel; and quickly after it, gave them greater and larger gifts of the spirit than before; and has been ever since giving ministerial gifts to men, to some more, others less, and which are signified by the talents following.

Ver. 15. *And unto one he gave five talents, &c.*] A talent with the Jews, if of silver, was, according to Brerewood<sup>v</sup>, of the value of 375*l.* of our money; according to Bishop Cumberland, 353*l.* 11*s.* 10*d.*; and if of gold, was equal to 4500*l.* and, according to the latter, 5075*l.* 15*s.* 7*d.*: so that five of these talents, if of silver, were 1875*l.* and if of gold, 22,500*l.* according to Brerewood; a very large sum for one servant to be intrusted with. The Persic version reads *pounds*, as in Luke. xix. 13. By these talents, special grace is not meant; for the parable speaks not of what was wrought in these servants, but of what was committed to their trust, and of what might lie useless by them, and be taken away from them; whereas special grace is internal, something implanted in man, and is an incorruptible seed, that can never be lost, or will be taken away; and it is certain, that one of these servants had not special and saving grace, but was wicked, slothful, and unprofitable, and was cast into utter darkness: but outward gifts are designed by the talents; and these not merely the gifts of natural knowledge and riches, the gifts of nature and of providence; nor the external ministry of the word, Gospel ordinances, and opportunities of enjoying them; but ministerial gifts, such as fit and qualify men to be preachers of the Gospel, as appears from their name, *talents*: they being the greatest gifts for usefulness and service in the church, as talents were the greatest of weights and coins among the Jews; from the nature of them, being what may be improved or lost, and for which men are accountable; from the persons to whom they were delivered, the servants of Christ; from the time of their delivery, when Christ went into a far country, to heaven, when he ascended on high, and received gifts for men, and gave them to them; and from the unequal distribution of them, being given to some more, and others less: all which perfectly agree with ministerial gifts: for it follows, *to another two, and to another one*; and these were given to *every man, according to his several ability, or according to his own power*; his proper power that belonged to him, as the Lord of these servants: for the sense is, not that he

<sup>v</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Abadin, c. 8. sect. 9.

<sup>v</sup> De Nummis Jud. c. 4.

gave these talents, or gifts, according to the different capacities, abilities, stations, and employments of these men; but according to that power and authority which he, as Mediator, had, to dispense these gifts severally as he would; to some more, others less, as he knew would best subserve his interest and kingdom: *and straightway took his journey*; after he had signified, that all power in heaven and earth was given to him, by virtue of which he ordered them to go into all the world, and preach his Gospel, and administer his ordinances; for which he had, and would abundantly qualify them; with a promise of his presence with them to the end of the world; he took his leave of them, blessed them, and was parted from them, and went up into heaven.

Ver. 16. *Then he that had received the five talents, &c.*] The largest measure of gifts; an account is first given of him, how he behaved, and conducted in his Lord's absence, and what use he made of the gifts bestowed upon him: this must be understood, not of a single man, but of that sort of the servants of Christ, who have the greatest ministerial gifts: he *went*; it denotes immediate application to business, and signifies that such servants went according to their commission, preached the Gospel to every creature, and administered the ordinances to proper subjects; they went directly, as soon as they had their talents; they did not stay to consult with flesh and blood, whether it would be for their interest and credit or no; they did not stick at any difficulties and discouragements, nor were deterred by the cross, reproaches, and persecutions; but went forth with courage and boldness, not in their own name and strength, but in the name and strength of Christ, who sent them, and promised them his presence and assistance, on which they depended: *and traded with the same*: with the five talents, or their ministerial gifts. The ministers of the Gospel are traders, not in their own name, nor on their own stock, and for themselves, but for Christ, and for the good of immortal souls: they closely attend unto, and work at, their business and employment; by constant reading, and diligent search into the word of God; by studious meditation on it; by frequent prayer; and continual preaching the Gospel, and administering ordinances; and their success follows: *and made them other five talents*; that is, increased in spiritual knowledge; gifts were improved and enlarged; a greater stock of divine things were laid in; and many souls gained to Christ: such are they whom Christ has ordained to go forth, and bear and bring forth fruit in their ministry, and whose fruit remain.

Ver. 17. *And likewise he that received two, &c.*] Talents, or a lesser measure of ministerial gifts: he *also gained other two*; he worked and laboured, and traded, in proportion to the gifts he had received; and his improvements and success, under a divine blessing, were answerable.

Ver. 18. *But he that received one, &c.*] Talent, or the least degree of gifts, for the ministry of the word: *went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord's money*. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, *silver*, and the Ethiopic, *gold*; but whether these talents were silver or gold, is not certain. Where he buried it; that is, he neglected the gift that was in him, he made no use of

it, either to his own advantage, or to the good of others, and the interest of his Lord; he either never went into the ministry, or if he did, he left it as Demas did, having too great affection for the world, and the things of it: he minded earth and earthly things, and employed himself in them, and not in his master's work and service. The phrase seems to point out the earthly-mindedness of the man, his worldly disposition, and his eager pursuit after the things of life; which were the reason why he disregarded his talent, and made no use of his ministerial gifts: he could not deny worldly self, nor leave all to follow Christ; but rather than drop the world, he chose to bury his talent in it: it was his Lord's money and not his own, and he was accountable to him for it, and should have used it in another manner.

Ver. 19. *After a long time, the Lord of these servants cometh, &c.*] Either in a providential way, by a fit of illness, or in a time of persecution, and awakens the conscience, and calls them to give an account of their stewardship; or by death, when their trading or working time is over, and they become accountable for their whole conduct, throughout their ministrations; or rather, at the last judgment, when all must appear before the judge of quick and dead, ministers as well as others, and give an account of their gifts, and the use of them, to their Lord, from whom they have received them, and whose servants they profess to be. Which coming of his is after a long time; for seventeen hundred years are now past, and he is not yet come; which is a long time in man's account, though not in God's account, with whom a thousand years are as one day; and in the apprehension of the saints, who love, long for, and hasten to, the coming of Christ, are desirous of it, and impatient for it. But though it may seem long, he'll certainly come: he stays long, to give time to his laborious ministers to exercise all those gifts he has bestowed upon them, and to leave slothful ones without excuse. It is not to be inferred from his delay, that he will not come: he is not unmindful of his promise, or slack concerning it; though he tarries long, he'll not tarry beyond the appointed time; at the end he will come, though it is long first: *and reckoneth with them*: what talents they received from him, what they had done with them, and what they had gained by them. The things that ministers of the word are intrusted with, are things of value; the Gospel is a pearl of great price, or rich treasure, that is put into their earthen vessels; it is the unsearchable riches of Christ; gifts to preach it are spiritual, and preferable to gifts of nature, and providence; and the souls of men committed to their care, are of great worth and esteem with Christ; nor are any of these their own, but Christ's, and therefore must give an account of them: this shews both the awfulness and usefulness of the Gospel ministry.

Ver. 20. *And so he that had received five talents, &c.*] Or the greatest gifts: as this man is the first to whom his Lord gave any talents, and the first that went and traded with them; he is also the first that is reckoned with; who *came and brought other five talents*: he came freely and cheerfully, with a holy confidence and intrepidity of mind, and gave in his account very readily, both of what he had received, and of what he had

gained; saying, *Lord, thou deliverest unto me five talents, behold I have gained besides them five talents more.* True ministers of the Gospel frankly own, that what gifts they have are delivered to them by Christ; and such are willing that he should have all returned to him, principal and increase: it is not to be imagined that this will be said in so many express words by them, nor will there be any need thereof; for Christ will not be ignorant of what they have been doing, and of what use they have been of; but the sense is, that as all will be manifest to Christ the searcher of hearts, with whom they have to do, so the account will stand fair and open; and it will be seen and known by all, that such and such faithful ministers of Christ have behaved in this agreeable manner, and have been thus and thus serviceable in his interest.

Ver. 21. *His Lord said unto him, well done, &c.*] Gospel ministers do not say so to themselves; they know they can do nothing well of themselves, and when they have done all they can, they own they are but unprofitable servants; they acknowledge all they do is owing to the grace of God, and strength of Christ, and that no praise is due to them; nor do they expect or seek for such eulogiums from men: but this is said, to shew how acceptable a diligent laborious ministry is to Christ, and to encourage industry in the preachers of the word, whose works will follow them, though not go before them: *thou good and faithful servant*: such may be said to be *good*, who have the grace of God implanted in them, some good thing in them towards the Lord God; a good work begun in their hearts, without which men can never be good ministers of Christ; and who have good abilities, not only natural and acquired parts, but ministerial gifts; which are the good things committed to them, and that dwell in them, which they are to keep by the Holy Ghost; and who make a good use of them, and freely communicate and impart their spiritual gifts, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; and who being employed in a good work, as that of the ministry is, do it well, and abide in it: and such may be said to be *faithful*, who preach the pure Gospel of Christ, and the whole of it; who neither mix it with the inventions of men, nor keep back any part of it from the saints; who seek not to please men, but their Lord and Master; and not their own honour and applause, but his glory; and who abide by him and his cause, notwithstanding all reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions. In such language as this, the Jews used to praise their servants, "דְּרִי אִישׁ כִּיב וְנֶאֱמָר, O man! good and faithful, and "from whose labour one had \* profit." *Thou hast been faithful over a few things*: not as considered in themselves; for the truths of the Gospel which ministers are intrusted with, and in which they are faithful, are neither few, nor inconsiderable; they are the manifold grace of God, and the unsearchable riches of Christ: nor are their gifts mean and despicable; nor are their labours worthless, and of no account; but in comparison of the unseen and eternal things of glory, which are prepared and laid up for them; so that there's no proportion between their works, and the glory that shall be revealed in them: *I will make thee ruler over*

*many things*; either on earth, where they shall reign with Christ a thousand years; and when the kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of it, will be given to the saints of the Most High; and when they who have turned many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars in that kingdom: or else in heaven, where as kings, they shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them, sit down with Christ in his throne, and wear the never-fading crown of glory, life, and righteousness; *enter thou into the joy of our Lord*: not their own, or what was of their own procuring, but their Lord's; which Jehovah the father has prepared for his people, and gives unto them; which the son possesses for them, and will bestow on them; and which the Holy Spirit makes them meet for; and which will chiefly lie in the enjoyment of Christ their Lord: this happiness of their's is expressed by *joy*, which will be full and perfect, and without any interruption or mixture; will be unspeakable and glorious, and continue for ever; for when the saints shall enter into it, as into an house or mansion, they shall take possession of it, and abide in it for ever. It was usual with the Jews to express the happiness of the world to come by *joy*; not only that which is from the Lord, but that with which he himself rejoices with his people: for they say, "there's no joy before, or in the presence of the holy blessed God, since the world was created, כְּאוֹתָה שְׂמֹחָה, like that joy, with which he will rejoice with the righteous, in the world to come."

Ver. 22. *He also that had received two talents, &c.*] A lesser degree of ministerial gifts; and who as he received next to the other, and was the next, who in proportion to what he had received, had traded and gained, he is mentioned in the next place, as giving in his account; who came and said, *Lord, thou deliverest unto me two talents, behold I have gained two other talents besides them*: his account, abating the sum and gains, is given in, in the same form as the other.

Ver. 23. *His Lord said unto him, &c.*] The same words as he did to the other servant, *well done good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord*: where the same commendation is made, and the same characters are given, as before; for a man that has lesser gifts, and is of less usefulness, may be as good and as faithful in his service, and as praise-worthy, as a man of greater gifts, and more extensive usefulness; and the same happiness is bestowed on one, as the other, which in neither is of merit, but of grace; and whatever difference may be made between the saints, or between one minister and another in the Millennium state, yet in the ultimate glory, their joy, bliss, and happiness, will be alike. It is not to be established from this parable, that man has a power to improve the stock of sufficient grace given him, and by his improvement procure eternal happiness to himself; since such a stock of grace is not designed by the talents; nor is that either gotten or improved, by the industry of man; nor does the parable suggest, that men by their improvement of the

\* T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 16. 2.

† Midrash Hanealam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 69. 4.

talents committed to them, do, or can, procure eternal happiness: *good and faithful servants* are indeed commended by Christ, and he graciously promises great things to them, which are not proportioned to their deserts; for whereas they have been *faithful over a few things*, he promises to make them *rulers over many things*; and bids them *enter into the joy of their Lord*: into the joy, which of his grace and goodness, he has provided for them, and not which they have merited and procured for themselves: nor is it to be inferred from hence, that true grace once given, or implanted, may be taken away or lost; for the parable speaks not of what is wrought in men, but of goods and talents bestowed on them, and committed to their trust; which may be lost or taken away, or be wrapped up in a napkin, and lie useless by them; when true grace is the incorruptible seed which never dies, but always remains; that good part which shall never be taken away nor lost, but is inseparably connected with eternal glory.

Ver. 24. *Then he which had received the one talent came, &c.*] For he that has the least gifts, is accountable for them; and therefore ought to make use of them to the good of his fellow-creatures, and the interest of his Lord and Master; though these often lie neglected, and frivolous, and even wicked pretences are formed to excuse such neglect, as here: *and said, Lord, I knew that thou art an hard man*; he calls him *Lord*, though he had not served him, and pretends he *knew* him; but if he had, he would have had a true affection for him, faith in him, and would have observed his commands; and he would also have appeared altogether lovely to him, and of an amiable character, and not in such a light as he represents him; which makes it a clear case, that he was ignorant of him, or he would never have said, that he was an hard, severe, or austere man; one very difficult of being pleased, cruel and uncompassionate to his servants, unjustly withholding from them what was due unto them, and rigorously exacting service that could not be performed by them: all which is the reverse of Christ's true character; who accepts of the meanest services of his people: and takes what is done, though ever so little, as even a cup of cold water, given to the least of his disciples, as done to himself; is merciful and compassionate, both to the bodies and souls of men; and is not unrighteous to forget any labour of love, shewn to him or his; and makes his strength perfect in the weakness of his servants, and his grace always to be sufficient for them: but this wicked servant goes on to traduce him, and adds, *reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed*: which seem to be proverbial expressions; see John iv. 37. describing either a covetous man, that is desirous of that which does not belong to him; or an hard master that requires work to be done, and gives neither tools nor matter to work with; like the Egyptian task-masters, who demanded the full tale of bricks, but gave no straw: whereas Christ is neither niggardly, nor exacting; he requires nothing that is not his, and gives his grace, and bestows his gifts liberally, and unbairds not; nor does he call any to service, of whatsoever sort, but he gives

them grace, strength, and abilities, proportionate to it; and as he has promised, he makes it good, that as their day is, so shall their strength be.

Ver. 25. *And I was afraid, &c.*] The Persic version adds, *to negotiate with thy money*: he was afraid, lest by trading he should not gain what his Lord expected; and most of all, lest he should lose the talent itself; and dreaded his Lord's austerity, should that be the case, fearing that he would have no mercy on him. This was his pretence; but the true causes were sloth and earthly-mindedness: *and went and hid his talent in the earth*; that it might not be lost, though it lay useless, and turned to no account. The Arabic version renders it, *and buried thy goods in the earth*: he owned the money to be his Lord's, and thought he did very well, and enough, that he preserved it, though he had not improved it; and this he hoped would be a sufficient excuse, and on which he laid the greatest stress: *lo! there thou hast that is thine*: he again acknowledges, that the gifts he had were not his own, but his master's; and whereas he had kept them entire, as he had received them, and there was the full sum he was intrusted with, he hoped no more would be required: but it is not sufficient to retain what is given, it must be made use of and improved; for every spiritual gift is given to profit with: and besides, there seems to be a degree of rudeness in these words; he does not bring the talent with him, and return it, but only signifies that he had hid it in the earth, in such a place, and *there* it was, where his Lord might take it, and have it again, if he pleased.

Ver. 26. *His Lord answered and said unto him, &c.*] Resenting, as he well might, not only his indolence and sloth, his neglect of his duty, and his worldly disposition, but the abusive character he had given of him, in order to cover his own wickedness: *thou wicked and slothful servant*; a very just character of him: he was a *wicked servant*; all men in a state of nature are wicked; they lie in wickedness, and are under the power of the wicked one; and there are many wicked men among professors of religion, and many wicked ministers, who, though not openly profane, yet either trusting to their works, or doing the work of the Lord deceitfully, or wholly neglecting it, justly merit this character. This man's wickedness lay in his slothfulness, in not doing the good he might, and had gifts and abilities for; and in entertaining wrong thoughts of, and in bringing false charges against his Lord: and he might be truly said to be *slothful*; since he took no pains to improve in spiritual knowledge; and instead of digging for that, as for silver and hid treasure, dug in the earth, and hid his talent there: he neglected the gift that was in him; did not stir it up, or study to shew himself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed; did not give himself up to reading, meditation, and prayer; but trusted to, and depended on what other men had done; stole away his neighbour's words, reaped that for which he had not laboured, and entered into the labours of others; and being afraid of difficulties, indulged himself in ease and pleasure, served his own belly, and not the Lord Jesus; he gratified his worldly lusts, and had no regard to his master's interest.

*Thou knowest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:* not granting that he was such an one, and that his servant knew him to be such, and had given a true character of him; but supposing he was such a person he had wickedly represented him to be; he turns the argument upon him, that therefore he must needs know, that he expected to have had his money improved, and to have received it with an increase; and that upon such a consideration he ought to have been the more diligent and industrious, in using and improving his talent, and not to have indulged sloth and idleness; and thus he convicts, judges, and condemns him, as a wicked, slothful servant, by his own words.

Ver. 27. *Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, &c.*] *Trapezites*, or *tablers*, the same whom the Jews <sup>2</sup> call שולחנים, and is the same word which is here used in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; who were so called from the table that stood before them, on which they told, and paid their money, and the exchange and use: hence all the Oriental versions here read, *thou shouldst have put my money to, or on the table;* put it into the hand of these bankers, where it would have been not only safe, as in the earth, where it was hid, but also would have made some increase, and would have been returned with profit; and then at my coming I should have received my own with usury: this is said not so much to encourage usury, though it may be lawful; and it seems to have been a practice in those times to put money out to use upon a reasonable interest; but to reprove the sloth and inactivity of this servant, upon his own reasonings, and the character he had given of his master.

Ver. 28. *Take therefore the talent from him, &c.*] This shews it was not special grace, which is intended by the talent; for the gift and calling of special grace are without repentance, and are that good part which shall not be taken away: but gifts may fail, cease, and vanish; they may be taken away from men, and men from them; a right arm may be clean dried up, and a right eye be utterly darkened: and give it unto him which hath ten talents; for to diligent and laborious ministers of the world, more spiritual light and knowledge is given: but this is not to be understood, as though other men's gifts are, properly speaking, taken away from them, and bestowed on them; but that their gifts appear the more illustrious through the slothfulness of others.

Ver. 29. *For unto every one that hath shall be given, &c.*] This seems to be a frequent saying of Christ's, or a common maxim of his, which he made use of on different occasions; see the note on Matt. xiii. 12. and accords with some usual sayings, and proverbial expressions of the Jews; who say <sup>3</sup>, that "the blessed God does not give wisdom, but to him that has wisdom;" and of a man, in other respects, they use this as a common proverb <sup>b</sup>, "if he adds or increases, they add unto him, and if he lessens, they lessen to him:" and so here; he that has gifts, and talents, shall have an addition to them. *And he*

*shall have abundance of spiritual gifts and knowledge; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away, even that which he hath.* The Vulgate Latin reads, *that which he seemed to have*, and so reads Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and so it is read in some Greek copies; though it seems to be taken out of Luke viii. 18.

Ver. 30. *And cast ye the unprofitable servant, &c.*] All the servants of Christ are unprofitable with respect to God; for no man can be profitable to him, as he that is wise may be profitable to himself, or others; or in a way of merit, since when they have done the most and best, they have done but their duty: but this man was unprofitable with respect to himself, having not improved the gift and talent bestowed on him; and with respect to men, being of no use for the conversion of sinners, or the comfort of saints, or the edifying of the body of Christ; and brought no honour to his master, and was of no service for the spreading of his Gospel, and the enlargement of his kingdom and interest; and therefore, as one good for nothing, the ministering angels are bid to take him, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth: he shall be turned out of doors into outer darkness, to be a companion of other unhappy creatures; who are also without, bewailing their miserable condition, and reflecting on their past conduct; whilst faithful, diligent, and laborious servants will be within, partaking of a rich entertainment, prepared by their Lord, accompanied with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: see the note on Matt. viii. 12.

Ver. 31. *When the son of man shall come in his glory &c.*] What is before signified in the two preceding parables, is here clearly and distinctly represented without a parable: and it should be observed, that as the foregoing parables only regard the Gospel church-state, and the ministers and members of it, good and bad, or all sorts of Christian professors; so this account of the last judgment only concerns them; for though all men that ever have been, are, or shall be in every nation under heaven, from Adam to the last man that will be born, will be judged; yet the part of it here described, though it gives a general and lively idea of the whole, only regards the judgment and final state of such who have made a profession of the Christian religion. The judge himself is first described, who is said to be *the son of man*; a name by which Christ is frequently called, and by which he styles himself in his state of humiliation; expressing both the truth of his human nature, and the meanness of it in that state: but as despicable as he appeared then in human nature, in the form of a servant, a man of sorrows, despised by men, and subject to sufferings and death; yet when he comes again, it will be in another guise manner: he will appear *in his glory*; in the glory of the only-begotten of the father, in the glory of his proper deity, in the glory of all the perfections of the divine nature; which glory was, in a great measure, and from most persons, hid in the days of his flesh, though he was in the form of God, and equal with him. He'll also come in his mediatorial glory, which he had with the

<sup>a</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 9. & c. 9. sect. 1.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 55. 1. Zohar in Exod. fol. 89. 4.

<sup>b</sup> Vajikra Rabba, sect. 30. fol. 170. 2.

father before the world was, and with all the honour, power, and authority of the judge of the whole earth, to execute judgment upon men; and in the glory of his human nature, of which his transfiguration on the mount was a pledge and emblem. *And all the holy angels with him*; which splendid retinue will add to the glory of his appearance; and who will accompany him not merely, or only as his attendants, to make the solemnity more grand, pompous, and magnificent; but as ministering spirits, who will be employed by him in gathering all before him, separating the wicked from the good, and conducting each to their several apartments of bliss or woe: and when he thus appears, *then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory*; or glorious throne, upon the clouds of heaven, where he'll sit as judge, and be visible to all.

Ver. 32. *And before him shall be gathered all nations.* &c.] That is, all that have professed the Christian religion in all the nations of the world, whether Jews or Gentiles, high or low, rich or poor, wise and foolish, such as have had greater or lesser talents; though it is also true of every individual of mankind of every nation, tribe and family, of every sex, age, and state, that ever has been, is, or will be. Yet Christian professors seem only here intended, as the following distinction of them, their final state, and the reasons of it shew. This collection of them before Christ, the righteous judge, will be made by the holy angels, who will come with him for this purpose; and being mighty, as they are, will be able to accomplish so great a work; and especially as being under the direction, influence, and authority of so divine, glorious, and illustrious a person, as the son of man will then to all appear to be. *And he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats*: they shall be gathered before him, as they were together in their visible church-state, as being all under a profession of religion; some wise, some foolish virgins; some sheep, and others goats; some industrious, diligent, faithful, and laborious servants; others wicked, slothful, and unprofitable ones; many of whom pass undistinguished and undiscovered now: but then the judge, who is of quick understanding, will easily discern the one from the other; such as have the oil of grace in the vessels of their hearts, together with their lamps, from such as have only the outward visible lamp of a profession, but destitute of the grace of God; and good and faithful servants, who have made a right use of their gifts, from such who have been negligent, careless, and remiss; and though these have been folded together, sheep and goats, in the sheepfold of the church, where they have all bore the character of the sheep of Christ; yet now when the chief shepherd appears, who knows his own sheep, and calls them by name, he'll as easily separate the one from the other, and more so, than any shepherd, among men, can part a flock consisting of sheep and goats. Hypocrites in Zion shall now be no more, nor sinners stand any longer in the congregation of the righteous, nor both together as one body, and on one side in judgment.

Ver. 33. *And he shall set the sheep on his right hand,* &c.] That is, the elect of God, and true believers, such as have the grace of God truly implanted in them; the sheep the father gave unto Christ, and made his care and charge, whom he, as the good shepherd, laid down his life for; and who know his voice in effectual calling, and follow him in the way of his ordinances and appointments; and are comparable to sheep for their meekness and innocence, their simplicity and usefulness, and their harmless and inoffensive lives, and conversations: these Christ will set on his right hand, as a token of his affection for them, and a mark of respect and honour shewn them, and as a pledge of that exaltation and glory he will be about to raise them to. *But the goats on the left*; that is, the foolish virgins, wicked, and slothful servants, graceless professors, who, because of the impurity of their hearts, the filthiness of their lives, and their offensiveness to Christ, are compared to goats: these he'll place at his left hand, in token of his disaffection for them, as a brand of disgrace upon them, and as an intimation of that dishonour and miserable condition they will quickly be in. These different situations plainly pre-signify how things will go with each, that one will be acquitted, and made happy, the other will be condemned, and become miserable. Agreeable to which the Jews say <sup>c</sup>, that there is a right hand and a left hand with the Lord: they that are on the right hand, are such as have done well, and are לְיָמִין, for *absolution*; and they that are on the left hand are criminals, and are לְשֵׁמֶלָה, for *condemnation*. Some think the allusion is to the two Scribes in the sanhedrim, who stood before the judges, one on the right hand, and the other on the left, and wrote the sentences; the one of those that were acquitted, and the other of those that were condemned <sup>d</sup>.

Ver. 34. *Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand,* &c.] Before Christ is called the son of man, now the king; who is not only king of saints, but king of the whole world; the king of kings, and lord of lords, the judge of all the earth; he appearing in glory and majesty, sitting on a throne of glory, being attended with his glorious angels, and all nations gathered before him, waiting for the final sentence to be pronounced upon them by him; and who accordingly begins with those on his right hand, his sheep, the chosen, redeemed, and called of God, saying to them, *come*. The Arabic version adds, *to me*: by such a phrase he sometimes had invited, and encouraged poor sensible sinners to come and partake of his grace: and here by it he calls the righteous, and bespeaks them in the most tender and endearing manner, and yet with the majesty of a king, and the authority of a judge, to come near unto him, with intrepidity and confidence, and take possession of a glorious kingdom; bestowing on them this high and illustrious character, *ye blessed of my father*: so called, partly because they were his father's, not only by creation, but by his choice of them to grace and glory, and therefore most happy and blessed; and partly, because, as such a choice shews, they were dear unto him,

<sup>c</sup> Jarchi in Gen. i. 26. Kimchi in 1 Kings xxii. 19. Lex. Cabalist. p. 132. Zohar in Numb. fol. 93. 4.

<sup>d</sup> Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 4. sect. 3. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 9. Moses Kotsensis Mizvot Torā pr. affirm. 97.



highly in his favour, and loved by him with an everlasting love; as also, because they were blessed by him as the father of Christ, and their's, with all the spiritual blessings of the everlasting covenant in him; with the pardon of their sins, the justification of their persons, the sanctification of their nature, with adoption, and a right unto, and meetness for the eternal inheritance: hence it follows, *inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*. The happiness of the saints, in the other world, is here expressed by a *kingdom*, because of the glory, riches, grandeur, and magnificence of it; as it is sometimes by a crown, for the same reason, suitable to their character and dignity, who are made kings and priests by Christ: and is likewise represented as an *inheritance*, as it is elsewhere, being not acquired by industry, or obtained by merit; but is the gift of their heavenly father, and in right of adoption, as the children of God, being made such by his free grace and favour, and denotes the stability and perpetuity of it: and this is said to be *prepared*, not only appointed and designed in the council, purposes, and decrees of God, but got ready; 'tis a kingdom erected, an inheritance reserved, and a crown of righteousness laid up in heaven; a glory really provided and secured in an everlasting covenant, and that *for you*: for some, and not others; for the sheep on the right hand, and not the goats on the left; for the peculiar favourites of God, the objects of his love and choice, the redeemed of the Lamb, and that are born of the spirit; and that for them, *from the foundation of the world*. The place itself, where this happiness is to be enjoyed, was actually made on the first day of the creation, when the heavens were formed, and the foundations of the earth were laid, and the glory itself long before. The Ethiopic version here reads, *before the world*; and the Persic, *before the foundation of the world was laid*; and Grotius himself owns, that the phrase is the same as *before the foundation of the world*; and Dr. Hammond's paraphrase is, *before all eternity*; for as early were these persons, the beloved, the chosen, and blessed of the father: so that this glory must be of free grace, and not merit, or owing to any works of righteousness done by men; since it was not only designed and appointed, but prepared and laid up for persons before they had a being, and had done neither good nor evil. The Jews\* speak of the law being an inheritance for all Israel, from the six days of the creation; but a much more glorious one is here spoken of: nearer to this is what they say<sup>†</sup>, that Bathsheba was appointed to be David's wife from the day that the world was created; and add, but the mystery of the thing is, מלכות דלעילא, *the kingdom that is above*, which is called by her name. So in 2 Esdras ii. 13. *the kingdom is already prepared for you*.

Ver. 35. *For I was an hungered and ye gave me meat, &c.*] This, and the following, are not mentioned as causes of the kingdom being prepared for them, or of their being entitled to it, or of their being put into the possession of it; but as descriptive of their characters, and as testimonies and evidences of the grace of God in them; by which it appeared, that they

were the blessed of his father, having his special grace vouchsafed unto them; and that they were the children of God, to whom the inheritance of the kingdom belonged, and for whom it was prepared: for what was done by them in time, could never be the cause of what was done for them in eternity, or before, or from the foundation of the world; nor is there any proportion between a kingdom, and such services as here mentioned: and besides, this kingdom is by inheritance, and not merit; is prepared by God, and not procured by men, and was got ready for them before they had a being; and therefore could not be caused by any actions of their's: what is here, and in the following instances, said to be done to Christ, is not to be understood of him personally, but mystically, of the members of his body, as he himself explains it, ver. 40. and the sense is, that when some of the servants of Christ, ministers, or private Christians, were in distress for want of the necessities of life, these gracious souls supplied them with food; which to do, especially in a time of persecution, shewed not only love to Christ, but great faith in him, and that they were not ashamed of him, and their profession of him, nor of his poor ministers and members; for this was done by them, not as the effect of mere humanity to the poor in general, but as an instance of affection to Christ's poor; and was done for his sake, and because they belonged to him, were preachers of his Gospel, and professors of his name; and therefore was considered as if done to himself personally: *I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink*: not gall and vinegar, as the Jews did, but a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, prophet, and righteous person, and because belonging to Christ: this is taken notice of with acceptance by him; and such shall not lose the reward of grace. The Targumist\* has a passage which may be compared with this: "Solomon said, by a spirit " of prophecy from before the Lord; the Lord of the " world shall say to all the righteous in the presence of every one, go taste, with joy, thy bread " which is returned unto thee, for thy bread which " thou hast given to the poor and needy, who were " hungry; and drink with a good heart the wine " which is laid up for thee in paradise, instead of thy " wine, which thou hast mingled for the poor and " needy, who were thirsty; for, lo! now are thy " works accepted before the Lord." *I was a stranger, and ye took me in, or gathered me*: an Hebraism; see 2 Sam. xi. 27. and the Septuagint there. Such servants of Christ as were obliged to quit their habitations through the violence of persecution, and were scattered abroad, or went about preaching the Gospel; such were by these righteous ones taken into their houses, and provided for with food and lodging, and every convenience of life; as they were by Gaius, and others.

Ver. 36. *Naked, and ye clothed me, &c.*] For in such a condition sometimes are the dear children of God, and members of Christ; see 1 Cor. iv. 11. when others, who, Dorcas like, have made coats and garments for them, and clothed them with them; and which will be shewn another day, or taken notice

\* T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 91. 2.

† Zohar in Exod. fol. 44. 3.

\* Zohar in Eccl. ix. 7.

of as the fruits, and so evidences of the grace of God in them. *I was sick, and ye visited me, or looked after me, or over me:* or, as the Persic version renders it, *ye had the care of me;* and which is the true sense and import of the word: for it not only intends visits paid to sick persons in a Christian manner, relieving them with their substance, giving good advice, or speaking comfortable words to them; but attending them, and waiting on them, and doing such things for them, which, in their weak state, they are not capable of doing for themselves. Visiting of the sick was reckoned, by the Jews, a very worthy action: they speak great things of it, and as what will be highly rewarded hereafter. "Six things, (they say<sup>1</sup>), " a man eats the fruit of them in this world, and " there is a stable portion for him in the world to " come:" and the two first of them are, *הכנסת אורחים*, *the taking in of travellers, or strangers,* as is mentioned in the preceding verse, and *ביקור חולים*, *visiting the sick.* One of their Rabbins<sup>1</sup> says, " he that does " not visit the sick, is as if he shed blood: says an- " other, he that visits the sick is the cause of his " living; and he that does not visit the sick, is the " cause of his death: and, says a third, whoever visits " the sick shall be preserved from the damnation " of hell." *I was in prison, and ye came unto me;* which has been often the lot of the saints, as it was frequently of the Apostle Paul, who had this respect shewn him by many of the people of God, as by the house of Onesiphorus, and by Epaphroditus, who brought him a present from the Philippians, when in bonds; and which will be remembered another day.

Ver. 37. *Then shall the righteous answer him, &c.*] From whence it appears, that only such shall be at the right hand of Christ, who are righteous persons, who have the righteousness of Christ imputed to them; and, in consequence of which, are created anew unto righteousness and true holiness; and, under the influence of divine grace, live soberly, righteously, and godly: and those, upon hearing such works ascribed unto them, will, with wonder and astonishment, reply, *saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?* which answer arises partly from not attending to, or thoroughly understanding the words of Christ, which they seem to take in such sense, as if he meant these things were personally done to him; whereas the far greater part of them had never seen him in the flesh, and much less in such circumstances as required such things to be done to him; and partly from surprise and astonishment, that he should take notice of such mean actions, and so highly extol them, and graciously reward them; as also from a forgetfulness of them, their left hand not knowing what their right hand had done: which shews, that they had put no confidence in their works, or depended upon them for their justification before God, and acceptance with him; these were out of sight, and mind; their only trust being in the person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ.

Ver. 38. *When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? &c.*] As they had never seen him hungry and thirsty in his own person, though he was both in the days of his flesh, and were ministered to both by angels, and by good women out of their substance; so they had never seen him a stranger, and took him into their houses; yet they had seen him hungry and thirsty, and as a stranger in his members, and had done these good offices to him in them, and to them for his sake: *or naked, and clothed thee?* for so Christ in person never was, until stripped of his raiment by the soldiers, and officers; but they had seen many of his poor saints without clothing, and had covered their nakedness.

Ver. 39. *Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?*] For though he bore the sicknesses of his people, yet we never read of his being sick himself, nor was he ever cast into prison; but this has been the case of many of his servants, as John the Baptist, Peter, and Paul, and multitudes of others, who have been tenderly and affectionately used by their fellow-Christians.

Ver. 40. *And the king shall answer, and say unto them, &c.*] Christ, though a king, and now appearing in great glory and majesty, yet such will be his goodness and condescension, as to return an answer to the queries of his people; blushing and astonished at his notice of their poor services, which they know to be so imperfect, and are always ready to own themselves unprofitable servants; and this he'll do in the following manner: *verily I say unto you;* a way of speaking often used by him, when here on earth, when he, in the strongest manner, would asseverate any thing as truth, and remove all doubt and hesitation about it. *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me:* which is to be understood, not in so limited a sense, as to regard only the apostles, and the least of them, for these were not the only brethren of Christ; nor in so large a sense, as to include all in human nature; but the saints only, the children of God, and household of faith: for though acts of charity and humanity are to be done to all men, yet especially to these; and indeed, these only can be considered as the brethren of Christ, who are born of God, and do the will of Christ; for such he accounts his mother, brethren, and sisters; and who are not only of the same human nature, but in the same covenant with him, and the sons of God, not by nature, as he is the son of God, but by adoption, and so are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: now he that does any of the above acts of kindness to these *brethren* of Christ, and because they stand in such a relation to him, even the *least* of them: though he is not an apostle, or a martyr, or a preacher of the Gospel, or has any considerable gifts and abilities for usefulness, but is a weak believer in spiritual things, as well as poor in temporals; and though it is but to *one* of these opportunity and circumstances not allowing it to be done to more; yet as such is the humility and condescension of this

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 197. 1.

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 40. 1. Vid. Maimon. Hilech. Ebel, c. 14. sect. 4, 5, 6.

great king, as to account such mean persons his brethren; such also is his grace and goodness, as to reckon every instance of kindness and respect shewn to them, as done to himself in person; and will take notice of it, accept and reward it, as if it had been so done.

Ver. 41. *Then shall he also say unto them on his left hand, &c.*] The goats, the foolish virgins, and slothful and wicked servants, *depart from me*: a like expression is used by him to preachers of the word, and professors of religion, that are mere nominal ones. Matt. vii. 23. and such are intended here, who professed to be on Christ's side, had been in his visible church, and hoped to have been with him for ever; but having nothing but the lamp of a profession, and some external works to trust to, they are bid to be gone from him; they are banished his presence, which is what is commonly called the punishment of loss; the loss of the presence of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, angels, and saints; and is thought to be greater than the punishment of sense, hereafter expressed. The character given of them, which is the reverse of the former, is, *ye cursed*: for having sinned against God, and his righteous law, they are cursed by it, which curses every one that is under its works, as these were, and do not perfectly fulfil whatsoever it requires; and so were justly rejected of God, and hated by him: and therefore are adjudged and sent, *into everlasting fire*: by which is meant, the wrath of God; and the phrase expresses the intolerable fierceness of it, and its perpetual continuance; the sense of which, without intermission, will ever be felt in the conscience; and is the punishment of sense, the wicked will for ever endure: it may also intend the pit and prison of hell, where these torments will be for ever inflicted; and so hell is called by the Jews<sup>k</sup>, the hell of עולם עקידת עולם, *eternal fire, or everlasting burning*: and is here said to be *prepared for the devil and his angels*: for Satan, or Beelzebub, the prince of devils, and all his principalities and powers under him: it is not said to be prepared for these persons, though it was, and who were fore-ordained to this condemnation, but for the devil and his angels; shewing, that the same punishment will be inflicted on hypocrites and carnal professors, as on the devils themselves; and 'tis indeed of such, that the devouring fire, and everlasting burnings are spoken, in Isa. xxxiii. 14. to which this passage seems to have some respect; for no where else is mention made of this everlasting fire: it is not said neither when it was prepared. It is a notion of the Jews<sup>l</sup>, that the angels were created on the second day; and it should seem by them, that they fell the same day; hence it is a prevailing opinion among them<sup>m</sup>, that hell was made on the second day of the creation; though at other times, they reckon hell among the seven things which were created before the world was<sup>n</sup>, and which may be reconciled together: for as heaven, the place

of the saints' happiness, was prepared from the foundation of the world, or on the first day of its creation, though the happiness itself was provided long before; so hell, the place of the torments of the devils and wicked, though it was not made or prepared until the second day of the creation, when, according to this opinion, the angels were made and fell; yet the punishment they were to endure there, was appointed before the world was; and so hell is said to *מסדרת מן עולם*, *be ordained from eternity*, because of their sins<sup>o</sup>.

Ver. 42. *For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat, &c.*] Hence it appears, that these were such as dwell among Christians, and professed the Christian name, and yet disregarded the poor members of Christ in distress, when it was in the power of their hands to help them; but when they were hungry and ready to starve for want of food, did not communicate to them for Christ's sake; which showed that they had no true faith in him, and love to him, and therefore are justly condemned by him; whereas such who never knew Christ, nor any of his people, or any obligation they were under to regard any for Christ's sake, these will never be condemned for the non-performance of these things: *I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink*; as not the least morsel of bread to eat, so not so much as a cup of cold water to drink; which with what follows, are manifest tokens and evidences, that they did not belong to Christ, were not true believers in him, nor had they any real love to him: the grace of God was not in them, and therefore had neither right unto, nor meetness for, the kingdom of heaven; but were righteously banished from the presence of the Lord, and sent to dwell among everlasting burnings; for righteous it was, that such as they who would not shew any love to him here, should not dwell with him for ever hereafter.

Ver. 43. *I was a stranger, and ye took me not in, &c.*] Did not take the poor members of Christ into their houses, and take care of them in their families, when they were obliged to flee from their places of abode, or wandered about preaching the Gospel; and who must have perished in the streets, if others, that bore the Christian name, had not been more compassionate than they: *naked and ye clothed me not: sick and in prison, and ye visited me not*: their conduct, behaviour, and character, are just the reverse of the righteous; and therefore 'tis no wonder that their sentence is different.

Ver. 44. *Then shall they also answer him, &c.*] As well as the righteous, being likewise astonished at what he had said, but on a different account; *saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to thee?* Hence it is clear again, that these men were nominal Christians, who had made a profession of Christ: they own him as Lord, and suggest that they had seen him, and known him, though

<sup>k</sup> Targum in Isa. xxxiii. 14.

<sup>l</sup> Targum Jon. in Gen. i. 26. Pirke Eliezer, c. 4.

<sup>m</sup> Targum in Cant. viii. 6. T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 54. 1. Zohar in Gen. fol. 13. 3. & 30. 2. & in Exod. fol. 61. 4. & in Deut. fol. 190. 1. Bere-shit Rabba, sect. 4. fol. 4. 1. & sect. 11. fol. 10. 1. & sect. 21. fol. 19. 1.

Shemot Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 101. 4. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 1. 2, & 121. 1, 2. & 130. 3.

<sup>n</sup> T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 54. 1. & Nedar. fol. 39. 2. Zohar in Lev. fol.

14. 4. Targum Jon. in Gen. iii. 24.

<sup>o</sup> Targum in Isa. xxx. 33.

never in such circumstances; for if they had, such was their love to him, and great respect and veneration for him, as they pretend, they would, to be sure, have ministered unto him; and if ever they had seen him in such a case, which they could not call to mind, they could not believe, but they must have supplied him with all things necessary and convenient.

Ver. 45. *Then shall he answer them, &c.*] With a stern countenance, in great resentment, as one highly offended, and with the authority of a judge: saying, *verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me:* since they had given no food not to the least of his brethren and friends that stood at his right hand, no not to any one of them; not so much as the least bit of bread to them when hungry, nor a drop of water to them when thirsty; had not taken them into their houses, nor provided the meanest lodging for them, when they were exposed in the streets to the inclemency of the weather, and insults of men; nor gave them the least rag to cover them, when they were almost naked, and ready to perish; nor did they minister to their wants, either physic, or food, or give attendance, when on sick beds, and in prison-houses; therefore he reckoned this neglect of them, and want of compassion to them, all one as if he himself in person had been so treated: and if then judgment will righteously proceed against men for sins of omission, much more for sins of commission; and if such will be dealt with in this manner, who have taken no notice, and shewn no respect to the members of Christ; what will the end be of those, who are injurious to them, their persons, and properties, and persecute and kill them?

Ver. 46. *And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, &c.*] Their excuses will not be regarded, their pleas will be of no avail, their pretensions to

interest in Christ, and love to him, will be set aside; the sentence will remain irrevocable, and there will be no appeal from it, for there's no higher tribunal to bring the cause before; judgment having passed, the execution of it immediately follows: these goats, or formal professors, shall be obliged, whether they will or no, to depart from the presence of Christ; the angels will be ordered to take and cast them into everlasting burnings; they'll be driven by them into hell, the place appointed for them; where they shall endure עוֹשֵׁי נֶצֶד, *everlasting punishment*, as the Jews<sup>p</sup> also express it; and that both in soul and body, as the just desert of sin; which being committed against an infinite God, cannot be satisfied for by a finite creature; who therefore must ever bear the punishment of it, because its pollution and guilt will always remain: *but the righteous into life eternal*: such as are justified by the righteousness of Christ, and who, though they have done works of righteousness under the influence, and by the assistance of the grace of God, yet have not depended upon them, but upon Christ, for life and salvation: these shall go into heaven, the place appointed for them, to enjoy that eternal life in soul and body, which is the free gift of God, through Christ; and will be a life free from all the sorrows of the present one; a life of perfect holiness and knowledge, and inconceivable pleasure; a life of vision of God, and communion with him, and which will continue for ever; and which ascertains the eternity of the punishment of the wicked: for as the happiness of the righteous will be eternal, the punishment of the wicked will be so too; for no reason can be given why the word which is the same in both clauses, should be taken in the one for a limited time, and in the other for an eternal duration. The Jews have a saying<sup>q</sup> which agrees with this last clause, "the world to come is not made but for the righteous."

## CH A P. XXVI.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, &c.*] Meaning either all that are recorded by this evangelist, all the sermons and discourses of Christ, delivered both to the people of the Jews, and to his disciples; his conversation with the former, and his divine instructions and prudent advice to the latter, together with all his excellent parables, which are largely related in this book; or else what is said in the two preceding chapters, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world, the state of the church, and conduct of his servants to the end of time, expressed in the parables of the virgins and talents, and concerning the last judgment and final state of all men: *he said unto his disciples*; who now were alone with him: having finished his prophetic, and being about to enter on his priestly office, he gives his disciples some intimations of its near approach.

Ver. 2. *Ye know that after two days is the feast of*

*the passover, &c.*] Which was kept in commemoration of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt; and was typical of Christ the passover, who was now to be sacrificed for his people. This was said on Tuesday, and on the Thursday following, the passover began. Christ speaks of this as a thing well known to the disciples, as it must be, since it always began on a certain day, the fourteenth of the month Nisan; which month answered to part of our March, and part of our April; and though there was very frequently an intercalation of a whole month in a year, made by the sanhedrim, to keep their festivals regularly in the proper season of the year; yet previous public notice was always given of this, either by fixing a paper upon the door of the sanhedrim<sup>r</sup>, signifying such an intercalation made, which served for the inhabitants of Jerusalem; or by sending messengers with letters into all distant places<sup>s</sup>, acquainting them with it. So that the times of these festivals were always well known;

<sup>p</sup> Caphtor, fol. 113. 1. Shalshet Hakabala, fol. 71. 1.  
<sup>q</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 47. 1.

<sup>r</sup> Targum in Cant. vii. 4.  
<sup>s</sup> Maimon Hilch. Kiddush Hachodesh, c. 4. sect. 17.

even to the common people: *and the son of man is betrayed to be crucified*; it must not be thought that this was equally known by the disciples, as the former; for though they might know, or at least remember, that Christ had told them that he should suffer many things of the priests, Scribes, and elders, who would deliver him to the Gentiles, to be crucified; yet might not understand that this passover was to be the time, when this should be done: by *the son of man*, Christ means himself, who was truly and really man, the seed of the woman, the son of Abraham and of David; a character by which the Messiah is described in the Old Testament, Psal. lxxx. 17. Dan. vii. 13. and hence frequently used by Christ of himself; which, as it expresses the truth of his human nature, so the weaknesses and infirmities he bore in it; and is very properly used here, when he is speaking of his being to be betrayed and crucified. What he says of himself is, that *he is betrayed*; that is, is to be betrayed, or will be betrayed, meaning at the passover, which was to be in two days time. Christ speaks of his being betrayed, as if it was already done; not only because it was so near being done, there being but two days before it would be done; but because it was a sure and certain thing, being determined in the purpose of God, and foretold in prophecy that it should be; and besides, Judas had now resolved upon it within himself, and was forming a scheme how to bring it about. And this respects not only the act of Judas in betraying him into the hands of the chief priests, but also the delivery, as the word here used signifies, of him by them, to the Roman governors; for they, as Stephen says, were also his betrayers and murderers; yea, it may include the delivery of him by Pilate, to the Jews and Roman soldiers; and the rather, because it follows, *to be crucified*; which was a Roman, and not a Jewish punishment. This was typified by the lifting up the brazen serpent on a pole, and foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament, Psal. xxii. 16. Zech. xii. 10. and predicted by Christ himself, sometimes more covertly, John xii. 32, 33. and sometimes in express words, Matt. xx. 19. and was a very painful and shameful death, and which shewed him to be made a curse for his people. It appears from hence; that the crucifixion and death of Christ, were not casual and contingent events, but were determined by the counsel of God, with all circumstances attending: the betraying and delivery of him were by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; and not only his death, but the manner of it by crucifixion, was pointed out in prophecy, and was a certain thing; and the very time of his death was fixed; which shews the early concern of God for the salvation of his people, and his wonderful grace and mercy to them: and it is clear from hence, that Christ had perfect knowledge of all this: he knew not only that he should be betrayed, but he knew from the beginning who would betray him; he not only knew that he should die, but he knew what kind of death he should die, even the death of the cross; and he knew the exact time when he should die, that

it would be at the following passover, which was just at hand; and he had suggested this to his disciples, and therefore he speaks of it as a thing known unto them; at least what they might have known, and concluded from what he had said to them, Matt. xx. 18, 19. and the whole is a considerable proof of his being God omniscient. And he thought fit to put his disciples in mind of it, because the time drew nigh; that their memories being refreshed with it, they might be prepared for it, and not be surprised, shocked, and offended at it, when it came to pass; which shews the tender concern our Lord had for them.

Ver. 3. *Then assembled together the chief priests, &c.*] About the same time, two days before the passover, that Jesus said these things to his disciples, as is plain from Mark xiv. 1. By *the chief priests* are meant, either such who had been high priests, or such as were the heads of the twenty-four courses of the priests; or rather, the principal men of the priesthood, who were chosen out of the rest, to be members of the great sanhedrim: *and the Scribes*; the doctors of the law, who wrote out copies of the law for the people, and interpreted it to them in a literal way: this clause is left out in the Vulgate Latin, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, and in the Alexandrian copy, and some others, but is retained in the Syriac version; and no doubt, but these men had a place in this grand council: *and the elders of the people*; these were the civil magistrates; so that this assembly consisted both of ecclesiastics and laymen, as the sanhedrim did, of priests, Levites, and Israelites<sup>1</sup>: these came unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas; his name was Joseph, but his surname Caiaphas; a word not of the same original with Cephas, as Camero thought; for these two words begin with different letters, nor are the rest the same. Now, though a king of Israel might not sit in the sanhedrim, yet an high priest might, provided he was sufficiently qualified with wisdom<sup>2</sup>. The president of this grand council at this time, should be Rabban Gamaliel, Paul's master; unless it was Caiaphas, at whose house they were: how they came to meet at the high priest's palace, deserves inquiry; since their proper and usual place of meeting, was a chamber in the temple, called Gazith<sup>3</sup>, or the paved chamber: now let it be observed, that according to the accounts the Jews themselves give, the sanhedrim removed from this chamber, forty years before the destruction of the temple<sup>4</sup>; and which, as Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, was about a year and a half before the death of Christ; and as others say<sup>5</sup>, four years; at least three years and a half before that time: but then, though the sanhedrim removed from the paved chamber, they met at Chanoth, the sheds, which was a place within the bounds of the temple, in the mountain of the house; and the question still returns, how came it to pass they did not meet there? To me the reason seems to be, that they chose not to meet there, but at the high priest's palace, because of privacy, that it might not be known they were together, and about

<sup>1</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* sect. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Min. Middot c. 5. sect. 3.

<sup>4</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 15. 1. Avoda Zara, fol. 8. 2. Sanhedrin, fol.

41. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 14. sect. 13. Juchasin, fol. 21. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Edzard. not. in Avoda Zara, c. 1. p. 236.

any affair of moment; and particularly this: the high-priest's house was always in Jerusalem, and he never removed from thence; nor did he go from the temple thither only in the night, or an hour or two in the day; for he had an apartment in the temple, which was called the chamber of the high-priest, where he was the whole day<sup>2</sup>.

Ver. 4. *And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety, &c.*] The Jews had often attempted his life, but he escaped out of their hands; they had sent officers to apprehend him, but to no purpose; they therefore meet and consult together, to form some scheme, and make use of some stratagem, that they might lay hold on him, and keep him; they were for doing this in the most private manner they could: *and kill him*; not with their own hands, nor privately; but their scheme was to apprehend him privately, by some secret artifice, and then deliver him to the Roman governor, to put him to death according to law, publicly, for crimes they had to charge him with; hereby Psal. ii. 2. had its accomplishment, at least in part.

Ver. 5. *And they said, not on the feast-day, &c.*] Upon mature deliberation, it was an agreed point with them, at least it was carried by a majority, that nothing of this kind should be attempted to be done on the feast-day, on any of the days of the feast of passover, which was now at hand; though this was contrary to their common rules and usages: for, a person that sinned presumptuously, and such an one they accounted Jesus to be, they say<sup>a</sup>, “they don't put him to death” by the order of the sanhedrim of his own city, nor “by the sanhedrim of Jabneh; but they bring him up to the great sanhedrim at Jerusalem, and keep him until the feast, and put him to death, בִּרְיָל, on a feast-day; as it is said, Deut. xvii. 13. *and all the people shall hear and fear, &c.*” But what influenced them at this time to take another course, is the reason following; *lest there be an uproar among the people*: they had no fear of God before their eyes, or in their hearts, only the fear of the people; many of whom believed in Christ, and others that did not, yet had a great veneration for him, having seen his miracles, and received favours from him; themselves, or their friends and relations, being cured by him of various diseases: besides, at the feast, people from all parts came up to Jerusalem; and they knew that large numbers from Galilee, where he had the greatest interest, would be present; and they feared, should they attempt any thing of this nature at this time, the people would rise, and rescue him out of their hands. But God had determined otherwise, and his counsel shall stand; 'twas his pleasure, that he should be put to death at this feast, that the truth might answer the type of the passover lamb; and that all Israel, whose males now met together, might be witnesses of it: and so it was, that though these men had concluded otherwise in their council; yet an opportunity offering by Judas, to get him into their hands, they embrace it; and risque the danger of the people's rising, who they found compliant enough to their wishes.

Ver. 6. *Now when Jesus was in Bethany, &c.*] Which was about fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, John xi. 18. or about two miles from it. The time of Christ's death being at hand, he keeps nigh to Jerusalem, where he was to suffer and die, in the room and stead of sinners: *in the house of Simon the leper*; so called, to distinguish him from others of the name. This epithet was either a family one, some person of note in it having been a leper; or else he is so named, because he himself had been one, but was now cured; though the reason interpreters give for this, that otherwise he would not have been suffered to live in a town, is not a good one; for lepers, according to the Jewish<sup>b</sup> canons, were only forbid Jerusalem, and towns and cities that were walled round, and not others, such as the village of Bethany. There were many lepers healed by Christ, which, among other things, was an evidence of his being the Messiah, and a proof of his deity, and this Simon was one of them; whether the same mention is made of in Matt. viii. 1. is not certain, nor very probable; since that man lived in Galilee, at, or near Capernaum; this at Bethany, near Jerusalem: however, he was one of those lepers that had a sense of his mercy, and was grateful for it, as appears by his entertaining Christ at his house; and may teach us thankfulness to Christ, who has healed all our diseases; and particularly, the spreading leprosy of sin, with which all the powers and faculties of our souls were infected; and which was not in our own power, or any creature's, to cure, but his blood cleanses from it: and it may be observed, that Christ goes in and dwells with such whom he heals, and with such he is always welcome.

Ver. 7. *There came unto him a woman, &c.*] By some thought to be the same that is spoken of in Luke vii. 37. and by most, to be Mary, the sister of Lazarus, John xii. 3. which may be true; for 'tis possible that one and the same woman, might perform a like action at different times; for to neither of the above, at the same time, will the following agree: not to the former, for though that was done in the house of one Simon, yet not Simon the leper, but Simon the Pharisee; who though he had a particular respect for Christ, which few of that sect had, yet appeared to be then of a Pharisaical spirit; that was done in Galilee, this near Jerusalem in Bethany; the woman there anointed the feet of Christ, but this woman poured the ointment on his head; nor did any such conversation as here follow upon it, between Christ and his disciples; but what discourse was had on that occasion, was between Simon and Christ. Not to the latter, for that does not appear to be done in Simon's house, but rather in the house of Lazarus; no mention is made of the alabaster box, nor was the ointment poured on his head, but on his feet; besides, that was done six days before the passover, whereas this was but two; moreover, Judas only objected to that, but the disciples in general had indignation at this; and though the objections to it, and Christ's defence of it, are much in the same language, in one place as in the other, yet it was no unusual thing with Christ, to make use of the same words on a like incident, or when the same objections

<sup>a</sup> Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 5. sect. 7.

<sup>b</sup> Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 4. Maimon. Hilch. Memarim, c. 3. sect. 8.

<sup>b</sup> Misn. Celim, c. 1. sect. 7. Maimon. Beth Hamikdash, c. 3. sect. 8.

were made. The fact here recorded, is the same as in Mark xiv. 3. where it stands in the same order as here, and seems to have been done at the supper, of which mention is made, John xiii. 2. when Satan entered into Judas, and put it into his heart to betray his master, the account of which follows this here: *having an alabaster box of very precious ointment*: Mark calls it, *ointment of spikenard*, which was very odorous, and of a very fragrant smell; see Cant. i. 12. Some there render it, *pure nard*; unadulterated, unmixed, sincere and genuine; others, *liquid nard*, which was drinkable, and easy to be poured out; and some *Pistic nard*, so called, either from *Pista*, the name of a place in India, from whence it was brought, as some think; or as Dr. Lightfoot, פִּיטִיקָא, *Pistaca*, which is the maste of a tree<sup>g</sup>, and of which, among other things, Pliny says<sup>d</sup>, the ointment of nard was made. The Persic version in both places read it, *ointment of Gallia*; and the just now mentioned writer<sup>e</sup>, speaks of *nardum Gallicum*, *Gallic nard*, which is what may be meant by that interpreter; but be it what ointment it will, it was ointment, *very precious*: very costly, and of a very great price; for the disciples observe, it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence: and for the better preserving of such ointments incorrupt, they used to be put into vessels made of *alabaster*<sup>f</sup>; though some think not the matter, but the form of these vessels is referred to; and observe, that vessels of gold, silver, and glass, for this use, being made in the form of *alabasters*, were called by that name; and that this might be made of the latter, since Mark says, that *she brake the box*: not into pieces, for then she could not be said to pour it out; but either the top, or side of it: though some critics observe, that the word signifies no more, than that she shook it, that the thicker parts of the ointment might liquify, and be the more easily poured out. The Arabic version has omitted that clause, and the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic, read it, *she opened it*; that is, as the Persic adds, *the top of the vessel*: she took off the covering of the box, or took out the stopple, and *poured it on his head*, as he sat at meat: which was usually done at festivals, or at any considerable entertainments, as at weddings, &c. "Says Rab, they pour ointment on the heads of the doctors; (the gloss is, the women put ointment on the heads of the scholars;) says R. Papa to Abai, does the doctor speak of the ointment of the bride-chamber? He replies, thou orphan, did not thy mother cause for thee, that they poured out ointment on the heads of the doctors, at thy wedding? for lo! one of the Rabbins got a wife for his son, in the house of R. bar Ula; and they say, that R. bar Ula got a wife for his son in the house of one of the Rabbins, חַרְדִּי מִשְׁחָה אֲרִישָׁה דְּרַבָּנָא, and poured ointment on the head of the doctors<sup>h</sup>:" to this custom are the allusions in Psal. xxiii. 5. Eccl. ix. 8. The pouring of this ointment on the head of Christ was emblematical of his being anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows; of his having the holy spirit, and his gifts and graces without measure; which,

like the ointment poured on Aaron's head, that ran down to his beard, and the skirts of his garments, descends to all the members of his mystical body: and was a symbol of the Gospel, which is like ointment poured forth; and of the sweet savour of the knowledge of Christ, which was to be diffused throughout all the world, by the preaching of it; and was done by this woman in the faith of him, as the true Messiah, the Lord's anointed, as the prophet, priest, and king of his church.

Ver. 8. *But when his disciples saw it, &c.*] What the woman did, what a costly box of ointment it was, and with what profusion she used it, *they had indignation*: Mark says, *within themselves*; either among themselves, or their indignation was secret in their breasts; their resentment was private, though it might be betrayed by their looks, and afterwards shewed itself in words. This indignation was either at the woman, for the Evangelist Mark observes, that *they murmured against her*, that she should act such an imprudent part, and be guilty of such extravagance; or at Christ himself, for suffering such an action to be done unto him; for so the Syriac version reads the above clause in Mark, and *they murmured* מַרְמְרִים, *against him*; so De Dieu observes it should be rendered; though Tremellius, Boderianus, and others, translate it, *against her*: or else their indignation was neither at Christ, whom they dearly loved; nor at the woman, they being taught to love their enemies, and much more the friends of Christ; but at the action, which they looked upon as an ill-judged thing, that sprung from misguided zeal, and which they thought could never be acceptable to their master, who was not used to encourage such profuseness and extravagance. *Saying, to what purpose is this waste, or loss?* They call that waste, or loss, which was spent on Christ himself; whereas, whatever is laid out for the honour of Christ, or the good of his interest, ought not to be reckoned loss, for it will be returned with great increase and advantage; but they could not see what end was to be answered by this expense. It is easy to observe the variableness and inconstancy of the disciples: one time, because the inhabitants of a certain village did not receive Christ, they were for calling for fire from heaven to destroy them; and here is a poor woman that exceeds, as they thought, in her respects to him, and they are filled with indignation.

Ver. 9. *For this ointment might have been sold for much, &c.*] Mark says, *for more than three hundred pence*: now if this is to be understood of Roman pence, each penny being seven pence half-penny of our money, three hundred pence come to nine pounds, seven shillings, and six-pence; but if it is to be understood of the penny of the sanctuary, which was one shilling and three-pence, they come to just as much more: it might well be called very precious and costly ointment; and this was the reason of the disciples' indignation, that so much cost and expense should be thrown away, as they thought, in such a manner, which might have been applied, in their opinion, to a

<sup>g</sup> T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 69. 1. Gloss. in ib.

<sup>d</sup> Hist. Nat. l. 13. c. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Ib. c. 2. & l. 12. c. 12.

<sup>f</sup> Plin Nat. Hist. l. 13. 2. & 36. 8.

<sup>h</sup> T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 17. 2.

better purpose. For had it been sold for its worth, so much might have been had for it, and given to the poor; which was a very plausible objection to the action; and which they seem to have taken from Judas, who had made the same, on a like occasion, about four days before this, and he might instigate the disciples now: which shews what mischief an hypocrite may do in a church, and what influence he may have over good men to draw them into his measures, under the specious pretences of carefulness, frugality, and doing good to the poor. It seems our Lord inured his disciples to this good work of relieving the poor: they kept one common purse, and one of them, who was Judas, was appointed the bearer of it; whatever they collected, or was made a present to them, they put into this purse; out of which they were provided with the necessaries of life; and the rest expended on the poor.

Ver. 10. *When Jesus understood it, &c.*] The indignation of his disciples at this action of the woman's; which he might know, as man, partly by their looks, and partly by their words; though without these, as God, he knew the secret indignation, and private resentment of their minds: *he said unto them, why trouble ye the woman?* by blaming her, and censuring the action she had done; as it must, no doubt, greatly trouble her to meet with such treatment from the disciples of Christ: had any of the Pharisees blamed her conduct, it would have given her no pain or uneasiness; but that Christ's own disciples should shew indignation at an action done by her from a sincere love to Christ, and to do honour to him, must cut her to the heart: and so it is when either ministers of the Gospel, or private believers, are blamed for their honest zeal in the cause of Christ, by any that profess to love him; this grieves them more than all the enemies of religion say or do unto them: *for she hath wrought a good work upon me*; upon his body, by pouring the ointment on it: the Persic version reads it, *according to my mind*: it was done in the faith of him, as the Messiah; it sprung from real and sincere love to him, and was designed for his honour and glory; and so had the essentials of a good work in it. This is the first part of our Lord's defence of the woman: he goes on,

Ver. 11. *For ye have the poor always with you, &c.*] This is said in answer to the objection of the disciples, that the ointment might have been sold, and the money given to the poor. Christ seems to have respect to Deut. xv. 11. and which, agreeably to the sense of the Jews, refers to the times of the Messiah: for they say<sup>a</sup>, "there is no difference between this world (this present time) and the times of the Messiah, but the subduing of kingdoms only; as it is said, Deut. xv. 11. *for the poor shall never cease out of the land*: the gloss "on it is, from hence it may be concluded, that therefore, *יש עניים לעולם*, for ever there will be poverty, and riches." Our Lord's words also shew, that there will be always poor persons in the world; that there will be always such with his people, and in his churches; for God has chosen, and he calls such by his grace; so that men may always have opportu-

nities of shewing kindness and respect to such objects: in Mark 'tis added, *and whosoever ye will ye may do them good*: by relieving their wants, and distributing to their necessities: *but me ye have not always*; referring not to his divine and spiritual presence, which he has promised to his people, churches, and ministers, to the end of the world, but to his corporeal presence; for he was to be but a little while with them, and then go to the father; be taken up to heaven, where he now is, and will be until the restitution of all things; so that the time was very short in which any outward respect could be shown to him in person, as man.

Ver. 12. *For in that she hath poured this ointment, &c.*] Which was so very precious, and cost so much, upon my body: for being poured on his head, it ran down all over his body. *She did it for my burial*: not for the interment of his body, but for the embalming of it, previous to it: the Jews used to embalm their dead, to shew their constant respect to the deceased, and their belief of the resurrection; at least not only used to wash them, but anoint them with oil; for so runs one of their canons<sup>1</sup>: "they do all things necessary to the dead, (*i. e.* on the sabbath-day.) *סִכְּוּ, they anoint him*: that is, as Bartenora adds, *with oil*; and they "wash him;" but the body of Christ, when dead, was not to be so used: the women intended it, and prepared materials for it, but the sabbath coming on, they rested according to the commandment; though, according to this canon, they might have anointed him, but they waited till the sabbath was over; and early on the first day, in the morning, they came to the sepulchre, in order to do it, but it was too late, Christ was risen; see Luke xxiii. 56. and xxiv. 1. Mark xvi. 1. Now either this woman had some revelation made to her, that the death of Christ was near at hand, and she feared, or knew, she should not be able to anoint him when dead; and therefore, as Mark has it, *she hath done what she could*; she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying; or if she had no knowledge of all this, nor any such intention, yet the Holy Ghost directed her to this action, with this view, as it were, for the performing of these funeral rites before he was dead; and so the Syriac version renders it, *she hath done it, אֵיךְ דִּלְמַקְבְּרֵי, as it were, to bury me.*

Ver. 13. *Verily I say unto you, &c.*] The following words are prefaced in this manner, to excite attention, and command belief: *wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world.* The Syriac version reads it, *סִבְרֵי, my Gospel*; and so the Persic version; and has respect chiefly to the doctrine of his death, burial, and resurrection, which this action of the woman had relation to; for though the incarnation of Christ, and all the actions of his life, and whatsoever he did for the good, and in the room and stead of his people, are good news and glad tidings to the sons of men, and so the Gospel; yet his dying for sin, and making atonement for it, thereby satisfying justice, fulfilling the law, destroying death, and him that had the power of it, and his lying in the grave, and leaving the sins of his people behind him, and rising again for their justification, which were the ends of his coming into the world,

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 69. 1.

<sup>1</sup> Misn. Sabbat, c. 23. sect. 5.



make up the most glorious and principal part of the Gospel: and these words of Christ shew that *this Gospel* should be preached; for which purpose he gave a commission and gifts to his disciples, and has done so, more or less, to men, ever since, for the conversion of sinners, and the edification of saints, and the glory of his name; and that this Gospel shall be preached all over the world, as it was by the apostles, agreeably to the commission; and will be again, towards the close of time, when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord: and then *there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her*: of her faith, love, and gratitude; for the memory of the just is blessed, and the righteous are had in everlasting remembrance. Christ suggests, that, though the disciples blamed this action, it should be spoken of by others to her praise and commendation, in all succeeding ages, throughout the world: a good name, the wise man says, is *better than precious ointment*. This woman got a good name, and obtained a good report by her precious ointment; and if this woman's action was to be told for a memorial of her, much more what Christ has done and suffered should be told as a memorial of him.

Ver. 14. *Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, &c.*] Who was provoked and exasperated, to the last degree, by this action of the woman, and Christ's defence of it, and because the ointment was not sold, and the money put into his hand; and being instigated by Satan, who had now entered into him, formed a scheme in his mind to betray his master, and was resolved to put it in execution, whereby he might, in some measure, satisfy both his avarice and revenge; and, as an aggravation of this his wickedness, he is described, as *one of the twelve*: of his twelve disciples; so the Persic and Ethiopic versions: this is a way of speaking used by the Jews<sup>k</sup>; they call the twelve lesser prophets, שנים עשר, or תרי עשר, *the twelve*, without any other word added thereunto. He was not an open enemy, nor one of Christ's common hearers, nor one of the seventy disciples, but one of his twelve apostles, whom he made his intimates and associates; whom he selected from all others, and called, qualified, and sent forth to preach his Gospel, and perform miracles: it was one of these that meditated the delivery of him into the hands of his enemies, and never left pursuing his scheme till he had effected it, even Judas Iscariot by name; so called, to distinguish him from another disciple, whose name was also Judas. This man *went to the chief priests*; of his own accord, unasked, from Bethany, to Jerusalem, to Caiaphas's palace, where the chief priests, the implacable enemies of Christ, with the Scribes, and elders of the people, were met together, to consult his death: Mark adds, *to betray him unto them*, which was manifestly his intent in going to them; and Luke, that he *commanded with them how he might betray him unto them*; in the safest, and most private manner; and both observe that *they were glad*; for nothing could have fallen out more to their wishes, who were met together on this design. The Jews, in their blasphemous account of Jesus<sup>l</sup>, say as much: they own, that Judas, or

Judas, as they call him, offered to betray him into the hands of the wise men, saying to them, almost in the words expressed in the following verse, "if you will hearken unto me, אַמְסַר אִתּוֹ, *I will deliver him into your hands to-morrow*;" and which agrees very well with the time also: for it was two days before the passover that Jesus was in Bethany, where he supped with his disciples, and washed their feet, and had the box of ointment poured on his head; and on the night of the day after all this was done, Judas set out from thence to Jerusalem; see John xiii. 30. so that it must be the next day before he could meet the high-priests, and on the morrow, at night, he delivered him into their hands; on the proposal of which, they say, that Simeon ben Shetach, whom they make to be present at this time, and all the wise men and elders, שְׂמוּעוֹן שֶׁמַּח, rejoiced exceedingly.

Ver. 15. *And said unto them, &c.*] Though the words, *to them*, are not in the original text, they are rightly supplied; as they are by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; and mean the chief priests to whom Judas went, and to whom he made the following proposal; *what will ye give me, and I will deliver him to you?* They did not ask him to do it, he first made the motion; a barbarous and shocking one! to deliver his Lord and Master, with whom he had familiarly conversed, and from whom he had received so many favours, into the hands of those that hated him; nor was he concerned what they would do to him, or what would become of him, when in their hands: all his view, and what he was intent upon, was, what they would give him for doing it. They did not tempt him, by first offering him so much money, if he would betray him; but he himself first moves it to them, and tempts them with it to offer him an handsome reward: and it is to be observed, that he does not mention the name of Jesus, either because they might be talking of him, when he came into their company; or else as suiting his language to their's, who, when they spoke of him, usually said, *he*, or *that man*, or *this fellow*. And in the same rude way Judas now treats his master: *and they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver*: that is, thirty shekels of silver; for it is a rule with the Jews, that when mention is made in Scripture of pieces of silver, without expressing the species, shekels are meant: so Onkelos, and Jonathan ben Uzziel, in their Targums on Gen. xx. 16. and xlv. 22, render pieces of silver, by shekels of silver; so pieces of gold signify shekels of gold: thus the 1700 pieces of gold in Judg. viii. 26. are, in the Septuagint, Arabic, and Vulgate Latin versions, called so many shekels of gold; and our version supplies the word *shekels* also, as it does in 2 Chron. ix. 15, 16. and yet some learned men have asserted<sup>m</sup>, that there were no shekels of gold among the Jews, though express mention is made of them in 1 Chron. xxi. 25. The value of a shekel of gold, according to Brerewood<sup>n</sup>, was, of our money, *fifteen shillings*; and some make it to come to a great deal more; to *one pound sixteen shillings and sixpence sterling*: had these thirty pieces been pieces, or shekels of

<sup>k</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2. & 15. 1.

<sup>l</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 16.

<sup>m</sup> Waserus de numis Heb. l. 2. c. 3.

<sup>n</sup> De numis Jud. c. 3.

gold, they would have amounted to a considerable sum of money; but they were pieces of silver, and not talents, or pounds, but shekels. The silver shekel had on one side estamped upon it the *pot of manna*, or, as others think, a *ceuser*, or incense-cup, with these words around it, in Samaritan letters, *shekel Israel, the shekel of Israel*; and, on the other, *Aaron's rod* budding, with this inscription about it, *Jerusalem Hakedushah, Jerusalem the holy*. As for the weight and value of it, R. Gedaliah says<sup>7</sup>, we know by tradition that the holy shekel weighs 320 grains of barley of pure silver; and the same writer observes<sup>8</sup>, that the *selah*, or holy shekel, is four *denarii*, or pence; that is, Roman pence, each being of the value of seven-pence halfpenny of our money: and to this agrees what Josephus<sup>9</sup> says, that a *shekel* is a coin of the Hebrews, which contains four Attic drachms, or drams; and an Attic dram is of the same value with a Roman penny: so that one of these shekels was worth about *half a crown*; and it usually weighed half an ounce, as not only some Jewish writers affirm, who profess to have seen them, and weighed them themselves, as Jarchi<sup>10</sup>, Gerundensis<sup>11</sup>, Abarbinel<sup>12</sup>, and Gedaliah ben Jehchiaah<sup>13</sup>; but other writers also, as Masius<sup>14</sup>, Arias Montanus<sup>15</sup>, Waserus<sup>16</sup>, and Bishop Cumberland. Now thirty shekels of silver were the price of a servant, Exod. xxi. 32. So<sup>17</sup> Maimonides observes, that the "atonement of servants, whether great or small, whether male or female, the fixed sum in the law is thirty shekels of good silver, whether the servant is worth an hundred pound, or whether he is not worth but a farthing," and which was in value of our money about *three pounds fifteen shillings*. This was the *goodly price*, which Christ, who appeared in the form of a servant, was prized at, according to the prophecy in Zech. xi. 12, 13. and which the high-priests thought a very sufficient one; and the wretch Judas, as covetous as he was, was contented with.

Ver. 16. *And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.*] Luke adds, *in the absence of the multitude*: in the most private manner, when he was alone, and in some solitary place, that no tumult might arise, and that there might be no danger of a rescue: for so he, and the chief priests, had consulted, and settled it, as what would be most prudent and advisable; and therefore, from that time forward, being prompted on by Satan, and the lucre of the money he was to receive, he narrowly watched, and diligently observed, the best and most fitting season to perform his enterprise, and which very quickly offered.

Ver. 17. *Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, &c.*] There were seven of these days, and this was the first of them, in which the Jews might not eat leavened bread, from the fourteenth, to the twenty-first of the month Nisan; in commemoration of their being thrust out of Egypt, in so much haste, that they had

not time to leaven the dough, which was in their kneading-troughs: wherefore, according to their canons<sup>c</sup>, on the night of the fourteenth day; that is, as Bartenora explains it, the night, the day following of which is the fourteenth, they search for leaven in all private places and corners, to bring it out, and burn it, or break it into small pieces, and scatter it in the wind, or throw it into the sea. Mark adds, *when they killed the passover*; and Luke says, *when the passover must be killed*; which was to be done on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, after the middle of the day; and this was an indispensable duty, which all were obliged to: for so they say<sup>d</sup>, "every man, and every woman, are bound to observe this precept; and whoever makes void this commandment presumptuously, if he is not defiled, or afar off, lo! he is guilty of cutting off." The time of killing the passover was after the middle of the day; and 'tis said<sup>e</sup>, that "if they killed it before the middle of the day it was not right; and they did not kill it till after the evening sacrifice, and after they had offered the evening incense; and after they had trimmed the lamps, they began to slay the passovers, or paschal lambs, unto the end of the day; and if they slayed after the middle of the day, before the evening sacrifice, it was right." The reason of this was, because the lamb was to be slain between the two evenings; the first of which began at noon, as soon as ever the day declined: and this was not done privately, but in the temple; for thus it is<sup>f</sup> affirmed, "they do not kill the passover but in the court, as the rest of the holy things." The time and manner of killing the lamb, and by whom, of the sprinkling of the blood, and of their flaying it, and taking out the fat, and burning it on the altar, may be seen in the Misna<sup>g</sup>. *The disciples came to Jesus*; that is, Peter and John, as may be learnt from Luke xxii. 8. for these only seem to have had any notion of Judas's betraying Christ, from what had been said at the supper in Bethany, two days before; the rest thought he was gone to prepare for the feast, and therefore were under no concern about it; but these two judged otherwise, and therefore came to Christ to know his mind concerning it; for it was high time that a preparation should be made; for this was Thursday morning, and the lamb was to be killed in the afternoon, and ate at even. *Saying unto him, where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?* This question in Luke follows upon an order which Christ gave to these disciples; *crying, go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat*; for masters used to give their servants orders to get ready the passover for them; and which were expressed in much such language as this<sup>h</sup>: "he that says to his servant, פסח ושדוש עלי ארת פסח, go and slay the passover for me: if he kills a kid, he may eat of it." It is reported<sup>i</sup> of "Rabban Gamaliel,

<sup>7</sup> Waser ib. & Ar. Montan. Ephron. sive de Siclo in Jud. Antiq. p. 136. Brerewood de ponder. & pret. vet. num. c. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Shaushalet Hakabala, fol. 79. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Ib.

<sup>10</sup> Antiq. l. 3. c. 8. sect. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Perush in Exod. xxi. 32.

<sup>12</sup> Ad fin. Expos. in Pentateuch.

<sup>13</sup> Comment. in 1 Reg. 7. fol. 92. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Shaushalet Hakabala, fol. 79. 2.

<sup>15</sup> In Joshua, 7. 91. p. 135.

<sup>16</sup> De Siclo, ut supra.

<sup>a</sup> De numis Heb. l. 2. c. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Hileh. Niske Maimon. c. 11. sect. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Misn. Pesach. c. 1. sect. 1. Maimon. Chametz Umetzah, c. 2.

<sup>d</sup> sect. 3, 4. & 3. 11.

<sup>e</sup> Maimon. Hileh. Korban Pesach. c. 1. sect. 1. 5.

<sup>f</sup> Ib. sect. 4. Moses Kotensnis Mitavot Tora pr. affirm. 39.

<sup>g</sup> Maimon. lb. sect. 3.

<sup>h</sup> Pesachim, c. 5. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10.

<sup>i</sup> Ib. c. 8. 2.

<sup>j</sup> Ib. c. 7. sect. 2.

“ that he said to his servant Tabi, *לך צלה*, go and roast the passover for us upon an iron grate.” The disciples having received such an order from their master, inquire not in what town or city they must prepare the passover, for that was always ate in Jerusalem; see Deut. xvi. 5, 6, 7. Luke ii. 41, 42. where they were obliged, by the Jewish canon<sup>k</sup>, to lodge that night; though they might eat the unleavened bread, and keep the other days of the feast any where, and in every place<sup>l</sup>; but they inquire in what house he would have it got ready; for they might make use of any house, and the furniture of it, where they could find room, and convenience, without any charge; for they did not let out their houses, or any of their rooms, or beds, in Jerusalem; but, at festivals, the owners of them gave the use of them freely to all that came<sup>m</sup>: and it is<sup>n</sup> observed among the wonders and miracles done at Jerusalem, that though there were such multitudes at their feasts, yet “ a man could never say to his friend, I have not found a fire to roast the passover lambs in Jerusalem, nor I have not found a bed to sleep on in Jerusalem, nor the place is too strait for me to lodge in, in Jerusalem.”

Ver. 18. *And he said, go into the city to such a man, &c.*] That is, to such a man in the city of Jerusalem, for, as yet, they were in Bethany, or at the Mount of Olives however, without the city; he does not mention the man's name, but describes him, as Mark and Luke say, and tells them, *there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him into the house, where he entereth in*; who seems to be not the master of the house, but a servant, that was sent on such an errand. This is a very considerable instance of our Lord's prescience of future contingencies; he knew before-hand, that exactly at the time that the disciples would enter Jerusalem, such a man, belonging to such a house, would be returning with a pitcher of water in his hand; and they should meet him; and follow him, where he went, which would be a direction to them what house to prepare the passover in; and say unto him; not to the man bearing the pitcher of water; but, as the other Evangelists say, to the good man of the house, the owner of it, who probably might be one of Christ's disciples secretly; for many of the chief rulers in Jerusalem believed on Christ, though they did not openly confess him, for fear of the Pharisees, as Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea; and this man might be one of them, or some other man of note and wealth; since they were to find, as they did, a large upper room furnished and prepared. For, it seems, that without mentioning his name, the man would know him by their language, he dictates to them in the following clause, who they meant; *the master saith*; the Syriac and Persic versions read, *our master*; thine and ours, the great master in Israel, the teacher sent from God: *my time is at hand*; not of eating the passover, as if it was distinct from that of the Jews, and peculiar to himself, for he ate it at the usual time, and when the Jews ate their's; and

which time was fixed and known by every body, and could be no reason to move the master of the house to receive him: but he means the time of his death, that he had but a little while to live; and that this instance of respect would be the last he would have an opportunity of shewing him whilst living, and the last time Christ would have an opportunity of seeing him; and he might say this to prepare him to meet the news of his death with less surprise: *I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples*; not with him and his family, but with his disciples, who were a family, and a society of themselves, and a sufficient number to eat the passover together; for there might be two companies eating their distinct passovers in one house, and even in one room: concerning which is the following rule, “ שתי חברות שדויו אוכלים בבית אחד ” *two societies that eat in one house*; the one turn their faces this way and eat, and the other turn their faces that way and eat, and an heating-vessel (in which they heat the water to mix with the wine) in the middle; and when the servant stands to mix, he shuts his mouth, and turns his face till he comes to his company, and eats; and the bride turns her face and eats<sup>o</sup>.

Ver. 19. *And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them, &c.*] They went into the city of Jerusalem; they met the man carrying a pitcher of water home; they followed him into the house he entered; they addressed the master of the house, in the manner Christ directed, who shewed them a large upper room, prepared with all proper furniture for such an occasion, as Christ had foretold: *and they made ready the passover*; they went and bought a lamb; they carried it to the temple to be slain in the court, where it was presented as a passover lamb for such a number of persons; they had it flayed, cut up, the fat taken out, and burnt on the altar, and its blood sprinkled on the foot of it: they then brought it to the house where they were to eat it; here they roasted it, and provided bread, and wine, and bitter herbs, and a sauce called *Charoseth*, into which the herbs were dipped: and, in short, every thing that was necessary.

Ver. 20. *Now when the even was come, &c.*] The second evening, when the sun was set, and it was dark, and properly night; for “ on the evenings of the passovers near the Minchah, a man might not eat שחושך ער, until it was dark<sup>p</sup>.” This was according to the rule, Exod. xii. 8. *he sat down with the twelve*, his twelve disciples; so the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel; and which also adds, *at table*; even all the twelve apostles, who were properly his family, and a sufficient number for a passover lamb<sup>q</sup>: for “ they don't kill the passover for a single man, according to the words of R. Judah, though R. Jose permits it: yea, though the society consists of an hundred, if they can't eat the quantity of an olive, they don't kill for them: nor do they make a society of women, servants, and little ones.” Judas was now returned again, and took his place among the disciples, as if he

<sup>k</sup> T. Bab. Pesach, fol. 95. 2. & Gloss in ib.

<sup>l</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Chametz Umetzah, c. 6. sect. 1.

<sup>m</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 12. 1. Megilla, fol. 26. 1 & Gloss in ib. Maimon Hilch. Beth Habbachira, c. 7. sect. 14. & Cseph Misna in ib.

<sup>o</sup> Abot R. Nathan, c. 35. Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 5.

<sup>p</sup> Misn. Pesachim, c. 7. sect. 13.

<sup>q</sup> Ib. c. 10. sect. 1.

<sup>r</sup> Ib. c. 8. sect. 7.

was as innocent, and as friendly, as any of them: this he might choose to do, partly to avoid all suspicion of his designs; and partly that he might get intelligence where Christ would go after supper, that he might have the opportunity he was waiting for, to betray him into the hands of his enemies. *He sat, or lay down* with them, as the word signifies; for the posture of the Jews, at the passover table especially, was not properly sitting, but reclining, or lying along on couches, not on their backs, nor on their right side, but on their left; of which see the note on John xiii. 23. The first passover was eaten by them standing, with their loins girt, their shoes on, and staves in their hands, because they were just ready to depart out of Egypt: but in after passovers these circumstances were omitted; and particularly sitting, or lying along, was reckoned so necessary to be observed, that it is said<sup>1</sup>, that "the poorest man in Israel might not eat, ע"י שוכב, until he lies along, or leans;" that is, as some of their commentators<sup>4</sup> note, either upon the couch, or on the table, after the manner of free men, and in remembrance of their liberty: and another of them<sup>5</sup> says, "we are bound to eat, ברהטב, lying along, as kings and great men eat, because it is a token of liberty." Hence they elsewhere say<sup>6</sup>, "it is the way of servants to eat standing; but here (in the passover) to eat, מוטבין, sitting, or lying along, because they (the Israelites) went out of bondage to liberty. Says R. Simon, in the name of R. Joshua ben Levi, that which a man is obliged to in the passover, though it be but the quantity of an olive, he must eat it, מוטב, lying along." The account Maimonides gives of this usage, is in these words<sup>7</sup>: "even the poorest man in Israel may not eat until he lies along: a woman need not lie; but if she is a woman of worth and note, she ought to lie: a son by a father, and a servant before his master ought to lie: but a disciple before his master does not lie, except his master gives him leave (as Christ did his); and lying on the right hand is not lying; and so he that lies upon his neck, or upon his face, this is not lying; and when ought they to lie? at the time of eating, the quantity of an olive, of unleavened bread, and at drinking of the four cups; but at the rest of eating and drinking, if he lies, lo! it is praiseworthy: but if not, there is no necessity." This custom was so constantly and uniformly observed at the passover, that it is taken particular notice of in the declaration, or shewing forth of the passover by the master of the family, when he says<sup>8</sup>, "how different is this night from all other nights, &c." and among the many things he mentions, this is one; "in all other nights we eat either sitting, or lying along; that is, which way we please, but this night all of us מוטבין, lie along."

Ver. 21. *And as they did eat, &c.*] The passover lamb, the unleavened bread, and bitter herbs: he said it was usual, whilst they were thus engaged, to discourse much about the reason and design of this insti-

tution. What they talked of may be learnt from what follows: "it is an affirmative precept of the law, to declare the signs and wonders which were done to our fathers in Egypt, on the night of the fifteenth of Nisan, according to Exod. xiii. 3. remember this day, &c. and from whence on the night of the fifteenth? from ver. 8. and thou shalt shew thy son, &c. at the time that the unleavened bread, and bitter herbs lie before thee. And though he has no son, or though they are wise, and grown up, they are bound to declare the going out of Egypt; and every one that enlarges, or dwells long on the things that happened and came to pass, lo! he is praiseworthy. It is a command to make known to children, even though they do not ask; as it is said, and thou shalt shew thy son: according to the son's knowledge, his father teaches him; how if he is a little one, or foolish? he says to him, my son, all of us were servants, as this handmaid, or this servant, in Egypt; and on this night the holy, blessed God redeemed us, and brought us into liberty: and if the son is grown up and a wise man, he makes known to him what happened to us in Egypt, and the wonders which were done for us by the hands of Moses, our master; all according to the capacity of the son. And it is necessary to make a repetition on this night, that the children may see, and ask, and say, how different is this night from all other nights? until he replies to them, and says to them, so and so it happened, and thus and thus it was.—If he has no son, his wife asks him; and if he has no wife, they ask one another, how different is this night? and though they are all wise men, every one asks himself alone, how different is this night? and it is necessary to begin with reproaches, and end with praise, how? he begins and declares, how at first our fathers were in the days of Terah, and before him, deniers (of the divine being), and wandering after vanity, and following idolatrous worship; and he ends with the law of truth, how that God brought us near to himself, and separated us from the nations, and caused us to draw nigh to his unity; and so begins and makes known, that we were servants to Pharaoh in Egypt, and all the evils he recompensed us with; and ends with the signs and wonders which were wrought for us, and with our liberties: and he that expounds from—a Syrian was my father, ready to perish: till he has finished the whole section: and every one that adds and enlarges in expounding this section, lo! he is praiseworthy. And every one that does not say these three words on the night of the fifteenth, cannot be excused from blame; and they are these, the passover, the unleavened bread, and the bitter herbs: the passover, because God passed over the houses of our fathers in Egypt, as it is said, Exod. xii. 27. the bitter herbs, because the Egyptians made bitter the lives of our fathers in Egypt: the unleavened bread, because they were redeemed: and these things

<sup>1</sup> Misn. Pesachim, c. 10. sect. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Jarchi & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>3</sup> Maimonides in ib.

<sup>4</sup> T. Hieros. Pesach. fol. 37. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Hilch. Chametz Umetzah, c. 7. sect. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Maimon. ib. c. 8. 2. Haggadah Shel Pesach. p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Maimon. ib. c. 7. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Vid. c. 8. 2, 3, 4, 5. & Haggadah Shel. Pesach. p. 5, 6, 7, 8.

"all of them are called the declaration, or shewing "forth." Christ now took up some part of the time, at least, whilst they were eating, in discoursing with his disciples about the traitor: *he said, verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me;* meaning to the chief priests and Scribes, who should condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles, to be mocked, scourged, and crucified, as he had told them some time before, Matt. xx. 18, 19. though he did not tell them as now, that it should be done by one of them; he had indeed signified as much as this two days before, at the supper in Bethany, but none seemed to understand whom he meant, but Peter and John, and the thing wore off their minds; and therefore he mentions it again to them, with great seriousness, and in the most solemn manner, declaring it as a certain and undoubted truth.

Ver. 22. *And they were exceeding sorrowful, &c.*] Partly that Christ should be betrayed at all, into the hands of his enemies, by whom they knew he would be ill used; and partly, that so vile an action should be done, by one from among themselves; and greatly, because they knew not, nor could not conceive, who of them could be guilty of such an horrid sin: *and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?* excepting Judas, who afterwards spoke for himself. This they said, though conscious to themselves the thing had never entered into their hearts; nor had they taken any step towards it, but with their whole souls abhorred it; yet, as knowing the treachery and deceitfulness of their hearts, which they could not trust to; and fearing lest should they be left thereunto, they might commit such a dreadful iniquity; and as desirous of being cleared by Christ from any such imputation, and even from all suspicion of any thing of this kind.

Ver. 23. *And he answered and said, &c.*] In order to make them easy, and point out the betrayer to them, *he that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.* This seems to refer to the dipping of the unleavened bread, or bitter herbs, or both, into the sauce called *Charoseth*, which the Jews<sup>2</sup> say, "was made of figs, nuts, almonds, and other fruits; to which they added apples; all which they bruised in a mortar, and mixed with vinegar; and put spices into it, calamus and cinnamon, in the form of small long threads, in remembrance of the straw; and it was necessary it should be thick, in memory of the clay." The account Maimonides<sup>3</sup> gives of it is, "*the Charoseth is a precept from the words of the Scribes, in remembrance of the clay in which they served in Egypt; and how did they make it? They took dates, or berries, or raisins, and the like, and stamped them, and put vinegar into them, and seasoned them with spices, as clay in straw, and brought it upon the table, in the night of the passover.*" And in this he says,

the master of the family dipped both the herbs, and the unleavened bread<sup>b</sup>, and that both separately and conjunctly; for he says<sup>c</sup>, that "he rolled up the unleavened bread and bitter herbs together, *וכטבל* " and dipped them in the *Charoseth*." And this was twice done in eating the passover; for so it is observed<sup>d</sup> among the many things, which distinguished this night from others: "in all other nights we dip but once, but in this night twice." By this action, Christ gave his disciples a signal, whereby they might know the betrayer: for this is not the general description of one, that sat at the table, and ate of his bread with him, and so fulfilled the prediction, in Psal. xli. 9. though this is too true; but then, this was saying no more than he had before done, when he said, *one of you shall betray me;* though the phrase is so<sup>e</sup> used; for instance, "if a man goes and sits at table with them, *ויטבל עמיהם*, and dips with them, " though he does not eat the quantity of an olive, " they bless for him." But this refers to a particular action then performed by Judas, just at the time Christ spoke these words; and who might sit near him, and dip into the same dish he did; for since there were thirteen of them, there might be more dishes than one; and two or three might have a dish to themselves, and Judas dip in the same dish with Christ.

Ver. 24. *The son of man goeth, &c.*] Meaning himself, not to the Mount of Olives, or Gethsemane, or the garden, whither he went a little after this, but out of the world, to his father: the phrase is expressive of his death, as in Josh. xxiii. 14. Psal. xxxix. 13. and denotes the voluntariness of it, and which is no ways inconsistent with the divine determinations about it: nor the violence that was offered to him by his enemies. *As it is written;* in the book of God's eternal purposes and decrees; for Luke says, *as it was determined:* or as it was recorded in the books of the Old Testament; in the *twenty-second Psalm*, in the *fifty-third of Isaiah*, and in the *ninth of Daniel*; for Christ died for the sins of his people, in perfect agreement with these Scriptures, which were written of him: *but woe unto that man by whom the son of man is betrayed;* for God's decrees concerning this matter, and the predictions in the Bible founded on them, did not in the least excuse, or extenuate the blackness of his crime; who did what he did, of his own free will, and wicked heart, voluntarily, and to satisfy his own lusts: *it had been good for that man if he had not been born.* This is a Rabbinical phrase, frequently used in one form or another; sometimes thus; as it is said<sup>f</sup> of such that speak false and lying words, and regard not the glory of their Creator, *טוב לך דלמא ייתנו לעלמא, it would have been better for them they had never come into the world;* and so of any other notorious sinner, it is at other times said<sup>g</sup>, *טוב ליה דלמא אבריי, or טוב ליה שלא נבריא, it would have been better for him if he had not been*

<sup>2</sup> Bartenora in *Misn. Pesach. c. 10. sect. 3.* Vid. Maimon. & Yom Tob, in *ib. & Piske Tos. Pesach. art. 322.*

<sup>3</sup> *Hilch. Chametz Umetzah, c. 7. sect. 11.*

<sup>4</sup> *ib. c. 8. sect. 2. 8.*

<sup>5</sup> *ib. sect. 6. & T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 115. 1.*

<sup>6</sup> *Misn. Pesach. c. 10. sect. 4. Maimon. Chametz Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 2. Haggadah Sbei Pesach, p. 5.*

<sup>e</sup> *Beresheit Rabba, sect. 91. fol. 78. 4.*

<sup>f</sup> *Zohar in Gen. fol. 41. 1. Vid. Misn. Chagiga, c. 2. sect. 1. T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 16. 1.*

<sup>g</sup> *Zohar in Gen. fol. 46. 4. & in Exod. fol. 1. 4. & 36. 3. & 62. 3. & 66. 3. & 105. 4. & 106. 1.*

<sup>h</sup> *T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 3. 2. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 17. 1. & Erubin, fol. 13. 2. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 79. 1.*

created; signifying, that it is better to have no being at all, than to be punished with everlasting destruction; and which was the dreadful case of Judas, who fell by his transgression, and went to his own place.

Ver. 25. *Then Judas, which betrayed him, &c.*] Or *that was about to betray him*, as the Ethiopic version reads it: he had taken a step towards it, was seeking an opportunity to do it; and at length effected it: the Persic version reads, Judas Iscariot; who after all the rest had put the question, *answered and said, Master, is it I?* Who though he knew what he had been doing, and what he further resolved to do, and was conscious to himself he was the man; nay, though he had been pointed out as the person, and the most dreadful woe denounced on him, that should be the betrayer, in his hearing; yet all this did not at all affect his marble heart; but in the most audacious manner, and without any concern of mind, or shew of guilt, asks if he was the person; suggesting, that surely he could not mean him. It is observed by some, that the word Rabbi, used by Judas, is a more honourable name than that of Lord, used by the disciples; thereby feigning to give Christ more honour, and exceed in his respect to him, than the rest of the disciples; in order, if he could, to cover his wicked designs: *he said unto him, thou hast said*: that is, 'tis as thou hast said; thou hast said right, thou art the man; a way of speaking used, when what is asked is assented to as truth: thus it being "said to a certain person, is Rabbi dead? He replied to them, אֲתָן, אמרתן, *ye have said*; and they rent their clothes!." Taking it for granted, by that answer, that so it was.

Ver. 26. *And as they were eating, &c.*] The paschal lamb, and just concluding the whole solemnity, which was done by eating some of the <sup>k</sup> lamb: for "last of all he (that kept the passover) eats of the flesh of the passover, though it be but the quantity of an olive, and he does not taste any thing after it; and at the same time he eats the quantity of an olive of unleavened bread, and does not taste any thing after it; so that his meal endeth, and the savour of the flesh of the passover, or of the unleavened bread, is in his mouth; for the eating of <sup>l</sup> then is the precept." So that the paschal supper was now concluded, when Christ entered upon the institution of his own supper: *Jesus took bread*; which lay by him, either on the table, or in a dish. Though this supper is distinct from the *passover*, and different from any ordinary meal, yet there are allusions to both in it, and to the customs of the Jews used in either; as in this first circumstance, of *taking the bread*: for he that asked a blessing upon bread, used to take it into his hands; and it is a rule<sup>1</sup>, that "a man does not bless, עַד שִׁתְּפֹס הַלֶּחֶם בְּיָדוֹ, until *he takes the bread into his hand*, that all may see that he blesses over it." Thus Christ took the bread and held it up, that his disciples might observe it: *and blessed it*; or asked a blessing over it, and

upon it, or rather blessed and gave thanks to his father or it; and for what was signified by it; and prayed that his disciples, whilst eating it, might be led to him, the bread of life, and feed upon him in a spiritual sense; whose body was going to be broken for them, as the bread was to be, in order to obtain eternal redemption for them: so it was common with the Jews, to ask a blessing on their bread: the form in which they did it was this<sup>m</sup>: "Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God, the king of the world, that produceth bread out of the earth." What form our Lord used, is not certain; no doubt it was one of his composing, and every way suitable to the design of this ordinance. It was customary also when there were many at table, that lay down there, <sup>n</sup> however, as Christ and his disciples now did, for one to ask a blessing for them all; for so runs the rule<sup>o</sup>, "if they sit to eat, every one blesses for himself, but if they lie along, אֲחִידוֹ כְּבָרְד לְכֻלָּם, *one blesses for them all*." Moreover, they always blessed, before they brake: "Says Rabba<sup>p</sup>, he blesses, and after that he breaks:" this rule Christ likewise carefully observes, for it follows, *and brake it*. The rules concerning breaking of bread, are these<sup>q</sup>: "The master of the house recites and finishes the blessing, and after that he breaks:—no man that breaks, is allowed to break, till they have brought the salt, and what is to be eaten with the bread, before every one—and he does not break neither a small piece, lest he should seem to be sparing; nor a large piece, bigger than an egg, lest he should be thought to be famished;—and on the sabbath-day he breaks a large piece, and he does not break, but in the place where it is well baked: it is a principal command to break a whole loaf." Christ broke the bread, as the symbol of his body, which was to be broken by blows, and scourges, thorns, nails, and spear, and to be separated from his soul, and die as a sacrifice for the sins of his people: and having so done, *he gave it to the disciples*; which being a distinct act from breaking the bread, shews that the latter does not design the distribution of the bread, but an act preceding it, and a very significant one: and which ought not to be laid aside: according to the Jewish<sup>r</sup> usages, "He that broke the bread, put a piece before every one, and the other takes it in his hand; and he that breaks, does not give it into the hand of the eater, unless he is a mourner; and he that breaks, stretches out his hand first and eats, and they that sit, or lie at the table, are not allowed to taste, until he that blesses, has tasted; and he that breaks, is not allowed to taste, until the *Amen* is finished out of the mouth of the majority of those that sit at table." *And said, take, eat, this is my body*: in Luke 'tis added, *which is given for you*; that is, unto death, as a sacrifice for sin; and by the Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 24. *which is broken for you*; as that bread then was, and so

<sup>1</sup> T. Hieros Kilaim, fol. 32. 2.

<sup>k</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Chametz Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 9. Vid. Bartenora in Min. Pesach. c. 10. sect. 8.

<sup>l</sup> Levush battecheleth Num. 167. sect. 3. & Slichan Aruch in Buxtorf. Exercit. de Cæna Dominic. Thes. 45.

<sup>m</sup> Haggadah Shel. Pesach. fol. 249. 2. Ed. Basil. Misn. Beracot, c. 6. sect. 1.

<sup>n</sup> Ib. sect. 6. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 42. 2. & 43. 1.

<sup>o</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 39. 2.

<sup>p</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Beracot, c. 7. sect. 3, 3, 4. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 47. 1.

<sup>q</sup> Ib. sect. 5.

expressive of his wounds, bruises, sufferings, and death, for them. Now when he says, *this is my body*, he cannot mean, that that bread was his real body; or that it was changed and converted into the very substance of his body; but that it was an emblem and representation of his body, which was just ready to be offered up, once for all: in like manner, as the Jews in the eating of their passover used to say of the unleavened bread, "הָאֵלֶּיךָ לְחֶמֶת דְּעֵינֵינוּ, *this is the bread of affliction*, which our fathers ate in the "land of Egypt." Not that they thought that was the self-same bread, but that it resembled it, and was a representation of the affliction and distress their fathers were in at that time: to which some think our Lord here alludes: though rather, the reference is to the passover lamb, which is frequently, in Jewish writings, called *the body of the lamb*: thus mention being made of the bringing of the herbs, the unleavened bread, and the sauce *Charoseth*, with other things to the master of the house, 'tis added: "and in the sanctuary (whilst that stood) they bring unto him, גִּזְרֵי שֶׁל פֶּסַח, *the body of the lamb*." Again, elsewhere 'tis said, "they bring a table furnished, and on it the bitter herbs and other greens, and the unleavened bread, and the sauce, כֶּבֶשׂ בְּבֵית הַפֶּסַח, *and the body of the paschal lamb*." And a little further, "he recites the blessing, blessed art thou O Lord, &c. for the eating of the passover, and he eats, מִגִּזְרֵי שֶׁל פֶּסַח, *of the body of the passover*." And now it is, as if Christ had said, you have had *the body of the lamb* set before you, and have eaten of it, in commemoration of the deliverance out of Egypt, and as a type of me the true passover, quickly to be sacrificed; and this rite of eating the body of the paschal lamb is now to cease; and I do here by this bread, in an emblematical way, set before you *my body*, which is to be given to obtain spiritual deliverance, and eternal redemption for you; in remembrance of which, you, and all my followers in successive generations, are to take and eat of it, till I come. The words, *take, eat*, shew that Christ did not put the bread into the mouths of the disciples, but they took it in their hands, and ate it; expressive of taking and receiving Christ by the hand of faith, and feeding on him in a spiritual manner.

Ver. 27. *And he took the cup and gave thanks, &c.* For the Jews blessed, or gave thanks for their wine, as well as for their food, and generally did it in this form: "Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God, the king of the world, who hast created the *fruit of the vine*." Hence the phrase, *the fruit of the vine*, in ver. 29. not that we are to suppose, that Christ used or confined himself to this form of words: and it is to be observed, that they not only gave thanks for their wine before food, and whilst they were eating, but also after meat; and as this relates to the blessing of the cup after eating, or as the Apostle Paul says, *when he had supped*,

1 Cor. xi. 25. I shall only transcribe what the Jews say concerning that: "When wine is brought to them after food, if there is but that cup there, the house of Shammai say, מְבָרַךְ עַל הַיַּיִן, *he blesses*, or gives thanks for the wine, and after that gives thanks for the food: the house of Hillel say, he gives thanks for the food, and after that gives thanks for the wine." And as this was usual at ordinary meals, to bless or give thanks for the wine, so at the passover; and which our Lord continued in his supper, and is to be practised by us. It should be further known, that the wine at the passover, and so what Christ used at his supper, was red. "Says R. Jeremiah, it is commanded to perform this duty, בֵּינָם אֲרוּם, *with red wine*." And elsewhere 'tis said, "that it is necessary, that there should be in it (the wine) taste, and look." The gloss on it is, שְׂוֵמָה אֲרוּם, *that it should be red*: and which, as it most fitly represented the blood sprinkled on the door-posts of the Israelites, when the Lord passed over their houses; so the blood of Christ, shed for the remission of the sins of his people. It is scarcely worth observing the measure of one of the cups, that was used at such a time: they say, that the four cups which were drunk at this feast, held an Italian quart of wine, so that one cup contained half a pint. More particularly, they ask how much is the measure of a cup? the answer is, two fingers square, and a finger and a half and the third part of a finger deep; or as it is elsewhere, the fifth part of a finger: and gave it to them, saying, *drink ye all of it*: for this is not to be restrained from one sort of communicants, and only partook of by another; but all are to drink of the cup, as well as eat of the bread: whether here is not an allusion to the custom of the Jews at the passover, when they obliged all to drink four cups of wine, men, women, and children, and even the poorest man in Israel, who was maintained out of the almshouse, may be considered.

Ver. 28. *For this is my blood of the New Testament, &c.* That is, the red wine in the cup, was an emblem and representation of his precious blood, whereby was exhibited a new dispensation, or administration of the covenant of grace; and by which it was ratified and confirmed; and whereby all the blessings of it, such as peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life, come to the people of God: the allusion is to the first covenant, and the book of it being sprinkled with the blood of bulls, and therefore called the blood of the covenant, Exod. xxiv. 8. But the second covenant, or the new administration of the covenant of grace, for which reason it is called the New Testament, is exhibited and established in the blood of Christ the testator. It was usual, even among the Heathens, to make and confirm their covenants by drinking human blood, and that sometimes mixed with wine. Which is shed for many, for the remission of sins; that is, was very shortly to be shed, and since has been, for all the

<sup>1</sup> Haggadah Shel Pesach, p. 4. Ed. Rittangel. fol. 242. 2. Ed. Basil.  
<sup>2</sup> Misa. Pesach, c. 10. sect. 3.  
<sup>3</sup> Maimon. Chamez Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 1.  
<sup>4</sup> Ib. sect. 7.  
<sup>5</sup> Haggadah Shel Pesach. fol. 241. 1.  
<sup>6</sup> Vid. Misa. Beracot, c. 6. sect. 1. 6.  
<sup>7</sup> Ib. c. 8. sect. 8.

<sup>8</sup> T. Hieros. Pesach. fol. 37. 3. & Sabbat, fol. 11. 1.  
<sup>9</sup> T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 108. 3. & R. Samuel ben Meir in ib.  
<sup>10</sup> T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 11. 1.  
<sup>11</sup> T. Bab. Pesach, fol. 109. 1.  
<sup>12</sup> Misa. Pesach, c. 10. sect. 1. T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 108. 1. Mitzvot Torah, pr. affirm. 41.  
<sup>13</sup> Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 3.

elect of God; for the many that were ordained to eternal life, and the many that were given to Christ, the many that are justified by him, and the many sons he'll bring to glory: whereby the full forgiveness of all their sins was procured, in a way consistent with, and honourable to the justice of God; full satisfaction being made to the law of God, for all their transgressions.

Ver. 29. *But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth, &c.*] From whence it seems natural to conclude, that Christ had drank of the cup in the supper, as well as at the passover; and it is reasonable to believe, that he also ate of the bread; since it appears from what has been observed before, see the note on ver. 26. that none might eat, till he that blessed and brake the bread had tasted of it<sup>f</sup>: the reason why wine is here called *the fruit of the vine*, and not wine, see for in the note on ver. 27. The design of this expression is to shew, that his stay would be very short: the cup he had just drank of, was the last he should drink with them: he should drink no more wine at the passover; he had kept the last, and which now of right was to cease; nor in the Lord's supper, for though that was to continue to his second coming, he should be no more present at it corporeally, only spiritually; nor in common conversation, which is not contradicted by Acts x. 41. Since, though the apostles drank with him in his presence, it does not necessarily follow, that he drank with them; and if he did, it was not in a mortal state, nor in the ordinary manner and use of it, but to confirm his resurrection from the dead, nor can it be proved that he drank of the fruit of the vine: the design of the phrase, as before observed, is to signify his speedy departure from his disciples. The allusion is to an usage at the passover, when after the fourth cup, they tasted of nothing else all that night, except water; and so Christ declares, that he would drink no more, not only that night, but never after. *Until the day I drink it new with you, in my father's kingdom:* Mark says, *in the kingdom of God*; and Luke, *until the kingdom of God come*; and both the Syriac and Persic versions read it here, *in the kingdom of God*; by which is meant, something distinct from the kingdom of the son, or of the Messiah, which was already come; and appeared more manifestly after the resurrection of Christ, upon his ascension to heaven, and the effusion of the holy spirit, and the success of the Gospel, both among Jews and Gentiles; and which will be more glorious in the latter day: and when all the elect of God are gathered in, and have been presented to Christ by himself, he'll then deliver up the kingdom to the father, and God shall be all in all; and then the kingdom of the father will take place here mentioned, and which is no other than the ultimate glory; so called, because it is of the father's preparing and giving, and in which he'll reign and dwell, and the saints with him, to all eternity; which must not be understood to the exclusion of

Christ, for it is called his kingdom also, Luke xxii. 30. in this state, Christ will drink *new wine*, not literally, but spiritually understood; and which designs the joys and glories of heaven, the best wine which is reserved to the last: which is sometimes signified by a feast, of which wine is a principal part; by sitting down as at a table, in the kingdom of heaven, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Matt. viii. 12. and expressed by *wine*, because of its refreshing and exhilarating nature, in God's presence is *fulness of joy*; and by *new wine*, because these joys are the most excellent, because they are always new, and never change; they are *pleasures for evermore*: to drink hereof, denotes the full enjoyment of them, which Christ, as man and mediator, and his people with him, shall be possessed of; and is different from the superficial *taste of the powers of the world to come*, Heb. vi. 5. which hypocrites have, and those real prelibations of glory which saints have in this life; there being a difference between drinking and tasting, Matt. xxvii. 34. and this will be social; Christ and his true disciples shall be together; and drink this new wine together; or enjoy the same glory and felicity in the highest measure and degree, they are capable of; and which society therein will yield a mutual pleasure to each other, as the words here suggest. The Jews often express the joys of the world to come, by such like figurative phrases: they make mention of, *יין דעלעמא דארמי*, *the wine of the world to come*<sup>g</sup>; and of *שכר רורני*, *a spiritual drink*, in the last days, which is called the world to come<sup>h</sup>: and so they explain<sup>i</sup> after this manner, Isa. lxiv. 4. *Neither hath the eye seen, O God, &c. יין זה, this is the wine*, which is kept in the grapes from the six days of the creation; of which they often speak in their writings<sup>k</sup>.

Ver. 30. *And when they had sung an hymn, &c.* The *Hallel*, which the Jews were obliged to sing on the night of the passover; for the passover, they say<sup>l</sup>, was *שען ורלל*, *bound to an hymn*. This *Hallel*, or song of praise, consisted of six Psalms, the cxiii, cxiv, cxv, cxvth, cxvith, cxvii, and cxviiith<sup>m</sup>: now this they did not sing all at once, but in parts. Just before the drinking of the second cup and eating of the lamb, they sung the first part of it, which contained the cxiii and cxiv Psalms; and on mixing the fourth and last cup, they completed the *Hallel*, by singing the rest of the Psalms, beginning with the cxvth Psalm, and ending with the cxviiith; and said over it, what they call the  *blessing of the song*, which was Psal. cxlv. 10, &c. and they might, if they would, mix a fifth cup, but that they were not obliged to, and say over it the *great Hallel*, or *hymn*, which was the cxxxvth Psalm<sup>n</sup>. Now the last part of the *Hallel*, Christ deferred to the close of his supper; there being many things in it pertinent to him, and proper on this occasion, particularly Psal. cxv. 1. and cxvi. 12, 13, 14, 15. and cxviii. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27. and the Jews themselves say<sup>o</sup>, that *דובלו של משיח*, *the sorrows of the Messiah* are contained in this part: that this is the

<sup>f</sup> Maimon. Chamez Umetzah, c. 9. sect. 10. Piske Toseph. Pesach. art. 328.

<sup>g</sup> Zohar in Lev. fol. 17. 2.

<sup>h</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 3. 4. En Israel, fol. 30. 1.

<sup>i</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 34. 2. & Sanhed. fol. 99. 1.

<sup>k</sup> Targum in Cant. viii. 2. Zohar in Gen. fol. 81. 4. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 30. 3.

<sup>l</sup> Mism. Pesach. c. 9. 3. T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 95. 1, 2.

<sup>m</sup> Seder Tephillot, fol. 101, &c. Ed. Amstelod.

<sup>n</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Chamez Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 5. 10.

<sup>o</sup> T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 118. 1.



hymn which Christ and his disciples sung, may be rather thought, than that it was one of his own composing; since not only he, but all the disciples sung it, and therefore must be what they were acquainted with; and since Christ in most things conformed to the rites and usages of the Jewish nation; and he did not rise up from table and go away, until this concluding circumstance was over; though it was allowed to finish the *Hallel*, or hymn, in any place they pleased, even though it was not the place where the feast was kept: however, as soon as it was over, *they went out to the Mount of Olives*; he and his disciples, excepting Judas: first he himself alone, and then the disciples followed him, according to Luke xxii. 39. and the Persic version here reads it, *he went out*. This seems to be contrary to a Jewish canon; for the passover was *נטען לירון, bound to lodging a night*<sup>1</sup>; that is, as the gloss explains it, "the first night (*i. e.* of the passover) a man must lodge in Jerusalem; thenceforward it was lawful to dwell without the wall, within the border." And a little after, the same phrase, *being bound to lodge*, is explained, *one night in the midst of the city*: but Christ had more important business to attend unto, than to comply with this rule, which was not obligatory by the word of God, though the Jews pretend to found it on Deut. xvi. 7<sup>1</sup>. The place where he went with his disciples, was the Mount of Olives, which was on the east side of Jerusalem; and was the place where the high-priest stood, and burnt the red heifer, and sprinkled its blood<sup>2</sup>: now from the temple, or from the mountain of the house, there was a causeway, or bridge on arches, made to the Mount of Olives, in which the high-priest and the heifer, *וכל מסעדיה, and all his assistants*, (the priests that helped him in this service,) went to this mount<sup>3</sup>: in this same way 'tis very probable, went Christ the great high-priest, who was typified by the red heifer, and his companions the disciples, to the same place, where he had his bloody sweat, and where his sorrows and sufferings began.

Ver. 31. *Then saith Jesus unto them, &c.*] Either before they went out of the house, where they had been eating the passover, and the supper; or as they were going along to the Mount of Olives; which latter rather seems to be the case: *all ye shall be offended because of me this night*. The words are spoken to the eleven disciples; for Judas was now gone to the high-priests, to inform them where Jesus was going that night, and to receive of them a band of men and officers to apprehend him; which is what would be the occasion of all the rest of the disciples being offended: for when they should see their master betrayed by one of themselves, and the officers seize him and bind him, and lead him away as a malefactor, our Lord here suggests, that they would be filled with such fear and dread, that every one of them would forsake him and run away, and provide for their own safety; yea, would be so stumbled at this unexpected event, that they

would begin to stagger and hesitate in their minds, whether he was the Messiah, or no, as the two disciples going to Emmaus, seem to intimate; they would be so shocked with this sad disappointment, and so offended, or stumble, as to be ready to fall from him: and their faith in him must have failed, had he not prayed for them, as he did for Peter; for they thought of nothing else but a temporal kingdom, which they expected would now quickly be set up, and they be advanced to great honour and dignity; but things taking a different turn, it must greatly shock and affect them; and it was to be the case not of one or two only, but of all of them: and that because of him, whom they dearly loved, and with whom they had been eating the passover, and his own supper, and had had such a comfortable opportunity together; and because of his low estate, his being seized and bound, and led away by his enemies; as the Jews were before offended at him, because of the meanness of his parentage and education: and this was to be that very night; and it was now very late, it may reasonably be supposed to be midnight: for since the last evening, or sun-setting, they had ate the passover, the ceremonies of which took up much time, and after that the Lord's supper; then the *Hallel*, or hymn was sung, when Christ discoursed much with his disciples, and delivered those consolatory and instructive sermons, about the vine and other things, occasioned by the fruit of the vine, they had been just drinking of, recorded in the xvth and xvith chapters of John; and put up that prayer to his father for them, which stands in the xviiith chapter; and indeed within an hour or two after, see Mark xiv. 37. this prediction of Christ's had its accomplishment, and which he confirms by a prophetic testimony: *for it is written, in Zech. xiii. 7. I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered*. This text is miserably perverted by the Jewish writers; though they all agree, that by the *shepherd*, is meant some great person, as a king; so the Targum renders it, *kill the king, and the princes shall be scattered*: one<sup>4</sup> of them says, that a wicked king of Moab is designed; another<sup>5</sup>, a king of the Ishmaelites, or of the Turks; and a third<sup>6</sup>, that any, and every king of the Gentiles is meant; a fourth says<sup>7</sup>, 'tis a prophecy of the great wars that shall be in all the earth, in the days of Messiah ben Joseph; and a fifth<sup>8</sup>, after having taken notice of other senses, mentions this as the last: that "the words *my shepherd, and the man my fellow*, in the former part of the verse, are to be understood of Messiah, the son of Joseph; and because he shall be slain in the wars of the nations, therefore the Lord will whet his glittering sword against the nations, to take vengeance on them; and on this account says, *awake, O sword! for my shepherd, and for the man my fellow*: as if the Lord called the

<sup>1</sup> Maimon. ut supra.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 95. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Talmud ib. & Jarchi in Deut. xvi. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Mian. Middot, c. 3. sect. 4. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 16. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Mian. Parah, c. 3. sect. 6. & Middot, c. 1. sect. 3. & Maimon. & Barbenora in ib.

<sup>6</sup> R. Sol. Jarchi, in Zech. xiii. 7.

<sup>7</sup> R. Isaac Chizuk Emuna, par. 1. c. 37. p. 310.

<sup>8</sup> R. David Kimchi, in Zech. xiii. 7.

<sup>9</sup> R. Aben Ezra in ib.

<sup>10</sup> Aberbiuel, Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 74. 4.

“ sword and vengeance to awake against his enemies, because of Messiah ben Joseph, whom they shall slay; and who shall be the shepherd of the flock of God, and by reason of his righteousness and perfection, shall be the man his fellow; and when the nations shall slay that shepherd, the sword of the Lord shall come and smite the shepherd; that is, every shepherd of the Gentiles, and their kings; for because of the slaying of the shepherd of Israel, every shepherd of their enemies shall be slain, and their sheep shall be scattered; for through the death of the shepherds, the people that shall be under them, will have no standing.” Now though this is a most wretched perversion of the passage, to make the word *shepherd* in the former part of it, to signify one person, and in the other part of it another; yet shews the conviction of their minds, that the Messiah is not be excluded from the prophecy, and of whom, without doubt, it is spoken, and rightly applied by him, who is concerned in it, the Lord Jesus Christ; who feeds his flock like a shepherd, is the great shepherd of the sheep, the chief shepherd, the good shepherd, that laid down his life for the sheep; which is intended by the smiting of him: in the text in Zechary, it is read, *smite the shepherd*; being an order of Jehovah the father's, to Justice, to awake its sword, and sheath it in his son, his equal by nature, his shepherd by office; and here, as his own act, and what he would do himself, *I will smite the shepherd*; for his ordering Justice to smite, is rightly interpreted doing it himself. The Jews can't object to this, when their own interpreters in general explain it thus, *השם יכרית, God shall cut off the shepherd* \*. The sufferings of Christ, which are meant by the smiting him, were according, not only to the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, the will of his good pleasure, but according to his will of command; which justice executed, and Christ was obedient to, and in which Jehovah had a very great hand himself: he bruised him, he put him to grief, he made his soul an offering for sin; he spared him not, but delivered him up into the hands of men, justice, and death, for us all: the latter clause, *and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered*, respects the disciples, and their forsaking Christ, and fleeing from him, when he was apprehended; for then, as was foretold in this prophecy, and predicted by Christ, they all forsook him and fled, and were scattered every man to his own, and left him alone. In Zechary 'tis only said, *the sheep shall be scattered*— here, *the sheep of the flock*; though the Evangelist Mark reads it, as in the prophet, and so the Arabic here, and the sense is the same; for the sheep are the sheep of the flock, Christ's little flock, the flock of slaughter, committed to his care; unless it may be thought proper to distinguish between the sheep and the flock; and by *the flock* understand, all the elect of God, and by *the sheep*, the principal of the flock; *the rams of his sheep*, or *flock*, as the Syriac version renders it; the apostles of Christ, who are chiefly, if not solely

intended; though others of Christ's followers might be stumbled, offended, and staggered, as well as they; as Cleophas was, one of the two that went to Emmaus.

Ver. 32. *But after I am risen again, &c.*] This he says for their comfort, that though he, their shepherd, should be apprehended, condemned, and crucified, should be smitten with death, and be laid in the grave, yet he should rise again; and though they should be scattered abroad, yet should be gathered together again by him, their good shepherd; who would after his resurrection, appear to them, be at the head of them, and go before them, as a shepherd goes before his sheep: for it follows, *I will go before you into Galilee*: the native place of most, if not all of them. This the women that came to the sepulchre after Christ's resurrection, were bid, both by the angel, and Christ himself, to remind the disciples of, and ordered them to go into Galilee, where they might expect to see him: accordingly they did go thither, and saw and worshipped him; see Matt. xxviii. 7, 10, 16, 17.

Ver. 33. *Peter answered and said unto him, &c.*] Who was always a forward man, free to speak his mind, and was often the mouth of the rest; observing what Christ had affirmed concerning all of them, that that very night, in a very short space of time, they would be offended because of him; and knowing the strong love he had for Christ, and being persuaded it could never be his case, thus addresses him; *though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended*: his sense is, that though all the men in the world, friends, and foes, though even all the rest of the disciples, who were his most intimate friends, most closely attached to him, and who dearly loved him, and sincerely believed in him, should be so stumbled at what should befall him, as to flee from him, and be tempted to relinquish his cause, and interest; yet nothing should ever cause him, in the least, to stumble and fall, to desert him, or hesitate about him, or cause him to take the least umbrage and offence at what might come upon him; and this he was positive of would be the case, not only that night, but ever after. No doubt he said this in the sincerity of his heart, and out of his great fervour of affection for Christ; but what he failed in, was trusting to his own strength, being self-confident; and in entertaining a greater opinion of himself, and his steady attachment to Christ, than of the rest of the disciples; and in contradicting what Christ had so strongly affirmed of them all, without any exception, and so of himself, and had confirmed by so glaring a prophecy concerning this matter.

Ver. 34. *Jesus said unto him, verily I say unto thee, &c.*] Christ, the more strongly to asseverate what he was about to say, uses the word *verily*, or prefixes his *Amen* to it, as being a certain truth, and what Peter might assure himself of would certainly come to pass: *that this night before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice*; which is, as if he should say, thou wilt not only be offended because of me,

\* R. Aben Ezra, R. David Kimchi, & Miclol Yophi in loc.

and flee from me, and be scattered with the rest, as will be the case of all of you; but thou wilt deny that thou knowest me, that thou belongest to me, or hast any concern with me; and this thou wilt do not only once, but again and again, even three times, one after another, and that this very night, before the cock has done crowing. In Mark it is said, *that this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice*; which may be reconciled with the words of Matthew, and the other evangelists, by observing, that the word *twice* is not in Beza's ancient copy, which he gave to the university of Cambridge, nor is it in the Ethiopic version; which if allowed to be the true reading, the difficulty is removed at once; but whereas it is in other copies, no stress must be laid on this, nor is there any need of it: for whereas the cock crows twice in the night, once at midnight, and again near break of day; and which latter crowing being louder, and more welcome, and most taken notice of, is, by way of eminence, called the cock-crowing; and is what Matthew here has respect to, and so designs the same as Mark does; and the sense of both is, that before the cock crow a second time, which is most properly the cock-crowing, Peter should three times deny his master, as he did; see Mark xiii. 35. where cock-crowing is distinguished from midnight, the first time the cock crows, and means the second time of crowing; and where Mark is to be understood in the same sense as Matthew, and both entirely agree. So cock-crowing and midnight are distinguished by the Jews, who say<sup>b</sup>, "that on all other days they remove the ashes from the altar, בקריאת הנוֹבֵר, *at cock-crowing*, or near unto it, whether before or after; but on the day of atonement, מִצִּיּוֹת, *at midnight*:" and who also speak of the cock's crowing a first and second, and even a third time<sup>c</sup>. "Says R. Shila, he that begins his journey before cock-crowing, his blood be upon his head. R. Josiah says, he may not proceed שִׁשְׁרֵב עַד, *until he repeats*; that is, until he crows twice: and there are, who say, until he trebles it, or crows a third time: of what do they speak? of a middling one, *i. e.* which neither crows too soon, nor too late."

Ver. 35. *Peter saith unto him, &c.*] Mark says, *he spake the more vehemently*; his spirits were raised to a greater pitch of resentment, and he expressed himself in stronger terms, and in more peremptory and self-confident language; *though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee*: he seems to have understood Christ, that he should suffer death, and that he would be in great danger himself, and therefore rather than lose his life would deny his master; wherefore he most confidently affirms, that should this be the case, should he be called to suffer death for his sake, or along with him, he would most cheerfully embrace it, rather than be guilty of so dreadful a crime, which he could not look upon but with the utmost detestation and abhorrence, as to

deny his dear Lord and Saviour: *likewise also said all the disciples*; that they would never be offended because of him, and would die with him rather than deny him. This they said, being also self-confident and ignorant of their own weakness, and drawn into these expressions through Peter's example; and that partly to shew their equal abhorrence of so horrible an iniquity, as denying Jesus; and partly to remove all suspicion from them, lest they should be thought to have less love and zeal for Christ than Peter had.

Ver. 36. *Then cometh Jesus with them, &c.*] The eleven disciples, *unto a place called Gethsemane*; the Syriac version calls it Ghedsiman; the Persic, Ghesmani, so the Arabic; the Vulgate Latin, and the Ethiopic, Gethsemani: in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and in the Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, it is called a *village*; and in the Ethiopic version, a *village of wine*; and in the Syriac and Persic versions, a *place*. Here, according to an Ethiopic writer, the Virgin Mary was buried by the apostles<sup>d</sup>. Its etymology is very differently given: some read, and explain it, as if it was שְׁמֵיִם, *a valley of fatness, or of olives*, as it is called in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; see Isa. xxviii. 1. others as if it was גִּי רִסְמֵי, *a valley of signs, or a very famous valley*; so Mount Sinai is called<sup>e</sup>, הַר רִסְמֵי, *Harsemanai, the mountain of signs*: but, to take notice of no more; the true reading and signification of it is, נֵת שְׁמֵי, *an olive-press, or a press for olives*: so we read<sup>f</sup> of a chamber in the temple which is called *the chamber, בית שְׁמֵי, Beth Semania, or Bethsemani*, where they put their wine and oil for temple service. It is very probable that at, or near this place, was a very public olive-press, where they used to squeeze the olives, for the oil of them, which they gathered in great plenty from off the Mount of Olives; at the foot of which this place was; and a very significant place it was for our Lord to go to at this time, when he was about to tread the wine-press of his father's wrath, alone, and of the people there were none with him: for it follows, *and saith unto the disciples, sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder*: perceiving a time of distress was coming upon him, he betakes himself to prayer, an example worthy of our imitation; in the performance of which duty he chose to be retired and solitary, and therefore left eight of his disciples at a certain place, whilst he went to another at some distance, convenient for his purpose; who perhaps might be the weakest of the disciples, and not able to bear the agonies and distress of their Lord and Master.

Ver. 37. *And he took with him Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, &c.*] James and John, who perhaps were the strongest, and best able to bear the shocking sight, and were his favourite disciples; who were admitted to be with him at other times, when the rest were not; as at the raising of Jairus's daughter, Mark v. 37. and moreover, these were at his transfiguration on the mount, Matt. xvii. 1. which was a repre-

<sup>b</sup> Mian. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 8.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 91. 1.

<sup>d</sup> Ludolph. Lex. Ethiop. p. 554.

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 89. 1.

<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 16. 1.

sentation and presage of his glory; and so were very proper persons to be witnesses of his sorrows and agonies, which were the way to it; and three of them were taken by him for this purpose, being a sufficient number to bear testimony, since by the mouth of two or three witnesses every thing is established: *and began to be sorrowful*; his soul was troubled on the same account six days before, John xii. 27. but was now sorrowful. He was a man of sorrows all his days, and acquainted with griefs, being reproached and persecuted by men: but now a new scene of sorrows opened; before he was afflicted by men, but now he is bruised, and put to grief by his father: his sorrows now began, for they did not end here, but on the cross; not that this was but a bare beginning of his sorrows, or that these were but light in comparison of future ones; for they were very heavy, and indeed seem to be the heaviest of all, as appears from his own account of them; his vehement cry to his father; his bloody sweat and agony; and the assistance he stood in need of from an angel; and the comfort and strength he received from him in his human nature: all which, put together, the like is not to be observed in any part of his sufferings: *and to be very heavy*; with the weight of the sins of his people, and the sense of divine wrath, with which he was so pressed and overwhelmed, that his spirits were almost quite gone; he was just ready to swoon away, sink and die; his heart failed him, and became like wax melted in the midst of his bowels, before the wrath of God, which was as a consuming fire: all which shews the truth, though weakness of his human nature, and the greatness of his sufferings in it. The human nature was still in union with the divine person of the son of God, and was sustained by him, but left to its natural weakness, without sin, that it might suffer to the utmost, and as much as possible for the sins of God's elect.

Ver. 38. *Then saith he unto them, &c.*] The three disciples, Peter, James, and John, who, by his looks and gestures, might know somewhat of the inward distress of his mind; yet he choose to express it to them in words, saying, *my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death*. That Christ had an human soul, as well as an human body, is clear from hence; and which was possessed of the same passions as ours are, but without sin, such as joy, love, grief, sorrow, &c. and at this time its sorrows were exceeding great: his soul was beset all around with the sins of his people; these took hold on him, and encompassed him, which must, in the most sensible manner, affect his pure and spotless mind; the sorrows of death and hell surrounded him on every side, insomuch that the least degree of comfort was not let in to him; nor was there any way open for it, so that his soul was overwhelmed with sorrow; his heart was ready to break; he was brought even, as it were, to the dust of death; nor would his sorrows leave him, he was persuaded, until soul and body were separated from each other; see a like phrase in Judg. xvi. 16. *tarry ye here*. The Ethiopic adds, *till I shall return*, for he was going a little further from them, to vent his grief, and pour out his soul unto God. Munster's Hebrew Gospel

reads it, *expect me, or wait for me here*, signifying, that he should return to them shortly; *and watch with me*. It was night, and they might be heavy and inclined to sleep: he knew it would be an hour of temptation both to him and them, and therefore advises them to watch against it; and to observe how it would go with him, and what should befall him, that they might be witnesses of it, and be able to testify what agonies he endured, what grace he exercised, and how submissive he was to his father's will.

Ver. 39. *And he went a little further, &c.*] Luke says, ch. xxii. 41. *about a stone's cast, about fifty or sixty feet from the place where they were, and fell on his face, and prayed*: partly to shew his great reverence of God, the sword of whose justice was awaked against him, the terrors of whose law were set in array before him, and whose wrath was pouring down upon him; and partly to signify how much his soul was depressed, how low he was brought, and in what distress and anguish of spirit he was, that he was not able to lift up his head, and look up. This was a prayer-gesture used when a person was in the utmost perplexity. The account the Jews give of it, is this, "כַּשְׁנוּפְלִין עַל פְּנֵיהֶם, when they fall upon their faces, they don't stretch out their hands and their feet, but incline on their sides." This was not to be done by any person, or at any time; the rules are these: "no man is accounted fit פָּנִי עַל פְּנִי, to fall upon his face, but he that knows in himself that he is righteous, as Joshua; but he inclines his face a little, and does not bow it down to the floor; and it is lawful for a man to pray in one place, and to fall upon his face in another: 'tis a custom that reaches throughout all Israel, that there is no falling upon the face on a sabbath-day, nor on feast-days, nor on the beginning of the year, nor on the beginning of the month, nor on the feast of dedication, nor on the days of *purim*, nor at the time of the meat-offering of the eves of the sabbath-days, and good days, nor at the evening prayer for every day; and there are private persons that fall upon their faces at the evening prayer, and on the day of atonement only: they fall upon their faces because it is a time of supplication, request, and fasting." *Saying, O my father*; or, as in Mark, *Abba, Father*; *Abba* being the Syriac word he used, and signifies, *my father*; and the other word is added for explanation's sake, and to denote the vehemency of his mind, and fervour of spirit in prayer. Christ prayed in the same manner he taught his disciples to pray, saying, *our father*; and as all his children pray under the influence of the spirit of adoption, whereby they cry *Abba, Father*. God is the father of Christ, not as man, for as such he was without father, being the seed of the woman, and made of a woman, without man; nor by creation, as he is the father of spirits, of angels, and the souls of men, of Adam, and all mankind; nor by adoption, as he is the father of all the chosen, redeemed, and regenerated ones; but by nature, he being the only-begotten of the father, in a manner inconceivable and inexpressible by us. Christ now addresses him in prayer in his human nature, as standing

<sup>c</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 34. 2.

<sup>d</sup> Maimon. Hileh. Tephills, c. 5. sect. 14, 15.

in this relation to him as the son of God, both to express his reverence of him, and what freedom and boldness he might use with him; what confidence he might put in him; and what expectation he might have of being heard and regarded by him; and what submission and resignation of will was due from himself unto him. *If it be possible, let this cup pass from me*; meaning not only *the hour*, as it is called in Mark, the present season and time of distress, and horror; but all his future sufferings and death, which were at hand; together with the bearing the sins of his people, the enduring the curse of the law, and the wrath of God, all which were ingredients in, and made up this dreadful bitter cup, this cup of fury, cursing, and trembling; called a *cup*, either in allusion to the nauseous potions given by physicians to their patients; or rather to the cup of poison given to malefactors the sooner to dispatch them; or to that of wine mingled with myrrh and frankincense to intoxicate them, that they might not feel their pain, see the note on Mark xv. 23. or to the cup appointed by the master of the family to every one in the house; these sorrows, sufferings, and death of Christ being what were allotted and appointed by his heavenly father: and when he prays that this cup might pass from him, his meaning is, that he might be freed from the present horrors of his mind, be excused the sufferings of death, and be delivered from the curse of the law, and wrath of God; which request was made without sin, though it betrayed the weakness of the human nature under its insupportable load, and its reluctance to sufferings and death, which is natural; and yet does not represent him herein as inferior to martyrs, who have desired death, and triumphed in the midst of exquisite torments: for their case and his were widely different; they had the presence of God with them, Christ was under the hidings of his father's face; they had the love of God shed abroad in them, he had the wrath of God poured out upon him; and his prayer bespeaks him to be in a condition which neither they, nor any mortal creature were ever in. Moreover, the human nature of Christ was now, as it were, swallowed up in sorrow, and intent upon nothing but sufferings and death; had nothing in view but the wrath of God, and the curse of the law; so that every thing else was, for the present, out of sight; as the purposes of God, his counsel and covenant, his own engagements and office, and the salvation of his people; hence it is no wonder to hear such a request made; and yet it is with this condition, *if it be possible*. In Mark 'tis said, *all things are possible unto thee*; intimating, that the taking away, or causing the cup to pass from him, was: all things are possible to God, which are consistent with the perfections of his nature, and the counsel of his will: and all such things, though possible in themselves, yet are not under such and such circumstances so; the removal of the cup from Christ was possible in itself, but not as things were circumstanced, and as matters then stood; and therefore it is hypothetically put, *if it be possible*, as it was not; and that by reason of the decrees and purposes of God, which had fixed it, and are immutable; and on account of the covenant of grace, of which this was a considerable branch and article, and in which Christ

had agreed unto it, and is unalterable; and also on the score of the prophecies of the Old Testament, in which it had been often spoken of; and therefore without it, how should the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be? they would not have been the Scriptures of truth. Besides, Christ had foretold it himself once and again, and therefore consistent with the truth of his own predictions, it could not be dispensed with: add to all this, that the salvation of his people required his drinking it; that could not be brought about no other way in agreement with the veracity, faithfulness, justice, and holiness of God. This condition qualifies and restrains the above petition; nor is it to be considered but in connexion with what follows: *nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt*; which shows that the request was far from being sinful, or contrary to piety to God, or love to men, or to true fortitude of mind; the pure natural will of Christ, or the will of Christ's human nature, being left to act in a mere natural way, shews a reluctance to sorrows, sufferings, and death; this same will acting on rational principles, and in a rational way, puts it upon the possibility of the thing, and the agreement of the divine will to it. That there are two wills in Christ, human and divine, is certain; his human will, though in some instances, as in this, may have been different from the divine will, yet not contrary to it; and his divine will is always the same with his father's. This, as mediator, he engaged to do, and came down from heaven for that purpose, took delight in doing it, and has completely finished it.

Ver. 40. *And he cometh unto the disciples, &c.*] The three he took with him, Peter, James, and John, after he had finished his prayer; and *findeth them asleep*: many things might contribute to, and bring this drowsiness upon them; as the great fatigue they had had in preparing the passover in the day, the plentiful meal they had eaten at night, though without excess, and the lateness of the night, it being now probably midnight; but the chief reason of their sleepiness was their sorrow, as is expressed in Luke xxii. 45. what Christ had said to them of his soul-troubles, and what they saw in him, had filled their hearts with sorrow, which brought on them an amazement and stupidity of mind; and this issued in sleep. We have other instances of persons in excessive grief and trouble falling asleep, as Elijah in 1 Kings xix. 4, 5. and Jonah in Jon. i. 5. so that this did not arise from a secure, lazy, indolent frame of spirit; or from any disregard to Christ, and neglect of him, and unconcernedness for him; but from their great sorrow of heart; for, the trouble and distress that he was in, added to the causes above mentioned. Though some have thought, that Satan might be concerned in it, who induced this sleepiness, or increased it, that he might the more easily surprise them with his temptations, he was preparing for them, which I will not deny. Now, though this sleep was natural bodily sleep, which the disciples fell into, yet was an emblem of, and carried in it a resemblance to, the spiritual sleep and drowsiness of the people of God; for as this was after a delightful entertainment and conversation with Christ at the passover and Lord's supper, so it sometimes is, that the children of God

fall into a sleepy frame of soul, after much communion with Christ, as the church did in Cant. v. 1, 2. and as this sleep befell them, when Christ was withdrawn a little space from them; so it was with the church, when her beloved was absent from her, Cant. iii. 1. and v. 2. and with the wise virgins when the bridegroom tarried, Matt. xxv. 6. and as this was not an entire thorough sleep; they knew all the while what Christ was doing, and could relate, as they have done, the circumstances of it; so the children of God, when asleep, they are not like unregenerate persons, in a dead sleep of sin, that hear, and see, and feel, and know nothing; but though they are asleep, their hearts are awake, as was the church's, Cant. v. 2. yet as the disciples were so much asleep, that the bare words of Christ did not arouse them from it for a while; so such is the sleep of the saints sometimes, that they are not to be aroused by the bare ministry of the word, though the most powerful arguments, and the most moving and melting language are made use of, as were with the church, Cant. v. 2, 3, 4. *and saith unto Peter, what! could ye not watch with me one hour?* This was said particularly to Peter, because he had so lately, in such a confident manner, declared, that he would not be offended with Christ, but abide with him, stand by him, and even die with him, was there an occasion for it; and yet, in so short a space of time, was fallen asleep, as were the rest who said the same things also: and it is as if Christ should say, how will you be able to stand by me throughout this night, when ye can't watch with me so much as one hour, though I so earnestly desired you to tarry here, and watch with me, and you saw in what distress I was in? how will you be able to withstand the temptations that will beset you quickly, and perform your promises of love, fidelity, constancy, and close attachment to me, in the greatest dangers, when you can't keep yourselves awake one hour for my sake?

Ver. 41. *Watch and pray, &c.*] These two are very justly put together. There is, and ought to be, a watching before prayer, and unto it; a watching all opportunities, the most suitable and convenient to perform it; and there is a watching in it, both over our hearts, thoughts, words, and gestures, and after it, for a return of it, and answer to it: the reason of this exhortation follows, *that ye enter not into temptation*; not that they might not be tempted at all; for none of the saints have been, or are without temptations; and they are needful for them; and it is the will of God they should be attended with them; and he has made gracious provisions for their succour and relief under them; but that they might not enter into them, throw themselves in the way of temptation, be surprised by them at an unawares, fall into them headlong, be immersed in them, fall by them, and be overcome with them, so as to forsake Christ, or to deny him: *the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*; meaning either that the evil spirit Satan was very desirous of having them in his hands; very forward and ready to make the onset upon them; was cheerful, alert, and confident of victory; and was strong, robust, and powerful; and they were but flesh and blood, very weak and infirm, and unequal to the enemy; which is a sense not to be despised, seeing it

carries in it a very strong reason why they ought to watch and pray, lest they fall into the temptations of such a powerful adversary; see Eph. vi. 12. 1 Pet. v. 8. or else by *spirit* may be meant the soul, as renewed and regenerated by the spirit of God; particularly the principle of grace in it, which is born of the spirit, and is called by the same name, and which lusts against the flesh, or corrupt nature: this was willing to watch and pray, and guard against falling into temptations; was willing to abide by Christ, and express its love to him every way; but *the flesh*, or *body*, so the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, is *weak* and infirm, prone to sleep, indulges ease, and unfit to bear trouble, but ready to sink under it, and is for fleeing from it: and so the words contain our Lord's excuse of his disciples in their present circumstances. Munster's Hebrew Gospel reads the words thus, *and indeed the spirit is שוקד, watchful, but the flesh is weak*. The Ethiopic version after this manner, *the spirit desires, and the body is fatigued*. The Persic version, contrary both to the letter and sense of the words, renders them, *my spirit is firm, but my body is infirm*.

Ver. 42. *He went away again the second time, &c.*] To the same place as before, or at some little distance; after he had reproved his disciples for their sleeping, and had exhorted them to watchfulness and prayer, suggesting the danger they were liable to, and the condition they were in: *and prayed, saying, O my father, if this cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, thy will be done*. The sense of this prayer to his God and father is, that if his sufferings and death could not be dispensed with; if it was not consistent with the decrees of God, and the covenant of grace, that he should be excused from them; or if the glory of God, and the salvation of his people required it, that he must drink up that bitter cup, he was content to do it; desiring in all things to submit unto, and to fulfil his father's will, though it was so irksome and disagreeable to nature.

Ver. 43. *And he came and found them asleep again, &c.*] For they were aroused and awakened, in some measure, by what he had said to them; but no sooner was he gone but they fell asleep again, and thus he found them a second time; or, *he came again and found them asleep*; so read the Vulgate Latin, the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel: *for their eyes were heavy*; with sleep through fatigue, sorrow, &c. Mark adds, *neither wist they what to answer him*; they were so very sleepy, they knew not how to speak; or they were so confounded, that he should take them asleep a second time, after they had had such a reproof, and exhortation from him, that they knew not what answer to make him; who probably rebuked them again, or gave them a fresh exhortation.

Ver. 44. *And he left them, and went away again, &c.*] At some little distance from them; they being so overpowered with sleep, that he could have no conversation with them: *and prayed the third time*; as the Apostle Paul did, when under temptation, he prayed thrice that it might depart from him, 2 Cor. xii. 8. *saying the same words*: the Arabic version renders it, *in the words which he before expressed*; and Munster's

Hebrew Gospel reads, *he said the same prayer*; not in the self-same words, or in the express form he had before delivered it; for it is certain, that his second prayer is not expressed in the same form of words as the first: but the sense is, that he prayed to the same purpose; the matter and substance of his prayer was the same, namely, that he might be exempted from suffering; but if that could not be admitted of, he was desirous to be resigned to the will of his heavenly father, and was determined to submit unto it.

Ver. 45. *Then cometh he to his disciples, &c.*] The three that were nearest to him, *the third time*, as Mark says, and as it was; and saith unto them, *sleep on now, and take your rest*. The Evangelist Mark adds, *it is enough*; which has induced some interpreters to think, that these words were spoken seriously by Christ: though the sense cannot be that they had watched sufficiently, and now might sleep, and take their rest, for they had not watched at all; but rather, that he had now no need of them, or their watching with him; the conflict was over for the present; or, as the Syriac version renders it, *the end is come*; and so the Arabic; and to the same purpose the Persic, *the matter is come to an end*, or to an extremity; the sense being the same with what is expressed in the following clause, *the hour is at hand*; and shews, that the words are to be understood in an ironical sense, sleep on and take your rest, if you can: I have been exhorting you to watchfulness, but to no purpose, you'll be alarmed from another quarter; a band of soldiers is just at hand to seize and carry me away, and now sleep if you can: that this is the sense appears from the reason given, and from the exhortation in the following verse, and the reason annexed to that: *behold the hour is at hand, and the son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners*: by the *son of man* Christ means himself, and under this diminutive title expresses his Messiahship, this being a character of the Messiah in the Old Testament; and the truth of his human nature, and the weakness and infirmities of it: by the *betraying*, or delivery of him, is intended either the betraying of him by Judas into the hands of the high-priest, Scribes, and Pharisees; or the delivery of him, by them, into the hands of Pilate, and by him to the Roman soldiers; all which were by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God. The high-priest, elders, Scribes, and Pharisees, notwithstanding all their pretensions to religion, righteousness, and holiness, were very wicked persons; though the Gentiles, the band of Roman soldiers, Judas brought with him to take Christ, are here rather meant, it being usual to call the Gentiles sinners. This betraying and delivery of Christ into the hands of these, was determined by God; the time, the very hour was fixed, and was now approaching; the last sand in the glass was dropping; for as soon as Christ had said these words, Judas, with his band of soldiers, appeared.

Ver. 46. *Rise, let us be going, &c.*] Not to run away from the enemy, but to meet him: this was said, partly to arouse his sleepy disciples; and partly to show his love to his father, and his submission to his will; as also to express the fortitude of his mind as man; he was now rid of his fears, and free from those agonies and dreadful apprehensions of things, he was

but a little while ago possessed of; and likewise to signify his willingness to be apprehended, and to suffer, and die, in the room of his people: *he is at hand that doth betray me*. This shews his omniscience: he not only knew, as he did from the beginning, who should betray him; but he knew when he would do it; and he knew where the betrayer now was, that he was just now coming upon him, in order to deliver him into the hands of sinful men. And this he spake with intrepidity of soul, with greatness of mind, being no more concerned at it, than when he gave him the sop, and bid him do what he did quickly: he does not mention his name; nor did he ever, when he spoke of him as the betrayer; either because the disciples, as yet, did not fully and certainly know who should betray him, and he would not now surprise them with it; or because they did, and therefore it was needless to mention his name; or rather, because he was unworthy to be mentioned by name: a *behold* is prefixed to this, partly to awaken the attention of his disciples; and partly to express what an horrid, insolent, and unparalleled action that was, Judas was now about to be guilty of.

Ver. 47. *And while he yet spake, &c.*] While he was thus speaking to his disciples, before the last words, *he is at hand that doth betray me*, were well out of his mouth; such an exact knowledge had Christ of every motion of Judas, of what he was about, and where he was: *lo! Judas, one of the twelve, came*. The Persic version adds, *in sight*; of Christ, and the disciples; they saw him, and knew him, though at some little distance: he came to Gethsemane, and into the garden, where they were, with a design to betray his master. He is described by his name Judas; that is, Iscariot, as in ver. 14. for there was another Judas among the apostles; the Syriac and Persic read, *Judas the betrayer*, to distinguish him from the other: and also by his office, *one of the twelve*; i. e. apostles, whom Christ called from the rest of his disciples and followers, and bestowed extraordinary gifts upon, and sent forth to preach the Gospel, cast out devils, and heal all manner of diseases; and *lo!* one of these betrays him! an apostle, and yet a devil! one of the twelve, one of his select company, and bosom friends, and yet a traitor! *and with him a great multitude, with swords, and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people*. Judas was at the head of them, went before them to shew them where Christ was, and to deliver him into their hands: he had not been asleep, he had been with the chief priests, and acquainted them with the opportunity he had of making good his agreement with him: he had got the band of soldiers, and other persons together, in order to make sure work of it! Thus we see how diligent wicked men are in the accomplishment of their evil designs, whilst good men are asleep and indifferent to godly and spiritual exercises. Judas is here described by his company; he who but a few hours ago was at table with his Lord, and the rest of the apostles, is now at the head of a band of Roman soldiers, and other miscreants, and blood-thirsty wretches, intent upon the death of his master. They may well be called a *multitude*, because made up of various sorts of persons, and these, many of them; of Roman soldiers, of the officers and ser-

vants of the chief priests; yea of the chief priests themselves, captains of the temple, and elders of the people, who were so eager upon this enterprise, that they could not forbear going in company with them, to see what would be the issue of it. And a *great* one; for the *band* of soldiers, if it was complete, consisted of a thousand men itself; and besides this, there were many others, and all to take a single person, and who had no more about him than eleven disciples; though the<sup>1</sup> Jews pretend he had two thousand men with him: and who came also with *swords and staves, or clubs*; the Roman soldiers with their swords, and the servants of the chief priests with their clubs: the reason of this posse, and of their being thus armed, might be either for fear of the people, who, should they be alarmed, and have any notice of their design, might rise and make an uproar, and attempt to rescue him; or that by having a Roman band with them, and the chief priests and their officers, it might appear, that what they did they did by authority; and that they seized him as a malefactor, as one guilty either of sedition, or heresy, or both. And this account is confirmed by the Jews themselves, who say<sup>2</sup>, that the citizens of Jerusalem were *בזוינים*, *armed*, and accoutred, and so took Jesus: and this multitude also came from the chief priests and elders of the people. Mark joins the Scribes with them: these composed the sanhedrim, or great council of the nation, who had been consulting the death of Christ; had agreed to give Judas thirty pieces of silver to betray him into their hands; had obtained a band of soldiers of the Roman governor to apprehend him, and sent their officers and servants to assist herein; these all acted under their direction, influence, and authority. The Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read, *sent*, from them.

Ver. 48. *Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, &c.*] By which it might be known who he was; for it being night, though they had lanterns and torches, as John says, yet Judas himself might not be able to discern him, so as to point him out, until he came very near him: moreover, Christ and his apostles might be clothed alike, so that a mistake might be easily made, and one of them be took for him: and so the Jews say<sup>1</sup>, that the two thousand men, they pretend were with him, were clothed with the same apparel; which story may take its rise from hence: add to this, that James, the son of Alpheus, called the brother of our Lord, is reported to be very like unto him. Besides, it is very likely that the Roman soldiers, who were to be the principal persons in apprehending, binding, and carrying him away, might never have seen him, and so could not know him without some sign was given them; and which Judas gave them before he came out with them: and is as follows: *saying, whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he, hold him fast.* Judas might the rather pitch upon this to be the sign, partly because it might be what had been usual with the disciples, when they had been at any time absent from Christ,

and which he admitted of; and partly because he might think this would best cover his treacherous designs, who, with all his wickedness, had not effrontery enough to come sword in hand and seize him in a violent manner; and besides, might not judge such a method advisable, had he impudence enough to prosecute it, lest this should put Jesus upon taking some measures to make his escape. The reason of his advice, *hold him fast*, was, because he knew that once and again, when attempts were made to seize him, he easily disengaged himself, passed through the midst, and went his way; see Luke iv. 30. John viii. 59. and x. 39. and therefore gave them this caution, and strict charge, lest, should he slip from them, he should lose his money he had agreed with the chief priests for; or to let them know, that when he was in their hands, he had made good his agreement, and should expect his money: and that it lay upon them then to take care of him, and bring him before the sanhedrim. The account the Jews themselves give of the directions of Judas, is not very much unlike this; who represent him advising in this manner, only as on the day before: "gird yourselves ready about this time to-morrow, and the man whom I shall worship and bow to, the same is he; behave yourselves like men of war, fight against his company, and lay hold on him<sup>m</sup>."

Ver. 49. *And forthwith he came to Jesus, &c.*] As soon as ever he appeared, before the rest could come up; for, he went before them, as Luke says, and that not only as their guide to direct them to the person they wanted, but he separated himself from them, that it might not be thought that he came with them, or belonged to them: *and said, hail, master; and kissed him.* Just as Joab asked Amasa of his health, and took him by the beard to kiss him, and smote him under the fifth rib, 2 Sam. xx. 9. The salutation he gave him was wishing him all health, prosperity, and happiness. The Syriac version renders it, *peace, Rabbi*; and the Persic, *peace be upon thee, Rabbi*; which was the very form of salutation the disciples of the wise men gave to their Rabbins. "Says<sup>n</sup> Aba bar Hona, in the name of R. Jochanan, in what form is the salutation of a disciple to his master? שלום " *עליך רבי, peace be upon thee, Rabbi.*" In Mark, the word *Rabbi* is repeated, this being usual in the salutation of the Jewish doctors; and the rather used by Judas under a pretence of doing him the greater honour, and of shewing the highest respect, and strongest affection for him. So this deceitful wretch still addresses him as his master, though he was now serving his most implacable enemies; and wishes him all peace and joy, when he was going to deliver him into the hands of those that sought his life; and to cover all, kissed him, as a token of his friendship, and the sincerity of it. It is rightly observed by Dr. Lightfoot, that it was usual for masters to kiss their disciples, particularly their heads; but then not for disciples to kiss their masters: of the former there are many instances in the Jewish writings, but not of the latter: yet, I can hardly think that this

<sup>1</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Ib.

<sup>3</sup> Ib.

<sup>m</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 16.

<sup>n</sup> T. Hieros. Shebuot. fol. 34. 1.



was done out of open contempt and derision, but under a pretence of respect and love; and even as being concerned for his present case, and as condoling him under the circumstances he was now likely to be in, through an armed band, which was just upon him; and which he, by this artifice, would have suggested he had no concern with.

Ver. 50. *And Jesus said unto him, friend, &c.*] Not in an ironical and sarcastic way, but because he pretended to be his friend, by saluting and kissing him, in the manner he had done; or rather, because Christ had always used him as his friend, his familiar friend, who had been of his councils, and had ate at his table; and therefore this carried in it something very cutting, had Judas had any conscience, or sense of gratitude: *wherefore art thou come?* The Ethiopic version reads, *my friend, art thou not come?* that is, art thou come as my friend? is thy coming as a friend, or as an enemy? if as a friend, what means this company with swords and staves? if as an enemy, why this salutation and kiss? or what is thine end in coming at this time of night? what is thy business here? thou hast left my company, and my disciples, what dost thou do here? The Syriac version reads it, *to that;* and the Arabic, *to this art thou come?* to kiss me, and by a kiss to deliver me into the hands of my enemies? to which agrees what is said in Luke, *Judas, betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss?* This he said, to let him know he knew him, and therefore he calls him by name; and that he knew his design in kissing him, and that what he was doing was against light and knowledge; he, at the same time, knowing that he was the son of man, the true Messiah. *Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him:* that is, the multitude, the Roman band, the captains and officers of the Jews, when Judas had given the sign; though not till Christ had given them a specimen of his power, in striking them to the ground; to let them know, that Judas could never have put him into their hands, nor could they have laid hold on him, had he not thought fit to surrender himself to them. The seizing and apprehending him is related by Luke and John as after the following circumstance; though the Ethiopic version here reads, *they lift up their hands, and did not lay hold on the Lord Jesus.*

Ver. 51. *And behold one of them which were with Jesus, &c.* Either one of the three that Jesus took with him whilst he was in his agony, leaving the other eight at some distance; or of the eleven, who might now be all with him: however, 'tis certain, Peter is the person meant; for though he is not named here, nor by Mark, nor Luke, he is by John; whose Gospel being wrote last, and many years after the rest, there was no danger like to accrue, by telling who it was that did the following action: he being now thoroughly awaked with the rest, by what Christ had said to him; and more so by the surprise of the multitude of armed men about him; and remembering his solemn protestations of abiding by his master; and seeing him just now ready to be seized, and carried away; without knowing his master's mind, or waiting for his answer to the question the other disciples put, *stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high-priest's, and smote off his ear.* It

seems he had a sword by his side, upon what account is not certain; this he drew, and struck at a servant of the high-priest's, who might shew great malignity against Christ, and was foremost, and most busy in apprehending him. The blow was levelled at his head, and with an intention, no doubt, to have cleaved him down, but sloping on one side took off his ear. The servant's name was Malchus, as John says; and it was his right ear that was cut off, as both he and Luke relate.

Ver. 52. *Then said Jesus unto him, &c.*] That is, unto Peter, *put up again thy sword into its place, or sheath.* This Christ said not only to rebuke Peter for his rashness, but to soften the minds of the multitude, who must be enraged at such an action; and which was still more effectually done by his healing the man's ear: and indeed, had it not been for these words, and this action of Christ's; and more especially had it not been owing to the powerful influence Christ had over the spirits of these men, in all probability Peter, and the rest of the apostles, had been all destroyed at once. *For all they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword.* This is not to be understood of magistrates who bear not the sword in vain, are ministers of God for good, and revengers of evil works; but of private persons that use the sword, and that not in self-defence, but for private revenge; or engage in a quarrel, to which they are not called; and such generally perish, as Peter must have done, had it not been for the interposition of almighty power. Though this seems to be spoken not so much of Peter, and of the danger he exposed himself to, by taking and using the sword, and so to deter him from it, but rather of these his enemies; and as an argument to make and keep Peter easy and quiet, and exercise patience, since, in a little time, God would avenge himself of them; and that the Jews, who now made use of the sword of the Roman soldiers, would perish by the sword of the Romans, as in a few years after the whole nation did.

Ver. 53. *Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my father, &c.*] Meaning, if he thought proper, or that there was any necessity for it, or that he was desirous of being rescued out of such hands he was falling into. This must be understood of him as man: for, as God, the angels were his creatures and ministering servants, whom he had the command of himself, and so had no need, as such, to pray to his father to detach a number of them to his assistance, and which, as man, he could only want. *And he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels.* A Roman legion consisted of about six thousand soldiers, or upwards; some add six hundred sixty-six; and others make the number far greater. Twelve are mentioned, either with respect to the twelve apostles; or in allusion, as others think, to the Roman militia; a proper and full army with them consisting of such a number of legions: and that there is an innumerable company of angels, thousand thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, is certain; and the Persic version here reads, *twelve myriads* of legions; and that these are at the command of God, and he can dispatch them at once, on any emergent occasion, is very evident; and what is it that such a company of

angels is not capable of, when a single angel slew in one night an hundred, fourscore, and five thousand men, 2 Kings xix. 35. wherefore had Christ had any inclination to have been rescued from the present danger, he stood in no need of Peter's sword.

Ver. 54. *But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, &c.*] That is, should Christ make such a request to his father, and he should grant it, and an host of angels should be sent to rescue him, and he should be rescued by them; how then should the Scriptures, which speak of Christ's being taken, and led as a lamb to the slaughter, and of his various sufferings, and the circumstances of them, have their accomplishment? *declaring*, as the Arabic version supplies, or as the Ethiopic version, *which say, that thus it must be*; that the Messiah must be apprehended, and suffer, and die. The several parts of the sufferings of the Messiah are foretold in the writings of the Old Testament; the spirit of Christ, in the prophets, testified before-hand of them; as that he should be reproached and despised of men, Psal. xxii. 6, 7, 8. Isa. liii. 3. be spit upon, smote, and buffeted, Isa. l. 5, 6. Mic. v. 1. be put to death, Psal. xxii. 15. Isa. liii. 12. and that the death of the cross, Psal. xxii. 15, 16. Zech. xii. 10. and be buried, Isa. liii. 9. and also the several circumstances of his sufferings, which led on to them, or attended them; as the selling him for thirty pieces of silver, Zech. xi. 12, 13. they betraying him by one of his familiar friends, Psal. xli. 9. the seizing and apprehending him, and which is particularly referred to here, Isa. liii. 7, 8. his disciples forsaking him, Zech. xiii. 7. and even his God and father, Psal. xxii. 1. his suffering between two thieves, Isa. liii. 12. the parting of his garments, and casting lots on his vesture, Psal. xxii. 18. the giving him gall and vinegar when on the cross, Psal. lxix. 21. and not breaking any of his bones, Psal. xxxiv. 20. yea, the Scriptures not only declared, that these things should be; but the necessity of them also, that they *must be*; because of the purposes and decrees of God, which are eternal, immutable, and unfrustrable; for as God had determined on his salvation of his people by Christ, and that through his sufferings and death, these were determined by him also, even the time, nature, manner, and circumstances of them; and which the Scriptures declare, and therefore must be likewise; and because of the covenant of grace, which is sure, unalterable, and unchangeable; in which Christ agreed to assume human nature, to obey, suffer, and die in it, and so do his father's will, which was to bear the penalty of the law, and undergo the sufferings of death, and which therefore must be, or Christ's faithfulness fail. Moreover, on account of the law and justice of God, which required his bearing the curse, as well as fulfilling the precept of the law: and especially on account of the salvation of his people, which could not be effected without them, they must be. Christ, in these words, discovers a very great concern for the fulfilling of Scripture; and that because it is the word of God, which must not be broken; and because throughout it he is spoken of, in the volume of it, it is written of him, to do the

will of God; even in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms: and besides, he was the minister of the circumcision, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; and even agreeably to them, and upon the foundation of them, he had himself predicted his own sufferings: and as those were to be the rule of the faith and practice of his people in all ages, he was concerned for their accomplishment in every punctilio; and which may teach us to value the Scriptures, and to be confident of the fulfilment of them in things yet future.

Ver. 55. *In that same hour said Jesus to the multitude, &c.*] That is, to the heads and chief of them, the chief priests, captains of the temple, and elders, as Luke says, ch. xxii. 52. for though it was in the dead of the night, and the company such, as they would not have chose to have been seen in at another time; yet so intent were they upon this affair, that they could not satisfy themselves without being in it, and seeing the issue of it; and this the Jews themselves confirm in their account; for they say<sup>o</sup>, that the elders of Jerusalem took Jesus, and brought him to the city. Now in that same hour, immediately, that very moment, that Christ had made an end of rebuking Peter for his rash action, and reasoning with him upon it, he turned and addressed himself to these men, saying; *are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves, for to take me?* as an highwayman, or notorious robber, that had done great mischief to the country; and being armed, and having associates, was not easy to be taken: the Syriac renders it, as a cut-throat: and the Persic, as a robber, and a cut-throat; a desperate villain, that would by no means yield, unless overpowered by numbers, by force of arms, by the dint of the sword, by knocks and blows: but how different from this, was the character of Jesus! who never did any injury to any man's person or property, but saved both; was meek, lowly, and humble in his deportment, throughout the whole of his life; never strove with men, or cried, and caused his voice, in any riotous manner, to be heard in the streets; and even when reviled, reviled not again, but took every insult patiently; and was now unarmed, and ready to submit at once; nay, before they could well come up to him, he asked them who they sought; and on mentioning his name, declared he was the person; and signified he was ready to surrender himself, only desired his disciples might have leave to go away: he adds, *I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.* The business he was employed in, was not thieving and stealing, but teaching; and that wholesome doctrine, which he, as man, had received from his father, and as the great prophet in Israel taught; and with such power and authority, as the Scribes and Pharisees did not: the place where he taught, was the temple; not a corner, or a private place, but a place of public worship, and of public resort: the time when he taught there, was the day-time, and day by day; for some days past, it had been his custom in the day-time to teach in the temple, and at night to go out, and abide in the Mount of Olives; and his continuance day by day in

<sup>o</sup> Toldos Jeshu, p. 17.

the temple, or his constant teaching there, is signified by sitting daily there, and teaching; unless it should be thought rather to have regard to the posture in which he taught; see Matt. v. 1. And yet, though this had been his common practice for some days past, and at other times before, yet no man laid hands on him then; which was not wanting to a good will in them, who were very desirous of it, and sought every opportunity to do it, but were prevented; either through fear of the people, or through Christ's making his escape from them; and particularly, by the singular providence and power of God, which restrained them, because his time was not yet come. However, Christ suggests by this, that they had no need to take such extraordinary methods to apprehend him, as to make use of one of his disciples to betray him; to come in the middle of the night to take him, and that in such great numbers, and with swords and staves, when he was every day with them in the temple.

Ver. 56. *But all this was done, that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled, &c.*] Some have thought these to be the words of the evangelist, making this remark upon what was said and done; but by what both Mark and Luke record, Mark xiv. 49. Luke xxii. 53. they appear to be the words of Christ himself; who observes this, partly to make himself, as man, easy under the treatment he met with; and partly, to fortify the minds of his disciples against offence at it; and also to throw conviction, or confusion, into the minds of his enemies. The Scriptures of the prophets he refers to, as having, or about to have, by this conduct, their accomplishment, were such, as regarded the betraying him by Judas, the taking him in this secret, private, insidious, yet violent manner; in all which he shewed great meekness, calmness, and submission, as Psal. xli. 9. Lam. iv. 20. Isa. liii. 7, 8. As also what respected the scattering, and hasty flight of his disciples from him, Zech. xiii. 7. which in the next clause is shewn to be accomplished. *Then all the disciples forsook him and fled;* not only went away from him, and left him alone, as he foretold they would, John xvi. 32. but they ran away from him in a precipitant manner, like timorous sheep, the shepherd being about to be smitten; and they fearing, lest Peter's rash action should be imputed to them all, and they suffer for it; or lest they should be laid hold on next, and bound, as their master was, or about to be. Every thing in this account is an aggravation of their pusillanimity, and ingratitude; as that they were the *disciples* of Christ that forsook him, whom he had called, and sent forth as his apostles to preach his Gospel; and to whom he had given extraordinary gifts and powers; who had forsaken all and followed him, and had been with him from the beginning; had heard all his excellent discourses, and had seen all his miracles, and yet these at last forsake him, and even *all* of them: John the beloved disciple, that leaned on his bosom, and Peter, that professed so much love to him, zeal for him, and

faith in him; the three that had just seen him in his agony and bloody sweat, and every one of them left him; not one stood by him, and this too, after they had had a fresh instance of his power, in striking the men to the ground, that came to take him; and when he was suing for them with their enemies, to let them go peaceably and safely: so that they had no need to have fled in such haste; and to leave him *then*, in the midst of his enemies, in his great distress and trouble, was very unkind and ungrateful: and to this account of the evangelist, pretty much agrees what the Jews themselves say of it; for they report<sup>p</sup>, that "when his disciples saw that he was taken, and that they " could not fight against them, *ירוצו ברגליהם, they " ran away on foot, and lift up their voice and wept " greatly."* Though they also pretend, that the citizens of Jerusalem killed many of them, and that the rest fled to the mountain, which is false.

Ver. 57. *And they that had laid hold on Jesus, &c.*] Who were the band, and the captain, and the officers of the Jews, as John xviii. 12. or as the Jews themselves say<sup>q</sup>, the elders of Jerusalem; who not only laid fast hold on him, but bound him; and that both for greater security of him, some of them perhaps knowing how he had made his escape from them formerly; or at least taking the hint from Judas, to hold him fast, and lead him away safely; and by way of reproach and contempt, thereby shewing that he was a malefactor, and had done some crime worthy of bonds; and having him thus in fast and safe custody, they led him away to Caiaphas, the high-priest; who was high-priest that year; for the priesthood was frequently changed in those times, and men were put into it by the Roman governor, through favour or bribery. The year before this, Simeon, or Simon ben Cambith, was high-priest; and the year before that, Eleazar, the son of Ananus; and before him, Ishmael ben Phabi, who were all three, successively, made high-priests by the Roman governor: as was also this Caiaphas, this year; and who by Josephus<sup>r</sup>, and in the Talmud<sup>s</sup> likewise, is called Joseph. From whence he had his name Caiaphas, is not certain: Jerom<sup>t</sup> says, it signifies a searcher, or a sagacious person; but may be better interpreted, he adds, one that vomits at the mouth; deriving the word, as I suppose, from *קיא*, to vomit, and *פא*, the mouth; see the note on ver. 13. It was to the house, or palace of this man, the high-priest, that Jesus was led; where the Scribes and elders were assembled: a council was held about a week before this, in which Caiaphas assisted, and then gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient, that one man should die for the people, John xi. 47, 49, 50. whether that was held at his house, or elsewhere, is not certain, very probably it might; however, it is clear from ver. 2. 3. of this chapter, that two days ago, the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, were assembled together in his palace, to consult about putting Jesus to death; and here they were again met together on the same account, waiting to have him brought before them.

<sup>p</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 16, 17.

<sup>q</sup> Ib.

<sup>r</sup> Antiq. l. 18. c. 14.

<sup>s</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 47. 1.

<sup>t</sup> De Heb. nominibus, fol. 104. col. 4. Tom. 3.

Ver. 58. *But Peter followed him afar off, &c.*] The Ethiopic version adds, *alone*; and which seems to be the true case; for though there was another disciple who also followed Jesus, and is thought to be John, yet it looks as if they followed him separately, and not together; for the other disciple went into the palace with Jesus, but Peter not till afterwards, being espied by his fellow disciple standing without. These two it seems, having a little recovered themselves from the fright they had been put into, stopped and turned back, and followed after Jesus, to see what would be the issue of things. Peter's following Christ, shewed love to him; he was loth to leave him, his bowels moved towards him, and he wanted to know how it would fare with him, and what would become of him; and yet keeping at a distance, following him afar off, betrayed fear, lest he should be observed, and taken up, and come into danger: however, he proceeded on his way in a slow pace, till he came *unto the high-priest's palace, and went in and sat with the servants, to see the end*; of the matter, or business, as the Ethiopic and Persic versions add; to see how it would go with him, whether he would exert his divine power, and deliver himself out of their hands, which he knew he was able to do, when he would again join him; or what punishment they would inflict upon him, whether they would scourge him, and then let him go; or whether they would sentence him to death; that so he might know how to provide for his own safety: all which was indulging curiosity, and the carnal reasonings of his mind; and it shewed want of integrity at that time, and some degree of hypocrisy, in placing himself among the servants of the high-priest, as if he was none of the followers of Jesus, but was of the same complexion and cast with them: he had got into bad company, and was in the way of temptation; and though he had no design in following Jesus, and in going into the high-priest's palace, and seating himself among the servants to deny his Lord, yet all this led on to it; for which reason these several circumstances are taken notice of, the account of which denial of his, is afterwards related.

Ver. 59. *Now the chief priests and elders, and all the counsel, &c.*] Or sanhedrim, which consisted, as the Jewish writers say<sup>a</sup>, of priests, Levites, and Israelites, of both ecclesiastics and laics; the ecclesiastics were the priests and Levites, and the laics the Israelites, or elders of the people; for if priests and Levites could not be found, a sanhedrim might consist of those only; and so those words in Deut. xxi. 2. *thy elders*, are thus interpreted<sup>b</sup>, וְזֶה בֵּית דִּין חֲדָשׁ, this is the great sanhedrim; and though a king of Israel might not sit in the sanhedrim, yet an high-priest might, if he was a man of wisdom<sup>c</sup>, and it seems as if Caiaphas was now at the head of this council, by its being assembled at his palace; which though it was not the usual place where they met, yet might be chose at this time for greater secrecy. Now these thus assembled together, *sought false witness against*

*Jesus, to put him to death*; they first take him up, and then seek out for witnesses against him; being determined, right or wrong, to put him to death, if possible; and false witnesses too, even those whose business it was, to examine and detect false witnesses, and to inflict the same punishment upon them, which they by their false testimony intended to have brought on another, Deut. xix. 18, 19. And besides, it was in the night, when it was forbid by their canons to begin the trial of capital causes, or to receive and admit of witnesses<sup>d</sup>. Indeed the Syriac and Persic versions read, *only witnesses, or witness, and leave out the word false*; perhaps imagining, that men could never be so wicked, to seek out for false witnesses: but this need not be wondered at, when these men were bent upon the death of Christ at any rate; and were aware that nothing true could be objected to him, that would legally take away his life; and besides, their manner of procedure in judgment against a false prophet, a deceiver, and one that enticed to idolatry, and such an one they would have Jesus to be, was quite different from what they took with other persons: their canon runs thus<sup>e</sup>: "the judgment of a deceiver, is not as the rest of capital judgments; his witnesses are hid; and he has no need, or ought not to have any premonition, or warning, as the rest of those that are put to death; and if he goes out of the sanhedrim acquitted, and one says I can prove the charge against him, they turn him back; but if he goes out condemned, and one says I can prove him innocent, they don't return him." So in the Misna<sup>f</sup> 'tis said, "of all that are condemned to death in the law, none have their witnesses hidden but this (the deceiver, or one that entices to idolatry)—and they hide his witnesses behind a wall, or hedge; and he (whom he endeavoured to seduce) says to him, say what thou hast said to me privately; and if he repeats it to him, he must say, how shall we leave our God that is in heaven, and go and serve stocks and stones! if he repents, 'tis well; but if he should say, so we are bound to do, and so it becomes us, they that stand behind the wall, or hedge, shall carry him to the sanhedrim and stone him." In the Gemara 'tis thus expressed<sup>g</sup>, "they light up a lamp in the innermost house, and set the witnesses in the outermost house, so that they can see him and hear his voice, and he cannot see them." And then follows what is said before, to which is added, "so they did to Ben Stada;" by whom they mean Jesus of Nazareth. Moreover, this need not seem strange, that they took such a course with Christ, when in the case of Stephen, they suborned and set up false witnesses against him. The sanhedrim cannot be thought to do this in person, but they sent out their officers to seek for such men, as could or would produce any thing against him, and no doubt promised them an handsome reward.

Ver. 60. *But found none, &c.*] That were fit for

<sup>a</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrim, c. 2. sect. 1, 2. Abarbanel in Tora, fol. 366. 2.

<sup>b</sup> T. Hieros. Sota, fol. 23. 3.

<sup>c</sup> Maimon. ib. sect. 4.

<sup>d</sup> Maimon. ib. c. 3. sect. 3, 4.

<sup>e</sup> Ib. c. 11. sect. 5.

<sup>f</sup> Sanhedrim, c. 7. sect. 10.

<sup>g</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 67. 1.

their purpose; *yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none*; whose testimonies were sufficient to put him to death, which was what they were resolved upon, or whose witness were not alike and agreed; for according to their law, a man must not die by the mouth of one witness only, but by the mouth of two or three witnesses agreed in a point; and though they might be willing enough to dispense with the law in this case, yet might have some regard to their own character and reputation; and especially as they meant to deliver him to the Roman governor, in order to be condemned by him; they knew they must have a charge, and this supported with a proper evidence, or they could not hope to succeed; for which reason, they could not put up, as they otherwise willingly would, with any sort of witnesses: *at the last came two false witnesses*; who were agreed in a point, and whose testimonies were alike; at least, had a greater appearance of truth and agreement than the rest; though Mark says, ch. xiv. 59. *neither so did their witnesses agree together*, as to prove the point, for which it was given.

Ver. 61. *And said, this fellow said, &c.*] Or *saith*, as De Dieu observes, the Syriac version of this place should be rendered; that is, he has not only said in times past, referring to John ii. 19. but continues to say it, and glory in it: *I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days*; in which they did injury, both to his words and sense: he did not say, *I am able to destroy the temple*, but only said, *destroy this temple*; signifying neither his power, nor his will and inclination to it; but put it upon the Jews, and left it to them to do it: nor did he say one word about the temple of God, or as it is in Mark, *this temple that is made with hands*; the temple at Jerusalem, which was made by the hands of men, and devoted to the worship of God; but only *this temple*, referring to his body, or human nature; in which he, the son of God, dwelt, as in a temple; nor did he say that he was able to build it in three days, but that he would raise it up in three days; intending the resurrection of his body by his own power, after it had been dead three days; and so they perverted his sense, as well as mis-recited his words; applying that to the material temple at Jerusalem, what he spoke of the temple of his body, and of its resurrection from the dead, on the third day; designing hereby to fix a charge, both of sacrilege and sorcery upon him: of sacrilege, in having a design upon the temple of God to destroy it; and of sorcery, or familiarity with the devil, and having assistance from him, or knowledge of the magic art, that he could pretend in three days to rebuild a temple, which had been forty and six years in building; and was what could never be done, but by the help of Beelzebub, the prince of devils, by whom it was insinuated he did all his miracles.

Ver. 62. *And the high-priest arose and said unto him, &c.*] He rose up from his seat in great wrath and anger; partly being vexed, that they could get no other and better testimony; and partly because of

Christ's contemptuous silence, giving no answer to the witnesses, as judging they deserved none; and which highly provoked the high-priest, and therefore in passion said, *answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?* Is it true or false, right or wrong? The Vulgate Latin renders it, *dost thou answer nothing to those things which these witness against thee?* To which agree the Arabic version, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel.

Ver. 63. *But Jesus held his peace, &c.*] Knowing it would signify nothing, whatever he should say, they being set upon his death, the time of which was now come; and therefore he quietly submits, and says nothing in his own defence to prevent it. To be silent in a court of judicature, Apollonius Tyanæus<sup>c</sup> says, is the fourth virtue; this Christ had, and all others: *and the high-priest answered and said unto him*; though Christ had said nothing, a way of speaking very frequent among the Jews, and in the sacred writings: *I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the son of God*; the Christ, the anointed, that David speaks of in the second Psalm, and who is there said to be the son of God, Psal. ii. 2, 7. to which the high-priest seems to have respect; since there is no other passage, in which both these characters meet; and which was understood by the ancient Jews of the Messiah, as is owned by modern ones<sup>d</sup>. Jesus was given out to be the Messiah, and his disciples believed him to be the son of God, and he had affirmed himself to be so; wherefore the high-priest, exerting his priestly power and authority, puts him upon his oath; or at least with an oath made by the living God, charges him to tell the truth, and which when ever any heard the voice of swearing, he was obliged to do, Lev. v. 1.

Ver. 64. *Jesus saith unto him, thou hast said, &c.*] That is, thou hast said right; or as Mark expresses it, *I am*, ch. xiv. 62. the Christ, the anointed of God, who was so from everlasting, and in time; being before the world was, installed into, and invested with the office of mediator; and in the fulness of time, anointed with the holy spirit without measure: he might truly say he was the Messiah, since all the characters of him in the books of the prophets, met in him; and all the miracles he was to work in proof of his Messiahship were wrought by him: as also that he was the son of God, not by creation, as angels and men; nor by adoption, as saints; nor as man, or in the human nature, in which he was the son of man, and not the son of God; nor was he begotten as man, whereas he is called the only-begotten son, and the begotten of the father; and was he the son of God as man, not the first, but the third person must be his father; besides, he was the son of God before his incarnation: nor as mediator neither; he was the son of God, antecedent to his office as mediator; his sonship is distinct from it, is an illustration of it, and what puts virtue into it; but he is so as God, as a divine person, by natural and eternal filiation; being begotten of the father in the divine essence, and of the same nature; and having the

<sup>c</sup> Philostrot. Vita Apollonii, l. 8. c. 1.

<sup>d</sup> Jarchi & Aben Ezra in Paal. ii. 1. & Kimchi in ver. 12.

same perfections with him, and in all things equal to him; and is the sense in which he always affirmed God to be his father, and himself to be his son. For this phrase, *thou hast said*, as answering to an affirmation, *I am*, see the note on ver. 35. Now, though Christ had so fully answered to the adjuration, and so strongly affirmed himself to be the Messiah, the son of God, yet he knew they would not believe; and therefore refers them to an after-proof thereof, which whether they would or no, would oblige them to acknowledge the whole: *nevertheless, I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the son of man, sitting at the right hand of power*: the Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel, read the *power of God*, as in Luke xxii. 69. though it is not absolutely necessary; for *power* designes God himself, who is all powerful; as appears by the creation of all things out of nothing, the upholding of all things in their being, the redemption of men, the conversion of sinners, and the preservation of his saints. In the Jewish writings<sup>a</sup>, God is frequently called, *הַגְּבוּרָה*, the *power*: such a thing, say they, we have heard, *כְּפִי הַגְּבוּרָה*, from the mouth of power, or *might*; that is, from God himself: and so he is by the Grecians called *δυναμις*, *power*<sup>f</sup>: by the son of man, is meant Christ in the human nature; who then appeared at their bar as a mere man, in a very despicable form and condition, but hereafter they should see him in a more glorious one, and at the right hand of God: a phrase expressive of his exaltation, above all creatures whatever: respect is had to the prophecy of him in Psal. cx. 1. *Sitting* there, denotes his having done his work; and his continuance in his exalted state, until all enemies are subdued under him: and when he says they should see him, his meaning is not, that they should see him at the right hand of God with their bodily eyes, as Stephen did; but that they should, or at least might, see and know by the effects, that he was set down at the right hand of God; as by the pouring forth of the holy spirit upon his disciples, on the day of pentecost; by the wonderful spread of his Gospel, and the success of it, notwithstanding all the opposition made by them, and others; and particularly, by the vengeance he should take on their nation, city, and temple; and which may be more especially designed in the next clause; and coming in the clouds of heaven. So Christ's coming to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, as it is often called the coming of the son of man, is described in this manner, Matt. xxiv. 27, 30. Though this may also be understood of Christ's second coming to judgment, at the last day; when as he went up to heaven in a cloud, he will return, and come also in the clouds of heaven; see Acts i. 9, 11. Rev. i. 7. when he'll be seen by the eyes of all, good and bad; and when this sanhedrim, before whom he now was, will see him also, and confess that he is Lord and Christ,

and the son of God. Though the former clause seems to have regard to what would quickly come to pass, and what they should soon observe, and be convinced of; for *אחרי*, rendered *hereafter*, may be translated *henceforward*; or as it is in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, *from this time*; meaning, that in a very little while, they should begin to see the effects of his being set down at the right hand of God, and which would be full proofs of it, and should see him come in the clouds of heaven, at the last day: reference seems to be had to Dan. vii. 13. where one like unto the son of man is said to come in the clouds of heaven, and which is understood of the Messiah by many, both of the ancient and modern Jews<sup>g</sup>: with whom one of his names is *Anani*<sup>h</sup>, which signifies *clouds*.

Ver. 65. *Then the high-priest rent his clothes, &c.*] Both his outer and inner garments. This he did, to shew his zeal for the honour and glory of God, his grief and concern at the profanation of his holy name by a false oath, and his abhorrence of, and indignation at the blasphemy he supposed Christ to be guilty of, in asserting himself to be the son of God. Some have thought, that Caiaphas in this action, transgressed the law, in Lev. xxi. 10. where it is said, that the high-priest—shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes: and it is one of the Jews' negative precepts<sup>i</sup>, that “an high-priest is prohibited, *לְעַלְמָא*, ever to rend “his garments:” and that therefore being transported with passion at the greatness of the supposed crime, could not forbear expressing his detestation of it in this manner, though it was forbidden him: but it does not appear to have been unlawful: as for the law in Leviticus, it only regards the rending of garments at funerals, or in mourning for the dead, as the context shews; and so Jonathan ben Uzziel paraphrases the text, *nor rent his clothes*: *בְּשַׁעַת אֲנִיָּו*, in the time of mourning; and so the Jewish<sup>k</sup> interpreters, in general, expound it; and besides, this prohibition, according to them, only regards the manner of rending: their rule is this<sup>l</sup>; “an high-priest rends below, and a common person above:” the sense of which, according to their commentators, is<sup>m</sup>, “that if any one dies for whom an high-priest “is obliged to rend his garments, he must rend below, at the extreme part of his garment, near his feet; and as for what is written, *nor rend his clothes*; the meaning is, he shall not rend as “other men do, above, over-against the breast, near the “shoulder, as the rest of the people.” Moreover, a priest might not go into the sanctuary, nor perform any part of service with his clothes rent; the canon runs thus<sup>n</sup>; “the judgment, or the law of them that rend their garment, and of those that uncover the head, is one and the same, as it is said, Levit. x. 6. lo! if he is in service, and rends his garments, he is guilty of death “by the hands of heaven; though his service is right, “and not profaned.” And indeed no man, whether a

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 94. 1. & Horayot, fol. 9. 1. Debarim Rabba, fol. 245. 4. Maimon. Hilch. Memarim, c. 5. sect. 15. & Melachim, c. 8. sect. 10. & alibi passim.

<sup>f</sup> Sententiæ Secundi, p. 21. Ed. Gale.

<sup>g</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 85. 4. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 33. fol. 209. 4. R. Jeshuah in Aben Ezra, in Dan. vii. 13. & Jarchi & Saadiah Gaon in loc.

<sup>h</sup> Targum in 1 Chron. iii. 24. & Beckius in ib. Midrash Tillim apud Galatin. de arcan. Cathol. ver. l. 10. c. 1.

<sup>i</sup> Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Toræ, pr. neg. 302.

<sup>k</sup> Jarchi, Aben Ezra, &c. in loc.

<sup>l</sup> Misn. Horayot, c. 3. sect. 5.

<sup>m</sup> Barteuora & Maimon. in ib.

<sup>n</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Biath Hamikdash, c. 1. sect. 14, 17.

priest or an Israelite, might go into the temple with his clothes rent; and a priest might not rend his sacerdotal garments, on any account; yet such were not these that Caiaphas now had on; but in case of hearing blasphemy, every one, be he what he would, was obliged to rend his garments: "Whosoever hears the cursing of the name (of God) is obliged to rend, even at the cursing of the surnames he is obliged to rend; and he that hears it from an Israelite, both he that hears, and he that hears from the mouth of him that hears, he is obliged to rend; but he that hears from the mouth of a Gentile, is not obliged to rend; and Eliakim and Shebna would not have rent, but because Rabshakeh was an apostate." So when witnesses expressed the blasphemy of such they testified against, the judges were obliged to rise up and rend their garments; concerning which, take the following rule: "a blasphemer is not guilty, unless he expresses the name (of God); says R. Joshua ben Korcha, all the day the witnesses are examined by the surnames; but when the cause is finished, they don't put to death because of the surnames, but they bring every man out, and ask the chief among them, and say to him, say expressly what thou hast heard, and he says it: then the judges stand upon their feet, *וקרעו*, and rend their garments, and do not sow them up again; and then the second and the third say, I have heard the same as he." From all which it appears, that Caiaphas did what was the custom of the nation to do in such a case. The observation, that some learned men have made, that the high-priest's rending his garments, was, though without his intention, an emblem and presage, of the rending of the priesthood from him, and his brethren, and the entire change of it; as the abolition of the whole ceremonial law, was signified by the rending of the vail of the temple in twain; and as the removing of the kingdom from Saul, was represented by Samuel's rending his mantle; and the revolt of the ten tribes to Jeroboam, by Abijah's rending his garment into twelve pieces, and giving ten to him; would have had a much better foundation to be built on, were these clothes that Caiaphas rent, his priestly ones: but such they were not; for both the high-priest, and the other priests, only wore their sacerdotal garments in the temple; nor was it lawful for them to go out in them elsewhere; for so the Jews say<sup>2</sup>; "it is forbidden to go out into the province, city, or country, in the garments of the priest-hood; but in the sanctuary, whether in the time of service, or not in the time of service, it was lawful." In the temple, there were chests on purpose for the garments of the priests; from whence they took them, and where they laid them up when they had performed their service: of these there were ninety-six in number; for as there were twenty-four courses, there were four chests for every course; in which the garments were put by themselves, the breeches by themselves, the girdles by themselves, the bonnets by themselves, and the coats by themselves; sealed up with an inscrip-

tion on them, shewing what was in them: and when the men that belonged to such a course, came to perform their service in turn, they opened these chests, and clothed themselves: and when they went out of their service, they put them up in them again, and sealed them; and as for "the high-priest, he left his golden garments, *בלשכה שלו*, in his chamber, (an apartment in the temple, peculiar to him, and for this use,) in the night, and at whatsoever time he went out of the sanctuary." Nor might he go abroad with them, unless *לצורך גדול*, in great necessity<sup>1</sup>; as Simeon the Just went out in priestly garments to meet Alexander the Great, to appease him, being warned of God so to do: hence the Apostle Paul knew not Ananias the high-priest, Acts xxiii. 5. which he must have done, had he had on his priestly garments: for when the priests were not in the temple, and out of service, they wore no distinguishing habits, but were dressed as laics, and as the common people were. The reason of Caiaphas's rending his clothes, is expressed in the next clause, saying, *he hath spoken blasphemy*: not only because Jesus asserted that he was the Messiah, but also the son of God; hereby making himself equal with God, which is the sense in which the Jews always understood this phrase; and he appearing to them to be but a mere man, they charged it as blasphemy against God, to assume such a character and relation to himself: *what further need have we of witnesses?* of seeking after others, as they had done: or of further examining and taking the depositions of those, who were before them: he was for putting a stop to the process, and bringing the cause at once to an issue: and therefore addresses the court in the following manner; *behold now, ye have heard his blasphemy*: out of his own mouth, as Luke, ch. xxii. 71. expresses it; and with their own ears, and at that very time; so that they had no need of recourse to things past, or examine witnesses about what they had heard from him formerly: and therefore he proposes, that they would attend to, and take notice of his present words; and which, as he suggests, were shocking and astonishing: for the word, *behold!* may not only be a note of attention, but of astonishment.

Ver. 66. *What think ye? &c.*] Of the words just now spoken by him; do not they in your opinion amount to a charge of blasphemy? and what punishment do you think ought to be inflicted on him? is he guilty of death, or no? This question he put, as being president of the court: *they answered and said, he is guilty of death*; they were unanimous in their vote, for Mark says, *they all condemned him to be guilty of death*; only Joseph of Arimathea must be excepted, who consented not to their counsel and deed, Luke xxiii. 51. and so must Nicodemus, if he was present; who seeing what they were determined to do, withdrew themselves before the question came to be put, and so it passed *nemine contradicente*; and indeed, if he had been guilty of blasphemy, as they charged him, the sentence would have been right. Now this was in the night, in which

<sup>1</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Obede Cochabim, c. 2. sect. 10. Vid. T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 85. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Misu. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 5.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 69. 1. & Tamid, fol. 27. 2.

NEW TEST.—VOL. I.

<sup>1</sup> Maim. Tamid, c. 5. sect. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 8, 9, 10.

<sup>3</sup> Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Toras, pr. affirm. 172.

<sup>4</sup> Maimon. ib. c. 10. sect. 4. Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 15.

they begun, carried on, and finished this judicial procedure, quite contrary to one of their own canons<sup>w</sup>, which runs thus: "pecuniary causes they try in the day, and finish in the night; capital causes (such as was this) they try in the day, and finish in the day; pecuniary causes they finish the same day, whether for absolution, or condemnation; capital causes they finish the same day for absolution, and the day following for condemnation; wherefore they do not try causes neither on the sabbath eve, nor on the eve of a feast-day." But in this case, they begun the trial in the night, examined the witnesses, finished it, and passed the sentence of condemnation, and that in the eve of a grand festival, their Chagigah.

Ver. 67. *Then did they spit in his face, &c.*] Not the judges, the members of the sanhedrim, but the servants of the high-priest, and the officers that had Jesus in hold, and were the guard upon him; see Luke xxii. 63. who seeing him condemned as guilty of death, thought they might insult him at pleasure, and use him in the most indecent and barbarous manner; and therefore, in a way of contempt, spit in his face; than which nothing was more reproachful and disgraceful: the Jews<sup>x</sup> say, that he that spits before, or in the presence of his master, is guilty of death, so nauseous and filthy was it accounted; and how much more must it be so, to spit in the face of any one? hereby a prophecy was fulfilled, Isa. l. 6. *I hid not my face from shame and spitting*; and hereby, together with his sweat and blood, his visage was more marred than any man's, and his form than the sons of men: *and buffeted him*; cuffed, or boxed him with their double fists: *and others smote him with the palms of their hands*; gave him many a slap on the face with their open hands, or struck him on the face with rods, as the word will bear to be rendered: they rapped him with the wands they had in their hands, and struck him on the head with the rods or staves they had with them; whereby was accomplished the prophecy, in Mic. v. 1. *they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek*. This was very injurious treatment, the Jews themselves being witnesses; who have in their canons enjoined<sup>y</sup>, that "if a man strikes his neighbour with his double fist, he must give him a shekel; R. Judah says, on account of R. Jose the Galilean, a pound: if he gives him a slap of the face, he must pay him two hundred zuzim, or pence; and if with the back of his hand (which was accounted<sup>z</sup> the more ignominious) four hundred zuzim: if he plucked him by his ear, or plucked off his hair, or spit, so as that the spittle came upon him, or took away his cloak—he must pay four hundred zuzim, and all according to his honour or dignity." All these indignities were done to Christ; see Isa. l. 6.

Ver. 68. *Saying, prophesy unto us, thou Christ, &c.*] Not that they owned him to be the Messiah; but because he asserted himself to be the Messiah, and his followers believed in him as such, they call him so; and in an ironical and sarcastic way, call upon him to

divine, and tell them who the persons were, that used him in this manner; suggesting, that if he was the Christ, or Messiah, he would know all things, and what were done to him: *who is he that smote thee?* for they had covered his face, or blindfolded him, as the other Evangelists say, and then bid him tell them who smote him last. Christ did not think fit to give them an answer to this question, but he will let them know hereafter, who the particular person, or persons were, that smote him; and when it will appear to all the churches, and to all the world, that he is the Lord God omniscient. Some learned men have observed<sup>a</sup>, that there was a play formerly used, called by the ancients, *καλλεσις*, at which, one person having his face covered, the rest smote him; or one put his hands over his eyes, and another smote, and asked him who it was that smote? and such an exercise is yet in being among us, which is commonly called *Blind-man's Buff*; and such pastime as this the Jews had with Christ; in this ludicrous way did they use him, and made him their sport and diversion, as the Philistines did Sampson; but it will cost them dear another day.

Ver. 69. *Now Peter sat without in the palace, &c.*] Peter's denial of his Lord, the account of which follows, is related among the sufferings of Christ; and indeed, the ill usage he met with from his enemies, their spitting in his face, buffeting him with their fists, smiting him on the cheeks with their hands, and rods, did not give him so much pain and grief, as to be denied by his own disciple: we are before told, ver. 58. that Peter followed Christ afar off, and went into the high-priest's palace, and sat with the servants there, to see what would be the end and issue of these things: and here now he was in the apartment, where the council sat, and were examining and trying Jesus; though, as Mark says, *beneath in the palace*; in the lower part of the room, in the great hall, in the midst of which the servants had made a fire: the Arabic version reads it, *in the area of the court*: here Peter had placed himself, and here he sat making his observations: *and a damsel came unto him*; one of the maids of the high-priest, as Mark says; and according to the Evangelist John, was she that kept the door, and had let him in, *saying, thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee*. The Arabic and Persic versions read, *Jesus the Nazarene, or of Nazareth*, as below. So she called him, not so much to distinguish him from any other of that name, as by way of reproach; suggesting, that he could not be the Messiah, or that prophet; since Christ comes not out of Galilee, nor does any prophet arise from thence: and when she charges him with being *with him*, her meaning is not, that he was with him in the garden, when he was taken; where it can't be thought she was to see him; nor with him in the temple, or in any part of Jerusalem, where she possibly might have seen him; but that he was a disciple of his, one that believed in him, embraced him as the Messiah, had imbibed his principles and doctrines, and was of his party; and was only come thither as a spy, to see what would be done to him.

<sup>w</sup> Misan. Sanhedrin, c. 4. sect. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 13. sect. 1, 2. T. Hieros. Yom Tob, fol. 63. 1.

<sup>x</sup> T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 99. 1.

<sup>y</sup> Misan. Bava Kama, c. 8. sect. 6.

<sup>a</sup> Maimon. & Bartenors in ib.

<sup>b</sup> Branni Select. Sacr. l. 5. Exerc. 2. sect. 38. p. 622, 623. & Capell. in loc. e Polluce, l. 9. c. 7.



Ver. 70. *But he denied before them all, &c.*] Which was a very great aggravation of his sin; for, as it is to a man's commendation to profess a good profession of Christ before many witnesses, so it is to his disgrace, and is resented by Christ, to deny him before men: he did not deny that Christ was God, or the son of God, or that he was come in the flesh, or that Jesus was the Christ, or that he was the only Saviour of sinners; but that he was with him, or one of his disciples; *saying, I know not what thou sayest*: which was a very great falsehood; he knew the sense and import of her words; he denied that which was most true; he had been with him from the beginning, had heard all his discourses, and seen his miracles; he had been with him at particular times, and in particular places, when and where some others of the disciples were not admitted, as at the raising of Jairus's daughter, at the transfiguration in the mount, and in the garden, very lately; and yet, O base ingratitude! now denies that he had been with him; or that he knew what was meant by such an expression. He denied that he was a disciple of Christ, which was his greatest character, and highest glory; and this denial did not arise from any diffidence of his being one, or from a sense of his unworthiness to be one, but from the fear of man, which brought this snare upon him; and the more his weakness is discovered in it, that he should be intimidated by a servant-maid into such a denial, who but a few hours before had confidently affirmed, that though he should die with Christ, he would not deny him; and who had so courageously drawn his sword in his master's cause, in the face of a band of soldiers, and a multitude of armed men with swords and staves. This was his first denial; a second follows.

Ver. 71. *And when he was gone out into the porch, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, *the gate*: and so does Munster's Hebrew Gospel; but more rightly it is rendered, *the porch*: he did not attempt to go out at the door, and run away, though he could gladly have done it; but he feared to do this, lest, as this would discover him, they should pursue him, and overtake him, and bring him before the sanhedrim: he chose rather to keep his ground, but was very uneasy; and therefore moved into the porch, where he sat very pensive, considering what was proper for him to do; when another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, *this fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth*: she speaks of Christ in the same contemptuous manner, as her fellow-servant had done; for this appellation of Christ was commonly, if not always used by way of contempt; and she means the same thing by his being with him, the other did, and is rather more spiteful, and bent on mischief; for, the other addressed him alone, and what she said, said to himself; but this directs her speech to the servants and officers that were near at hand, and uses him in a very scurrilous manner: this sorry fellow, that is sauntering and lurking about here, is certainly one of this man's disciples.

Ver. 72. *And again he denied with an oath, &c.*] He denied a second time, that he had ever been with Jesus, or was a disciple of his; and to put it out of all doubt, and an end to all dispute about it, and further

charge of this kind, as he hoped, he annexed an oath to it: he swore by the God of truth; made a solemn appeal to the omniscient God, the searcher of hearts, that he was so far from being ever with Jesus of Nazareth, or a disciple of his, that, says he, *I do not know the man*: meaning not only that he had no personal knowledge of him, or acquaintance with him; but that he had never seen the man in his life, nor did he know what manner of man he was. This, as it was a downright falsehood, it was what he had no need to have said; for there were multitudes that knew Christ in this sense, who never joined with him, or became his disciples. This was so much overdoing it, that it was much it had not given them a suspicion of him. Those that would excuse Peter's sin, by supposing that he meant, that he knew Christ to be God, and did not know him as a mere man, have no foundation for such a supposition; and indeed, such an ambiguous expression, and mental reservation, is no other than dealing fallaciously. Peter knew Christ in every sense; he knew him spiritually, whom to know is life eternal: and he valued the knowledge of him above all things else: he knew him to be God, and the son of God; he knew him as mediator, and the Saviour of lost sinners; he knew him as man, and had had personal intimacy and conversation with him of a long time, and yet now denies he knew him; and that with an oath, adding perjury to lying; and so it is, that one sin leads on to another. This instance of Peter's shews the wickedness and deceitfulness of man's heart; and what the best of men are, or would be, when left to themselves, and of God: they become like other men, even like the men of the world, whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.

Ver. 73. *And after a while, &c.*] Mark says, *a little after*, and Luke observes, that it was *about the space of one hour after*: so that here was time to reflect upon what he had been saying, and to guard against another temptation, should he be attacked; but, alas! as yet he was unmindful of his Lord's words, and persists in the denial of him, and that with greater aggravation, than at his first surprise: and indeed his temptation was now more violent: for there *came unto him they that stood by*; the officers and servants of the high-priest, his attendants that waited upon him, and who stood by the fire, where Peter was warming himself: before he was attacked by single maid-servants, now by a body of men, and one of them the kinsman of the man whose ear he had cut off, and who challenged him, as having seen him in the garden: and another confidently affirmed, and swore to it, that he was with Jesus, and was a Galilean; and all of them agreed in this, and said to Peter, *surely thou also art one of them, for thy speech bewrayeth thee*: not his spiritual speech, for he had not been speaking in the language of a disciple of Christ, like one that had been with Jesus; nor his swearing neither, for this rather shewed him to be one of them; but his country language, the brogue of his speech, the Galilean dialect which he spoke: for in Mark 'tis said, *thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth therunto*: for though the same language was spoken in Galilee as at Jerusalem, yet it was not so accurate and polite in Galilee, nor so well pronounced; words of different signification were con-

founded together. Hence the Talmudists say<sup>b</sup>, that “the men of Judah, who were careful of their language, their law was confirmed in their hands; the men of Galilee, who were not careful of their language, their law was not confirmed in their hands —the men of Galilee, who do not attend to language, what is reported of them? a Galilean went and said to them, *למאן אמר למאן*, they said to him “foolish Galilean, *חמור*, *Chamor* is to ride upon, or “*Chamar* is to drink, or *Hamar* is for clothing, or “*Immar* is for hiding for slaughter.” By which instances it appears, that a Galilean pronounced *Chamor*, an ass, and *Chamar*, wine, and *Hamar*, wool, and *Immar*, a lamb, all one, and the same way, without any distinction; so that it was difficult to know which of these he meant. Many other instances of the like kind are given in the same place, which shew the Galilean to be a more gross, barbarous, and impolite language, than what was spoken at Jerusalem; and Peter using this dialect, was known to be a Galilean: just as the Ephraimites were known by their pronouncing *Shibboleth*, *Sibboleth*.

Ver. 74. *Then began he to curse, and to swear, &c.*] He swore before, and now he began to curse; not Christ, as Saul compelled some to blaspheme him, who professed him, and as the Jews formerly cursed Christ, and his followers, in their synagogues: for Peter's crime was bad enough, it need not be made worse than it was: he could never call Jesus accursed; in so doing he would have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost; but he cursed himself; *he began to imprecate himself*, as the Arabic version renders it; he made dreadful imprecations and wishes; wished that all the miseries and calamities he could think of might fall upon him, if he was one of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, or knew any thing of him: saying, *I know not the man*; if I do, God do so to me, or more also: let vengeance light upon me; may I be the most miserable creature in the world, if I know any thing of him; and *immediately the cock crew*: as he was swearing and cursing in this manner; as soon as ever the words were out of his mouth, and he had in this sad and solemn manner three times denied that he knew Christ, or was ever with him, or a disciple of his. It is forbid, by a Jewish canon, to keep cocks at Jerusalem; it runs thus<sup>c</sup>: “they do not bring up cocks in Jerusalem, because of the holy things, neither do the

priests in all the land of Israel, because of the purifications.” Whether this canon was then in being, or how it was dispensed with, or whether there was any particular providence in the cock being here now, and so nigh the high-priest's palace, is not certain; but one there was: nor can the Jews deny that there were cocks at Jerusalem; for they themselves speak of a cock, *שנסקל בירושלים*, *that was stoned at Jerusalem*.

Ver. 75. *And Peter remembered the words of Jesus, &c.*] Forgetfulness of God, of his works, of his words, and of his law, of his revealed mind and will, is often the cause of sin; and a remembrance of things is necessary to the recovery of a fallen or back-sliding professor; as, of what he is fallen from, of the love and kindness of God formerly shewn to him, of his evil ways and works he is fallen into, and of the words and truths of Christ he has been very indifferent unto and lukewarm about: *which said unto him, before the cock crew*, or is done crowing, *thou shalt deny me thrice*; which he was put in mind of on hearing the cock crew. So by one means, or another, sometimes by some remarkable providence, and sometimes by the ministry of the word, God is pleased to alarm and awaken sleepy professors, back-sliding believers, and remind them of their condition and duty, and restore them by repentance, as he did Peter: *and he went out*; of the high-priest's palace, either through fear, lest he should be seen weeping, and be suspected; or rather through shame, not being able to continue where his Lord was, when he had so shamefully denied him; as also to leave the company he had got into, being sensible he was wrong in mingling himself with such, and thereby exposed himself to these temptations; as well as to vent his grief in tears privately: *and wept bitterly*; being thoroughly sensible what an evil and bitter thing the sin was, he had been guilty of: his repentance sprung from Christ's looking upon him, and from his looking to Jesus, and was truly evangelical: it was a sorrow after a godly sort, and was increased by the discoveries of Christ's love unto him; and was attended with faith in him, and views of pardon through him: the Persic version adds, *and his sin is forgiven*; which, though not in the text, yet is a truth; for Peter's repentance was not like Cain's, nor Esau's, nor Judas's; it was not the repentance of one in despair, but was a repentance unto life and salvation, which needed not to be repented of.

## C H A P. XXVII.

Ver. 1. *WHEN the morning was come, &c.*] Or, *as soon as it was day*, as Luke says, ch. xxii. 66. The sanhedrim had been up all night, which, after eating the passover, they had spent in apprehending, trying, and examining Jesus, and the witnesses against him; and had come to an unanimous vote, that he was guilty of death; upon which they either put Jesus out

of the room for a while, or went into another themselves, to consult what further steps should be taken: or if they went home to their own houses, they very quickly got together again, and met in the temple, where they seem to be, ver. 5. unless the story of Judas is, by anticipation, inserted here; and in their council-chamber, where they led Jesus, and examined

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 53. 1. 2. Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud. in rad. 512.

<sup>c</sup> Misn. Bava Kama, c. 7. sect. 7. T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 82. 2.

Abot R. Nathan, c. 35. Maimon. Hilch. Beth Habechirah, c. 7. sect. 14. Shalshelet Hakabala, fol. 9. 2.

<sup>d</sup> T. Hieros Erubin, fol. 26. 1. Caphtor, fol. 49. 1.

him again concerning his being the son of God; see Luke xxii. 66. all which shews how intent they were upon this business, and with what eagerness and diligence they pursued it; their feet ran to evil, and they made haste to shed blood. This was the time of their morning prayers, of their saying their phylacteries, and reciting the *shema*, *hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is one Lord*, according to their canon, which is this<sup>c</sup>: “from what time do they read the *shema* in the morning? from such time that a man can distinguish between blue and white:” says R. Eliezer, between blue and green; and he finishes it before the sun shines out. R. Joshua says, “before three hours had elapsed:” but religion, rites, ceremonies, and canons, must all give way to the accomplishment of what their hearts were so much set upon: *all the chief priests and elders of the people*. The Syriac and Persic versions leave out the word *all*, but it is retained in the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and in Munster’s Hebrew Gospel, and that very rightly. The Scribes and elders met at Caiaphas’s house before, ch. xxvi. 57. but it being in the night, they might not be all together; Annas particularly seems to have been absent, John xviii. 24. but now they all assemble together, as in a case of necessity they were obliged to do: their rule was this<sup>f</sup>; “the sanhedrim, consisting of seventy and one (as this was), are obliged to sit all of them as one, (or all, and every one of them,) in their place in the temple; but at what time there is a necessity of their being gathered together, בְּתַקְנֵי כָלֵל, *they are all of them assembled*; but, at other times, he who has any business may go, and do his pleasure, and return: yet so it is, that there may not be less than twenty-three sitting continually all the time of their sitting; (their usual time of sitting was from the morning daily sacrifice, to the evening daily sacrifice<sup>g</sup>;) one that is under a necessity of going out; this looks upon his companions that remain, and if twenty-three remain, he may go out; but if not, he may not, until the other returns.” This being now a case of necessity, and great importance, they are all summoned and gathered together, unless we except Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus; who yet might be there, though they did not consent to their counsel and deed, as is certain of the former, Luke xxiii. 51. these *took counsel against Jesus*; God’s holy child Jesus, his anointed, the Messiah; and which was taking counsel against the Lord himself; and so the prophecy in Psal. ii. 2. had its accomplishment: what they consulted about was *to put him to death*; it was not what punishment to inflict upon him, whether scourging or death; that was before determined; they had already adjudged him to death: but now they enter into close consultation what death to put him to, and in what manner; whether privately, he being now in their hands; or whether by the means of zealots, or by the Roman magistrate; or whether it should be by stoning, which must have been the

case, if they put him to death according to their law, and by their authority; or whether by crucifixion, which they chose as the most ignominious and painful; and therefore determined to deliver him up to the Roman governor, and use their interest with him to put him to death, according to the Roman law.

Ver. 2. *And when they had bound him, &c.*] The captain, and officers, bound him when they first took him, and brought him to Annas, and Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas, John xviii. 12, 24. Perhaps he might be unloosed whilst he was examining before the high-priest, under a shew of freedom to speak for himself; or they might bind him faster now, partly for greater security, as he passed through the streets, and partly for his greater reproach; as also, that he might be at once taken to be a malefactor by the Roman judge; *they led him away*: the chief priests and elders of the people led him, at least by their servants, and they themselves attending in person, that they might awe the people from attempting a rescue of him, as they passed along; and that they might influence the Roman governor speedily to put him to death; and lest he should be prevailed upon to release him, through his own commiseration, the innocence of Jesus, and the entreaty of his friends. *And delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor*; and so fulfilled what Christ had predicted, Matt. xx. 19. This they did, either because the power of judging in cases of life and death was taken away from them; or if it was not, they chose that the infamy of his death should be removed from them, and be laid upon a Gentile magistrate; and chiefly because they were desirous he should die the death of the cross. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions leave out the first name Pontius, and only call him Pilate: the Ethiopic version calls him Pilate Pontinæus; and Theophylact suggests, that he was so called because he was of Pontus. Philo the Jew<sup>h</sup> makes mention of him: “Pilate, says he, was πῆλος ἡγεμῶν τῆς Ἰουδαίας, *procurator of Judea*; who not so much in honour of Tiberius, as to grieve the people, put the golden shields within the holy city in the palace of Herod.” And so Tacitus<sup>i</sup> calls him the procurator of Tiberius, and Josephus also<sup>k</sup>. It is said<sup>l</sup> of him, that falling into many calamities, he slew himself with his own hand, in the times of Caligula, and whilst Publicola and Nerva were consuls; which was a righteous judgment of God upon him for condemning Christ, contrary to his own conscience.

Ver. 3. *Then Judas, which had betrayed him, &c.*] Before he is described as he that *shall*, or *should*, or doth betray him; but now having perpetrated the horrid sin, as he that *had* done it. *When he saw that he was condemned*; that is, that Jesus was condemned, as the Syriac and Persic versions read, either by the Jewish sanhedrim, or by Pilate, or both; for this narrative concerning Judas may be proleptically inserted here, though the thing itself did not come to pass till afterwards; and the sense be, that when he, either being present

<sup>c</sup> Misn. Beracot, c. 1. sect. 2.

<sup>f</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 3. sect. 9.

<sup>g</sup> Ib. c. 3. sect. 1. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 177. 3.

<sup>h</sup> De Legat. ad Caium, p. 1033, 1034.

<sup>i</sup> Hist. l. 15.

<sup>k</sup> De Belle Jud. l. 2. c. 9. sect. 9.

<sup>l</sup> M. Aurel. Cassiodor. Chronicon in Caligula, Joseph. Antiq. l. 18. c.

11. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 7.

during the whole procedure against Christ; or returning in the morning after he had received his money, and had been with his friends; finding that his master was adjudged to death by the sanhedrim, who were pushing hard to take away his life; that they had delivered him bound to the Roman governor; and that he, after an examination of him, had committed him to the soldiers to mock, and scourge, and crucify him; and seeing him leading to the place of execution, *repented himself*: not for the sin, as committed against God and Christ; but as it brought a load of present guilt and horror upon his mind, and exposed him to everlasting punishment: it was not such a repentance by which he became wiser and better; but an excruciating, tormenting pain in his mind, by which he became worse; therefore a different word is here used than what commonly is for true repentance: it was not a godly sorrow for sin, or a sorrow for sin, as committed against God, which works repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but a worldly sorrow, which issues in death, as it did in him. It did not spring from the love of God, as evangelical repentance does, nor proceed in the fear of God, and his goodness; but was no other than a foretaste of that worm that dieth not, and of that fire which cannot be quenched: it was destitute of faith in Christ; he never did believe in him as the rest of the disciples did; see John vi. 64, 70, 71. and that mourning which does not arise from looking to Jesus, or is not attended with faith in him, is never genuine. Judas's repentance was without hope of forgiveness, and was nothing else but horror and black despair, like that of Cain's, like the trembling of devils, and the anguish of damned souls. It looks as if Judas was not aware that it would issue in the death of Christ: he was pushed on by Satan, and his avarice, to hope, that he should get this money, and yet his master escape; which he imagined he might do, either through such a defence of himself, as was not to be gainsayed; or that he would find out ways and means of getting out of the hands of the Jews, as he had formerly done, and with which Judas was acquainted: but now, there being no hope of either, guilt and horror seize his mind, and gnaw his conscience; and he wishes he had never done the accursed action, which had entailed so much distress and misery upon him: *and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders*; which was the sum he had covenanted for, and they had agreed to give him, on condition of delivering Jesus into their hands, which he had done: and it appears from hence, that the money had been accordingly paid him, and he had received it. But he being filled with remorse of conscience for what he had done, feels no quietness in his mind; nor could he save of what he had desired, but is obliged to return it; not from an honest principle, as in the case of true repentance, but on account of a racking and torturing conscience.

Ver. 4. *Saying, I have sinned, &c.*] Here was a confession, and yet no true repentance; for he confessed, but not to the right persons; not to God, nor Christ, but to the chief priests and elders; nor over the head of the antitypical scape-goat, not seeking to Christ for

pardon and cleansing, nor did he confess and forsake sin, but went on adding sin to sin, and so found no mercy. The same confession was made by a like hardened wretch, Pharaoh, Exod. ix. 27. He proceeds and points out the evil he had committed: *in that I have betrayed innocent blood, or righteous blood*; so the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read, and some copies; that is, have betrayed an innocent and righteous person, and been the occasion of his blood being about to be shed, and of his dying wrongfully. So God, in his all-wise providence, ordered it, that a testimony should be bore to the innocence of Christ, from the mouth of this vile wretch that betrayed him; to cut off the argument from the Jews, that one of his own disciples knew him to be a wicked man, and as such delivered him into their hands: for though Judas might not believe in him as the Messiah, and the son of God, at least had no true faith in him, as such; yet he knew, and believed in his own conscience, that he was a good man, and a righteous and innocent one: and what he here says is a testimony of Christ's innocence, and what his conscience obliged him to; and shews the errors that now encompassed him about; and might have been a warning to the Jews to have stopped all further proceedings against him; but instead of that, *they said, what is that to us? see thou to that*: signifying, that if he had sinned, he must answer for it himself; it was no concern of their's; nor should they form their sentiments of Christ according to his: they knew that he was a blasphemer, and deserving of death; and whatever opinion he had of him, it had no weight with them, who should proceed against him as an evil-doer, let him think or say what he would to the contrary; and suggest, that he knew otherwise than what he said: so the Syriac and Persic versions render it, *thou knowest, and the Arabic, thou knowest better*.

Ver. 5. *And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, &c.*] Upon the ground, in that part of the temple where they were sitting; in their council-chamber, *לשכת הדין*, *the paved chamber*, where the sanhedrim used to meet<sup>m</sup>: for it seems they would not take the money of him; and he was determined not to carry it back with him, and therefore threw it down before them, left it, and *departed*: from the sanhedrim: *and went*; out of the temple; not to God, nor to the throne of his grace, nor to his master, to ask pardon of him, but to some secret solitary place, to cherish his grief and black despair, *and hanged himself*. The kind and manner of his death, as recorded by Luke in Acts i. 18. is, *that falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out*; which account may be reconciled with this, by supposing the rope, with which he hanged himself, to break, when falling; it may be, from a very high place, upon a stone, or stump of a tree; when his belly burst, and his guts came out: or it may be rendered, as it is in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, *he was strangled*; and that either by the devil, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks; who, having been in him for the space of two or three days, caught him up into the air, and threw him down headlong; and dashing him on the ground, he burst

<sup>m</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 89. 2.

in the midst, and his bowels gushed out, and the devil made his exit that way : or by a disease called the squinancy, or quinsy, a suffocation brought upon him by excessive grief, deep melancholy, and utter despair; when being choaked by it, he fell flat upon his face, and the rim of his belly burst, and his entrails came out. This disease the Jews call אסקרָא, *Iscara*; and if it was what he was subject to from his infancy, his parents might call him Iscariot from hence; and might be designed in providence to be what should bring him to his wretched end: and what is said of this suffocating disorder, seems to agree very well with the death of Judas. They say, that "it is a disease that begins in the bowels, and ends in the throat:" they call death by it, מִיתָה רָעָה, *an evil death*; and say, that "there are nine hundred and three kinds of deaths in the world, but that אסקרָא שֶׁבְּכֵל אִסְכָּרָא, the *hardest of them all is Iscara*; which the Gloss calls *strangulament*, and says, is in the midst of the body:" they also reckon it, מִיתָה כּוֹשֵׁתָה, *a violent death*; and say, that the spies which brought a bad report of the good land, died of it. Moreover, they affirm, that "whoever tastes any thing before he separates (*i. e.* lights up the lamp on the eve of the sabbath, "to distinguish the night from the day), shall die by *Iscara*, or suffocation." Upon which the Gloss says, this is "measure for measure: he that satisfies his throat, or appetite, shall be choaked: as it is said, "he that is condemned to be strangled, either he shall be drowned in a river, or he shall die of a quinsy, this is *Iscara*."

Ver. 6. *And the chief priests took the silver pieces, &c.*] Off of the ground, after Judas was gone, no other daring to meddle with them; for in any other it would have been deemed sacrilege; and they being the proper persons to take care and dispose of money brought into the temple: and if not, their covetous disposition would have moved them to take up the money: and said, one to another, *it is not lawful to put them into the treasury, or Corban*; as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave the word untranslated: and which is the place where the offerings for the repair and service of the temple were put, and is the same into which Christ beheld the people casting their money, Mark xii. 41. Josephus "observes, that "there was, "with the Jews, an holy treasure, which is called *Corbanus*;" and this is the לִשְׁכַּת הַקֹּרְבָּן, *the chamber of the Korban*, of which the Jews make mention": the reason the high-priests give why it was not lawful to put this money into the treasury, or into any of the chests in the *Corban* chamber, was, *because it is the price of blood*. Thus they strained at a gnat, and swallowed a camel. It is highly probable, that they took this self-same money out of the treasury to buy this blood with, and yet scruple to put it in, having bought it: and besides, they made no hesitation about seeking for, and shedding this innocent blood, and yet boggle at putting this money into the *Corban*, because it was the price of it; proceeding upon the same

reason as the law in Deut. xxiii. 18. does, pretending much religion, and great veneration for holy places and things, when they made no conscience of committing the most flagitious crimes.

Ver. 7. *And they took counsel, &c.*] With one another, considered of the matter, and deliberated about it a while; and at last came to a resolution, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in: a field of no great value, or it could not have been bought so near Jerusalem for so small a sum as thirty pieces of silver. Grotius's conjecture seems to be a good one, that it was a field the potter had dug up for his use, and had made the most of it; so that it was good for nothing, but for the purpose for which these men bought it, to bury strangers in: either such as were not of their own nation, as the Roman soldiers, many of which were among them, and who they did not suffer to be buried among them; or proselytes, or such as came from distant parts, at their three festivals, many of whom may be supposed to die at such times: now by this act of humanity in providing for the interment of strangers, they designed, and hoped to have covered their wickedness in bargaining with Judas to betray innocent blood, for this sum of money; but it was so ordered by divine providence, that this became a public and lasting memorial of their sin and infamy: for it follows,

Ver. 8. *Wherefore that field was called, &c.*] Not by the priests and elders, but by the common people, who knew by what money it was purchased, *the field of blood*; or *Aeldama*, which so signifies, as in Acts i. 19. not called the field of the priests, the purchasers; nor the field of the strangers, for whom it was bought; but the field of blood, being purchased with that money, for which innocent blood was betrayed; and this name it bore *unto this day*; in which Matthew wrote his Gospel, about eight years after, as is thought. Jerom<sup>s</sup> says, that in his time this field was shown on the south side of Mount Sion.

Ver. 9. *Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, &c.*] Through the purchasing of the potter's field with the thirty pieces of silver, the price that Christ was valued at, a prophecy in the writings of the Old Testament had its accomplishment: but about this there is some difficulty. The evangelist here says it was spoken by Jeremy the prophet; whereas in his prophecy there is no mention of any such thing. There is indeed an account of his buying his uncle Hanameel's son's field, in ch. xxxii. but not a word of a potter, or a potter's field, or of the price of it, thirty pieces of silver; and that as a price at which he, or any other person was valued; but the passage which is manifestly referred to, stands in Zech. xi. 12, 13. where are these words, *and I said unto them, if ye think good, give me my price, and if not, forbear; so they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver: and the Lord said unto me, cast it unto the potter, a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver,*

<sup>a</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 33. 1.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 62. 2.

<sup>c</sup> Bernacet, fol. 8. 1.

<sup>d</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 19. 2.

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Sota, fol. 35. 3.

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 105. 1.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 30. 2.

<sup>c</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 9. sect. 3.

<sup>d</sup> Misa. Middot, c. 1. sect. 1.

<sup>e</sup> De locis Hebraicis.

and cast them to the potters in the house of the Lord: for the removing of this difficulty, it might be observed, that the Syriac and Persic versions make no mention of any prophet's name, only read, *which was spoken by the prophet*; and so may as well be ascribed to Zechariah, as to Jeremy, and better: but it must be owned, that Jeremy is in all the Greek copies, in the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel. Various things are said for the reconciling of this matter: some have thought that Zechariah had two names, and that besides Zechariah, he was called Jeremy; but of this there is no proof. Jerom<sup>7</sup> affirms, that in an Hebrew volume, being an apocryphal work of Jeremy, which was shewn him by one of the Nazarene sect, he read these words verbatim: so that though they do not stand in the writings of Jeremy, which are canonical Scripture, yet in an apocryphal book of his, and which may as well be referred to, as the book of Maccabees, the traditions of the Jews, the prophecies of Enoch, and the writings of the Heathen poets. Moreover, Mr. Mede<sup>8</sup> has laboured, by various arguments, to prove, that the four last chapters of Zechariah were written by Jeremy, in which this passage stands; and if so, the reason is clear, for the citation in his name. But what seems best to solve this difficulty, is, that the order of the books of the Old Testament is not the same now, as it was formerly: the sacred writings were divided, by the Jews, into three parts: the first was called the law, which contains the five books of Moses; the second, the prophets, which contains the former and the latter prophets; the former prophets began at Joshua, and the latter at Jeremy; the third was called Cetubim, or the Hagiographa, the holy writings, which began with the book of Psalms: now, as this whole third and last part is called the Psalms, Luke xxiv. 44. because it began with that book; so all that part which contained the latter prophets, for the same reason, beginning at Jeremy, might be called by his name; hence a passage, standing in the prophecy of Zechariah, who was one of the latter prophets, might be justly cited under the name of Jeremy. That such was the order of the books of the Old Testament, is evident from the following passage<sup>9</sup>: "it is a tradition of our Rabbins, that the order of the prophets is, Joshua and Judges, Samuel and the Kings, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the twelve." Moreover, it is usual with them to say<sup>10</sup>, that the spirit of Jeremiah was in Zechariah; and it is very plain, that the latter prophets have many things from the former; and so might Zechariah have this originally from Jeremy, which now stands in his prophecy: all this would be satisfactory to a Jew: and it is to be observed, that the Jew<sup>11</sup>, who objects to every thing he could in the evangelist, with any appearance on his side, and even objects to the application of this prophecy; yet finds no fault with him for putting Jeremy for Zechariah. That the prophecy in Zechariah belongs to the Messiah, and was fulfilled in Jesus, manifestly appears from the context,

as well as the text itself. The person spoken of is in ver. 4. called to feed the flock of slaughter, which being in a very poor condition, ver. 5, 6. the state of the Jews, at the time of Christ's coming, is hereby very aptly represented: he agrees to do it, ver. 7. and accordingly furnishes himself for it; but he is despised, abhorred, and rejected by the shepherds, the principal men in church and state; because he severely inveighed against their doctrines and practices, ver. 8. upon which he rejects them, and dissolves both their civil and church state; which can suit with no other times than the times of Jesus, ver. 9, 10, 11, 14. and lest it should be thought that he used them with too much severity, he gives one single instance of their ingratitude to him, which shews how little they esteemed him; and that is, their valuing him at no greater a price than *thirty pieces of silver*, ver. 12, 13. which were afterwards cast unto the potters. The Jews<sup>4</sup> themselves own, that this prophecy belongs to the Messiah, though they interpret it of him in another manner. "Says R. Chanun, the Israelites will have no need of the doctrine of the king Messiah in the time to come; as it is said, Isa. xi. 10. to him shall the Gentiles seek, and not the Israelites: if so, for what does the king Messiah come? and what does he come to do? to gather the captives of Israel, and to give them the thirty precepts, as it is said, Zech. xi. 12. and I said unto them, if ye think good, &c. Rab says, these are the thirty mighty men; and Jochanan says, these are the thirty commands." Should it be objected, that supposing the Messiah is intended, the money is said to be given into his hands, and not into the hands of him that was to betray him; if ye think good, give me my price: it may be replied, that the words הָרַב שָׂכָרִי should not be rendered, give me my price, but give my price; i. e. give what you think fit to value me at, into the hands of the betrayer; and accordingly they did: so they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver; which is the very sum the chief priests agreed with Judas for, and which he received; see Matt. xxvi. 15. and if it should be objected to the citation of the evangelist, that it is considerably different from the word of the prophet, it being in the latter, *I took the thirty pieces of silver*; whereas in the former, the words are quoted thus, saying, and they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value: it may be observed, that the word which Matthew uses may be rendered, *I took*, as it is in the Syriac version; and that the thirty pieces of silver were the goodly price, at which the Messiah was valued by the children of Israel, is manifest enough; and is an instance of egregious ingratitude, that this should be the price of the innocent one, as the Arabic version renders the phrase, of him that was valued: of the honoured one, as the Ethiopic; of the most precious one, as the Syriac; he who in his person, and the perfections of his nature, is equal to his father, and his fellow; who has all the riches of grace and glory in him, as mediator; who is

<sup>7</sup> In loc.

<sup>8</sup> Mede's Works, p. 963, 1022, 1023.

<sup>9</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2. Vid. Praefat. R. David Kimchi in Jer.

<sup>4</sup> Sopher Hagitgulin apud Surenhus. Biblos Katallages, p. 41.

<sup>5</sup> R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 25. p. 412.

<sup>6</sup> Beresheit Rabba, sect. 9a. fol. 85. 3, 4.

superior to angels, and fairer than the sons of men in human nature: is the chiefest among ten thousands, and more precious than rubies; and all the things that can be desired are not to be compared with him, and yet sold for a sum of money, the price of a slave, Exod. xxi. 32. and that by the children of Israel, to whom the Messiah was promised; who expected him, and desired his coming; and who sprung from among them, and was sent unto them, and yet they received him not, but undervalued him in this exceeding mean way. Wicked men have no value for Christ; they sell him and themselves for nought; but gracious souls can't value him enough, nor sufficiently express their esteem of him.

Ver. 10. *And gave them for the potter's field, &c.*] In the prophet it is, *and I cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord*: whereas here it is, *they gave them*; but the word Matthew uses may be rendered, *I gave*, as it is by the Syriac; and as the last words require it should, *as the Lord commanded me*; otherwise there will be no coherence between them: and whereas the thirty pieces of silver are, in the prophet, said to be cast, or given to the potter, and here, *for the potter's field*, there is no contradiction: the plain sense is, that they were given to the potter, as a valuable consideration for his field: and whereas 'tis added, *in the house of the Lord*, which the evangelist does not cite; the reason is, because this money was first cast down in the temple by Judas, and after being taken up by the priests, they covenanted with the potter for his field, and paid him for it with this money in the sanctuary. The evangelist, instead of this last clause, puts, *as the Lord commanded me*; which have made some think, that there should be a different reading; and that instead of בית, *the house*, it should be read ברת, *according to the commandment*: but there is no need to suppose this: the evangelist is justified in the use of this phrase, by what is said in the prophet in the beginning of ver. 13. *and the Lord said unto me*: and this is only a transposition and explanation, according to a rule the Jews have, סרס, הומקרא ורשדו, *invert, or transpose the Scripture, and explain it*°. Should it be said that the Messiah, and not the betrayer, nor the priests, is said to cast this money to the potter, or give it for the potter's field; it may be replied, that Jesus may be said to do that which Judas, and the chief priests did; because, by his almighty power and providence, he over-ruled those things for good, which in themselves were evil. Judas thought to have converted the money to his own use, and the priests would have been glad to have taken it again to themselves; but Christ obliged Judas to carry back the money to the priests, and cast it into the temple, and worked upon the minds of the priests, not to put it into the treasury, but to buy the potter's field with it, whereby the prophecy, in its literal sense, was fully accomplished.

Ver. 11. *And Jesus stood before the governor, &c.*] Pilate who sat; for so was the custom for the judge to sit, and those that were judged, to stand, especially whilst witness was bore against them<sup>f</sup>. "Says R. Bo,

"in the name of Rab Hona, the witnesses ought to stand whilst they bear witness. Says R. Jeremiah, "in the name of R. Abhu, also לדיות צריכן לדיות עומדין, *those that are judged ought to stand, whilst they receive their witness.*" And again<sup>g</sup>, "how do they judge? the judges sit, ודידוין עומדין, *and they that are judged stand.*" Think what a sight was here, the eternal son of God in human nature, the Lord of life and glory, the Prince of the kings of the earth, standing before an Heathen governor! he before whom Pilate must stand, and even all men, small and great, another day; all must appear, and stand before the judgment-seat of Christ; he himself stands at the bar of men! the reason of this was, because he stood in the law-place, and stead of his people: he became their substitute from everlasting, was made under the law in time, and was subject to its precept, and its penalty: and though he had no crimes of his own to answer for, he had the sins of his people on him; on account of which he stood before the governor, to receive the sentence of condemnation on himself; that so sin being condemned in his flesh, the whole righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in them: he stood here, that they might stand before God, and at the throne of his grace with boldness and intrepidity; a new, and living way to it being opened for them, through his blood and sacrifice; and that they might stand before him, the judge of all the earth, with confidence, and not be ashamed at his coming. *And the governor asked him, saying, art thou the king of the Jews?* for the Jews had suggested to Pilate, that Jesus had given out that he was Christ a king; and he being Cæsar's procurator, it became him strictly to inquire into this matter, lest there should be any encroachment made on his master's dignity, authority, and dominions, and he himself should suffer blame; wherefore, he does not ask Jesus, whether he said he was the king of the Jews, or others said so of him, but whether he was their king: he knew he was not in fact; but his question was, whether he was so in right; or if he thought he was, what claim he made, and what he did to support it: *and Jesus said unto him; thou sayest*; which is all one as if he had said, *I am*; see Matt. xxvi. 25, 64. compared with Mark xiv. 62. and that this was the sense of his answer is clear from John xviii. 36, 37. though, at the same time, he let him know that his kingdom was not of this world; that he was not a temporal king, nor did he lay any claim to any earthly dominions; and therefore neither he, nor his master Cæsar, had any thing to fear from him: he was only a king in a spiritual sense, over the Israel of God; such as received him, as the Messiah, and believed in his name.

Ver. 12. *And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, &c.*] As that he was a perverter of the people, a stirrer-up of sedition, discord, and rebellion among them; that he taught them not to give tribute to Cæsar, and set up himself for a king; all which he had done not in one place only, but

<sup>g</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 119. 2. & Vajikra Rabba, sect. 27. fol. 167. 4.

<sup>f</sup> T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 43. 2, 3.

<sup>e</sup> Ib. Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 2.

throughout all the land of Judea, from Galilee to Jerusalem; see Luke xxiii. 2, 5. *he answered nothing*; the things laid to his charge being notoriously false, and known to be so by all the people; and the evidence with which they were supported being so slender, the judge could never receive it; he therefore judged it unnecessary, and not worth a while to return an answer to them: besides, he knew they were bent upon his death, and that, should he set aside these charges, as he easily could, they would invent new ones, and so increase their sin, and their condemnation: but the chief reason of all, of his silence, was, he had the sins of his people to answer for, and the time of his dying for them was now come, and for which he was ready; and therefore would say nothing to remove these false charges, and retard his death.

Ver. 13. *Then saith Pilate unto him, &c.*] Observing he made no reply to the accusations of the chief priests and elders, and in order to draw something out of him, *hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?* art thou deaf? or dost thou not take in what is alleged against thee? dost thou not consider the nature of these charges? how many, and of what kind the depositions are now made by persons of such rank and figure? art thou under no concern to make answer to them?

Ver. 14. *And he answered him to never a word, &c.*] He made no reply to any one thing which Pilate suggested to him, though it seems to have been in a kind and friendly way, and with a view to his good: *insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly*; that a man, who at other times had such fluency of speech, and readiness of expression; who both for matter and words, and also weight and authority, spake as never man did: and who had so often silenced the Scribes and Pharisees, men of the greatest learning among the Jews, of which Pilate, doubtless, had knowledge, should say nothing in his own defence; and especially when the charges brought against him were of a capital nature, and touched his life, and yet were so easy to be refuted, and proved to be false ones: and what might increase his wonder, was, that he should take no notice of them, nor return an answer to them, considering by whom they were brought; not by the common people, but by the sanhedrim of the nation, and that before him the Roman governor, who had power to crucify or release him: and above all, he marvelled at the patience of Jesus, that he could hear such notorious falsities, and which so affected his character, and his life, and say nothing to them; and at the fortitude of his mind, at his being so regardless of his life, and fearless of death.

Ver. 15. *Now at that feast, &c.*] The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, *at every feast*: which looks as if the authors of these versions thought the sense was, that the following custom was used at each feast in the year, at the feasts of pentecost, and tabernacles, and passover; whereas it was only

at the feast of the passover; and which is meant by the feast here, as is clear from John xviii. 39. It was but once a year that this was done; at every returning passover; and so the Persic version renders it, *every year on the day of the feast*; that is, of the passover, and which was frequently called by way of emphasis, *מז, the feast: the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would*. It was not a law, but a custom; it was not enjoined by the law of Moses; for they that sinned against that, died without mercy: nor is it agreeable to strict justice, that there should be such a release of criminals; nor was it a Jewish custom, as an emblem of their deliverance out of Egyptian bondage. I have not met with the least trace of any such custom of their's at the time of the pass over in any of their writings; but it seems to be a Roman one: and from all the accounts of the evangelist, it appears to be peculiar, to the Roman governor, who, either by the order of Cæsar, or of himself, introduced such a custom to get the favour of the people; for it was to them the release was made, and the person, whom they pleased; and this being repeated annually for some time, was expected by them, and at last became necessary.

Ver. 16. *And they had then a notable prisoner, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin reads, *he had*; that is, Pilate, who had committed him to prison, and under whose power he was: for the Jews had lost all authority of this kind, at least in capital cases. This prisoner is called a *notable* one; that is, a famous, or rather an infamous one: he was a thief, and a robber, and had been guilty of sedition; had made, or joined with others in an insurrection, and had committed murder in it; and so, on more accounts than one, was deserving of death: nor could it be otherwise expected by himself, or others, but that he should die: his name was called *Barabbas*; that is, as the Syriac version reads it, *בן אבא*, which signifies *the son of a father*: a father's child that was spoiled and ruined, and a child of his father the devil. This was a name common among the Jews. Frequent mention is made of R. Abba<sup>b</sup>, and Bar Abba is the son of Abba: hence we read of Abba Bar Abba<sup>c</sup>, and of R. Samuel Bar Abba<sup>d</sup>, and of R. Simeon Bar Abba<sup>e</sup>, and of R. Chijah Bar Abba<sup>f</sup>. In Munster's Hebrew Gospel it is read *בן רבה*, *Bar Rabbah, the son of a master*; and so Jerom says, that in the Gospel according to the Hebrews it is interpreted, *the son of their master*; but the former is the right name, and the true sense of the word. The Ethiopic version adds, *the prince, or chief of robbers, and all knew him*; and the Arabic, instead of a *prisoner*, reads, a *thief*, as he was.

Ver. 17. *Therefore when they were gathered together, &c.*] Meaning not the chief priests and elders; for these were together before, but the common people; and so the Persic version renders the words, *when the people increased into a multitude*: for it was to them the release of a prisoner was to

<sup>b</sup> Juchasin, fol. 70. 1, &c.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Beraot, fol. 18. 2. & Hieros. Pesachim, fol. 39. 1. & Juchasin, fol. 104. 1.

<sup>d</sup> T. Hieros. Pesachim, fol. 39. 1.

<sup>e</sup> T. Hieros. Succa, fol. 53. 3. Juchasin, fol. 105. 1.

<sup>f</sup> T. Hieros. Succa, fol. 55. 3. Juchasin, fol. 91. 2.



be made, and so the proposal of one; and it was at their option, who should be the person; for it was *whom they would*, as in ver. 15. and where the Ethiopic version adds, *and should choose. Pilate said unto them, whom will ye that I should release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus, which is called Christ?* He puts it to them, whom they would choose to have released, Barabbas, the thief and robber, the seditious person and murderer, or Jesus, whom some called the Christ, the Messiah, the king of the Jews. Pilate on purpose proposed such an infamous person along with him, not doubting but they would have preferred him, whatever were their prejudices against him, before such a scandalous person as Barabbas; and whatever good will they might secretly have to put Jesus to death, and release Barabbas, yet he thought they could not, for shame, speak out their sense, and desire him, and not Jesus. His view was not to reproach Christ, by joining him with so wicked a man, but in order to save him.

Ver. 18. *For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.*] He saw in their countenances, and by their charges against him, and by the whole of their conduct, that it was not out of any regard to Cæsar, or to the peace and tranquillity of the civil government, or to strict justice; but from envy, at his popularity, at his fame and credit, the honour, glory, and applause he had among the people, on account of his doctrine, and miracles, that they had delivered him up into his hands; and therefore Pilate might the rather hope to succeed in this scheme of his to release him, by proposing him with so notorious a person to the populace, when the one, as he might reasonably judge, was abhorred by them, and the other had got great credit and esteem among a large number of them. The Persic version here adds the people's answer; *they answered, release Barabbas, but deliver Jesus to us.*

Ver. 19. *When he was set down on the judgment-seat, &c.*] That is, when Pilate the governor, as the Syriac and Persic versions read, was set down upon the bench, and while he was sitting there, and trying of Jesus: *his wife sent unto him; her name, according to the Ethiopians, was Abrokla*; who might be a Jewess, as the wife of Felix was, Acts xxiv. 24. and a favourer of Jesus, or, at least, a religious person; and if only a mere Heathen, yet had some notion of justice being to be done; and however, pressed by her dream, sent a messenger to her husband, as he was trying this cause: *saying, have thou nothing to do with that just man; meaning Jesus, whom she either knew to be so, or concluded from her dream that he was one: and her sense is, that her husband would have no hand in his condemnation and death, but rather do all he could to release and save him. She might know that he had gone some lengths already against him; that he had the night before granted a band of soldiers to the chief priests to apprehend him; and knew he rose early that morning, at the request of the same, to try him; and he was now before him, and she might be apprehensive that he was forward to adjudge him to*

death, and therefore sends this cautionary message; alleging this for a reason, *for I have suffered many things this day, in a dream, because of him.* The Arabic and Persic versions read, *this night.* Pilate might rise that morning before she was awake, and had an opportunity of telling her dream; or she might dream it after he was gone; in which she was sadly distressed about Jesus, and might have some hints given her of the miserable consequences of his death, not only to the Jewish nation, but to her husband and family; which gave her great uneasiness and disquietude. Some have thought, that this dream was from the devil, willing to hinder the death of Christ, and so man's redemption and salvation by it; but had he had any such intention, the most effectual method would have been to have persuaded the chief priests and elders off of it, and from attempting it; whereas, on the contrary, they were instigated by him to it: and whatever natural causes there might be of this dream, as the chief priests coming over night to desire a band of soldiers to take Jesus, and the discourse they might have with Pilate about him; which things might run in her mind in her sleep; yet, doubtless, this was of God, and with a design that a testimony should be bore to the innocency of Christ every way; as by Judas that betrayed him, by Pilate his judge, and by his wife.

Ver. 20. *But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude, &c.*] Among whom the choice lay who should be released. This they did not by haranguing them, or making a public oration to them; but by sending their servants, or proper persons among them, telling them that Jesus had been examined before the sanhedrim that morning, and was found to be a blasphemer; and that the whole court had unanimously condemned him to death, and therefore it became them to act according to their decree: and besides, should this man be set free, they might suggest to them, since he has given out that he is the king Messiah, the Romans hearing of it, will be jealous of such a person, and come and take away both our place and nation, or deprive us of the few privileges we have remaining: with such sort of arguments as these, it may be supposed they worked upon the common people. The Persic version reads, *commanded*, instead of *persuaded*, *that they should ask Barabbas to be released to them, and destroy Jesus;* for nothing short of that would satisfy them: they thirsted after his blood, and were bent upon his death: to release Barabbas, if Jesus was not destroyed, would not answer their end: they desired Barabbas's liberty for no other reason, but for the sake of the destruction of Jesus.

Ver. 21. *The governor answered and said unto them, &c.*] A second time, after some time had been allowed and taken up to consider of the matter, and which the chief priests and elders improved among the people against Jesus. *Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?* for as these two were proposed, one of them must be released; and it lay in the breast of the people to choose which they

would: *they said, Barabbas*; so that Christ was not only numbered among, and reckoned with transgressors, but he was accounted worse than the worst of them; a seditious person, a robber, and a murderer was preferred before him: see Acts iii. 14.

Ver. 22. *Pilate saith unto them, &c.*] As one astonished at their choice: he could not have thought they would have asked the life of so vile a wretch, that had been guilty of such capital crimes, crimes to be abhorred by all men: *what shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ?* Surely you would not have me put him to death, and that for no other reason but this, because he is called either by himself or others, Christ, or the Messiah, or the king of the Jews! *they all say unto him, let him be crucified*; which was a Roman punishment, inflicted on the meanest and worst of men; as wicked servants, thieves, robbers, and cut-throats\*; and so was not only a torturing and painful death, but a very shameful and ignominious one; yea, an accursed one: in this they all agreed, being instigated to it by the chief priests and elders.

Ver. 23. *And the governor said, why, what evil hath he done?* &c.] What reason can be given, why he should be crucified? what sin has he committed, that deserves such a death? From whence 'tis clear, that of all the things they had accused him, they had not, in Pilate's account, given proof of one single action, that was criminal, nor had he done any: he came into the world without sin, he did none in it; he knew no sin, nor could any be found in him, by Satan, nor his accusers, nor his judge: *but they cried out the more, saying, let him be crucified*: the more they saw Pilate inclined to favour him, and pleaded for him, and attested his innocence; the more clamorous, outrageous, and urgent they were to have him crucified.

Ver. 24. *When Pilate saw he could prevail nothing, &c.*] That it was to no purpose to talk to them, and in favour of Jesus; he saw they were determined upon his crucifixion, and that nothing else would satisfy them: *but that rather a tumult was made*: there was an uproar among the people, and he might fear the consequences of it, should he not grant their request; otherwise, as Philo the Jew says of him, he was *την φυσικην ακαμπτου και μηλα τε αυταδης αμεινυλτος, naturally inflexible, rigid, and self-willed*: but he knew the temper of these people, and had had experience of their resoluteness, when they were determined on any thing; as in the case of his introducing the golden shields into the holy city, of which the same author speaks: and was then obliged, though sore against his will, as now, to yield unto them. *He took water, and washed his hands before the multitude*; either in conformity to a custom among the Jews, whereby they testified their innocence as to the commission of murder; see Deut. xxi. 6, 7. Psal. xxvi. 6. or to a Gentile one, used when murder was committed, for the lustration or expiation of it<sup>2</sup>: *saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person*; though this did not clear him from all guilt in this matter:

he ought to have acted the part of an upright judge, and not have yielded to the unrighteous requests of the people; he ought not to have scourged an innocent man, and much less have condemned and delivered him to be crucified, as he did; though in this he bore a testimony to the innocence of Christ, and which is somewhat remarkable in him; who was, as Philo says<sup>1</sup>, notoriously guilty of receiving bribes, of injuries, rapine, and frequent murders of persons uncondemned: see ye to it; you must be answerable for this action, and all the consequences of it. The Syriac version renders it, *you have known*; and the Persic version, *you know*: and the Arabic version, *you know better*; see the note on ver. 4.

Ver. 25. *Then answered all the people, &c.*] They were as unanimous in their imprecations upon themselves, as in desiring the crucifixion of Christ: *and said, his blood be on us, and on our children*; not for the cleansing of them from sin, which virtue that blood has; but if there were any stain, blot, or pollution, through the shedding of it, they wished it might be on them and their's: not for the forgiveness of sins, which that blood was shed for; but on the contrary, if there was any sin and guilt in it, they desired it might be imputed to them: nor for their justification before God, and security from wrath to come, both which are by his blood; but all the reverse of this, that if there were any punishment, and condemnation, and death, due for the shedding of it, they imprecated it all upon themselves, and their posterity: so this phrase is used in Josh. ii. 19. 2 Sam. i. 16. and in other places, and in the Talmud<sup>3</sup>: and it is a notion of the Jews, that the guilt of innocent blood, and the blood of that innocent man's children, lie not only upon the persons immediately concerned, but upon their children to the end of the world: and so the judges used to address the witnesses upon a trial, after this manner<sup>4</sup>: "know ye, that capital causes, are not as pecuniary ones: in pecuniary causes, a man gives his money, and it atones for him; but in capital causes, *וכמו דם זרעו תלוין בו, his blood, and the blood of his seed, hang upon him*, to the end of the whole world: for lo! of Cain 'tis said, *the voice of the blood of thy brother cryeth, &c.* his blood, and the blood of his seed." And this imprecation of their's, has been notoriously verified in them; for though this blood was shed for many of them, and Christ prayed for the forgiveness of them, and they had the Gospel, and the doctrine of remission of sins first preached among them, which was made the power of God unto salvation to some of them, even of those who were concerned in the crucifixion of Christ; yet, on the generality of them, his blood was in the sense they wished it; and for the shedding of it, wrath came upon them to the uttermost, in the entire destruction of their nation, city, and temple, and very remarkable it is, that great numbers of them were put to death by crucifixion; and very likely some of those very persons, that were so clamorous for the crucifying

<sup>1</sup> Lipsius de Cruce, l. 1. c. 12, 13.

<sup>2</sup> De Legat. ad Caium, p. 1084.

<sup>3</sup> Vid. Ovid. Fast. l. 2. Anticlidis Redit. l. 74. Triclinius in Ajac. Sophocl. 3. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ubi supra.

<sup>5</sup> T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 110. 1. Yoma, fol. 21. 1. & Avoda Zara, fol. 12. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 12. sect. 3.

of Christ; and if not, at least their children; five hundred of the Jews and more, were sometimes crucified in a day, whilst Titus was besieging the city; till at length there wanted room for crosses, *καὶ σταυροὶ τοῖς σωμασίν*, and crosses for bodies, as Josephus<sup>u</sup> says, who was an eye-witness of it: and to this day, this dreadful wish of the blood of Christ upon them, is to be seen in their miserable, abject, and captive state; and will be, until such time that they look to him whom they have pierced, and mourn.

Ver. 26. *Then released he Barabbas unto them, &c.*] The seditious person, robber, and murderer, for which crimes he was in prison. This man was an emblem of the persons for whom Christ suffered, both in his character and in his release: in his character; for they are such as have rebelled against God, robbed him of his glory, and destroyed themselves; many of them are notorious sinners, the chief of sinners, and all of them by nature, children of wrath, as others; and as the descendants of Adam, under the sentence of condemnation and death; and yet in Christ, they are children of Abba, father; being of God predestinated by him, to the adoption of children: and in his release; for when Christ was apprehended, they were let go; when he was bound they were loosed; when he was condemned, they were released, and acquitted; and when the sword of justice was awaked against him, the hand of grace and mercy was turned upon them. *And when he had scourged Jesus;* which was done some time before his examination, trial, and condemnation were over, though mentioned here, as appears from John xix. 1. and was done by Pilate, in order to move the pity and compassion of the Jews; hoping they would have been satisfied with it, and not have insisted upon his death: and he indeed moved it to them, that he might chastise him and let him go, Luke xxiii. 22. but nothing would do but crucifixion. Whether the previous scourging sufficed, or whether he was not scourged again upon his condemnation, is not certain: if he was scourged twice, John may be thought to relate the one, and Matthew the other; for certain it is, that it was usual with the Romans to scourge either with rods or whips, just before crucifixion<sup>v</sup>: our Lord was scourged with whips, as the word here used shews. Persons of birth and blood, and freemen of Rome, were beaten with rods; but such as were servants, which form Christ had taken, were scourged with whips; to which, sometimes were fastened, the huckle-bones of beasts<sup>w</sup>; so that this kind of whipping, was very severe and cruel. The Jews themselves own this scourging of Jesus, only they ascribe it to the elders of Jerusalem, and relate it thus<sup>x</sup>: “the elders of Jerusalem took Jesus, and brought him to the city, and bound him to a marble pillar in the city, *יכדורו בשמים*, and smote him with whips, or whipped him; and said unto him, “where are all thy miracles which thou hast done?” Hereby the prophecy in Isa. l. 6. and our Lord’s

prediction in Matt. xx. 19. had their accomplishment. This scourging of Christ, was an emblem of the scourges and strokes of divine justice, which he endured in his soul, as the surety of his people; being smitten of God by the sword of justice, as he stood in their place and stead, and stricken for their transgressions; and may furnish out several instructions: as that it is no wonder, if any of the followers of Christ have, do, or shall, meet with such like treatment from men; and that it becomes them to bear patiently the scourges of their heavenly father, since these are in love; and that they need not fear being trodden down, or carried away by the overflowing scourge of God’s wrath, since Christ has endured this in their room. This being done, *he delivered him to be crucified;* either into the hands of the Jews, to their will and at their request; or into the hands of his soldiers, to execute the sentence he had passed upon him; which was done in a judicial way, and according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

Ver. 27. *Then the soldiers of the governor, &c.*] Those that were about him, his attendants and guards, took Jesus into the common hall; the *prætorium*, or judgment-hall, as it is sometimes called; the governor’s palace, into which the Jews would not enter, lest they should defile themselves: Pilate therefore came out to them, and went into the pavement called Gabbatha, and sat upon a judgment-seat there; see John xviii. 28, 29, and xix. 13. where he passed sentence on Christ; which being done, the soldiers took him into the hall of judgment; which being both magnificent and large, was fit for the scene they intended to act there. Munster’s Hebrew Gospel reads it, they took him in the house of judgment; and the Ethiopic version renders it, out of the court of judicature; both wrong. *And gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers;* the same that Judas had with him to take him, consisting of five hundred, and some say more: these their fellow-soldiers, to whom Jesus was committed, got together to him, or against him, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it, to make themselves sport and diversion with him. Think in what hands and company our dear Lord now was: now was he encompassed with dogs, and enclosed with the assembly of the wicked indeed; see Psal. xxii. 16. The Persic version renders it, *multitudes of knaves being gathered together to him.*

Ver. 28. *And they stripped him, &c.*] Of his clothes; at least of his upper garment: for one man to spit upon another, as these soldiers afterwards did on Christ, or to strip him of his garment, according to the Jewish canons, were punishable with a fine of four hundred pence<sup>y</sup>, which amounted to twelve pounds and ten shillings of our money; but the soldiers were in no danger of being prosecuted, for stripping Christ. This is one part of the low estate Christ submitted to: his clothes on his back seem to be all he had in this world, and of these he is stripped: *and put on him a scarlet robe, or a red coat,* as the

<sup>u</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 12.

<sup>v</sup> Lipsius de Cruce, l. 2. c. 2.

<sup>w</sup> Ib. c. 3.

<sup>y</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 17.

<sup>z</sup> Misn. Bava Kama, c. 8. sect. 6.

Persic version renders it; very likely an old coat of one of their officers. The Evangelists Mark and John say it was *purple*, and so the Arabic version renders it here: whether there were two garments put upon him, the one a purple vest, and the other a scarlet robe over it; or whether scarlet was used instead of purple, is not certain; which was a colour wore by kings, and a sign of imperial dignity<sup>a</sup>; and therefore put upon Christ by way of mockery, upbraiding him with the character he bore, as king of the Jews. This was an emblem of his being clothed, as it were with our sins, which are as scarlet, and of his bloody sufferings in the human nature.

Ver. 29. *And when they had platted a crown of thorns, &c.*] What sort of thorn this crown was made of, whether of the bramble, or of the white thorn, is not very material<sup>b</sup>: the word used in the Syriac version, is rendered by interpreters, *white thorns*, and which were common in Judea: these, be they what they will, they made into the form of a crown, and they put it upon his head: both to reproach him as a king, and to torture him as a man: however, it had its significancy, and was an emblem of men, comparable to thorns; either of wicked men, and of his being encompassed with them at this time; or of good men, chosen out from among them, redeemed by him, and accounted as a royal diadem with him<sup>c</sup>: or it might represent the sins of his people, which, like thorns, pierced him, and like a crown of them surrounded him every side; or else the many troubles he was exercised with, and through which he did, as his members do, enter the kingdom: and especially, his being made a curse for us, thorns and briars being the curse which was inflicted on the earth, for the sin of man: in this Christ was the antitype of the ram, caught by his horns among the thickets, which *Abraham* sacrificed in the room of his son. This may teach us many useful lessons: we may see what a curse sin brought upon man, and upon the earth for man's sake; and even upon the Messiah, in the stead of men: we may observe the difference between us and Christ: we are a crown of glory, and a royal diadem in his hand; we are crowned with loving kindness and tender mercies, and have a crown of righteousness, life, and glory, laid up for us, and he was crowned with thorns; as also the difference between Christ in his state of humiliation wearing such a crown, and his state of exaltation, in which he is crowned with glory and honour. The Jews acknowledge this circumstance of the sufferings of Jesus, though they ascribe it to the elders of Jerusalem; who, they say<sup>d</sup>, "took thorns" and made a crown of them, and put it upon his "head." Which are the very words of the evangelist: *and a reed in his right hand, or cane*; and Munster's Hebrew Gospel uses the word, *קנה*, a cane, such as men walk with; and this may be confirmed from the barbarous use they afterwards made of it, by smiting him on the head with it: a *reed* indeed may fitly

express the weakness of his kingdom in the eye of the world: but any cane or common staff, or stick, put into his hands in the room of a sceptre, would also signify the meanness of his kingdom, which was not of this world, and came not with observation: they meant to reproach him with it, but they'll find one time or another, that he has another sceptre, even a sceptre of righteousness, a staff of strength, a rod of iron, with which he'll rule and break in pieces, all the wicked of the earth. However, we may learn from hence, Christ does not disdain to hold a reed in his hand: nor will he break the bruised reed, or discourage, or crush the weakest believer. *And they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews*: being thus clad in a scarlet, or purple robe, or both; and having a crown of thorns on his head, and a reed instead of a sceptre in his hand, they carry on the mockery still further, and bend the knee to him, as to a prince just come to his throne, and salute him as such; and in a mock way, wish him long life and prosperity: thus deriding him in his kingly office, as all such do, who call him Lord, Lord, but disregard his commands.

Ver. 30. *And they spit upon him, &c.*] The Syriac and Persic versions add, *upon his face*, which he did not hide from spitting; see Isa. l. 6. and so what with sweat, by being hurried from place to place, and with blood trickling down from his temples, scratched with thorns, and with the spittle of these filthy soldiers, his visage was more marred than any man's, and his form than the sons of men, Isa. lii. 14. *And took the reed or cane*, which was put into his right hand, and smote him on the head: whereby they drove the sharp points of the thorns into it, which must give him inexpressible pain and torture.

Ver. 31. *And after that they had mocked him, &c.*] Gone through the whole farce, and glutted themselves with derision of him, and with sport and diversion with him, they took the robe off from him: it belonging to one of their company, and put his own raiment on him: partly that he might be known to be the self-same person that was condemned and committed to them, which they now brought forth to crucify; and partly, that the four soldiers that were appointed to be the executioners, might have the perquisite of his clothes, which belonged unto them: *and led him away to crucify him*; for a condemned person was always executed the same day: their canon is<sup>e</sup>, "after that his judgment, or sentence is finished, they don't tarry with him, but "slay him, בְּיוֹם, that very day." And their custom was this; "he whose sentence for death is finished, they bring him out from the house of judgment; and one stands at the door of it, and linen clothes in his hand, and a horse at some distance from him; and a crier goes out before him, saying, such an one is going to be executed with such a death, because he has committed such a sin, in such a place, at such a time, such and such being witnesses; whoever knows him to be innocent, let him come, and

<sup>a</sup> Alexander ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 28.

<sup>b</sup> Vid. Bartholin. de Spinea Corona, sect. 1. 2.

<sup>c</sup> Vid. Paschal. de Coronis, l. 10. c. 12. p. 701, 702.

<sup>d</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 17.

<sup>e</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 12. sect. 4. Mim. Sanhed. c. 6. sect. 1.

“ speak in his favour: if one says, I have something to say in his favour: this waves with the linen clothes, and the other rides upon the horse, and runs and brings back him that is judged, to the sanhedrim; and if he is found innocent, they dismiss him: but if not, he returns, and goes to execution.” The Jews pretend<sup>g</sup>, that a crier went out before Jesus of Nazareth, forty days before his execution, and made such a proclamation, but found none that had any thing to say in his favour, and therefore hanged him on the evening of the passover. But this is false; Christ had no such length of time, or his friends any liberty granted them to speak for him. They led him out of the common hall, through Jerusalem, and through one of the gates of it, without the city, in order to crucify him, to which he was adjudged, when that prophecy was fulfilled in Isa. liiii. 7. *He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth:* as he made no opposition or struggle, but quietly went along with them, where they led him; so he took every thing patiently from them, uttered not one complaint, or any murmuring and repining word, or any thing by way of reviling; but became meekly subject to them, and submitted himself to him that judgeth righteously.

Ver. 32. *And as they came out, &c.*] Of the city; for no execution was made, neither in the court of judicature, nor in the city, but at some distance; as it was at stoning, so at crucifixion<sup>h</sup>: “ when judgment was finished, they brought him out to be stoned; the place of stoning was without the sanhedrim, as it is said, Lev. xxiv. 14. *bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp.*” Upon which the gloss and Gemara say<sup>1</sup>, without the three camps; which were these, the court which was the camp of the Shekinah; or the divine presence; and the mountain of the house, the camp of the Levites; and the city, the camp of Israel; so that he that was executed, was had without the city. Maimonides<sup>k</sup> says, “ the place in which the sanhedrim executed, was without it, and at a distance from it, as it is said, Lev. xxiv. 14. and it appears to me, that it was about six miles distant; for so far it was between the sanhedrim of Moses our master, which was before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the camp of Israel.” So Jesus went without the camp, and suffered without the gate, as the antitype of the red heifer; see Numb. xix. 3. compared with Heb. xiii. 11, 12, 13. and the notes there. *They found a man of Cyrene:* a place in Lybia, and one of the five cities called Pentapolis: which were these, Berenice, Arsinoe, Ptolemais, Apollonia, and Cyrene<sup>l</sup>; Kir in Amos i. 5. and ix. 7. is rendered by the Targum, קירני, *Cyrene*, as it is also by the Vulgate Latin. There were many Jews dwelt here, as appears from Acts ii. 10. as this man was a Jew, as his name shews; and besides, there was a synagogue of the Cyrenian Jews at Jeru-

saalem, Acts vi. 9. so that though he was a native of Cyrene, he might now dwell there, and some of these were converted to the faith of Christ; for of those that were scattered abroad at the death of Stephen, some were men of Cyrene, Acts xi. 19, 20. And it is very likely, that this man was a favourer of Christ, which might be one reason why they laid hold on him, and obliged him to bear the cross of Christ; since he was the father of Alexander and Rufus, who were men of note among the first Christians: *Simon by name*; of which name was one of the apostles, and a common name among the Jews, and signifies hearkeuing and obedient: and none are fit to bear, or will bear the cross of Christ, but such who hearken to his voice, and are obedient to him, being made willing in the day of his power: *him they compelled to bear his cross*; which they did, not out of good will to Christ, but fearing lest through his faintness and weakness, he should die before he got to the place of execution, and they be disappointed of their end, the crucifixion of him; or because they were in haste to have him executed, and he was not able to go so fast as they desired; for when they first came out, the cross was laid upon Christ, and he bore it, as John relates; but he being weak and ready to faint under it, and not able to go the pace they would have him, and meeting with this man, they press him to bear it after him: which he might be unwilling to do, partly because it was scandalous and ignominious; and partly, because if a favourer of Jesus, he did not choose to be any ways accessory to his death: but he was obliged to it; and it may be observed from hence, that taking up the cross and following Christ, is disagreeable to flesh and blood: though the spirit may be willing, the flesh recoils; none care for it, or choose to bear it, unless constrained to it.

Ver. 33. *And when they were come to a place called Golgotha, &c.*] The true pronunciation is *Golgotha*, and so it is read in Munster's Hebrew Gospel. It is a Syriac word, in which language letters are often left out: in the Syriac version of this place, the first *l* is left out, and the latter retained, and it is read *Gogoltha*; and so, in the Persic, *Gagulta*; and in the Arabic, *Gagalut*. The Ethiopic version reads it, *Golgotha*; and so, Dr. Lightfoot observes, it is read by the Samaritan interpreter of the first chapter of Numbers: *that is to say, a place of a skull*: some say Adam's skull was found here, and from thence the place had its name; this is an ancient tradition, but without foundation<sup>m</sup>: it seems to be so called, because it was the place where malefactors were executed, and afterwards buried; whose bones and skulls in process of time might be dug up, and some of them might lie scattered about in this place: for, one that was executed as a malefactor<sup>n</sup>, “ they did not bury him in the sepulchres of his ancestors; but there were two places of burial appointed by the sanhedrim; one for those that were

<sup>g</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 13. sect. 1.

<sup>h</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1.

<sup>i</sup> Mian. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 1.

<sup>j</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 42. 2.

<sup>k</sup> Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 12. sect. 3.

<sup>l</sup> Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 5.

<sup>m</sup> Mian. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 4. 5.

<sup>n</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 13. sect. 2, 3.

“stoned, and for those that were burnt; and another for those that were killed with the sword, and for those that were strangled; and when their flesh was consumed, they gathered the bones, and buried them in their place;” *i. e.* in the sepulchres of their ancestors. This place was as infamous as our Tyburn, and to be crucified at *Golgotha*, was as ignominious as to be hanged at Tyburn; which shews to what shame and disgrace our Lord was brought, and what he condescended to bear on our account.

Ver. 34. *They gave him vinegar to drink, &c.* It was a custom with the Jews<sup>o</sup>, when “a man went out to be executed, to give him to drink a grain of frankincense in a cup of wine, that his understanding might be disturbed, as it is said, Prov. xxxi. 6. *Give strong drink to him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that be of heavy hearts;*” and the tradition is, that the honourable women in Jerusalem gave this freely; but if they did not, it was provided at the charge of the congregation.” The design of it was to cheer their spirits, and intoxicate their heads, that they might not be sensible of their pain and misery. But such a cup was not allowed Christ at the public expense, nor were the honourable women so compassionate to him; or if it was sent him, the soldiers did not give it him, but another potion in the room of it; indeed Mark says, they gave him *wine mingled with myrrh*; which was either a cordial provided by his friends, and given him, and is different from what the soldiers gave him here; or the sense is, that they gave him the cup, that was so called, but not the thing; but instead of it, *vinegar mingled with gall*. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, instead of *vinegar*, read *wine*; and so does Munster’s Hebrew Gospel, and so it is read in Beza’s most ancient copy, and in another exemplar, and in one of Stephens’s; and which may be easily reconciled with the common reading, and that with Mark; for the wine they gave him was flat and sour, and no other or better than vinegar; and real vinegar may be so called, as this seems to be; and the rather, because vinegar was a part of the Roman soldiers’ allowance, and so they had it ready at hand; see the note on John xix. 29. As also, because it was thought that vinegar was useful to prolong the life of a man ready to die; and therefore they might choose to give it to Christ, that he might live the longer in misery: so the Jews<sup>p</sup> write, that “if a man swallows a wasp or hornet alive, he can’t live; but they must give him to drink a quarter, דרלית שמני, of *vinegar of Shamgaz*, (which the gloss says is strong vinegar,) and it is possible he may live a little while, until he hath given orders to his house.” The Arabic version, instead of *gall*, reads *myrrh*; nor are we to suppose that this drink was mixed with the gall of a beast itself, but with something that was as bitter as *gall*; as wormwood, or myrrh, or any other bitter, to make it distasteful. This potion of vinegar with gall, was an aggravating circumstance in our Lord’s sufferings, being given to him when he had a violent thirst upon him; and

was an emblem of the bitter cup of God’s wrath, he had already tasted of in the garden, and was about to drink up: the Jews had a notion of vinegar’s being expressive of the chastisements of the Messiah; the words in Ruth ii. 14. they say<sup>q</sup>, “speak of the king Messiah; *come thou hither*, draw nigh to the kingdom; *and eat of the bread*, this is the bread of the kingdom, *and dip thy morsel in the vinegar*, אלו דיסורין, “these are the chastisements, as it is said in Isa. liii. 5. “*he was wounded for our transgressions.*” By this offer was fulfilled the prophecy in Psal. lxxix. 21. and which he did not altogether refuse; for it follows, *and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink*: not because it was the vinegar of Gentiles, which was forbidden by the Jewish canons<sup>r</sup>, lest it should have been offered to idols; but because he would make use of no means either to prolong his life, or discompose his mind; and that it might appear he knew what he did, and that he was not afraid nor unwilling to die; though he thought fit to taste of it in a superficial way, to shew he did not despise nor resent their offer; and that he was really a-thirst, and ready to drink a more disagreeable potion than that.

Ver. 35. *And they crucified him, &c.* That is, the soldiers: they laid the cross upon the ground, and stretched Christ upon it; they extended his two arms as far as they could, to the transverse part of it, and nailed his hands unto it: his two feet they fixed by each other on a basis, in the body of the cross, through which they also drove nails; and then raising it up, fixed it in the earth, and left him hanging on it till he expired. This death was not only painful and cruel, but exceedingly shameful and ignominious: it was what was inflicted on the meanest of persons, as servants, whose form Christ had taken; and upon the worst of men, as murderers, cut-throats, thieves, and the vilest of men<sup>s</sup>; among whom Christ was now numbered: *and parted his garments, casting lots*: for they stripped him of his clothes before they fixed him to the cross, and crucified him naked, as was the custom of the Romans<sup>t</sup>; as it was of the Jews to stone and hang persons naked: their canons run thus<sup>u</sup>; “when he is four cubits off of the place of stoning, they strip off his garments; a man they cover before, a woman both behind and before; the words of R. Judah: but the wise men say, a man is stoned naked, and a woman is not stoned naked: a man, they hang him with his face to the people; a woman, with her face to the tree. R. Eliezer, and the wise men say, a man is hanged, but a woman is not hanged.” On which the Gemara<sup>v</sup> says, “what is the sense of the Rabbin’s? the Scripture says, *thou shalt hang him*; him, and not her: and, says R. Eliezer, him, בלא כסותו, “without his clothes.” So our Lord was crucified; his clothes were a perquisite of the soldiers; there were four of them, as we learn from John xix. 23. and they parted them into four parts, and then cast lots whose each part should be; or rather, they divided his garments into four parts, and each took his part; but his vesture, or coat, being seamless, and woven from top to bottom,

<sup>o</sup> T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 12. 2.

<sup>p</sup> Midrash Ruth, fol. 33. 2.

<sup>q</sup> T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 29. 2.

<sup>r</sup> Lipsius de Cruce, l. 1. c. 12, & 13.

<sup>s</sup> Lipsius de Cruce, l. 2. c. 7.

<sup>t</sup> Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 3. 4.

<sup>u</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 46. 1.

they did not choose to tear it into pieces, but cast lots for it, who should have it: *that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, by David, in Psal. xxii. 18. They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.* All this, Beza says, is not in any of the ancient copies; nor is it in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, but stands in the Vulgate Latin, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; see the note on John xix. 24.

Ver. 36. *And sitting down, they watched him there.*] That is, the soldiers, after they had crucified Jesus, and parted his garments, sat down on the ground at the foot of the cross, and there watched him, lest his disciples should take him down; though there was no need to fear that, since they were few, and weak, and wanted courage, and were in the utmost dread and consternation themselves; or lest the people, who were very changeable with respect to Christ, one day saying Hosanna to the son of David, and another day crucify him, crucify him, should once more change their sentiments of him, and through pity to him rise and take him down; or rather, lest Jesus himself should, by his miraculous power, unloose himself, come down, and make his escape. It was usual with the Romans to set a soldier, or soldiers, to watch those that were crucified, not only before they expired, but after they were dead, lest they should be took down and buried; as appears from Petronius, Plutarch, and others\*. This seems to be the watch Pilate refers to, ver. 65. and over which there was a centurion, ver. 54.

Ver. 37. *And set up over his head his accusation written, &c.*] The Evangelist John calls it a *title*, and Luke, a *superscription*, and Mark, the *superscription of his accusation*: it was what contained the sum and substance of what he was accused, and for which he was condemned, and suffered. The Syriac and Persic versions here render it, *the cause of his death*. It was written by Pilate in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, that all might read it; and by his orders it was put upon the cross, and over the head of Jesus by the soldiers. This title, or inscription, setting forth the person's crime, used to be carried before him, or put upon him, as he was led to execution: but here it was set upon the cross, and perhaps nailed unto it; to which the apostle seems to allude in Col. ii. 14. the substance of it was, *this is Jesus the king of the Jews*. This was what the chief priests accused him of to Pilate, and about which he questioned him, and for which they desired he might be crucified; urging, that should he let him go, he could not be Cæsar's friend. Hence Pilate wrote his accusation in this form, not so much in derision of Jesus; for by conversation with him he understood what sort of a king he was, as to the reproach of the Jews for crucifying him who was their king; being the person that was prophesied of in their books, as king of Zion, and whom they expected as such, though now they denied and rejected him.

Ver. 38. *Then were there two thieves crucified with him, &c.*] Which seems contrary to one of their canons, which runs thus; אֵין דְּנִין שְׁנַיִם בַּיּוֹם אֶחָד, *they don't*

*judge two in one day*†, unless they were both in the same crime, and died the same death: but here were three persons, Jesus, and these two malefactors, condemned and executed in one, and the same day: these two thieves were led out with Jesus, to be put to death with him, according to Luke xxiii. 32. and were crucified with him upon the same spot of ground; their death was the same, but not their crime: *one on the right hand, and another on the left*; and Jesus in the midst, as John relates, chap. xix. 18. and hereby was fulfilled, as Mark observes, chap. xv. 28. a prophecy in Isa. liii. 12. If this was so ordered by Pilate, it might be done in order to cover the sin, and take off the reproach of putting an innocent person to death, suggesting hereby he was one of them; though this seems rather to be done by the Jews, the soldiers agreeing to it, for the greater reproach of Jesus; intimating, that he was the worst of these malefactors, and a ringleader of such sort of persons: and whereas they had observed, he took it ill at their hands that they should come to apprehend him with swords and staves, as if he was a thief and a robber; to vex and distress him the more, they crucify him between two such persons: but the grand reason why it was so ordered, was, that though Christ was no transgressor, he was accounted one, and stood in the room and stead of sinners, and was numbered with them, and as such was treated by divine justice, and accordingly died for them.

Ver. 39. *And they that passed by, &c.*] In the road to or from Jerusalem; for, it seems, the crosses were placed by the way-side; or they who passed by the cross, the populace that came from Jerusalem, on purpose to see the sight, *reviled him, or blasphemed him*; they spoke all manner of evil of him, they could think of, to which he answered not a word; and which may teach us patience under the revilings of men: this was foretold of him, Psal. lxxxix. 51. *they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed, or Messiah*; and which Jarchi explains by מֵסִיחַ, *the ends of the king Messiah*; his last times, towards the close of his days; and cites that passage in the Misna\*, "in the heels, or, as Buxtorf renders it, in the end of the days of the Messiah "impudence shall be multiplied," as it now was exceedingly: *wagging their heads*; in derision of him, and as exulting in his misery; see Isa. xxxvii. 22. Lam. ii. 15. This also was prophesied of him in Psal. xxii. 7.

Ver. 40. *And saying, thou that destroyest the temple, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel, read, *the temple of God*; and add *ah!* here, as in Mark xv. 29. and so Beza says 'tis read in a certain copy. They refer to the charge of the false witnesses against him, who misrepresenting his words in John ii. 19. declared that he gave out that he was able to destroy the temple of Jerusalem, and rebuild it in three days time; wherefore it is added, *and buildest it in three days, save thyself*. They reproach him with it, and suggest, that these were vain and empty boasts of his; for if he was able to do any thing of that kind, he need not hang upon the tree, but could easily save

\* Vid. Lipsium de Cruce, l. 2. c. 16. & Lydium. de re militari, l. 5. c. 4. p. 191. Kirchman. de funeribus Rom. append. c. 9. p. 736.

† Lipsius de Cruce, l. 2. c. 11.

Vol. I.—New Test.

† T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 35. 1. & 46. 1. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 8. fol. 190. 1.

‡ Sota, c. 9. sect. 15.

himself: *if thou be the son of God, come down from the cross.* The Jews themselves say <sup>a</sup>, that the following words were said to Jesus on the cross, "if thou be the son of God, why dost thou not deliver thyself out of our hands?" As Satan before them, they put an *if* upon the sonship of Christ; and seeing his followers believed in him as the son of God, and he had owned himself to be so before the sanhedrim, they require a sign of it by his power, and to do that which they believed no mere man in his situation could do; which shews, that they had no other notion of the son of God, but that he was a divine person: but his sonship was not to be declared by his coming down from the cross, which he could have easily effected, but by a much greater instance of power, even by his resurrection from the dead; and no other but that sign was to be given to that wicked and perverse generation.

Ver. 41. *Likewise also the chief priests, &c.*] Who as they attended at his apprehension, and in their own council condemned him to death unanimously, and were very busy at his arraignment, examination, and trial before Pilate, and persuaded the people to be urgent for his crucifixion; they follow him to the cross to exult over him, and insult him, and to see that the execution was strictly performed: and forgetting their character, office, and education; and laying aside all humanity, decency, and good manners; instead of rebuking and restraining the populace from using him in an ill and unkind manner, they themselves stood *mocking him, with the Scribes and elders*; who composed the whole sanhedrim of the nation. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, and several copies, read, *and the Pharisees*; of which, no doubt, there were great numbers present, who had been indefatigable and implacable enemies of Christ every where, and to whom it must be a pleasing sight to see him hanging on the cross: these scoffed at him, gibed, and reproached him; and *said*, as follows:

Ver. 42. *He saved others, himself he cannot save, &c.*] This was not so much a concession of their's, that he had done many saving works, as healing the sick, cleansing lepers, causing the blind to see, and the lame to walk, and raising the dead; but rather a suggestion, that these were only pretensions and illusions; that either they were not really done, or done by the help of the devil; since now he himself was in the utmost extremity, he could not save himself: but of this they might have been convinced by his striking many of them to the ground, that came to apprehend him in the garden, and of which these men were eye-witnesses; and he, as man, could easily have obtained of his father more than twelve legions of angels that would have rescued him out of their hands: but so it must not be; he came not to save himself, but others, and to save them spiritually and eternally by dying himself. *If he be the king of Israel*: that is, the Messiah, who was promised and expected as a king, as Zion's king, or king of Israel; see John i. 49. hence in Mark xv. 32. 'tis Christ the king of Israel. *Let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.* The Persic version reads, *that the people may see, and believe in him*;

and the Syriac and Arabic versions, *that we may see, and believe in him*, as in Mark xv. 32. But, alas! they had seen greater things already than this, and yet had not believed. He could easily have caused the nails to have given way, and unloosed himself, and come down, who had done such mighty works among them; and if he had, there is no reason to conclude they would have believed him to be the son of God, and the true Messiah; for though after this he did a much greater work, raised himself from the dead, of which they had the fullest evidence, yet they remained unbelieving.

Ver. 43. *He trusted in God, &c.*] That is, he pretended to claim an interest in him, to be high in his favour and esteem; and to have great faith and confidence in him: *let him deliver him now*; directly, from the cross, and the death of it: *if he will have him*; or if he is well pleased with him as his own son, or delights in him as such, and will shew him any favour and good will; see Psal. xxii. 8. where are these very words, and which are predicted should be said by these men to Christ; and are a wonderful confirmation of the truth of that Psalm and prophecy belonging to him: *for he said, I am the son of God*; not only in his ministry, but he had said so in their grandcouncil, before them all.

Ver. 44. *The thieves also, &c.*] One or other of them, not both; an Hebrew way of speaking, as Drusius <sup>b</sup> has observed: so it is said of Jonah, ch. i. 7. that he was *gone down into the sides of the ship*; not into both sides, but into one or other of them: so here the thieves, one or other of them, not naming which, railed at Jesus, for it was but one of them; see Luke xxiii. 39. unless it can be thought, as it is by some, that they both at first reviled him; but one being quickly convinced of his evil, ceased, and rebuked his fellow-sufferer, confessed his sin, bore a testimony to the innocence of Christ, and desired to be remembered by him in his kingdom. This was an aggravation of the sufferings of Christ, that he should be vilified by those, *which were crucified with him*; who ought to have been, considering the condemnation they were in, and the future state they were just entering into, lamenting and confessing the sins they had been guilty of, instead of adding sin to sin, and so aggravating their condemnation. These, at least one of them, *cast the same into his teeth*; as the populace, the chief priests, Scribes, elders, and Pharisees had done; twitted him with his pretensions of being the son of God, the Messiah, and king of Israel; and urged, that if he was, why did not he save himself, and them also?

Ver. 45. *Now from the sixth hour, &c.*] Which was twelve o'clock at noon, *there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour*: till three o'clock in the afternoon, the time the Jews call *between the two evenings*; and which they say <sup>c</sup> is *from the sixth hour, and onwards.* Luke says, the sun was darkened, ch. xxiii. 45. This darkness was a preternatural eclipse of the sun; for it was at the time when the moon was in the full, as appears from its being at the time of the passover; which was on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, the Jews beginning their months from the new moon: and moreover, it was over all the land, or *earth*, as the

<sup>a</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 17.

<sup>b</sup> Quest. Heb. l. 1. qu. 5.

<sup>c</sup> T. Hieros Pesachim, fol. 31. 3.



word may be rendered; and the Ethiopic version renders it, *the whole world was dark*; at least it reached to the whole Roman empire, or the greatest part of it; though some think only the land of Judea, or Palestine, is intended: but it is evident, that it is taken notice of, and recorded by Heathen historians and chronologers, as by Phlegon, and others, referred to by Eusebius<sup>d</sup>. The Roman archives are appealed unto for the truth of it by Tertullian<sup>e</sup>; and it is asserted by Suidas, that Dionysius the Areopagite, then an Heathen, saw it in Egypt; and said, "either the divine being suffers, or suffers with him that suffers, or the frame of the world is dissolving." Add to this the continuance of it, that it lasted three hours; whereas a natural eclipse of the sun is but of a short duration; see Amos viii. 9. The Jews<sup>f</sup> have a notion, that in the times of the Messiah "the sun shall be darkened, *בפלגות יומא*, *in the middle of the day*, (as "this was), as that day was darkened when the sanctuary was destroyed." Yea, they speak<sup>g</sup> of a darkness that shall continue a long time: their words are these: "the king Messiah shall be made known in all the world, and all the kings shall be stirred up to join together to make war with him; and many of the profligate Jews shall be turned to them, and shall go with them, to make war against the king Messiah; so *יתרושך גל עלמא*, *all the world shall be darkened fifteen days, and many of the people of Israel shall die in that darkness.*" This darkness that was over the earth at the time of Christ's sufferings, was, no doubt, an addition to them; the sun, as it were, hiding its face, and refusing to afford its comforting light and heat to him; and yet might be in detestation of the heinousness of the sin the Jews were committing, and as expressive of the divine anger and resentment; for God's purposes and decrees, and the end he had in view, did not excuse, nor extenuate their wickedness; as it shews also their wretched stupidity, not to be awakened and convinced by the amazing darkness, with other things attending it, which made no impression on them; though it did on the Roman centurion, who concluded Christ must be the son of God. It was an emblem of the judicial blindness and darkness of the Jewish nation; and signified, that now was the hour and power of darkness, or the time for the prince of darkness, with his principalities and powers, to exert himself; and was a representation of that darkness that was now on the soul of Christ, expressed in the following verse; as well as of the eclipse of him, the sun of righteousness, of the glory of his person, both by his incarnation, and by his sufferings.

Ver. 46. *And about the ninth hour, &c.*] Or three o'clock in the afternoon, which was about the time of the slaying and offering of the daily sacrifice, which was an eminent type of Christ. The Jews say<sup>1</sup>, that "every day the daily sacrifice was slain at eight and a half, and was offered up at nine and a half:" about which time also the passover was killed, which was

another type of Christ; and as they say<sup>2</sup>, "was offered first, and then the daily sacrifice." Though the account they elsewhere give of these things, is this; "the daily sacrifice was slain at eight and a half, and was offered up at nine and a half; (that is, on all the common days of the year;) on the evenings of the passover it was slain at seven and a half, and offered at eight and a half, whether on a common day, or on a sabbath day: the passover eve, that happened to be on the sabbath eve, it was slain at six and a half, and offered at seven and a half, and the passover after it." At this time, *Jesus cried with a loud voice*: as in great distress, having been silent during the three hours darkness, and patiently bearing all his soul-sufferings, under a sense of divine wrath, and the hidings of his father's countenance, and his conflicts with the powers of darkness; but now, in the anguish of his soul, he breaks out, saying, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani*: which words are partly Hebrew, and partly Chaldee; the three first are Hebrew, and the last Chaldee, substituted in the room of *Azabthani*: as it was, and still is, in the Chaldee paraphrase of the text in Psal. xxii. 1. from whence they are taken; *that is to say, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* He calls him his God, not as he was God, but as he was man; who, as such, was chosen by him to the grace of union to the son of God; was made and formed by him; was anointed by him with the oil of gladness; was supported and upheld by him in the day of salvation; was raised by him from the dead, and highly exalted by him at his own right hand; and Christ, as man, prayed to him as his God, believed in him, loved him, and obeyed him as such: and though now he hid his face from him, yet he expressed strong faith and confidence of his interest in him. When he is said to be *forsaken* of God; the meaning is not, that the hypostatical union was dissolved, which was not even by death itself; the fulness of the Godhead still dwelt bodily in him: nor was he separated from the love of God; he had the same interest in his father's heart and favour, both as his son, and as mediator, as ever: nor was the principle and habit of joy and comfort lost in his soul, as man, but he was now without a sense of the gracious presence of God, and was filled, as the surety of his people, with a sense of divine wrath, which their iniquities he now bore, deserved, and which was necessary for him to endure, in order to make full satisfaction for them; for one part of the punishment of sin is loss of the divine presence. Wherefore he made not this expostulation out of ignorance: he knew the reason of it, and that it was not out of personal disrespect to him, or for any sin of his own; or because he was not a righteous, but a wicked man, as the Jew<sup>3</sup> blasphemously objects to him from hence; but because he stood in the law-place, and *stead of sinners*: nor was it out of impatience, that he so expressed himself; for he was entirely resigned to the will of God, and content to drink the whole of the bitter cup:

<sup>d</sup> In *Chronica*.

<sup>e</sup> *Apolog.* c. 21.

<sup>f</sup> *Zohar* in *Exod.* fol. 4. 1.

<sup>g</sup> *Ib.* fol. 3. 4.

<sup>1</sup> T. Hieros. *Peschim*, fol. 31. 3. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*

<sup>3</sup> *Misn. Pesachim*, c. 5. sect. 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Vet. Nizzachon*, p. 162.

nor out of despair; for he at the same time strongly claims and asserts his interest in God, and repeats it; but to shew, that he bore all the griefs of his people, and this among the rest, divine desertion; and to set forth the bitterness of his sorrows, that not only the sun in the firmament hid its face from him, and he was forsaken by his friends and disciples, but even left by his God; and also to express the strength of his faith at such a time. The whole of it evinces the truth of Christ's human nature, that he was in all things made like unto his brethren; that he had an human soul, and endured sorrows and sufferings in it, of which this of desertion was not the least: the heinousness of sin may be learnt from hence, which not only drove the angels out of heaven, and Adam out of the garden, and separates, with respect to communion, between God and his children; but even caused him to hide his face from his own son, whilst he was bearing, and suffering for, the sins of his people. The condescending grace of Christ is here to be seen, that he, who was the word, that was with God from everlasting, and his only-begotten son that lay in his bosom, that he should descend from heaven by the assumption of human nature, and be for a while forsaken by God, to bring us near unto him: nor should it be wondered at, that this is sometimes the case of the saints, who should, in imitation of Christ, trust in the Lord at such seasons, and stay themselves on their God, and which may be some support unto them, they may be assured of the sympathy of Christ, who having been in this same condition, cannot but have a fellow-feeling with them. The Jews themselves own<sup>a</sup>, that these words were said by Jesus when he was in their hands. They indeed apply the passage to Esther; and say<sup>b</sup>, that "she stood in the innermost court of the king's house; and when she came to the house of the images, the Shekinah departed from her, and she said, *Eli, Eli, lama Azabthani?* my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Though others apply the *Psalms* to David, and others to the people of Israel in captivity<sup>c</sup>: but certain it is, that it belongs to the Messiah; and so many things in it were fulfilled with respect to Jesus, as most clearly shew him to be the Messiah, and the person pointed at: the first words of it were spoken by him, as the Jews themselves allow, and the very expressions which his enemies used concerning him while suffering, together with their gestures, are there recorded; and the parting his garments, and casting lots on his vesture, done by the Roman soldiers, are there prophesied of; and indeed there are so many things in it which agree with him, and cannot with any other, that leave it without all doubt that he is the subject of it<sup>d</sup>.

Ver. 47. *Some of them that stood there, &c.*] Near the cross, looking on, and mocking at him, when they heard that; the words, *Eli, Eli*, spoken by Christ, said, *this man calleth for Elias*. These could not be the Roman soldiers that said so, who had no notion of Elias; rather the Hellenistical Jews, who not so well understanding the Hebrew language, hearing the

above words, and having some notion of the prophet Elias, fancied he was calling for him; though it seems most likely to be the Jews, who either through the nearness of the sound of the words, and mistake of them, and not near enough to hear and distinguish them, really thought he called for that prophet; or rather wilfully mistook him, with an intent to banter and ridicule him.

Ver. 48. *And straightway one of them ran and took a sponge, &c.*] Which was not far from the cross, where a vessel full of vinegar was set, John xix. 29. and filled it with vinegar; dipping it into it, it sucked it up. Some of these sponges had leathern handles to them<sup>e</sup>. And put it on a reed; a stalk of hyssop; see the note on John xix. 29. and gave him to drink; not to revive his spirits, or hasten his death, as some have thought, but in contempt of him, and to mock him, he having signified that he was a-thirst.

Ver. 49. *The rest said, let be, &c.*] The others, to whom he belonged, that fetched the sponge, said to him, let him alone, keep at a distance from him, give him nothing to drink: *let us see whether Elias will come to save him*; whom the Jews looked upon to be the forerunner of the Messiah, and therefore suggest, that should he come to save him, they would believe he was the Messiah; and they had a mighty notion of Elias appearing to persons frequently<sup>f</sup>, and talking, and conversing with them; see the note on Matt. xvii. 3. though they did not believe he would come, and appear to Christ; for they were persons of great note for piety and learning, to whom he appeared, as they pretend, whereas they had no such opinion of him. The Ethiopic version here adds, *and one took a spear and pierced his side with it, and blood and water flowed out*: but this circumstance is only recorded by the Evangelist John, ch. xix. 34. though Beza says the same is read here in two ancient copies.

Ver. 50. *Jesus, when he had cried again, &c.*] A second time, as the Persic version; for he had cried once before, and expressed the words he did, as in ver. 46. what he now delivered were, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*, Luke xxiii. 46. and it is finished, John xix. 30. which he said with a loud voice; which shewed the vehemency of his affection, his strong confidence in God, and his being fearless of death; as also he thus spoke, that he might be heard, and his words attended to, since they contained things of the greatest importance and consequence: moreover, being able to express himself in such a manner, this declared him to be more than a mere man; for after such agonies in the garden, and so much fatigue in being hurried from place to place, and such loss of blood by being buffeted, scourged, crowned with thorns, and nailed to the accursed tree, where, being stretched, he had hung for some hours; to speak with so loud a voice was more than human, and was a conviction to the centurion, that he was a divine person: for when he saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, *truly this man was the son of God*, Mark xv. 39. and likewise it shews, that he died freely and voluntarily,

<sup>a</sup> Toldes Jesu, p. 17.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 15. 2. & Gloss. in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 39. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Vid. Jarchi & Kimchi in Psal. xxii. 1.

<sup>d</sup> See my Book of the Prophecies of the Old Test. &c. p. 158. &c.

<sup>e</sup> Misn. Sabbat, c. 21. sect. 3.

<sup>f</sup> Vid. Juchasin, fol. 79. 1. & 86. 1. & 101. 1. & 118. 2. & 132. 1.

and not through force and necessity: it was not all that men had done, or could do to him, that could have forced his life from him: he died willingly, and when nature was in its full strength; and which is signified in the next phrase, *yielded up the ghost*, or *dismissed the spirit*, as the Syriac version truly renders it; he sent it away. It was not taken from him, he laid down his life of himself, as the Lord of it, and gave himself freely to be an offering and sacrifice in the room of his people; which is a proof of his great love, and amazing grace unto them.

Ver. 51. *And behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain, &c.*] Just at the time that Christ spake with so loud a voice, and expired, and which was at the time of the offering up of the evening incense; and so must be seen by the priest that was then offering, and those that assisted him, for the incense-altar was near the vail; and which must be a very astonishing sight unto them: the vail was of a very great thickness; it was made of fine twined linen, Exod. xxvi. 31. and it is a rule with the Jews<sup>1</sup>, that "where-ever mention is made in the law of fine linen, or fine twined linen, it means a thread six times doubled:" and whereas this was made of blue, and purple, and scarlet, Jarchi's note on the place is, that "every kind was doubled with each thread of six threads." His sense is more clearly expressed in his note on ver. 1. "lo! here are four sorts to every thread; one of linen, and three of wool, and every thread is six times doubled; behold four sorts when they are twisted together, make twenty-four doubles to a thread." Yea, some of them make it to be forty-eight doubles". What a thick piece of tapestry must this be! and this makes the rending of it the more amazing; for no doubt but that the vail of the second temple was made after the manner of the first; and this was rent *from top to bottom*; and which was no less than forty cubits in length, which was the height of the holy of holies in the second temple; and which made the rent the more astonishing. The account the Jews give of the vail, is this<sup>2</sup>: "R. Simeon ben Gamaliel said, on account of R. Simeon, the son of the Sagan, the thickness of the vail is an hand's breadth, and it is woven of seventy-two threads, and every thread has twenty-four threads in it: it is forty cubits long, and twenty broad, and is made of eighty-two myriads; (which is either the number of the threads in it, or the sum of the golden pence it cost. Some copies read, is made by eighty-two virgins<sup>3</sup>); two are made every year; and three hundred priests wash it." The Syriac version renders it, *the face of the gate of the temple*; by which may be meant, perhaps, the vail of the gate of Ulam, or of the porch<sup>4</sup>. The Jews have a tradition<sup>5</sup>, that "forty years before the destruction of the temple, the gates of it opened of themselves." R. Jochanan ben Zaccai reproved them, saying, O

temple! temple! wherefore dost thou fright thyself? I know thy end is to be destroyed; for so prophesied of thee Zechariah, the son of Iddo, "open thy gates, O Lebanon, &c. Zech. xi. 1." But whether this may be referred to in the above version, or has any reference to the evangelic history, I will not say. Other writers, as Josephus<sup>6</sup>, and Egesippus<sup>7</sup>, speak of the eastern gate of the city, which was of brass, and as much as twenty men could shut, opening of its own accord, before the destruction of the temple; which perhaps the Jewish tradition rather regards. This rending of the vail was done, as some think, in token of mourning for, and testifying abhorrence at the crucifixion of Christ; the temple rending its garments, the vail, at the death of its Lord, proprietor, and type, as the high-priest did his at supposed blasphemy; or to shew that the Lord, who had taken up his residence in the most holy place between the cherubim, over the mercy-seat, in thick darkness, was now about to remove, and leave the house desolate; or it signified the rending of Christ's flesh, the breaking of his body for us, which was typified by the vail; see Heb. x. 20. and may also denote both the fulfilment and abrogation of the ceremonial law, which had its end in the death of Christ; and likewise the more clear discoveries of the mysteries of grace under the Gospel, in which they are laid to open view, and are beheld with open face: to which may be added, that this pointed out, that the way to the holiest of all, to heaven, of which this was a figure, was now made manifest; and was plain and accessible, as it was, first to Christ, who entered by his own blood, as the forerunner; and also to his people, who likewise have boldness to enter by the same. *And the earth did quake*: whether this earthquake reached only to the spot of ground where Christ was crucified, and on which the city and temple of Jerusalem stood; or whether it extended to other parts of the earth; since, in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, as Pliny<sup>8</sup> relates, there was an earthquake, in which twelve cities in Asia fell, is not certain. However, it was an indication of the divine anger and resentment, and in detestation of the sin of crucifying Christ; see Psal. xviii. 7. and was an emblem of the shaking and removing of the Jewish church-state and ordinances, Heb. xii. 26, 27. *And the rocks rent*; which were near Mount Calvary, and about Jerusalem; and, as we are told, the clefts are to be seen to this day, and which appear to be supernatural. This was also a token of divine wrath and fury, Nahum i. 5, 6. and a rebuke of the stupidity and hardness of the Jews, who were unmoved when rocks were rent asunder, being harder than they; and an emblem of the future conversion of many through the powerful ministry of the word, and in consequence of Christ's death; when hearts, as hard as rocks, were broke in pieces, stony hearts taken

<sup>1</sup> Maimon. Cole Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 14. Kimchi in Sepher Shorash rad. 712.

<sup>2</sup> T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 51. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Mien. Shekalim, c. 8. sect. 5. Shemot Rabba, sect. 50. fol. 144. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 4. fol. 183. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Vid. Bartenora & Yom. Tob. in ib.

<sup>5</sup> Vid. Bartenora in ib.

<sup>6</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 39. 2. Jarchi & Kimchi in Zech. xi. i. Gana Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 2.

<sup>7</sup> L. 8. c. 12.

<sup>8</sup> L. 5. c. 44.

<sup>9</sup> L. 2. c. 34.

away, and hearts of flesh given; of which the three thousand being pricked to the heart under Peter's sermon, were an instance.

Ver. 52. *And the graves were opened, &c.*] Which were near the city of Jerusalem: this was a proof of Christ's power over death and the grave, by dying; when he through death, destroyed him that had the power of it, and abolished death itself; and became the plague of death and the destruction of the grave, taking into his hands the keys of hell and death: *and many bodies of saints which slept, arose*: not that they arose at the time of Christ's death: the graves were opened then, when the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent; but the bodies of the saints did not arise, till after Christ was risen, as appears from the following verse; but because the other event now happened, they are both recorded here: these were saints, and such as slept in Jesus; and of whom he is the first fruits that now rose; and not all, but many of them, as pledges of the future resurrection, and for the confirmation of Christ's, and the accomplishment of a prophecy in Isa. xxvi. 19. And they rose in the same bodies in which they before lived, otherwise they could not be called their bodies, or known by those to whom they appeared: but who they were is not to be known; some have thought them to be the ancient patriarchs, as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, &c. In the Septuagint on Job xlii. 17. Job is said to be one of them, and a tradition is there recorded, which runs thus: "it is written, that he rose with whom the Lord rose." But it should seem rather, that they were some later saints, such as Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, John the Baptist himself, good old Simeon, Joseph the husband of Mary, and others, well known to persons now alive. Some think they were such, as had been martyrs in the cause of religion; and so the Persic version renders the words, *and the bodies of many saints who suffered martyrdom, rose out of the graves.*

Ver. 53. *And came out of the graves after his resurrection, &c.*] The resurrection of Christ; for he rose as the first fruits, as the first-begotten of the dead, and the first-born from the dead; for he was the first that was raised to an immortal life; for though others were raised before him, by himself, and in the times of the prophets, yet to a mortal life; but these saints came forth to the resurrection of life, and therefore it was necessary that Christ the first fruits, should rise first. The Arabic version indeed reads, *after their own resurrection*; and the Ethiopic version, *after they were raised*; both wrong, and scarcely sense: *and went into the holy city*: the city of Jerusalem, which though now a very wicked city, was so called, because of the temple, and the worship of God, and his residence in it: the burying-places of the Jews were without the city<sup>d</sup>, and therefore these risen saints, are said to go into it: *and appeared unto many*; of their friends and acquaintance, who had personally known them, and conversed with them in their life-time. These saints, I apprehend, continued on earth until our Lord's ascension, and then joining the retinue of angels, went triumphantly with him to heaven, as tro-

phies of his victory over sin, Satan, death, and the grave.

Ver. 54. *Now when the centurion, &c.*] That was over the band of soldiers, that mocked Christ in Pilate's hall, and who was particularly over the guard of soldiers, set about the cross of Christ: *and they that were with him, watching Jesus*: the soldiers that were with him, who were set to watch the cross of Christ, lest he should come down, or any should take him down from thence; see the note on ver. 36. *Saw the earthquake, and those things that were done*: as besides that, the darkening of the sun, the rending of the rocks, and particularly heard with what a loud voice Christ spoke, and then at once expired: *they feared greatly*: not with a true godly fear, but with a fear of punishment; lest divine vengeance should light on them, for their concern in this matter: *saying, truly this was the son of God*: which they concluded, not from any mediatorial performances, which they were utter strangers to, but from effects of divine power; and which to them shewed him to be a divine person, what he said he was, and the Jews charged him with blasphemy, on account of, and condemned him for, as these soldiers might have seen and heard.

Ver. 55. *And many women were there, &c.*] At the cross of Christ, at some little distance from it; but where was Peter, who had declared he would never be offended, though all men were; and would die with Christ, rather than deny him? and where were the rest of the disciples, who said the same things? None were present excepting John, as can be learnt from the evangelists; but many women, those of the weaker sex, were there, which was a rebuke of the former vanity and confidence of the disciples, and of their present pusillanimity and cowardice: *beholding afar off*: Christ upon the cross, in all his agonies, the chief priests and people mocking him, the darkness upon the earth, the quaking of it, and the rending of the rocks: they were witnesses of all this, being at some little distance, by reason of the crowd of people and soldiers about the cross; and they beheld with an eye of faith, their bleeding, dying Lord, as crucified for them, and as bearing and taking away their sins: a sight which at once stirred up their affection and love to Christ, their concern for him, and sorrow for sin; and yet joy and peace, in believing in him: *which followed Jesus from Galilee*: where they had seen his miracles, heard his doctrines, and had been savingly converted by him; and therefore followed him wherever he went, though an hundred miles or more, and through many difficulties and discouragements: they attended him in his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and now at his cross; nor did they leave him when dead, and in his grave: *ministering unto him*: not now, for he stood in no need of their assistance, nor could they give him any; but this respects what they had done heretofore, in their journey with him from Galilee to Jerusalem; when they ministered to him of their worldly substance, as a token of their affection for him; and which expresses the low estate and mean condition he was in, and is an instruction to his followers, how to behave

<sup>d</sup> Vid. Gloss. in T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 80. 2. & Maimon. Hilch. Shemitta veyobel, c. 13. sect. 3.

towards the faithful preachers of his Gospel; see Luke viii. 3.

Ver. 56. *Among which was Mary Magdalene, &c.*] Out of whom Christ had cast out seven devils; and who having received much from him, loved much, which she showed by her zealous and constant attachment to him. She was called Magdalene, either because she was an inhabitant of Magdala, Matt. xv. 39. so we read of R. Isaac, מַגְדָּלָה, of *Magdala*, or *Magdalene*; and the rather, because that Magdala was famous, or rather infamous, for whoredom; for which reason the Jews' say, it was destroyed: or else she was so called, because she was גְּדֹלֶת, a tonstrix, or plaiter of women's hair, as the word signifies<sup>g</sup>; and so we often read of Mary, מַגְדָּלָה שִׁיעָר נְשִׂימָה, the *plaiter of women's hair*<sup>h</sup>; by whom the Jews seem to design Mary, the mother of Jesus, whom they confound with this Mary Magdalene. Jerom says<sup>i</sup>, her name signifies *towered*, or fortified, because of her care and diligence, and the ardour of her faith; and *Migdal*, in Hebrew, does signify a tower: and *Mary the mother of James and Joses*: the same with the wife of Cleophas, and sister to Mary, the mother of Jesus: instead of *Joses*, the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read *Joseph*: יוֹסֵפִי, *Jose*, in Hebrew, is the same with *Joseph*, the last letter being cut off; the Arabic version reads *Mary*, the mother of James, and the mother of *Joses*, John xix. 25. *And the mother of Zebedee's children*: that is, of James and John; her name was Salome, Mark xv. 40.

Ver. 57. *When the even was come, &c.*] The second evening, when it was just on sun-setting; at which time the Jewish sabbath began, and when the bodies of those that were crucified, must be taken down; and if not dead, their bones must be broken, and they dispatched, in order to be interred in the common burying-place of malefactors: *there came a rich man of Arimathea*: not from thence now, for he lived at Jerusalem; but this was the place of his nativity, or former abode, and from whence he originally came; and is the same with Ramathaim Zophim, and Ramah, and was the birth-place of Samuel the prophet, 1 Sam. i. 1, 19. and is by the Septuagint called Armathaim, in 1 Sam. i. 1, 3, 19. and viii. 4. and xv. 34. and xvi. 13. and xxviii. 3. His character, as a rich man, is particularly mentioned, not merely to shew that such men may be, and sometimes are, instances of the grace of God; much less in a way of boasting, that such a man was attached to Jesus; but rather to point out the reason, how he came to have such easy access to Pilate, and to succeed in his business with him; as well as to observe the accomplishment of a prophecy, in Isa. liii. 9. *named Joseph*: the same name with one of the patriarchs, the sons of Jacob; between whom there was a resemblance, not only as good men, but in their observance of funeral rites and obsequies; the one in those of his father, the other in those of his dear Lord and Master. Some think<sup>k</sup> he is the same with Joseph ben Gorion, the brother of Nicodemus ben Gorion, often spoken of as a priest, and

one of the richest of them in Jerusalem: *who also himself was Jesus' disciple*; though he was only a secret one, as Nicodemus was: he had not as yet, or till now publicly professed him, for fear of the Jews, who had made a law, that whoever did, should be cast out of the synagogue; see Luke xix. 38.

Ver. 58. *He went to Pilate, &c.*] To his house where he lived, and went in, as Mark says, ch. xv. 43. *boldly*; not being ashamed of Christ crucified, or afraid to own him, and shew his respect to him as dead, though he knew he should incur the displeasure, reproach, and persecution of the Jews: *and begged the body of Jesus*; which could not be taken down and interred, without the leave of the Roman governor; and which was generally granted to the friends of the deceased, when asked; otherwise they were buried in places<sup>l</sup> appointed for such persons; see the note on ver. 33. And this would have been the case of Christ, had not Joseph craved his body; and which he did, to prevent its being abused by the Jews, and interred in such an ignominious manner: *then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered*; to Joseph, after he had understood by the centurion that Jesus was dead, which he at first could not tell how to believe, and marvelled at it, Mark xv. 44. 45. Joseph might the more easily obtain his request, as he was a person of character and riches; and because Pilate himself had a good opinion of Jesus, and of his innocence, as well as his wife was much in his favour: so that Joseph had no difficulty to obtain the body of Christ; but as soon as he asked, he had the favour granted, and orders were given to the centurion and his soldiers, to deliver it to him.

Ver. 59. *And when Joseph had taken the body, &c.*] Down from the cross, with the assistance of others, or from the hands of those who had orders to deliver it to him: *he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth*; that is, he wound up the body in it round and round, as was the custom of the Jews; see Acts v. 6. John xi. 44. Nor was it usual to bury in any thing but linen: so 'tis said<sup>m</sup>, "let the wrappings, or grave-clothes, be של פשתן לבנים, of white linen; and let not the price of them be dear, for it is forbidden to bury in wrappings of silk, or brodered garments, even to a prince of Israel: for this is pride and destruction, and the work of the Gentiles." This clean linen cloth, in which the dead body of Christ was wrapped, may be an emblem of his purity and innocence, who did no sin; nor did he die for any of his own, but for the sins of others; and also of his pure and spotless righteousness, which is compared to fine linen, clean and white, and which he now had wrought out, and brought in; see Rev. xix. 8.

Ver. 60. *And laid it in his own new tomb, &c.*] Christ was laid not in his own, but in another's tomb; for as in his life-time he had not where to lay his head; so when he was dead, he had no sepulchre of his own to put his body in: and moreover, this shews that as he was born for others, and suffered and died

<sup>g</sup> Juchasin, fol. 96. 2.

<sup>f</sup> T. Hieros. Taniot, fol. 69. 1. Echa Rabbati, fol. 52. 4.

<sup>e</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in Mian. Kiddushin, c. 2. sect. 2.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 104. 2. Chagiga, fol. 4. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 67. 1.

<sup>l</sup> Ad Principium, Tom. 1. fol. 41.

<sup>k</sup> Alting, Shilo, p. 309.

<sup>j</sup> See Mian. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 5, 6. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 14. sect. 9.

<sup>m</sup> Juchasin, fol. 54. 2. Vid. Maimon. Hilchot Ebel, c. 4. sect. 2.

not for himself, but them; so he was buried for them, as well as rose again for their justification: and it was a *new* tomb in which he was laid, in which none had been laid before; and was so ordered by providence, for the confirmation of the truth of his resurrection; for had another body been laid there, it might have been said that it was that, and not his that was raised. The Jews distinguish between a new grave, and an old grave: "a new grave may be measured, and sold, and divided; an old one may not be measured, nor sold, nor divided: there is a new grave, which is as an old one; and an old one, which is as a new one; an old grave, in which are ten dead bodies, which is not in the power of the owners, lo! this is as a new grave." *Which he had hewn out in the rock*: it was usual with the Jews to make their sepulchres in rocks: "in the midst (of the court of the sepulchre, they say) two caves are opened, one on one side, and the other on the other; R. Simeon says, four on the four sides; Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel says, all are לפי הסלע, according to the rock;" *i. e.* according to the nature of the rock, out of which the sepulchre is hewn; see Isa. xxii. 16. *And he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre*; for the sepulchres were made with doors to go in and out at: hence we often read of הפתח הקבר, the door of the sepulchre; and this was not only the custom of the Jews, but of other nations also: the stone rolled to the door, was what the Jews call, גולל, from its being rolled to, and from the door of the sepulchre; and which, they say, was a large and broad stone, with which the mouth of the sepulchre was stopped above: and it was at the shutting up of the sepulchre with this stone, that mourning began; and after it was shut with this sepulchral stone, it was not lawful to open it: now this was done by Joseph, to preserve the body from any injury, either from beasts, or from the Jews: and when he had so done, he departed to his own house; for the sabbath drew on, and there was no more time to do any thing more in this affair. The Syriac version reads these last clauses in the plural number; they rolled a great stone, and they put it, &c. and they went away; intimating, that Joseph did not do this himself; the stone was too great; but by others, or with their assistance. It may be observed, that all this was done on a feast-day; on one of the days of the feast of the passover, when no servile work was to be done; and yet this was agreeably to the Jewish canons, which say, "they do all things needful for the dead on a feast-day; they shave his head, and wash his clothes, and make him a coffin; and if they have no boards, they bring timber and saw boards of it, silently within doors; and if the person is a man of note, they do it even in the street; but they don't cut wood out of the forest, to saw planks of it for the coffin; nor do they hew stones, to build a tomb with them." In this case, there was no need for the latter, because the sepulchre in

which the body of Christ was laid, had been hewn out of a rock before; but the body was wrapped in a clean linen cloth, and wound up in it with myrrh and aloes to preserve it, and was interred; and so the women on this day, prepared spices and ointments, to anoint it with; though they rested on the sabbath-day according to the commandment; but then as soon as that was over, though it was a feast-day, they came to the sepulchre with their spices and ointments, Luke xxiii. 56. and xxiv. 1.

Ver. 61. *And there was Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, &c.*] The wife of Cleophas, and the mother of James and of Joses: *sitting over-against the sepulchre*; observing where the body of Christ was put, and how it was laid; for they intended to prepare spices and ointments to anoint it with; and were mourning for the death of Christ: for *sitting* was a mourning posture, which now they were allowed, the body being taken down from the cross, and interred by leave of the governor; for, for one that died as a malefactor, they might not use the outward signs of mourning: the canon is this; for such "they don't mourn, but they grieve; and there is no grieving but in the heart:" hence these women before stood, John xix. 25. but now they sat.

Ver. 62. *Now the next day that followed the day of preparation, &c.*] Which was the sabbath-day; for the day of preparation was the day before the sabbath, Mark xv. 42. in which they prepared every thing necessary for the sabbath, and therefore was so called: and as this introduces the account of the chief priests and Pharisees, making application to Pilate, to secure the sepulchre; and which by his leave they did, by sealing the stone, and setting a guard about the sepulchre; it shews what consciences these men had, who accused the disciples of Christ of a violation of the sabbath, for plucking a few ears of corn on that day; and sought to kill Jesus, because he healed a man on it, and bid him take up his bed and walk; and yet they themselves could leave their devotions, and first meet together and agree upon an address to Pilate, and then go in a body to his palace; and having obtained their request, march to Joseph's garden, and make the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch, which were servile works, and, according to their laws and traditions, not to be done on the sabbath-day; and yet they scrupled them not, notwithstanding their characters and profession, which follow: *the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate*; these were the inveterate and implacable enemies of Christ; they took counsel how to put him to death; they employed Judas to betray him, and sent a band of soldiers with him to take him; they suborned false witnesses against him; they moved the people to prefer Barabbas to him; they got him condemned to death, and followed him to the cross, where they mocked him; and still, like the troubled sea, they were restless and uneasy; for though he was dead, they feared his resurrection; and

\* Masseh. Semachto, c. 14. fol. 16. 2.

• Mifn. Bava Bathra, c. 6. sect. 8.

• Mifn. ib. & Bartenora in Mifn. Ohalot, c. 15. sect. 8.

• Vid. Kirchan de Fener. Roman. l. 3. c. 15. p. 438.

• Bartenora & Xom. Tob. in Mifn. Ohalot, c. 2. sect. 4.

\* T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 47. 2. Maimon. Hilchot Ebel, c. 1. sect. 2. & c. 2. sect. 8.

• Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Rab. p. 497.

• Maimon. Hilchot Yom. Tob. c. 7. sect. 15.

• Mifn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 4.

though they could not prevent the thing, they consulti to hinder the credit of it.

Ver. 63. *Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, &c.*] Meaning Jesus; for no better name could they give him alive or dead, and they chose to continue it; and the rather to use it before Pilate, who had a good opinion of his innocence; and to let him see, that they still retained the same sentiments of him: מַטְוִי, a deceiver, is with the Jews <sup>2</sup>, “ a private person, that deceives “ a private person; saying to him there is a God in “ such a place, so it eats, and so it drinks; so it does “ well, and so it does ill.” But which can never agree with Jesus, who was not a private person, but a public preacher; and who taught men, not privately, but openly, in the temple and in the synagogues; nor did he teach idolatry, or any thing contrary to the God of Israel, or to the unity of the divine being; or which savoured of, and encouraged the polytheism of the Gentiles. The Ethiopic version renders these words thus; *Sir, remember, &c.* as if Christ had said this to Pilate in their hearing, and therefore put him in mind of it. *While he was yet alive*; so that they owned that he was dead; and therefore could not object this to the truth of his resurrection, that he was taken down from the cross alive, and did not die: *after three days I will rise again*: now, though he said this to his disciples privately, Matt. xvi. 21. and xvii. 23. yet not clearly and expressly to the Scribes and Pharisees; wherefore they must either have it from Judas, and lied in saying they remembered it: or they gathered it either from what he said concerning the sign of the prophet Jonas, Matt. xii. 40. or rather from his words in John ii. 19. and if so, they acted a most wicked part, in admitting a charge against him, as having a design upon their temple, to destroy it, and then rebuild it in three days; when they knew those words were spoken by him concerning his death, and resurrection from the dead: they remembered this, when the disciples did not: bad men have sometimes good memories, and good men bad ones; so that memory is no sign of grace.

Ver. 64. *Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure, &c.*] By this also they own, that he was buried; and they knew in what, and whose sepulchre he was laid, and where it was; and request of Pilate, that as he had given leave to Joseph to take the body and inter it, that he would also give orders that the sepulchre might be watched, that no body might come near it, and remove the body, and that *until the third day*: not from the time they made this request, but from the time of Christ's death; for no longer did they desire the sepulchre to be guarded; for if he did not rise, and no pretensions could be made to it in that time, they then very likely intended to expose his dead body, and triumph over him as an impostor; and after that time, they cared not what became of it, and were in no concern about watching the sepulchre; but till then they judged it necessary and desired it, *lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away*: but of this there was no danger; they were too fearful and timorous to do such an action, had they been ever so much inclined to it;

they all forsook him and fled, immediately upon his apprehension; nor durst any of them appear at the time of his crucifixion, but John; and were now shut up for fear of the Jews; and besides, they had forgot what Christ said to them about his resurrection, though these men remembered it, and even disbelieved it when it was told them: the phrase *by night*, is not in two copies of Beza's, nor in the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, nor in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; but is in other copies, and in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions: *and say unto the people, he is risen from the dead*; to the common people, that were illiterate, credulous, and easily imposed on: as for themselves, who were the learned, the wise and knowing, they were in no danger of being carried away with such a deception; but the populace, for whom they pretend a great concern, were: *so the last error shall be worse than the first*; either their own error and mistake, should the sepulchre be neglected, and an opportunity given for such a report; this would be of more fatal consequence than their first mistake, in suffering him and his followers to go on so long: or rather, the error of the people, in believing that Jesus was the Messiah; which would be greatly strengthened and received by greater numbers, should it be given out, and there was any proof of it, that he was risen from the dead: nor were they mistaken in this, for the number of the disciples and followers of Christ greatly increased after his resurrection; to an hundred and twenty, which was their number upon Christ's resurrection, three thousand were added at one time; being converted under one sermon, and that the first preached after Christ was risen.

Ver. 65. *Pilate said unto them, ye have a watch, &c.*] Meaning either the watch of the temple, said to be placed in the tower of Antonia, for the service of it: hence mention is made of the captain of the temple, Acts iv. 1. but it is not likely they would remove the temple guards, to watch a sepulchre night and day: or rather, therefore, the soldiers that had had the care of the crucifixion of Christ, and watched him on the cross, are designed: the words may be read imperatively, *have ye a watch, or take a watch*, as the Ethiopic version renders it, and which seems best; for if they had a watch already, what occasion had they to have applied to Pilate for one? but having none, he gives them leave to take one, or such a number of soldiers as were sufficient: *go your way*: as fast as you can, take the watch as soon as you please, make no stay, but satisfy yourselves in this point: *make it as sure as you can*; or, *as you know how to do it, and what will be proper and necessary*.

Ver. 66. *So they went, &c.*] From Pilate's palace, to the garden of Joseph, and to the sepulchre there; which whether more than a sabbath-day's journey, or two thousand cubits, may be inquired; and if so, then they broke one of their own traditions, which allowed a person to go no further on a sabbath-day; see the note on Acts i. 12. *And made the sepulchre sure*; in the following manner, *sealing the stone*; that was rolled to the door of it, it may be with some public seal, with Pilate's, or with the sanhedrim's; as the stone at the

mouth of the lions' den, in which Daniel was put, was sealed with the king's signet, and with the signet of his lords, Dan. vi. 17. that there might be no change of the sentence upon him, and by which it appeared, that his deliverance was by no human assistance: so the stone at Christ's sepulchre was sealed, that it could not be removed without breaking it; which would shew, whether any fraudulent methods were taken to remove the body: and setting a watch; a guard of soldiers, to observe and prevent any person coming near it; or with the watch: they made sure the sepulchre with the watch; or sealed the stone, the watch being present; all which was overruled by the providence of God, for the greater confirmation of the truth of Christ's resur-

rection: by the methods taken, it clearly appears, there could be no fraud in the case; the body was laid in a tomb, where no corpse had ever been before; in a tomb hewed out of a rock, to which there was no access, but at the door; where a great stone was rolled; and this had a seal upon it, and a guard of soldiers about it; and hereby there were more witnesses of Christ's resurrection, than otherwise would have been; as the soldiers, though they were afterwards bribed to tell another story; and even the chief priests and Pharisees were convicted that he was risen, or they would never have taken such a method with the soldiers, as they did.

## C H A P. XXVIII.

Ver. 1. *IN the end of the sabbath, &c.*] This clause is by some joined to the last verse of the preceding chapter, but stands better here, as appears from Mark xvi. 1. and intends not what the Jews call the sabbath-eve, for that began the sabbath; but what they call *בוצאי שבת*, the goings out of the sabbath; and as Mark says, ch. xvi. 1. *when the sabbath was past*: that is, when the sun was set, and any stars appeared. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel render it, *the evening of the sabbath*; and the Persic version, *the night of the sabbath*; but must mean, not the evening and night, which preceded the sabbath, and was a part of it, but what followed it, and belonged to the first day. *As it began to dawn*: not the day, but the night; a way of speaking used by the Jews, who call the night, *אור*, light: thus they say *אור לארבעה עשר*, on the light, or night of the fourteenth (of the month Nisan) they search for leavened bread, &c. And so the word is used, in Luke xxiii. 54. of the eve of the sabbath, or the beginning of it, as here of the going out of it; *towards the first day of the week, or sabbaths*; so the Jews used to call the days of the week, the first day of the sabbath, the second day of the sabbath, &c. take an instance or two<sup>2</sup>. "The stationary men fast four days in the week, from the second day to the fifth day; and they don't fast on the sabbath-eve (so they sometimes call the sixth day), because of the glory of the sabbath; nor *באחד בשבת*, on the first day of the sabbath, or week, that they may not go from rest and delight, to labour and fasting, and die." On which the Gemara has these words<sup>2</sup>; "the stationary men go into the synagogue, and sit four fastings; *בשני בשבת*, on the second of the sabbath, or week: on the third, and on the fourth, and on the fifth." *Came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary*, the wife of Cleophas, and mother of James and Joses, with whom also was Salome, the mother of Zebedee's children, Mark xvi. 1. There seems to be some difference between the evangelists about the time of the women's coming to the sepulchre. Matthew says, it was at the end of the

*sabbath, when it began to dawn; towards the first day of the week.* John says, that *Mary Magdalene came when it was yet dark*, John xxi. 1. and yet Mark says, that they came *at the rising of the sun*, Mark xvi. 2. Though they all agree it was early in the morning: all they say is no doubt true, and may be reconciled thus. As soon as the sabbath was ended, the women set out on their journey, and as they went, bought spices and ointment to anoint the body with: they passed through the gates of the city before they were shut, and might stay some time in the suburbs; when *Mary Magdalene, eager to be at the sepulchre, set out first, whilst it was dark, and came back and reported to Peter what she had seen, and returned again by such time the other women came, which was at sun-rising.* From all the accounts it is clear, that he rose, as is expressly said, Mark xvi. 9. on the first day of the week, and which was the third from his death: on the sixth day, which was Friday, he was crucified, and buried that evening; he lay in the grave all sabbath-day, or Saturday; and rose early on the first day of the week, before the women got to the sepulchre; who came thither, as it is here said, *to see the sepulchre*: not merely to see it, for they had seen it before, and where, and how the body of Christ was laid in it; but to see whether they could enter into it, and anoint the body with the spices and ointments, which they had prepared and brought with them for that purpose.

Ver. 2. *And behold there was a great earthquake, &c.*] Or *there had been one*; which, how far it reached, and whether further than the spot of ground in which the sepulchre was, is not certain: it was an emblem of the shaking of the earth by the preaching of the Gospel, the sound of which was now to go after Christ's resurrection to the ends of the world; and a prelude of the general resurrection, when the earth shall be shaken, and the graves opened, and the dead come forth; and was a symbol and token of the presence and majesty of Christ, at whose rising, as at his death, the earth shook and trembled. Think whether the watch

<sup>1</sup> Mian. Pesachim, c. 1. sect. 1. Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.  
<sup>2</sup> Mian. Taanith, c. 4. sect. 3.

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 27. 2. Vid. T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 4. 2. & 11. 1. & 67. 2.



could now be asleep, as they afterwards gave out, ver. 13. The Persic version renders it very wrongly; and there was great consternation and fear; which was the consequence of the earthquake, and the descent of the angel, and was so great that it was not possible for the keepers to sleep, if ever so much inclined: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven; perhaps Gabriel, who brought the news of the conception of Christ to the virgin, and of his incarnation to the shepherds, and might be the same angel that strengthened him in the garden: nor is this any contradiction to the other evangelists, which speak of two angels, Luke xxiv. 4. John xx. 12. for Matthew does not say there were no more than one, though he makes mention but of one. And came and rolled back the stone from the door: of the sepulchre, which by Joseph, or his orders, was put there, and was sealed by the Jews. This might be done, that way might be made for the risen body of Christ to pass out of the sepulchre; for to suppose, as some do, that he penetrated through this stone with his risen body, is not to be credited: 'tis true, he could have caused the stone to have given way, or removed it himself, and put it in the place again; as he caused the doors of the house in which the disciples were, to open and shut so quick, that they could not discern it when he appeared in the midst of them, John xx. 19. see Acts xii. 10. but he might choose to do it by the ministry of an angel, which is no ways derogatory to his power and majesty, but rather agreeable. Moreover, this might be done, that the women might have access to the sepulchre, and enter into it, which was the thing they were concerned about by the way, who should roll away the stone for them. Besides, this the angel did, as a token that Christ was risen, and to let the guard know as much, who, if they thought fit, might come and see what was done; but chiefly the stone was rolled away by the angel, as an emblem of the acquittance and discharge of Christ, as the surety of his people. He had taken upon him their sins; he had bore them in his body on the tree; he had suffered and died for them, and was laid as a prisoner in the grave; and now full satisfaction being made, an angel is sent from heaven to roll away the stone; thereby signifying, that the debt was fully paid, and he was now legally discharged. 'Tis added, and sat upon it; thereby shewing who it was that rolled it away; that it was done by him, not by the earthquake, nor by any human power: he sat there defying the guard of soldiers to come nigh; and waiting for the coming of the women, to tell them the good news, that their Lord was risen; and as the keeper of the sepulchre, that no corpse might be brought and laid in the room of Christ, and it be said that he was not risen. This posture of the angel does not contradict what other evangelists say of this, and the other angel, that they stood by the women, and also were sitting in the sepulchre, Mark xvi. 5. Luke xxiv. 4. John xx. 12. for each was true: when the women first came, the angel sat upon the stone; after that, with the other, stood by them; when having invited them to the grave, placed themselves, sitting the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Christ had lain.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 72. 1.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 25. 2.

Ver. 3. *His countenance was like lightning, &c.*] There was such a lustre and brightness in his face, that it glittered like lightning: such a description is in Dan. x. 6. and his raiment white as snow: the word *white* is left out in the Vulgate Latin, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel: the angel appeared clad in white, as a token of the purity and innocence of his nature; and because of the victory and triumph of Christ over death and the grave; and that he might be known and taken by the women for a good angel, it being a commonly-received notion of the Jews, that ministering angels were clothed in white. "Said R. Ame to R. Levi, shew me the Persians; he said to him, they are like to the mighty men of the house of David: shew me the Chaberin, (another nation near the Persians,) they are like to destroying angels: shew me the Ishmaelites, they are like to devils of the house of Haca: shew me the disciples of the wise men in Babylon, they are like to the ministering angels." Upon which the gloss says, "to the devils, because they are clothed in black, and are like to devils; to the ministering angels, לְבוּשׁ לְבָנִים, they are clothed in white, and veiled like the ministering angels; as it is written in Ezek. ix. 2. and the man was clothed with linen: and it is said of R. Judah, that he was veiled, and sat in fine linen fringed, and was like to an angel of the Lord of hosts: and elsewhere <sup>d</sup> it is said, who are the ministering angels? the Rabbins: and why are they called ministering angels? because they are fringed, as the ministering angels, in beautiful garments."

Ver. 4. *And for fear of him the keepers did shake, &c.*] Though they were soldiers, Roman soldiers and veterans, who had been used to terrible sights in the field of battle; were men of courage, and fearless of danger; and yet were seized with a panic, and every limb of them shook and trembled at the sight of the angel, for fear he was come as an executioner of divine vengeance upon them; who had been concerned in the crucifixion of Christ, had watched him as he hung upon the cross, and now his body in the sepulchre: and even supposing no consciousness of guilt in them, or dread of punishment from him; yet such was the glory and majesty in which he appeared, of which they had never seen the like before, that it had this effect upon them: and became as dead men: they turned pale, as dead men, and had scarce any life, or spirit, left in them.

Ver. 5. *And the angel answered and said unto the women, &c.*] Who being come up, were also affrighted at the sight of the angel. The Arabic version leaves out the first part, and the angel answered: which is a Jewish way of speaking, when nothing goes before, to which it is a reply; and renders the other part thus, and said to the two women: but from the other evangelists it appears, that there were more women than two; see Mark xvi. 1. Luke xxiv. 10. *fear not ye*; some put an emphasis upon the word *ye*, as if used in opposition to the keepers, who had reason to be afraid, but not these good women. It was very common with gracious persons to be filled with fear at the sight of an angel, as Zacharias, and the shepherds; but without

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 20. 2.

reason; they are their friends, their fellow-servants, and ministering spirits to them. The Persic version adds, *but come near before, for ye are his familiars*: the reason alleged, by the angel, why they had no reason to fear, is, *for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified*: the knowledge which angels have of saints is very considerable, and which arises from their frequent embassies to them, care and guardianship of them, the good offices they perform, and their several ministrations to them; and the knowledge which the angel had of these good women, might not be from immediate revelation, but from the observations he had made of them: they had followed Jesus from Galilee, they had attended him all the while he was on the cross, and were now come to his grave to anoint him; and from their words and gestures, the angel might know that they were the disciples of Christ, and now sought him; and therefore had no reason to fear, as those who were his adversaries: and indeed, such as seek a crucified Christ, and life and salvation by him, have no reason to be afraid of any thing; not of sin, and its damning power, since Christ saves, his blood cleanses, and his righteousness justifies from all sin; nor of the law, its menaces, curses, and condemnation, for Christ has redeemed them from it; nor of Satan, and his principalities and powers, who are spoiled by Christ, and out of whose hands he has ransomed his people; nor of the world, since Christ has overcome it, and delivered his people from it; nor of death, whose sting is taken away, and that abolished as a penal evil; nor of hell, and wrath to come, from which he has saved them; and much less of good angels, who are kindly disposed to them: and such are they that seek a crucified Christ, whom Christ has first sought, and looked up, and found in redemption and effectual vocation; who are made sensible of their lost and dangerous state by nature, to whom Christ has been manifested; and who see both their need of him, and his worth and value: these seek to him in the first place, and with all their hearts, for cleansing, pardon, righteousness, rest, food, salvation, and eternal life: they seek for him where he is, and is revealed, in the Scriptures, in the Gospel, in the ordinances, and at the father's right hand.

Ver. 6. *He is not here, &c.*] In the grave, where he was laid, and these women saw him laid: he was dead, but is now alive; he was laid in the grave, but God would not leave him there, nor suffer him to see corruption: *for he is risen, as he said*: not stolen away, as the chief priests hired the soldiers to say he was; nor removed to another place, as Mary Magdalene first thought, when she found him gone; but he was risen from the dead, by the power of his father, and by his own power, as he had before said he should. In one of Beza's exemplars 'tis added, *to you*; for the words that Christ said in Galilee, that he should be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and rise again, the third day, were said in the presence and hearing of these women, and to them, as well as to the disciples; see Luke xxiv. 6, 7, 8. This clause is left out in the Persic version: it follows, *come see the place where the Lord lay*; the Lord both of angels and men: the Syriac and Persic versions read, *our Lord*. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions leave out the word

*Lord*, and only read *he*. Christ, as the son of God, lay in the bosom of his father, and in the arms of his love, from all eternity; as mediator, he lay in the womb of God's purposes and decrees, being his elect, in whom his soul delighted; as man, he lay in the womb of the virgin; and, as an example to his people, he lay, when baptized, in the waters of Jordan; and as the language of the ordinance of the Lord's supper is, *come see my hands, and my feet*; that of baptism is, *come see the place where the Lord lay*: but here it regards the grave, in which the body of Christ had been laid; and the women are invited by the angel to go along with him, into the sepulchre, to see the place where he had lain; to assure them the more of the truth of his resurrection, that they might, with their own eyes, see that he was gone, who before had beheld where, and how he was laid; as also to affect them with the condescending grace of Christ, in making his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; as well as to strengthen their faith in their discharge from sin and condemnation by Christ, who was risen for their justification; as also to let them see that the grave was perfumed and sanctified by him; and he was risen as the first fruits and pledge of them that slept.

Ver. 7. *And go quickly and tell his disciples, &c.*] Who were mourning and weeping for the death of Christ; despairing of his resurrection, of which, at least, they had but little hope, nor indeed much thought, though Christ had so often told them of it; and therefore a quick dispatch was necessary to remove their sorrow, revive their faith, and relieve their souls, to which the errand these women were sent upon, and the news they were to bring, had a tendency; namely, *that he is risen from the dead*: than which nothing could be more joyful news unto them, as it is to all believers; for on this depend the justification and salvation of God's elect; their security from condemnation, and their resurrection from the dead. This news was first brought to the apostles by women, who were greatly honoured hereby; that as the woman was first in the transgression, and the cause of death, so the first news of the resurrection of Christ to life, and of life and immortality being by him, who was first shewed the path of life, were brought by women; and to a woman it was that Christ first appeared after his resurrection, Mark xvi. 9. The Vulgate Latin only reads, *that he is risen*, as in the former verse. *And behold he goeth before you into Galilee*. These are still the words of the angel to the women, telling them what they should say to the apostles, that he should go before them into Galilee; and which might serve to confirm the resurrection to them, and to give the greater credit to the report of the women, since this very thing Christ had promised them before; see ch. xxvi. 32. though it was also true, that he should go before these women into Galilee, and who also should see him there: for the next words, *there shall ye see him*; though they may chiefly design the apostles, who should have a sight of Christ in Galilee, yet may include these women also: *lo! I have told you*; I Gabriel, who am an angel of the Lord, sent by him to inform you of these things; and you may depend upon the truth of them, that Jesus is risen, and that he is about, in a very little time, to go before his disciples

into Galilee, where they shall see him with their bodily eyes, and have a free and familiar conversation with him. The reasons why this place was pitched upon for Christ and his apostles to meet in, were, because here he first preached, and chiefly conversed, and had the largest number of disciples there, to whom he meant to shew himself, as he did, 1 Cor. xv. 6. as well as to his apostles: moreover, the apostles were of Galilee; and so were these women; and to go into their own country, and there meet with Jesus, must be very agreeable; and besides, there they would be safer and freer from the molestations and persecutions of the Jews; and might follow their former calling, as they did, until the time they were to be further employed in preaching the Gospel.

Ver. 8. *And they departed quickly from the sepulchre, &c.] Or they went out from it, as it may be rendered, and as it is in Mark xvi: 8. which shews, that they went into the sepulchre upon the invitation of the angel, and saw the place where the Lord lay; and here it was the angel gave them their instructions, and errand to the disciples; which as soon as they received, they quitted the sepulchre in all haste, partly in obedience to the angel's orders, and partly through surprise and fear; for Mark says, they fled from the sepulchre, as persons terrified and affrighted: and 'tis added here, with fear and great joy: a mixture of both these; with fear and dread, because of the vision they had seen, and with joy at the news of Christ's resurrection; and yet in this their faith might not be so confirmed, as to have no doubt about it: they might fear the body was taken away, and removed to some other place, and that this they had seen might be a deception and a delusion. However, between both joy and fear, they set out, and did run to bring his disciples word; as Mary Magdalene ran to Peter, John xx. 2. nor is running unusual for women, or unbecoming them on certain occasions; see Gen. xxiv. 20, 28. and xxix. 12. Their fright, as well as their joy, and their regard to the angel's order, might cause them to run, and make the quicker dispatch.*

Ver. 9. *And as they went to tell his disciples, &c.] This clause is wanting in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, and in Beza's most ancient copy; but it stands in the Ethiopic version, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, behold, Jesus met them: that they might be confirmed in what the angel had told them, and their fear might be removed, and their joy increased; and also be capable of reporting to the disciples not only what they had heard from the angel, but what they had seen themselves; they being now eye-witnesses, as well as ear-witnesses of his resurrection: so souls in the way of their duty, as these women were, oftentimes meet with Jesus, and he with them, as they may expect, and indeed not otherwise: saying, all hail; all health of soul and body, all happiness and prosperity, both temporal, spiritual, and eternal, attend you. The Syriac and Persic versions, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel render it, peace be to you; which, 'tis highly probable, was the phrase used by Christ, since it was the common form of salutation among the Jews, and what Christ made use of at other times; see John xx. 19, 26. and they came; near unto him, being encouraged by the above salutation, and knowing who*

he was by his voice, habit, and gesture: *and held him by the feet; they threw themselves prostrate at his feet, in token of reverence and humility; and they laid hold on his feet, that they might know, and be assured that he was really risen, and that it was not a spirit, or a mere phantom and appearance; and they held him in affection to him, and as desirous of his continuance with them: and worshipped him; with divine adoration, expressing their love to him; their faith and hope in him, owning him to be their Lord and God; he being, by his resurrection from the dead, declared to be the son of God, with power; and so the proper object of religious worship.*

Ver. 10. *Then said Jesus unto them, be not afraid, &c.] Of me, or what you have seen; or lest there should be any deception in the case. In other respects the saints are subject to fears; as lest they should have no share in the love of God, nor interest in Christ, or the work of God is not begun in their hearts; and by reason of sin, lest that should get the ascendant over them, and they perish by it, and so fall short of eternal glory; when it is the will of Christ to have these fears removed, by shedding abroad his love in their hearts, by affording his gracious presence, views of interest in him, and promises of his grace, by sending his spirit, word, and ministers to comfort them, by discovering and applying pardoning grace to them, and shewing his power to keep them. Go tell my brethren; meaning not his kinsmen according to the flesh, but his disciples, who were in this relation to him, as all the elect of God are; not only through his incarnation, he being their *Goel*, their near kinsman, and Redeemer, and of the same nature, flesh, and blood with them, and like unto them in all things, excepting sin; but on account of their divine adoption, to which they were predestinated, and which they received through his redemption, and under the witnessings of the spirit: he that is his God being their's; and he that is his father being their's also: and which was made manifest in their regeneration, by their faith in him, and obedience to him, and his father; see Matt. xii. 49, 50. A very considerable relation this is, that the disciples stood in to Christ, who is the eternal son of God, and heir of all things; and wonderful grace and condescension it was in Christ to own the relation, when they had so lately forsaken him; and now he was raised from the dead, and had glory given him: *that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me: he does not say they should not see him before: for they saw him, all but Thomas, that very evening, and all of them eight days after; and both times were before they went into Galilee: but this he said, to put them in mind of what he had promised them, ch. xxvi. 32. and to confirm the words of the angel; and which might serve for a confirmation of the truth of these things, both to the women, and to the disciples, when they observed the exact agreement between the words of Christ, and of the angel. Moreover, it may be remarked, that wherever Christ has appointed to meet his people, they may expect, and be sure to see him at one time or another; as in his house and ordinances, where they are sometimes indulged with a sight of him by faith, which is an appropriating, assimilating, soul-rejoicing, and sa-**

tisfying one; when with pleasure they behold the glory of his divine person, and of his offices, the transcendent excellencies and perfections of his nature, his love and his loveliness, the beauty and amiableness of him, the fulness of grace, life, and righteousness in him, and so the suitableness of him as their Saviour and Redeemer; and when they are favoured with communion with him, and the joys of his salvation.

Ver. 11. *Now when they were going, &c.*] Or were gone from the sepulchre: that is, the women, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, and their companions, when they were going, or gone, and before they could come to the disciples, to inform them of what they had seen and heard, and deliver the message both of the angel, and of Christ, unto them: *behold, some of the watch came unto the city*: that is, of *Jerusalem*. The word *behold* is left out in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; but ought to be retained as expressive of what is wonderful, and worthy of observation and attention; that the very persons who were placed to prevent every thing, that might be the foundation of a report, that Christ was risen, should be the first persons that should relate it to the chief priests and elders, that employed them: not all the watch, for some still stayed behind, till they had orders to come away; but some of them, the principal of them, or who were deputed by the rest, came. The Persic version, rather commenting than translating, has these words: "moreover, the rulers and governors, who watched the sepulchre, coming to themselves, returned to the city with a pale and frighted countenance." *And shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done*: how that there had been a very great earthquake, and a very surprising appearance; one like a young man descended from the clouds, whose countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow, which filled them with astonishment and dread; that he rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, and then sat upon it; and that some women coming to the sepulchre, were shown by him where the body had been laid, but was now gone; and how, that after they had recovered themselves from the fright, they had themselves examined the sepulchre, and the body was certainly gone; and sure they were that the women did not carry it away, nor any other: all which they thought proper to relate to the chief priests; partly on their own account, to clear themselves from the charge of bribery and corruption, and sloth and negligence; and partly that the chief priests might consider what was proper to be done at such a juncture.

Ver. 12. *And when they were assembled with the elders, &c.*] Upon this the grand sanhedrim was convened together, which consisted of the chief priests, Scribes, and elders; *and had taken counsel among themselves what steps to take to stifle this matter*, that it might not spread and be believed by the people; they agreed upon this, as the best expedient, to bribe the soldiers to give a false account of it, as they did: *they gave large money unto the soldiers, or sufficient money*; they gave large sums of money, as were enough to satisfy the soldiers; they gave them whatever they would have; for though these men were very covetous, yet upon this occasion gave liberally; and that perhaps

which were for the sacrifices, or for the repair of the temple, or for the supply of the poor.

Ver. 13. *Saying, say ye his disciples came by night, &c.*] They charged them to tell every one that should ask them about this affair; and even publish it every where, that the disciples of Christ came in the dead of the night, *and stole him away while we slept*: which was a very unlikely thing, and a foolish scheme this, for such a body of men to form. There is no shew of probability in it, that the disciples, who were intimidated by the taking and putting Christ to death, and were now shut up in a house, for fear of the Jews, that these should venture out in the night, to take away the body of Christ, which was decently and honourably interred in a garden of one of his disciples; and when they knew it was guarded by a company of Roman soldiers; and who besides had no notion of his resurrection from the dead, nor never thought of it till he was risen, and therefore would never attempt any thing of this kind, in order to give out such a report. Moreover, had they took it away by stealth, it is not reasonable to think that they would afterwards have reported such a lie every where, that he was risen from the dead, when they were sure to obtain nothing by it, but reproach, afflictions, persecutions, and death: add to this, that this was never objected to them by their worst enemies, when they most strongly asserted his resurrection: nor was it a feasible account, or well put together, with respect to the watch. It can hardly be thought that they should be all of them asleep at once; and if they were, 'tis much they were not awaked by the coming up of the disciples, and the rolling away of the stone, and the bustle there must be in taking up the body, and carrying it away; and besides, if they were asleep, and continued so, what is their evidence good for? for how could they know that his disciples came and took him away? if they awaked, though too late, and saw them at a distance, why did not they pursue them, who might easily have been overtaken with such a burden? at least, why did not they search their houses for the body? and take up both the women and the disciples, and prosecute them for it? and yet nothing of this was done. Besides, how came the linen clothes to be left behind? why did they take the napkin from his head, and give themselves all that trouble to unwrap the body, and carry it away naked? It is clear the chief priests themselves were convinced in their own minds, that he was truly risen, or they would have punished the soldiers severely for their sleep and negligence, and would never have given them money to spread such a story.

Ver. 14. *And if this come to the governor's ears, &c.*] Not the governor of the watch, but Pontius Pilate the governor of Judea: if this should be told him, and should be heard by him; or this matter should come before him, and be under his examination, and there should be any danger of punishment; for to sleep on the watch was severely punished by the Romans: *we will persuade him*; that this is the true state of the case, and intercede with him, and make use of all our interest, not to punish for it: or will persuade him, that though this is a false account, yet it will be much better that it should go in this way, for his own peace, and the peace of the nation, and the security of the

Roman government; since, should it spread among the people, that this person was really raised from the dead, they would, one and all, believe he was the true Messiah, and would set him up as a king, and seize upon the government in favour of him: *and will secure you: indemnify you, bear you harmless, keep you from punishment; so that you need not be under any care, or concern on this account.*

Ver. 15. *So they took the money, and did as they were taught, &c.]* Though they had been just now in the greatest fright and consternation imaginable, at the sight of the angel, and knew what was done; yet being men of no religion or conscience, were tempted with the money, and took it, and reported every where what had been put into their mouths by the chief priests and elders. *And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews unto this day: to the time that Matthew wrote this Gospel; which according to the subscriptions to a most ancient copy of Beza's, and the Syriac and Arabic versions of De Dieu, was in the eighth year after our Lord's ascension; though others make it to be the ninth; and others the fifteenth.* The sense is, not that this narrative of the evangelist gives, that the sanhedrim bribed the soldiers to give out such a lying story, was known to the Jews, and commonly reported by them; though some take this to be the sense; but that it was reported and believed among the Jews in common, to that time, that the disciples of Christ did really come in the night, and steal away the body of Christ, while the watch slept: to such judicial blindness, and hardness of heart, were they given up, as to believe a lie, and which had no appearance of truth in it. They have since contrived a more monstrous and ridiculous story than this. They say, that Judas, seeing where the body was laid, and the disciples sitting upon the tomb, and mourning over it, in the middle of the night, took his opportunity to take away the body, and buried it in his own garden, under a current of water; having first turned the water another way, and then put it in the same course as before; and which he afterwards discovered to the Jews; and the body was taken up and exposed, and insulted in the most ignominious manner: but alas! Judas had hanged himself some days before; and had he been living, would not have been capable of doing what they ascribe unto him.

Ver. 16. *Then the eleven disciples, &c.]* For Judas was not only gone from them, but was dead; so that there were now but eleven of them: *went away into Galilee: not directly, as soon as the women had delivered their message; for Christ appeared to them the same day at Jerusalem; and so he did at the same place that day sennight; see John xx. 19, 26. but some time after this they went together into Galilee, according to Christ's direction both before and after his resurrection, Matt. xxvi. 32. and xxviii. 10. into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them; either before his death, or since he was risen; and very likely at one of the above interviews he had with them.* This is generally thought to be Mount Tabor; but of this there is no proof, nor certainty: it might be the mountain near Capernaum, on which he taught, Matt. v. 1.

or that, if not the same with the other, near the sea of Galilee, where Christ fed four thousand with seven loaves, and a few fishes, Matt. xv. 29. A mountain was appointed for this meeting, both for solitariness and for sight; for here it was he was seen by above five hundred brethren at once, 1 Cor. xv. 6.

Ver. 17. *And when they saw him, they worshipped him. &c.]* With divine adoration, as the eternal son of God; for so he was now declared to be by his resurrection from the dead, Rom. i. 4. *but some doubted; or some of them, as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; that is, some of the eleven disciples: not that they doubted now that Christ was risen from the dead; since he had appeared several times to them before this, and had given them all the proofs of the truth of his resurrection they could desire; but they, who worshipped him now in Galilee, had doubted before in Jerusalem; not only Thomas, but all of them: they looked upon the words of the women as idle tales; nor did the rest believe the two disciples, with whom Christ travelled to Emmaus: wherefore he upbraids them for their unbelief, Luke xxiv. 11. Mark xvi. 11, 13, 14. or else the sense is, that some of them, though they believed Christ was risen from the dead, of which they had had the strongest assurance; yet they doubted whether what they then saw on the mountain was he, or whether it was not a spirit, or a mere phantom; and therefore, as in the next verse, he came nearer to them, when they knew him: or else this may be understood of some of the seventy disciples, or of the five hundred brethren, who saw him at this time, and at first had some doubts of his resurrection, but were afterwards fully satisfied.*

Ver. 18. *And Jesus came and spake unto them, &c.]* To the eleven disciples and apostles; for though there might be so large a number as before observed, yet the following words were only spoken to the apostles: *saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; which is to be understood of him, not as God, who has the same original and undervived power and authority over all creatures, and things in heaven and earth, as the father has; but as mediator, to whom all things are delivered by the father; and not of a power of doing this, or the other thing, or of omnipotence, being the Almighty; nor of doing miracles, and forgiving sins, which he had, and exercised before his death and resurrection, but of governing: he was king before, but his kingdom was not with observation; but now he was declared, and made manifest, to be both Lord and Christ; he had all power and authority for the settling the affairs of his church and kingdom, to appoint offices and officers in it, and to bestow gifts upon men, to qualify them for the same, and to institute ordinances to be observed till his second coming: and this power of his reached to things in heaven; he having the angels in heaven subject to him, as ministering spirits to be sent forth by him at his pleasure; and all the gifts of the spirit to dispose of as he thought good; and to things on earth, not only to the saints, whose King he is, and who are made willing to serve him; but to all flesh, to kings and princes, who rule and*

reign by him; and even to all the wicked of the world, who in some shape or another are made to subserve the ends of his mediatorial kingdom and government: and this is not usurped power, but what is given him, and what he has a right to exercise; having finished sin, abolished death, overcome the world, and destroyed the devil; and must reign till all enemies are subject to him: and this he says, and it was necessary to say it at this time, partly on account of his late sufferings and death, which were attended with weakness and reproach; and partly on account of the following commission he gives to his disciples, that it might be seen and believed, he had power and authority sufficient to give them such an one; as also to animate and encourage them under all the weakness, contempt, and persecution that should attend them in their ministry. The Syriac and Persic versions add, *as the father hath sent me, even so I send you*, as in John xx. 21. from whence these words seem to be taken.

Ver. 19. *Go ye therefore, &c.*] Into all the world; some into one place, and some into another; since his power and authority, and so now the commission he gave them, reached every where: before it was confined to Judea, but now it is extended to all the nations of the world; see Matt. x. 6, 7. Mark xvi. 15. *and teach all nations*; Jews and Gentiles, first the one, and then the other, the doctrines of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; whatever they had learned from Christ, or were ordered by him, or *disciple all nations*: make them disciples by teaching them; or, as the Persic version, by way of explanation, adds, *bring them to my religion and faith*: not that they were able to do this of themselves, but they were to teach men externally, or outwardly minister the word, whilst the spirit of God internally applied it, and taught, and made men true disciples of Christ: and they are such, who have learned to know themselves, their sin, and lost estate by nature; to deny themselves, both sinful and righteous self; who have learnt to know Christ, and the way of righteousness, peace, pardon, life, and salvation by him; and who are taught and enabled to part with all for Christ, and to bear all for his sake, and to believe in him, and give up themselves to him, and follow him whithersoever he goes: *baptizing them*; not all nations, for the antecedent to the relative *them*, cannot be *all nations*: since *כֹּל הָעַמִּים*, the words for *all nations*, are of the neuter gender, whereas *אִתָּם*, *them*, is of the masculine: nor can it be thought that it should be the mind of Christ, that all the individuals of all nations should be baptized, as Heathens, Turks, and Jews; but *μαθητάς*, *disciples*, supposed and contained in the word *μαθητεύσατε*, *teach, or make disciples*; such as are taught, and made disciples by teaching, or under the ministry of the word by the spirit of God: Christ's orders are to *baptize*: *בָּרְכֵם*, *dip* them, as Munster's Hebrew Gospel renders it; that is, in water, which, though not expressed, is implied; for with no other baptism could the apostles baptize: not with the Holy Ghost, and with fire; for

this was Christ's peculiar prerogative; but with water, which they in obedience to this commission practised, Acts viii. 36, 38. and x. 47. and which was to be done in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; by the authority of these three divine persons, who all appeared, and testified their approbation of the administration of this ordinance, at the baptism of Christ: and as they are to be invoked in it, so the persons baptized not only profess faith in each divine person, but are devoted to their service, and worship, and are laid under obligation to obedience to them. Hence a confirmation of the doctrine of the Trinity, there are three persons, but one name, but one God, into which believers are baptized; and a proof of the true deity both of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and that Christ, as the son of God, is God; since baptism is administered equally in the name of all three, as a religious ordinance, a part of divine instituted worship, which would never be in the name of a creature. This is the first, and indeed the only place in which the Trinity of persons is expressed in this order, and in the self-same words. Galatinus<sup>1</sup> pretends, that the ancient Jews used the same way of speaking. It would be well if proof could be made of it: he asserts it to be in Zohar on Deut. vi. 4. and in the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel on Isa. vi. 3. In the former he says, it is expressed thus, *hear, O Israel; the Lord, he is called the Father; our God, he is called the Son; is one Lord, this is the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from both; and again, by the same R. Simeon, it is said, holy, this is אֱלֹהִים, the Father; holy, this is בְּרַחֲמֵינוּ, the Son; holy, this is רִחוּ וְהִקְרִשׁ, the Holy Ghost: and in the latter after this manner, "Holy Father, Holy Son, and Holy Holy Ghost;" but no such words are now to be found in either of these places. He affirms, that he himself saw a copy of Jonathan's Targum that had these words. The Jews often speak of the Tetragrammaton, or name of four letters, the name Jehovah, which they say is not lawful to be pronounced; and also of the name of twelve letters, which the above writer<sup>2</sup> makes to be "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;" and of forty-two letters, which from a book called Gale Razia, he says is, "Father God, Son God, Holy Ghost God, "three in one, and one in three;" which in the Hebrew language make up so many letters; but this wants better authority.*

Ver 20. *Teaching them to observe all things, &c.*] All ordinances, not only baptism, but the Lord's supper; all positive institutions, and moral duties; all obligations, both to God and men; all relative duties that respect the world, or one another, those that are without, and those that are within; and these are to be taught them, and therefore to be insisted on in the ministry of the word; and not merely in order that they may know them, and have the theory of them, but that they may put them into practice: *whatsoever I have commanded you*; every thing that Christ has commanded, be it what it will, and nothing else; for Christ's ministers are not to teach for doctrines the commandments of men; or enjoin that on the

<sup>1</sup> L. 2. c. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. c. 11, 12. Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Heb. in voce תּוּרָה.

churches, which is of their own, or other men's devising, and was never ordered by Christ; and for their encouragement he adds, *and lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*: meaning, not merely to the end of their lives, which would be the end of the world to them; nor to the end of the Jewish world, or state, which was not a great way off, though this is sometimes the sense of this phrase; but to the end of the world to come, the Gospel church-state, which now took place; or to the end of the present world, the universe: not that the apostles should live to the end of it; but that whereas Christ would have a church and people to the end of the world, and the Gospel and the ordinances of it

should be administered so long, and there should be Gospel ministers till that time; Christ's sense is, that he would grant his presence to them, his immediate disciples, and to all that should succeed them in future generations, to the end of time: and which is to be understood not of his corporeal presence, which they should not have till then, but of his spiritual presence; and that he would be with them, in a spiritual sense, to assist them in their work, to comfort them under all discouragements, to supply them with his grace, and to protect them from all enemies, and preserve from all evils; which is a great encouragement both to administer the word and ordinances, and attend on them.

## THE GOSPEL, ACCORDING TO ST. MARK.

**T**HIS is the title of the book, the subject of which is the Gospel; a joyful account of the ministry, miracles, actions, and sufferings of Christ: the writer of it was not one of the twelve apostles, but an evangelist; the same with John Mark, or John, whose surname was Mark: John was his Hebrew name, and Mark his Gentile name, Acts xii. 12, 25. and was Barnabas's sister's son, Col. iv. 10. his mother's name was Mary, Acts xii. 12. The Apostle Peter calls him his son, 1 Pet. v. 13. if he is the same; and he is thought to have wrote his Gos-

pel from him<sup>a</sup>, and by his order, and which was afterwards examined and approved by him<sup>b</sup> it is said to have been wrote originally in Latin, or in the Roman tongue: so say the Arabic and Persic versions at the beginning of it, and the Syriac version says the same at the end: but of this there is no evidence, any more, nor so much, as of Matthew's writing his Gospel in Hebrew. The old Latin copy of this, is a version from the Greek; it is most likely that it was originally written in Greek, as the rest of the New Testament.

### C H A P. I.

**Ver. 1.** *THE beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, &c.*] Not that the Gospel first began to be preached at this time, for it was preached, by Isaiah, and other prophets before; and long before that, was preached unto Abraham; yea, it was preached as early as the times of our first parents, in Eden's garden; and is indeed that mystery, which was hid in God before the creation of the world; and was ordained before that was, to the glory of the saints: but the sense is, that this narrative Mark was about to write, began with the ministry of John the Baptist, and of Christ; which was a Gospel one, and was the beginning of the Gospel dispensation, in distinction from the legal one: the law and the prophets were until John, and they ceased and ended in him; when the *עולם הברא*, *the world to come*, the kingdom of God, or Gospel state, took place. The design of this

evangelist, is not to give an account of the genealogy of Christ, of his conception and birth, of what befel him in his infancy, or of any actions and sayings of his from thence, to his appearance in Israel; but to give an account of his ministry and miracles, sufferings and death: which is introduced with the preaching and baptism of John his forerunner, and which he chiefly intends by *the beginning of the Gospel*: he first points out Christ, who is the author and substance, as well as the great preacher of the Gospel; the sum of which is, that he is Jesus, the Saviour and Redeemer of lost sinners; the Christ, the Messiah, that was to come; the Mediator between God and man, the prophet that has declared the whole mind and will of God; the great high priest, who has offered himself a sacrifice for his people, made peace, procured pardon, brought in everlast-

<sup>a</sup> Papias apud Euseb. Hist. l. 3. c. 39. Tertull. adv. Marcion. l. 4. c. 5.

<sup>b</sup> Hieron. Catalog. Script. Eccles. p. 91. sect. 18.

ing righteousness, and obtained eternal redemption, and now lives to make intercession for them; and King of saints, who reigns over them, protects and defends them, and is no other than the *son of God*; equal with his father; of the same nature with him, possessed of the same perfections, and enjoying the same glory; and which is a grand article of the Gospel, and without which he could not be an able Saviour, nor the true Messiah. Mark begins his account of the Gospel, and which he calls the beginning of it, with the same article of the divine sonship of Christ, as the Apostle Paul began his ministry with, Acts ix. 20. Matthew began his Gospel with the humanity, Mark with the divinity of Christ: the one calls him the son of David, the other the son of God, both true: Christ is the son of David according to his human nature, the son of God according to his divine nature; so a testimony is bore to the truth of both his natures, which are united in one person.

Ver. 2. *As it is written in the prophets, &c.*] Malachi and Isaiah; for passages out of both follow; though the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions read, *as it is written in the prophet Isaias*; and so it is in some Greek copies: but the former seems to be the better reading, since two prophets are cited, and Isaiah is the last; to which agree the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, and the greater number of Greek copies. The following citations are made to shew, that according to the writings of the Old Testament, John the Baptist was to be the harbinger of Christ, to come before him, and prepare his way; and also the propriety of the method the evangelist takes, in beginning his Gospel with the account of John's ministry and baptism: the first testimony stands in Mal. iii. 1. and the words are the words of the father to the son, concerning John, pointing out his character and his work: *behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.* John the Baptist is here called a *messenger*, and the message he was sent and came with, was of the greatest moment and importance, and required the closest attention to it; wherefore this passage is introduced with a *behold!* signifying that something momentous, and what should be strictly regarded, was about to be delivered: and indeed, the work of this messenger was no other, than to declare that the long expected Messiah was born; that he would quickly make his public appearance in Israel; that the kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of the Messiah, was at hand; and that it became the Jews to repent of their sins, and believe in Christ: he is called the messenger of God, *my messenger*; because he was sent, and sanctified by him; he was called unto, and qualified for his work by him; see John i. 6, 7. his father Zechariah says, he should be called the prophet of the Highest, Luke i. 76. The reason of his being called the messenger of God, may be observed in the text itself, *behold, I send*: the words in Malachi are by us rendered, *behold, I will send*: because this was at the time of the prophet's writing a thing future, but in the times of the evangelist a thing

done: and indeed, it is a more literal version of the Hebrew text, to render it *I send, or am sending*; and it is so expressed, to denote the certainty of it, and because in a little time it would be done: the words *before thy face*, are not in the original text of Malachi, nor in the Septuagint version, but are inserted by the evangelist; who might do it with authority, since Christ had done it before him, Matt. xi. 10, and which, as Surenhusius<sup>c</sup> observes, is for the greater elucidation of the matter. The prophet does not say before whom he should be sent, though it is implied in the next clause, but here it is expressed: besides, this messenger had now appeared before the face of Christ, had prepared his way in the wilderness, and had baptized him in Jordan; all which is designed in the following words, *which shall prepare thy way before thee*, by his doctrine and baptism: in the text in Malachi it is, *before me*; which has made it a difficulty with the interpreters, whether the words in the prophet, are the words of Christ concerning himself, or of his father concerning him. But sending this messenger before Christ, may be called by the father sending him before himself, and to prepare the way before him; because Christ is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and is the angel of his presence, or face; besides, Jehovah the father was greatly concerned, and the glory of his perfections, in the work the Messiah was to do, whose way John came to prepare. That the prophecy in Malachi here cited, is a prophecy of the Messiah, is owned by several Jewish writers<sup>d</sup>; who expressly say, that those words which follow, *the Lord whom ye seek*, are to be understood of the king Messiah: and though they are divided among themselves, who should be meant by this messenger, see the note on Matt. xi. 10. yet some of them are of opinion, that Elias is intended, even Abarinel himself: for though in his commentary he interprets the words of the prophet Malachi himself, yet elsewhere<sup>e</sup> he allows Elias may be intended: indeed he, and so most that go this way, mean Elijah the prophet, the Tishbite; who they suppose will come in person, before the Messiah appears: yet not he, but one in his spirit and power is designed; and is no other than John the Baptist, in whom the passage has had its full accomplishment.

Ver. 3. *The voice of one crying in the wilderness, &c.*] This is the other testimony in proof of the same, and may be read in Isa. xl. 3. see the note on Matt. iii. 3.

Ver. 4. *John did baptize in the wilderness, &c.*] Of Judea, Matt. iii. 1. where he first appeared as a preacher; and is the same wilderness Isaiah has respect to in the above prophecy. The words are best rendered in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; *John was in the wilderness, baptizing and preaching the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins*: according to which, the account of the Baptist begins with his name, John; describes the place where he was, where he made his first appearance, and continued in, the wilderness; which was not a wild uninhabited place

<sup>c</sup> Biblos Katallages, p. 229.

<sup>d</sup> Kimchi & Ben Melech in Mal. iii. 1. Abarinel, Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 76. 4.

<sup>e</sup> Abarinel, Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 76. 4.



and without people, but had many cities, towns, and villages in it; and also declares his work and ministry there, which was preaching and baptizing: for though baptizing is here put before preaching, yet certain it is, that he first came preaching in these parts; and there baptized such, to whom his preaching was made useful. Baptism is here called, the *baptism of repentance*: because John required repentance antecedent to it, and administered it upon profession of repentance, and as an open testification of it; and this *for*, or *unto the remission of sins*: not for the obtaining the remission of sins, as if either repentance, or baptism, were the causes of pardon of sin; but the sense is, that John preached that men should repent of their sins, and believe in Christ, who was to come; and upon their repentance and faith, be baptized; in which ordinance, they might be led to a fresh view of the free and full forgiveness of their sins, through Christ; whose blood was to be shed for many, to obtain it: see Acts ii. 38.

Ver. 5. *And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, &c.*] The people of the land, a great number of them: *and they of Jerusalem*; the inhabitants of Jerusalem, hearing of this new preacher, the new doctrine that he taught, and the new ordinance that he administered: *and were all baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins*; that is, as many of them as were brought to a sight and sense of their sins, and made a confession of them, these he baptized, or immersed, in the river Jordan; for certain it is, that there were many of the Pharisees and Sadducees who came, whom he rejected; see the notes on Matt. iii. 5, 6, 7.

Ver. 6. *And John was clothed with camel's hair, &c.*] This is a description of John by his clothes; see the note on Matt. iii. 4. to which may be added, that it was usual for penitents, and men of austere lives, and of the first class for holiness and religion, to live in deserts, to fare hard, and wear coarse apparel. Mention is made of one man, who is called, *נִתְן דְּרָצִיטָא*, because he had on a garment of goat's hair, which cut his flesh, that so it might atone for him, for he was a penitent: *and with a girdle of skin about his loins*; a leathern one, as in Matt. iii. 4. not a golden one, such as the high-priest wore, though the Jews call John an high-priest: he was indeed of the priestly race: his father was a priest, but he did not wear a priestly girdle, nor any of the priest's garments; *and he ate locusts and wild honey*. The Ethiopic version renders it, *honey of earth bees*: in Ethiopia was a sort of bees, little bigger than flies, and without a sting, which had their hives in the earth, where they produced honey of a white colour, very pleasant and wholesome; and this is thought, by the Ethiopians, to be the honey which John ate<sup>1</sup>; but then there must

have been the same in Judea, which does not appear. Moreover, in the land of Judea, there was *דְּבַשׁ שֶׁל תְּמָרִים*, the *honey of palm-trees*; and it is said<sup>2</sup>, that it is the best honey; and therefore the Scripture calls, honey of the palm-trees, honey; and the palm-trees which grow in the plains and valleys, abound most with it; wherefore there was much of this about Jericho, the city of palm-trees: there was also *דְּבַשׁ שֶׁל תְּאֵינִים*, *honey of figs*; which in some places was in great plenty: "R. Jacob ben Dosthai says<sup>3</sup>, it is " three miles from Lud to Ono (see Ezra ii. 33.) one " time I walked before break of day, and I went up " to my ancles in honey of figs." Dr. Lightfoot thinks, this was the honey the evangelist speaks of, and John ate of. I have observed on Matt. iii. 4. that with the Jews, the honey of bees was lawful to eat<sup>4</sup>, though the bees themselves were not. So Jonathan ben Uzziel paraphrases, Levit. xi. 20, "Let the species " of bees be an abomination to you, but the honey of " bees may be eaten;" they being reckoned among reptiles that fly: and it may be further observed, that according to them, the honey of wasps and hornets was lawful to be eaten, as well as the honey of bees<sup>5</sup>; and this may be truly called, as here, wild honey; for which they give these reasons<sup>6</sup>, because it is not of the substance of their bodies, but they gather it from herbs; and because in the same manner as bees, they take it into their bodies, but do not produce it from them; though some of the doctors dissent, and think it not lawful<sup>7</sup>.

Ver. 7. *And preached, saying, there cometh one mightier than I after me, &c.*] From whence it appears, that John was a preacher of Jesus Christ; of the dignity of his person, the excellency of his office, and the nature and importance of his work: *the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose*; expressing the great veneration he had for him, and the great sense he had of his own unworthiness, to be concerned in the lowest and meanest service of life for him; and that he was far from being worthy of the high honour done him, to be his messenger and forerunner; see the note on Matt. iii. 11.

Ver. 8. *I indeed have baptized you with water, &c.*] This was spoken to the baptized persons, partly to take off their dependence upon him and his baptism; and partly to direct their views to Christ, from whom the gifts and graces of the spirit are alone to be had: *but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost*; see the note on Matt. iii. 11. One copy adds, *and with fire*, as there: a Jewish writer says, the holy blessed God baptizeth with fire, and the wise shall understand<sup>8</sup>.

Ver. 9. *And it came to pass in those days, &c.*] Whilst John was preaching and baptizing in the wilderness, and had large crowds of people flocking to him, to see his person, hear his doctrine, and to be baptized by him; some for one thing, and some another; *Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee*; the place where he

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 56. 9. Vid. Buxtorf. not. in Sepher Cosri, p. 156, 157.

<sup>2</sup> Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Ludolph. Lex. Ethiop. p. 447.

<sup>4</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Biccurim, c. 1. sect. 10.

<sup>5</sup> T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 111. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Vid. Piske Tosephot Becorot, art. 12.

<sup>7</sup> Misn. Macshirin, c. 6. sect. 4. T. Bab. Becorot, fol. 7. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Maacolat Assurot, c. 3. sect. 3. Ib. & Bartenora in Misn. Macshirin, ibid.

<sup>9</sup> In Piske Tosephot Becorot, art. 12. Maggid Misna in Maimon. Hilch. Maacolat ib.

<sup>10</sup> R. Menachem in Lev. viii. apud Ainsworth on Gen. xvii. 12.

had been brought up, and lived, and dwelt in from his infancy, to this time: *and was baptized of John in Jordan*; which was the reason of his coming from Nazareth to him; see Matt. iii. 13. where this is observed; and in some verses following, an account is given of what passed between Christ and John, on this occasion.

Ver. 10. *And straightway coming up out of the water, &c.*] Not John, as many think; though it was true of him, that he came up out of the water, as the administrator of the ordinance of baptism to Christ, but Christ himself; who having descended into the water, the river of Jordan, and being baptized by immersion in it by John, came up out of it; not from the river-side, and up the declivity to it, but out of the river itself: when *he saw the heavens opened; or cloven, or rent*; this may be understood, either of John, who was the spectator of all this, which was done for the manifestation of the Messiah to him, and the confirmation of his faith in him, and that he might bear record of him; and so the Persic version reads, *John saw, &c.* see John i. 32, 33. or of Jesus Christ himself, who came up out of the water; and when he did, saw the heavens part, *and the spirit like a dove descending upon him.* The position of these words here, is a little different from that in Matt. iii. 16. there it is, *the spirit of God descending like a dove*; which seems rather to point out the manner of his descent, than the form in which he descended: here it is put, *the spirit like a dove descending on him*; which seems rather to incline to such a sense, that the spirit appeared in the form of a dove, as well as descended like one; and both may be designed, and indeed the latter follows upon the former: if it was the form of a dove the spirit of God descended in, it was a very suitable one: the dove is a very proper emblem of the spirit of God: *the voice of the turtle*, in Cant. ii. 12. is by the Targum interpreted, *the voice of the holy spirit*: he may be likened to a dove, for its simplicity and sincerity; he guides into all truth as it is in Jesus, and teaches to speak the word in all plainness, openness, and sincerity, and preserves the saints in the simplicity of the Gospel; and for its mildness and meekness; one of the fruits of the spirit of God is meekness, Gal. v. 23. And this it produces in converted persons, making them meek; humble, and gentle: and also for its harmlessness and innocence; and which appears, or at least should, in those who mind the things of the spirit: hence that advice of Christ, *be harmless as doves*, Matt. x. 16. Likewise for its purity and cleanness; the spirit of God is a spirit of holiness, he is the author of sanctification; such as are washed, sanctified, and justified, are so in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God, 1 Cor. vi. 11. The dove is a mournful and bemoaning creature; and the spirit of God makes intercession for the saints, with groanings which cannot be uttered, Rom. viii. 26. To which may be added, that Noah's dove bringing the olive-leaf in its mouth, as a sign of peace and reconciliation, fitly resembled the holy spirit, one of whose fruits is peace, Gal. v. 22. and which he produces, by leading to the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, whereby peace is made, and reconciliation obtained: and his descending upon Christ here, points

him out as the peace-maker, through whom was come peace on earth, good will towards men, and glory to God. Christ, on whom he lighted, is comparable to a dove; he is said to have doves' eyes, Cant. v. 12. and he has all the fruits and graces of the dove-like spirit of God, which rested on him; like the dove, he is humble, meek, and lowly; in which characters, he is to be followed and imitated by his people: and as that creature is a very loving one to its mate, so is Christ to his church; whom he has so loved, as to give himself for her: and as that is a lovely beautiful creature, so is Christ; he is altogether lovely; and especially his eyes of love, as they are set and fixed upon his church and people. With this descent of the spirit as a dove on Christ, compare Isa. xi. 2. and lxi. 1. see the note on Matt. iii. 16.

Ver. 11. *And there came a voice from heaven, &c.*] What the Jews call *Bath Kol*, saying, *thou art my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased*: it is in Matthew, *this is my beloved son*; as if the words were spoken to others, to John, the administrator of baptism to him, and to those that were spectators; directing them to Christ, on whom the spirit now descended, and testifying to them how great a person he was, how nearly related to God; how much he was the object of his love, and what a pleasure and delight he took in him; but here they are delivered as an immediate address to Christ himself, *thou art my beloved son*. Christ, as he was the only-begotten son of God from eternity, so his filiation was owned and declared to him as early, Psal. ii. 7. This therefore was not the first time, nor was it only for his sake that this was said unto him, but also for the sake of those that stood by: but it may be observed, that he is not only called his son, but his *beloved son*; which might be necessary to be said to him in his state of humiliation, whilst he was yielding obedience to the will of God, and fulfilling all righteousness; and when he was about to be, as he quickly after this was, tempted by Satan in the wilderness, by whom his sonship was called in question. Now these words being directed to Christ, shew that the former are spoken of him, and are applicable to him, as well as to John; see the note on Matt. iii. 17.

Ver. 12. *And immediately, &c.*] As soon as he was baptized, and this testimony had been given of his divine sonship, the very self-same day, *the spirit driveth him into the wilderness*: into a more remote and desolate part of it; for it was in the wilderness John was baptizing and preaching, when Christ came to him, and had the ordinance of baptism administered by him; and it was the same spirit that descended on him at his baptism, which remained with him; by whose impulse he was moved, though not against his will, to go into this desert and forlorn place. For this was not the evil spirit Satan, by whom he was tempted; for Matthew expressly says, that he was *led up of the spirit—to be tempted by the devil*: where the devil that tempted him, is manifestly distinguished from the spirit by whom he was led, and the same spirit is meant here, as there. Moreover, in one of Beza's copies, and in his most ancient one, and in one of Stephens's, it is read, *the Holy Spirit driveth him*; see the note on Matt. iv. 1.

Ver. 13. *And he was there in the wilderness forty days, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions add, *and forty nights*; for so long was he there, *tempted of Satan*: the several temptations of Satan, and how they were overcome by Christ, are particularly related by the Evangelist Matthew, ch. iv. which are here omitted; and what is not mentioned there, is here recorded: *and was with the wild beasts*; which shews, that he was now in an uncultivated and uninhabited part of the desert by men, and where only the most fierce and most savage of creatures dwelt; and yet was as secure and unhurt by them, being the Lord of them, as Adam in Eden's garden, or Daniel in the lions' den. This circumstance is only related by the Evangelist Mark, and is what adds to the uncomfortable situation Christ was in, when tempted by Satan; and his being not hurt by them, may declare, partly his innocence, as man, being as pure and holy as the first man was in his state of integrity, when all creatures were brought before him, to give them names; and partly the power of God, who shut up the mouths of these creatures, that they did him no hurt; and also may signify, the awe they stood in of him, who, as God, is Lord of all. These creatures were more gentle to Christ, and used him better than the wicked Jews, among whom he dwelt, who are compared to lions, dogs, and bulls of Bashan, Psal. xxii. 12, 13, 16, 20, 21. *And the angels ministered unto him*; after the temptations were over, and Satan had left him, preparing for him, and bringing to him proper food, after so long a fast; and waiting upon him, and serving him as their great Lord and master; see the note on Matt. iv. 11.

Ver. 14. *Now after that John was put in prison, &c.*] In the castle of Macherus, by Herod, for reproving him for taking his brother Philip's wife: *Jesus came into Galilee*; again, from whence he came to be baptized of John: *preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God*; the good news and glad tidings of the kingdom of the Messiah, or Gospel dispensation; which lies not in worldly pomp and splendour, in outward observances, in legal rites and ceremonies, but in righteousness, peace, and joy; in peace and pardon by the blood of Christ, in justification by his righteousness, and in free and full salvation by him.

Ver. 15. *And saying, the time is fulfilled, &c.*] Either that which was fixed for the end of the law and prophets, the legal and Mosaic dispensation, and the Jewish church-state; or the fulness of time for the Messiah's appearance in the world; which was agreed upon between the father and the son, was predicted in various prophecies, and the people of the Jews were in a general expectation of: *and the kingdom of God is at hand*; the same with the *kingdom of heaven*, in Matt. iii. 2. and iv. 17. see the notes there: *repent ye, and believe the Gospel*. He called them to repent, not only of their former sins and vicious course of life, but of their bad principles and tenets, concerning a temporal kingdom of the Messiah; concerning merit and free will, justification by the works of the law, and salvation by their obedience to the ceremonies of it, and the traditions of the elders: these he exhorts them to change their sentiments about, and to relinquish them, and give into the Gospel scheme; which pro-

claims liberty from the law, peace, pardon, and righteousness by Christ, and salvation and eternal life by the free grace of God.

Ver. 16. *Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, &c.*] The same with the sea of Tiberias, John vi. 1. *he saw Simon*; whose surname was Peter, the son of Jonas: *and Andrew his brother*; the brother of Simon, *casting a net into the sea*; of Galilee, in order to catch fish: *for they were fishers*: by occupation, this was their trade and business, by which they got their livelihood; see the note on Matt. iv. 18.

Ver. 17. *And Jesus said unto them, come ye after me, &c.*] Leave your worldly employments, and become my disciples, *and I will make you to become fishers of men*: which will be a much more excellent and honourable employment, as men, and the souls of men, are more excellent, and of more worth than fishes; see the note on Matt. iv. 19.

Ver. 18. *And straightway they forsook their nets, &c.*] Which perhaps were their all; see Matt. xix. 27. *And followed him*: both in a corporeal and spiritual sense; see the note on Matt. iv. 20.

Ver. 19. *And when he had gone a little further thence, &c.*] From the place where Simon and Andrew were casting their nets, though still by the sea-side; *he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother*. The former was he whom afterwards Herod killed with the sword, and the latter the beloved disciple; these were also fishermen: *who also were in the ship mending their nets*: as the other two disciples were on ship-board, casting their nets into the sea to catch fish; these were also in a ship, repairing their nets, in order to use them the same way, and for the same purpose; see the note on Matt. iv. 21.

Ver. 20. *And straightway he called them, &c.*] As soon as he saw them; for he was looking out for them, having appointed them long before to the service he now called them to; *and they left their father Zebedee with the hired servants, and went after him*. It might seem unnatural, had they left their father alone in the ship, to have taken the care and management of it, and therefore 'tis added, *with the hired servants*: who were hired for that purpose, to assist in mending the nets, and casting them, and managing the ship, and conducting it from place to place, and therefore were not to be charged with want of humanity; and such was the power that went along with Christ's call, that notwithstanding natural affection to their parents, and the gain they might get by these servants and their trade, they cheerfully quitted all, and followed Christ; see the note on Matt. iv. 22.

Ver. 21. *And they went into Capernaum, &c.*] Jesus and his four disciples he had just called, Simon and Andrew, James and John; though the Arabic and Persic versions read, *he went*; that is, Christ; and so Beza says it was read in a certain copy: *and straightway on the sabbath-day he entered into the synagogue and taught*; that is, immediately, as soon as he entered the city, it being then sabbath-day; or, as soon as the sabbath-day came, he went to the synagogue at Capernaum, and his disciples with him; where the people used to meet weekly to hear the law read, and to be instructed in divine things; which opportunity Christ laid hold on to preach the Gospel to

them, and teach them things concerning the kingdom of God.

Ver. 22. *And they were astonished at his doctrine, &c.*] The nature and importance of it, it being what they had not been used to hear; only at best the doctrine of the law, and sometimes only the traditions of the elders, or an allegorical and traditional sense of the Scriptures, and things very trifling and unedifying: and also they were amazed at the manner of his preaching, which was with so much gracefulness, gravity, and majesty, and was attended with so much evidence and power: *for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes; or their Scribes*, as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read. He did not go about to establish what he said by the authority of the Rabbins, as the Scribes did; saying, Hillell says so, or Shammai says thus, or such a doctor says thus and thus; but he spake as from himself, as one sent of God, that had an authority from him, and was independent of man; and this was what they had not observed in others, and wonder at it; see the note on Matt. vii. 28, 29.

Ver. 23. *And there was in their synagogue, &c.*] In the synagogue of the Capernaïtes, at the same time that Jesus was teaching there, *a man with an unclean spirit*: not with an unclean heart, for there were doubtless many such there, but that had a devil; for in Luke, ch. iv. 33. 'tis said, *he had a spirit of an unclean devil*: so called, because he is impure in himself, and the cause of uncleanness in men, in which he delights: and such spirits sometimes are where religious persons meet, but with no good design; either to disturb the preacher, or to divert the hearer, that the word may be unfruitful and unprofitable: *and he cried out*: either the man, or rather the unclean spirit in him, who had possessed his body, and made use of the organs of it: he cried out through dread of the majesty of Christ, whose presence he could not bear; and through grief and envy at the success of his ministration, and the influence it had upon the minds of men; and through fear of being dispossessed of the man, in whom he was.

Ver. 24. *Saying, let us alone, &c.*] Meaning with himself, the rest of the unclean spirits, that had possessed the bodies of men in Galilee, and in all Judea; knowing that Christ had power to dislodge them, and fearing he would, entreats him he would let them alone, quietly to dwell in their beloved habitations: *what have we to do with thee?* They had nothing to do with Christ, as a Saviour; they had no interest in him, nor in his redemption, but he had something to do with them, to shew his power over them, and to deliver men out of their hands: *thou Jesus of Nazareth*: calling him so, from the place where he was educated, and had lived the greatest part of his life, though he knew he was born at Bethlehem; but this he said, according to the common notion of the people, and it being the usual appellation of him: *art thou come to destroy us?* not to annihilate them, but either to turn them out of the bodies of men, which to them was a sort of a destruction of them, and was really a destroying that power, which they had for some time exercised over men; or to shut them up in the prison of

hell, and inflict that full punishment on them, which is in reserve for them: *I know thee who thou art, the holy one of God*: he whom God had called his holy one, Psal. xvi. 10. and who is so, both in his divine nature, as the son of God, the holy one of Israel; and as the son of man, being the holy thing born of the virgin, and is without the least stain of original sin, or blemish of actual transgression; and also as the mediator, whom the father has sanctified and sent into the world, the true Messiah; and all this the devil knew from his wonderful incarnation, by the voice from heaven at his baptism, from the conquest over him in the wilderness, and by the miracles he had already wrought: in the high-priest's mitre was written, קודש ליהוה, which may be rendered, *the holy one of the Lord*: the high-priest was an eminent type of him.

Ver. 25. *And Jesus rebuked him, &c.*] Checking his insolence, despising his flattery, and refusing to receive a testimony from him; and which he wanted not, lest it should be thought he had a familiarity and confederacy with him: *saying, hold thy peace; stop thy mouth, I need no such witness as thine, nor thy praises; I am not to be soothed by thy flattery, nor is my mouth to be stopped, or power restrained, by such methods: wherefore he adds, and come out of him*: I'll not let thee alone, thy encomiums of me shall not prevail upon me to leave thee in the quiet possession of the man; I'll give a testimony of who I am, by the dispossessing of thee out of this man. In imitation of this authoritative power of Christ, the Jewish exorcists, in their pretensions to cast out devils, use a like form: so they tell us<sup>4</sup>, that R. Simeon ben Jochai, cast a devil out of Cæsar's daughter, saying, *Ben Talmion* (which was the name of the devil) *come out, Ben Talmion come out*; and he came out of her; see the note on Matt. xii. 27.

Ver. 26. *And when the unclean spirit had torn him, &c.*] Not that he had torn any limb from him, or had made any wound in any part of his body; for Luke says, ch. iv. 35. that he *hurt him not*, but he shook him; and as Luke there says, *threw him in the midst*, of the people, or synagogue; and so the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read here, *he cast him, or threw him to the ground*: he threw him into convulsions, and laid him prostrate on the floor: *and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him*; though sorely against his will, as his loud cry shewed, and being obliged to it by a superior power.

Ver. 27. *And they were all amazed, &c.*] The people that were in the synagogue, who were met together for divine worship, were astonished, not only at his doctrine, as before, but at this miracle and power of his in casting out devils: *insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, what thing is this?* They spake among themselves, as Luke says; they inquired of one another; they conferred together, talked over the point, and disputed among themselves, concerning both the doctrine and power of Christ, what, and how wonderful they were: *what new doctrine is this?* This they said, not as fixing a brand of novelty upon it, as the Athenians did on Paul's doc-

trine, Acts xvii. 19. but as admiring it; being what was rare and unusual, and which they had never heard of from their Rabbins and Scribes, and which was confirmed by miracles; *for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him:* they not only observed the authority with which he delivered his doctrine, but the authority with which he cast out devils, by a word speaking; he not only commanded them to come out, but they immediately came out; their exorcists took authority upon them to command, but could not oblige the devils to obey; but these men took notice, that such was the authority of Christ in commanding, that the unclean spirits were obliged to obey, and did.

Ver. 28. *And immediately his fame spread abroad, &c.*] Not only in the city of Capernaum, where these things were done, and where his fame was first spread, but also *throughout all the region round about Galilee:* and not only throughout Galilee, but throughout all the country that was bordering upon it, and adjacent to it; see Matt. iv. 23, 25. The Persic version reads, *through all the provinces.*

Ver. 29. *And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, &c.*] Christ having wrought this miracle, and finished his sermon, and the whole synagogue service being over, when it was usual for every one to repair to their own houses, or their friends, for refreshment; he, and they that were with him, departed from it, and directly, being not far from it, *they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew:* who being brethren, dwelt together in a house at Capernaum, where it seems they were now inhabitants, though their native place was Bethsaida, John i. 44. *with James and John;* whom they took along with them, being fellow-disciples of Christ.

Ver. 30. *But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, &c.*] *A great fever,* Luke says; a very violent one, which threatened with death, and must be very dangerous to an ancient person; see the note on Matt. viii. 14. *And anon they tell him of her;* for it seems, that not as soon as he came into the house, but some time after, when he had sat awhile, and rested himself after his fatigue in preaching; they acquainted him with her case, and beseeched him to look upon her, and restore her: this was done, either by Simon and Andrew, or by some others of their friends that were in the house; who having either seen, or heard of his dispossessing the unclean spirit, might rightly conclude he had power to remove a fever.

Ver. 31. *And he came and took her by the hand, &c.*] He went into the room where she lay, and took hold of her hand; not to feel her pulse, and thereby judge of the nature and strength of her disorder, as physicians do; nor merely in a friendly manner, as is customary, but in order to restore her: *and lift her up;* to sit upright in the bed, who before was laid along upon it, so weak as not to be able to turn herself, much less to sit erect by any assistance whatever: *and immediately the fever left her;* and there was not the least symptom of it, nor none of the effects which it usually leaves; such was the virtue that went forth from Christ by touching her, and such his great power: *and she ministered unto them;* she immediately arose from the bed, and put

on her clothes, being at once in perfect health and strength; and, in gratitude to her Saviour and physician, she assisted in preparing food for him and his disciples, and served at table to them.

Ver. 32. *And at even, when the sun did set, &c.*] At which time the Jews' sabbath was ended; see the note on Matt. viii. 16. for this was a sabbath-day, ver. 21. when according to them, it was not lawful to heal; nor did they offer to bring their sick to him on that day; but the last of the two evenings being come, and the sun set, the sabbath was over; and therefore being under no restraint on account of that, *they brought unto him all that were diseased;* with any sort of disease whatever, even all that were in their city; *and them that were possessed with devils.* The Persic version renders it *epileptics*, such as were troubled with the falling sickness, as many of those were, whose bodies the devils possessed.

Ver. 33. *And all the city was gathered together at the door.*] That is, the inhabitants of the city of Capernaum, a very great number of them at least, who having either heard of, or seen the dispossession of the unclean spirit in the synagogue in the day-time; and being willing to see what miraculous cures might be wrought by Christ upon the diseased and possessed that were brought to him, got together in great crowds about the door of the house of Simon and Andrew, where Jesus now was.

Ver. 34. *And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, &c.*] Not that there were some, who had some sorts of diseases, whom he did not heal; but he healed all that came, or were brought to him, which were many, of every sort of disease, which were divers, with which they were afflicted: *and cast out many devils;* even as many as were brought to him, or were possessed with any: *and he suffered not the devils to speak;* either for him, or against him; which shews his great power over them: *because they knew him, or that they knew him:* he would not suffer them to say a word about him, because he knew that they knew that he was the Christ, the son of God, or he would not permit them to say who he was; because he had others to bear witness of him, and better testimonies than their's, and lest his enemies should reproach him with an agreement and familiarity with them.

Ver. 35. *And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, &c.*] On the morrow after the sabbath, on the first day in the morning, notwithstanding the fatigue of the former day, through preaching and working miracles; yet he rose up very early while it was very much within the night, as the light and day were coming on, and before the day broke; though it might be broad day before he departed out of the house, as Luke suggests, ch. iv. 42. *he went out;* out of the house of Simon and Andrew, and out of the city of Capernaum, leaving his disciples and friends behind him: *and departed into a solitary place, and there he prayed;* as man, to his God and Father; it may be for his disciples he had lately chosen; for himself, as man, that he might be strengthened as such for service; and for success in his ministry, and that his Gospel might run and be glorified; he chose a desert, and solitary place.

for the sake of retirement, from the crowd of people that attended at Peter's door; where he could not be alone, and in private, and as most suitable for the exercise of prayer. His early and private devotion may be an example to us.

Ver. 36. *And Simon, and they that were with him, &c.*] Peter, and his brother Andrew, together with James and John, followed after him; some time after he was gone; for he privately withdrew from them, so that they might not be aware when he went, nor apprized of his departure, for some considerable time; which when they were, they set out, in diligent search, and eager pursuit after him, until they found him.

Ver. 37. *And when they had found him, &c.*] In the desert and solitary place, where he had been praying: they said unto him; in order to engage him to go with them, and as the reason why they sought him with so much eagerness and diligence, *all men seek for thee*; not all the men in the world, nor, it may be, all the inhabitants of Capernaum, but a large number of them, who were inquiring after him, some for one thing, some for another; some to see him, what manner of man he was, and some to hear him, what sort of doctrine he preached, and others to see his miracles, or to have themselves, or their sick healed; and the disciples were loth that such an opportunity of doing good should be missed, and therefore sought for him, till they found him.

Ver. 38. *And he said unto them, let us go into the next towns, &c.*] Instead of returning with his disciples to Capernaum, as they expected he would, and especially since there was such a concourse of people got together, he proposes to go to the next towns; or village-cities; towns that were neither villages, nor cities, but between both, as the word signifies: hence the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions render it, *villages and cities*; and it designs such towns in which there were synagogues. The Jews distinguish between walled towns, villages, and large cities. They ask, "what is a large city? every one in which there are ten leisure men; if less than so, lo! it is a village." And "every place in which there were ten Israelites, they were obliged to provide a house into which they might go to prayer, at every prayer-time, and that place is called a synagogue." These were the places Christ judged it advisable to go to; he had preached already at Capernaum, the day before, and had confirmed his doctrine by miracles, which was sufficient for the present, and therefore thought fit to go elsewhere, and orders his disciples to go likewise; for the Syriac version renders it, *go ye to the next cities*; and in the same way read the Arabic and Persic versions: *that I may preach there also*; as well as at Capernaum, that so the Gospel may be spread, and have its usefulness in other parts as well as there: the Arabic version renders it, *that we may preach*; both I and you; but without any foundation; nor does the reason following suit such a version, *for therefore came I forth*; meaning, not from Simon's house, nor from Capernaum, though there may be a truth in that; for

Christ might come from thence, with that view, to preach the Gospel elsewhere; but from God his father, from whom he came forth, and by whom he was sent to preach the Gospel to other cities also, both in Galilee and Judæa; even to all the inhabitants of that country, to all the lost sheep of the house of Israel; so that this was but answering the end of his coming, and acting according to the commission given him.

Ver. 39. *And he preached in their synagogues, &c.*] Which were in the next towns, in the village-cities, and throughout all Galilee: taking every town and city in his circuit, he continued preaching the Gospel of the kingdom in one place and another, until he had gone over the whole country: *and cast out devils*; as out of the souls, so out of the bodies of men, whereby he confirmed the doctrine he preached.

Ver. 40. *And there came a leper to him, &c.*] After he was come down from a certain mountain, in Galilee, where he had been preaching to the people, Matt. viii. 1. and when he was in a certain city, Luke v. 12. either Capernaum, or some other city of Galilee. This man was full of leprosy, as Luke says, and very probably deemed incurable; of the nature and symptoms of the leprosy, see the note on Luke v. 12. *beseeching him*; to cure him of his leprosy: *and kneeling down to him*; in token of submission, respect, and reverence, and to worship him: *and saying unto him, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean*; see the note on Matt. viii. 2. Mark omits the word *Lord*.

Ver. 41. *And Jesus, moved with compassion, &c.*] At the sad and deplorable case the poor man was in, being a merciful high-priest, and not with a desire of popular applause, and vain glory: *put forth his hand and touched him*; though the leprosy was spread all over him, and there was no place clean, and touching him was forbidden by the law: *and saith unto him, I will be thou clean*; see the note on Matt. viii. 3.

Ver. 42. *And as soon as he had spoken, &c.*] The above words, *immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed*; from it, and which seems to be done not by touching him, but by the words spoken, which were accompanied with such power, as to effect the cure in an instant; see the note on Matt. viii. 3.

Ver. 43. *And he straitly charged him; &c.*] Either with the sin which had been the cause of this leprosy, and to take care that he sinned that sin no more, lest a worse evil should befall him; for sin was usually the cause of leprosy, as the cases of Miriam, Gehazi, and Uzziah shew. It is said to come upon men for seven things. The seven abominations mentioned in Prov. vi. 16—19. are said, by the Jewish writers<sup>1</sup>, to be the reasons of persons being stricken with leprosy: *a proud look*; as appears from the instance of the daughters of Zion, Isa. iii. 16—24. the crowns of whose heads were smitten with a scab, and who were attended with a stink, baldness, and burning. *A lying tongue*; as in the case of Miriam, who, with Aaron, spoke against Moses; upon which the cloud departed from the tabernacle, and Miriam became leprous, white as snow, Numb.

<sup>1</sup> Mian. Megilla, c. 1. sect. 1, 2, 3. T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 9. 2. & 3. s. Maimon. Megilla, c. 1. sect. 4, 5, 8. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, affirm. pr. 154.

<sup>2</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 11. sect. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Vajikra Rabba, sect. 16. fol. 158. 1, 2.

xii. 1, 10. *And hands that shed innocent blood*; which is proved from Joab, on whose head the blood of Abner and Amasa returned; and on account of which a leper was not to fail from his house; see 1 Kings ii. 31. 32. compared with 2 Sam. iii. 29. *An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations*; which was fulfilled in Uziah, who sought to bring the high-priesthood into contempt, and therefore was smitten with leprosy, which arose in his forehead, while he had the censer in his hands, and was contending with the priests; and he continued a leper to his death, 2 Chron. xxvi. 18—21. *Feet that be swift in running to mischief*; which was true of Gehazi, who ran after Naaman the Syrian, and took a gift of him which he should not; for which, the leprosy, Naaman was cured of, seized him, and cleaved unto him, 2 Kings v. 20—27. *A false witness that speaketh lies*; of this no instance is given. *And him that soweth discord among brethren*; as Pharaoh between Abraham and Sarah; wherefore the Lord plagued Pharaoh, &c. Gen. xii. 17. which the Jews understand of the plague of leprosy. These seven things are, in another place, said to be an evil tongue, shedding of blood, a vain oath, uncleanness, a proud spirit, theft, and envy. Elsewhere it is said, that for eleven things leprosy cometh; for cursing God, for uncleanness, for murder, for saying of a neighbour a thing that there is nothing in it, for pride, for entering into a border which is not a man's own, for a lying tongue, for theft, for a false oath, for profaning the name of God, for idolatry; and R. Isaac says, for an evil eye; and the Rabbins also say, it comes upon him who despises the words of the law: the first is proved from Goliath, 1 Sam. xvii. 26. 46. the second from the daughters of Jerusalem, Isa. iii. 16—24. the third from Cain, Gen. iv. 15. and from Joab, 2 Sam. iii. 29. the fourth from Moses, Exod. iv. 5, 6. the fifth from Naaman, 2 Kings v. 1. the sixth from Uziah, 2 Chron. xxvi. 16—19. the seventh from Miriam, Numb. xii. 1, 10. the eighth and ninth from Zech. v. 4. compared with Lev. xiv. 45. the tenth from Gehazi, 2 Kings v. 20, 27. the eleventh from the children of Israel when they made the calf, Exod. xxxii. 25. compared with Numb. v. 2. But whether this man's sin was either of these, or what it was, is not certain: however, he was, by this cure, laid under an obligation, for the future, to avoid it, and all other sins: or rather the charge was to tell no man of his cure, before he came to the priest: nor to him, or any other, how he came by it, and by whom he was healed; and forthwith sent him away;

to the priest, in all haste; and it looks as if the man was unwilling to have gone from him, but chose rather to have continued with his kind benefactor: for the word signifies, he cast him out; he drove him from him; he obliged him to go without delay.

Ver. 44. *And saith unto him, see thou say nothing to any man, &c.*] By the way, till he came to the priest; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest: the Syriac and Persic versions read, *to the priests*; and the Vulgate Latin renders it, *to the chief priest*; but any priest might judge of the cleansing of a leper; and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them; see the note on Matt. viii. 4.

Ver. 45. *But he went out, &c.*] Either out of the synagogue; for in ver. 39. it is said, that Christ preached in their synagogues, &c. and in ver. 40. *there came a leper to him*; and Luke very plainly suggests, that he was in the city, ch. v. 12. and he might be in the synagogue: and this was allowed a leper, according to the Jewish canons, provided some rules were observed; which were these: "if a leper enters into a synagogue, they make for him a partition ten hands high, and four cubits broad; he enters in first, and goes out last:" or, it may be, he went out of the house where he was, into the city, and parts adjacent; for it seems as if the cure was done privately: and yet a leper was not allowed to enter into a house; "if he did, all the vessels which were there, *i. e.* all the goods in the house were defiled, even to the very beams." R. Simeon says, as far as four cubits. R. Judah says, "if he staid so long as the lighting of a lamp." *And began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter*; contrary to the charge Christ gave him; though this might be done by him, not out of disobedience to Christ, but out of a transport of joy for the mercy received; and perhaps with a good intention to spread the fame and glory of his Saviour: *insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city*; of Capernaum, or whatever city it was, where this cure was wrought, without a crowd of people about him, and danger from them, at least from his enemies, who envied his applause and glory. *But was without in desert places*; devoid of inhabitants, where he spent his time in prayer: *and they came to him from every quarter*; whenever the people could learn where he was: so agreeable was his doctrine to some; and so useful his miraculous work of healing to others.

## CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1. *AND again he entered into Capernaum after some days, &c.*] After he had been preaching in the synagogues throughout Galilee, and after he had spent some days in prayer, and private retirement in desert places: *and it was noised that he was in the house*; a report was spread throughout the city that he was in

the house of Simon and Andrew, where he was before, and where he used to be, when in Capernaum.

Ver. 2. *And straightway many were gathered together, &c.*] From all parts of the city, *insomuch that there was no room to receive them*; in the house: by which it should seem to be a large one, though not large enough

<sup>u</sup> T. Bab. Eracin, fol. 16. 1. Vid. Abarbinel. in 2 Kings v. 27.

<sup>v</sup> Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 7. fol. 188. 2, 3.

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>x</sup> Misn. Negaim, c. 13. sect. 12.

<sup>y</sup> Ib. sect. 11.

to hold such a numerous company as were got together: *no, not so much as about the door*; or the places before the door, the porch, the court, or court-yard. The crowd was so great, that neither the house, nor the out-places before, could hold them, nor could they come even near the door; and he preached the word unto them. The Ethiopic version renders it, *he spake his own word to them that came to him*; he preached the Gospel, the word of grace and truth, of life and salvation, to as many as could come near him, and were within the hearing of him. To me it seems, that our Lord went up into an upper room, and out of the window preached to the people, that were, in great numbers, without doors; and the following narrative seems to confirm this conjecture.

Ver. 3. *And they came unto him, &c.*] A considerable body of people, townsmen, friends, and relations of the person after-mentioned: *bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four*; carried by four men upon their shoulders, as if he was a dead carcass; so weak and enfeebled was he by his disease, that he could not walk, or be otherwise brought; or rather upon a bed, which four men, at the four corners of it, carried in their hands; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *four men carried him on a bed*; and certain it is, by what follows, that he was brought upon a bed. This man's case appears to be a very bad one, and what seems to be incurable by the art of medicine: it was not a slight touch of the palsy, but a general one, which had deprived him of motion and sensation. The palsy is a disease, whereby the body, or some of its parts, lose their motion, and sometimes their sensation or feeling: the causes of it are an impeded influx of the nervous spirits into the villi, or the muscles, or of the arterious blood into their vessels; which may happen from some fault either in the brain, the nerves, muscles, or their vessels. The palsy is said to be *perfect*, or complete, when there is a privation of motion and sensation at the same time; *imperfect*, when one of the two is destroyed, the other remaining. The palsy again is either *universal*, *lateral*, or *partial*. The *universal* palsy, called also *paraplegia*, or *paraplexia*, is a general immobility of all the muscles that receive nerves from the cerebrum, or cerebellum, except those of the head—its cause is usually supposed to reside in the ventricles of the brain, or in the root of the spinal marrow.—The *lateral* palsy, called also *hemiplegia*, is the same disease with the *paraplegia*, only that it affects but one side of the body. Its cause is the same, only restrained to one side of the brain, or spinal marrow. The *partial* palsy is where some particular part, or member, alone is affected; as, for instance, where the motion of the arm, or leg, is destroyed<sup>a</sup>. Now this man's disease seems to be the perfect and general palsy, which affects the whole body, or the *paraplegia*, which reaches every part but the head; whereby all sense, as well as motion, are destroyed, and sometimes only one of them: but in this case it seems as if both of them were lost: that he was motionless, is clear from his being carried by four persons; and it looks as if he had lost his feeling, since he is not said to be grievously tormented,

as the centurion's servant is said to be, Matt. viii. 6. whose disease seems to have been of the partial or imperfect kind; or however, though it deprived him of motion, yet not of sensation; his might be a kind of scorbutic palsy. This man is an emblem of a sinner in a state of nature, who is insensible of his condition, of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, of his danger and misery to which he is exposed, of his lost and undone state, of the necessity of the new birth, and of the need of salvation by Jesus Christ; and who, as he is destitute of spiritual life, can have no spiritual motion to come to Christ for life and salvation, or any spiritual strength and activity to move in, or perform any thing that is spiritually good: and as the friends of this man took him, and brought him to Christ, and laid him down before him, hoping he might receive a cure from him, though from what appears, it was unasked by him, as he did; so it becomes the friends and relations of unregenerate persons, who have received the grace of God themselves, and are in a sound and safe estate, to be concerned for them; to bring them under the means of grace, where they may be brought to a sense of their sins, and to a comfortable view of the free and full forgiveness of them, as this man; and this should be done, even though there may be difficulties in the accomplishment of it, as there were in this case, as is manifest from what follows.

Ver. 4. *And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, &c.*] To the room where Jesus was, nor into the house, nor even to the door, the crowd about it was so great, *they uncovered the roof where he was*. The Arabic version reads it, *they went up to the roof*; and the Persic thus, *they carried him up upon the roof*. The place where Christ was, seems to be an upper room; for in such an one the Jewish doctors used to meet, and discourse together about religious matters; see Acts i. 13. and xx. 8. Though some think this was a mean house in which Christ was, and had no upper room, but the ground-floor was open to the roof, through which the man, sick of the palsy, was let down on his bed to Christ; and the rather, because the people crowded about the door to get in, and there was no room to receive them, no not about it: but even from this circumstance it seems most reasonable, that there was an upper room in which Christ was, and at a window in which he might preach to the people, with much more convenience, than at, or about the door, where they were pressing: for, certain it is, that he did preach the word to them, ver. 2. and many instances may be given of the above-mentioned doctors, whose usages, when indifferent, and not sinful, might be complied with by Christ, as these were, of their meeting and conversing together in upper rooms. Instead of many, take the following<sup>b</sup>: "It happened to Rabban Gamaliel, and the elders, who were sitting *בעליית*, in an upper room in Jericho, that they brought them dates, and they did eat, &c." Again<sup>c</sup>, "these are some of the traditions which they taught, *בעליית*, in the upper chamber of Hananiah ben Hezekiah, ben Garon." So it is likewise said<sup>d</sup>, that "R. Tarphon, or Tryphon, and the

<sup>a</sup> Chambers's Cyclopaedia, in the word *palsy*.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Beraicot, fol. 37. 1.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 12. 1. & Misn. Sabbat, c. 1. sect. 4.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 40. 2. Vid. T. Hieros. Pesachim, fol. 30. 2. & T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 74. 1.



“ elders, were sitting *in the chamber* of the house of Nithzah, in Lydda, and this question was asked “ before them, is doctrine greatest, or practice greatest?” Once more <sup>d</sup>, “ the elders of the house of Shammai, and the elders of the house of Hillel, went up, “ לעליית, *to the upper chamber* of Jochanan ben Bethira, and said, that the Tzitzith, or fringes, had “ no measure, &c.” Now, over this upper room, was a flat roof, with battlements about it; for so the Jews were obliged to build their houses, Deut. xxii. 8. to which they had a way of going to and from, both within and without-side their houses; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 17. Hence we so often read <sup>e</sup> of דרך נגות, *the way of the roofs*, in distinction from דרך פתחים, *the way of the doors*; by which they entered into their houses, and by which means, things might be carried from a court to a roof, and from a roof to a court; about which the doctors dispute, saying, that on a sabbath-day <sup>f</sup>, “ it is forbidden to ascend and descend “ from the roofs to the court, and from the court to the “ roofs; and the vessels, whose abode is in the court, “ it is lawful to move them in the court, and which “ are in the roofs, it is lawful to move them in the “ roofs.—Says Rabbi, when we were learning the law “ with R. Simeon at Tekoah, we brought up oil, and a “ confection of old wine, water, and balsam, from roof “ to roof, and from roof to court, and from court to court, “ and from the court to a close, and from one close to “ another, till we came to the fountains, in which they “ washed. Says R. Judah, it happened in a time of danger, “ and we brought the book of the law from court to roof, “ and from roof to court, and from court to a close, “ to read in it.” Now, in these roofs, there was a door, which they call, פתח נגות, *the door of the roofs*<sup>g</sup>; now when they had brought up the sick man to the roof of the house, by a ladder fastened on the outside, which was common <sup>h</sup>; they took up this door, and let him down in his bed into the room where Jesus was: and because they wrenched the roof-door open with violence, therefore ’tis said, *and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed where-in the sick of the palsy lay*: opening the door, and perhaps taking up the frame of it, and removing some tiles about it, to make the way wider, they let down with ropes, the bed, and the man on it, together. The Persic version thus renders it, *and the paralytic man being put upon a bed, at the four corners of the bed so many ropes being fastened, they let him down through a window to Jesus, into the place where he was sitting*: which is rather a paraphrase, or exposition of the words, than a translation.

Ver. 5. *When Jesus saw their faith, &c.*] The faith of the sick man, and his friends, who seemed confident, that could they get at Christ, a cure would be wrought: the faith of the one appears in suffering himself to be brought in such a manner, under so much weakness; and with so much trouble; and of the other in bringing him, and breaking through so many difficulties to get him to Christ. *He said unto the sick of the palsy, son, thy sins be forgiven thee*; pointing

and striking at the root of his disorder, his sins. Christ calls him son, though in this afflicted condition a person may be a child of God, and yet greatly afflicted by him; afflictions are not arguments against, but rather for sonship: *for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?* He scourgeth every son whom he receiveth, and by chastising them, dealeth with them as with sons; and such as are without chastisement are bastards, and not sons, Heb. xii. 6, 7, 8. yea he calls him a son, though a sinful creature, and who had not, as yet, until these words were spoken by Christ, any discovery and application of pardoning grace unto him: he was a son of God by divine predestination, being predestinated to the adoption of children: he was a son by virtue of the covenant of grace, he was interested in, as appears by his enjoying pardon of sin, a blessing of it; which runs thus, *I will be their father, and they shall be my sons and daughters*, 2 Cor. vi. 18. He was one of the children which were given to Christ as in such a relation: and for the sake of whom Christ was now a partaker of flesh and blood, and in a little time was to die for them, in order to gather them together, who were scattered abroad. The blessing Christ conferred on this poor man is of the greatest consequence and importance, forgiveness of sin: it is what springs from the grace and mercy of God; it is provided in a promise in the covenant of grace; Christ was sent to shed his blood to procure it, in a way consistent with the holiness and justice of God; and this being done, it is published in the Gospel, and is a most considerable article in it, and than which, nothing can be more desirable to a sensible sinner: and blessed are they that are partakers of it, their sins will never be imputed to them; they will never be remembered more; they are blotted out of God’s debt-book; they are covered out of his sight, and are removed as far as the east is from the west, even all their sins, original and actual, secret or open, of omission, or commission; see the note on Matt. ix. 2.

Ver. 6. *But there were certain of the Scribes sitting there, &c.*] In the upper room where Jesus was, to watch and observe what he said, and did: *and reasoning in their hearts*; upon the above words of Christ, in the following manner.

Ver. 7. *Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? &c.*] They took Christ to be a mere man, and reasoned with themselves, that he must be a blasphemer, in assuming that to himself, which was peculiar to God: they seem astonished at his words, and wonder at his arrogance, and to be filled with indignation and resentment at him; saying, *who can forgive sins but God only?* this was a generally-received maxim with them, and a very just one. The Chaldee paraphrase of Job xiv. 4. runs thus; “ who can give a pure man out of a “ man that is defiled with sins, but God, who alone is “ he, *יבוק ליה, that can pardon him?*” They even deny that Metatron, so they call the angel in Exod. xxiii. 20. of whom they say, that his name is as the name of his master, has a power of forgiving sins; for

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Menschof, fol. 41. 2. Vid. Targum in Cant. iii. 4.

<sup>e</sup> T. Pesach. fol. 92. 1. Moed. Katon, fol. 95. 1. Cetubot, fol. 10. 2. Gittin, fol. 81. 1. Bava Metzila, fol. 88. 1. in 117. 1.

<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 91. 1. & Hieros. ib. fol. 25. 3.

<sup>g</sup> T. Hieros. Erubin, fol. 26. 2.

<sup>h</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Bava Metzila, fol. 117. 1.

which reason the Israelites rejected him as a messenger<sup>1</sup>. They were right in saying, that none but God could forgive sin, against whom it is committed; but wrong in charging Christ with blasphemy on this account; because he is truly God, as well as man, as his omniscience and omnipotence hereafter manifested, did abundantly shew. That no mere creature can forgive sin, is certain: good men may, and ought to forgive one another, and even their very enemies; but then they can only forgive sin as an injury done to themselves, not as committed against God. The ministers of the Gospel may be said to remit sins ministerially, or declaratively, by preaching the doctrine of pardon, declaring, that such as believe in Christ shall receive the remission of sins; but for any man to assume such a power to himself, as to grant pardons and indulgences, to absolve from sins, is antichristian, as the pope of Rome does; in which he takes that to himself, which is peculiar to God; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God, 2 Thess. ii. 4. Nor can any man procure the forgiveness of his sins by any thing he has, or can do; not by his riches, which will not profit in a day of wrath, they being not a sufficient ransom-price for a man's self, or any of his brethren and friends; nor by his repentance, for though this, and remission of sins, go together in grace and experience, yet repentance is not the cause of remission of sins, but rather the effect of remission applied; nor by his faith, for faith does not procure, but receives this blessing: and much less by good works, for then the forgiveness of sins would not be according to the riches of grace; and a man would be saved by his works, since a principal part of salvation lies in the pardon of sin; and besides the blood of Christ would be shed in vain. That God only can forgive sin, is evident, because it is against him, and him only, that men sin: sin is a transgression of his law, a contrariety to his nature, and a contradiction of his will, an affront to his justice and holiness, a contempt of him, who is the lawgiver, that is able to save and to destroy; it is of the nature of a debt, which he only can loose from. Moreover, if there were any besides himself that could forgive sin, he would have one equal with him, and like unto him; whereas, *who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity?* Mic. vii. 18. This is a prerogative peculiar to him, which he challenges to himself: *I even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions*, Isa. xliii. 25. but then this is common to all the three divine persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit. The father, he has prepared this grace in his own heart; for the moving cause of it, is his sovereign grace and mercy; he has promised and secured it in the covenant of his grace; he set forth, and sent forth his son to obtain it, by the shedding of his blood, that so his justice might be satisfied; and it is for Christ's sake he forgives all trespasses. The son of God is concerned in it: as man, his blood was shed for it; and that being the blood, not of a mere man, but of him that is God, as well as man, it was effectual to that purpose; it is in his name that it is preached, and he is exalted as a Saviour to give it; and as the advocate of his people he calls for

it, and requires it; and as he is truly and properly God, he has equal power to bestow it, and apply it as his father. The holy spirit, as he makes men sensible of their need of it, he shows it to them, and their interest in it; he sprinkles the blood of Christ upon their consciences, and declares them pardoned through it; he bears witness of the truth of it to them, and seals it up unto them; so that it is wholly of God.

Ver. 8. *And immediately, when Jesus perceived in his spirit, &c.*] *His own spirit*, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read; not his human soul, nor the holy spirit of God, though both may be said to be his spirit; but his divine nature, in and by which he knew all things, even the most sacred thoughts of men's hearts: and as soon as ever the above thoughts were conceived in the minds of the Scribes and Pharisees, they were perceived by him, and told to them, *that they so reasoned within themselves; he said unto them, why reason ye these things in your hearts?* thereby reproving them, not for reasoning and concluding in their own minds, that none but God can forgive sins; but for imputing blasphemy to him, for pronouncing this man's sins pardoned; he being God, as well as man, of which his knowing the thoughts and reasonings of their minds might have been a convincing proof.

Ver. 9. *Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, &c.*] This question was put to them by Christ, in order to prove his deity, and clear himself from the charge of blasphemy; for he that could cure the sick of the palsy, by a word speaking, had power to forgive him his sins: and therefore proposes it to them, which was easiest to say, *thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?* Both of them were easy to say, but not with power and effect: they were both instances of divine power, and proofs of deity; and only he that could do the one, could do the other, and the one was as easy to be performed, by a divine person, as the other: and though it may be hard to say which is the greatest instance of power, or the strongest proof of deity, to pardon a sinner, or to cure a paralytic by a word speaking; perhaps forgiveness of sin may be the greatest evidence of divine power and goodness; however, it is certain, it is a greater blessing to be pardoned, than to be cured of a palsy; yet curing of a palsy, in the manner in which Christ did it, was a more sensible proof of his deity to the Scribes and Pharisees, than pronouncing a man's sins forgiven; because this was visible, and could not be denied; whereas the other, though pronounced, they might question whether it had its effect: but by the one, which they would see done before their eyes, there would be left no room for them to doubt of the reality of the other; see the note on Matt. ix. 5.

Ver. 10. *But that ye may know that the son of man, &c.*] Meaning himself, who was really man, and the true Messiah, in which sense this phrase had been used in the writings of the Old Testament; see Psal. lxxx. 17. Dan. vii. 13. and though by reason of his outward form, and mean appearance, he might be thought by them to be but a mere man, and had no right, nor authority, to say what he had; in order to convince them; he affirms, that he *hath power on earth to forgive sins*.

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 30. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

As there is an emphasis lies on the phrase, *the son of man*, suggesting, that his being so was no contradiction to his deity, nor any hindrance to the exertion of his power; so there is another on those words, *upon earth*; intimating, that though he was upon earth, in a very low estate, in a state of humiliation, yet he had the same power to forgive sin as in heaven; his humbling himself in human nature did not strip him of his perfections, power, and prerogative as God: and if he had power on earth to forgive sin, there can be no room to doubt of it now he is in heaven; since as mediator, he is *exalted to be a prince, and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins*, Acts v. 31. And that it might appear he had such a power on earth, *he saith to the sick of the palsy*; turning to, and addressing him in the following words, with great majesty, authority, and power; see the note on Matt. ix. 6.

Ver. 11. *I say unto thee, arise, and take up thy bed, &c.*] He bid him, in an authoritative way to arise from his bed, in which he was brought, and on which he lay before him, and take it up upon his shoulders, directly, and in the face of all the people, carry it away: *and go thy way into thine house*; to shew himself whole to his family and friends, and go about his business; see the note on Matt. ix. 6.

Ver. 12. *And immediately he arose, &c.*] Power going along with the words of Christ, he found himself perfectly well; and at once sprung up from off his bed, and *took up his bed*, upon his shoulders, with all the ease imaginable: *and went forth before them all*: the Scribes and Pharisees, and the whole multitude of the people, who were eye-witnesses of this wonderful cure: *or against them all*; for being strong and robust, he made his way through the crowd, with his bed on his back; *insomuch that they were all amazed*; at the power of Christ, and the strength of the man: *and glorified God, saying, we never saw it on this fashion*; or anything like this in our days. They easily perceived it was a preternatural action, and what could never be done by any mere man; they therefore attribute it to God, and give him the glory of it; they celebrated the perfections of God, particularly his power, and his goodness, which were very visible in this instance; they praised him and his works, and gave thanks to him for this wonderful cure, which was wrought; and that he had given such power to Christ, who they looked upon to be but a man; though they might have concluded from hence that he was God, to perform such mighty works: and these that glorified God, and expressed their thankfulness for this instance of his kindness to men, were not the Scribes and Pharisees, who had charged Christ with blasphemy; for the miracles of Christ rarely, if ever, had such an effect upon them, as to acknowledge that they were from God, and that Christ performed them by a divine power, but rather by a diabolical influence. We never read of their praising God, and glorifying him for any thing that was done by Christ; but generally went away, after a miracle, hardened, and full of spight and malice, going and consulting together how to take away his life. But these were the *multitude*, as Matthew says, who attended on the ministry of Christ, and followed him from place to place, and had a high opinion of him, as a great and good man; though they did not

believe in him as the Messiah, and did not know him to be the son of God; see the note on Matt. ix. 8.

Ver. 13. *And he went forth again by the sea-side, &c.*] The sea of Galilee, where he had met with, and called Peter and Andrew, James and John; and not far from which were the solitary place, and the desert places, where he was before he entered into Capernaum: *and all the multitude resorted unto him*: who had been with him at Peter's house, and about the door, and those who could not get near him: *and he taught them*; the word of God, the Gospel, and the doctrines of it.

Ver. 14. *And as he passed by, &c.*] As he went from Simon's house, and from the city of Capernaum, to go to the sea-side: *he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus*; the same with Matthew, Matt. ix. 9. and son to the same Alphaeus as James was, Matt. x. 3. Beza's most ancient copy reads *James*, instead of *Levi*, very wrongly; but he was the brother of James, and also of Simon and Jude; so that there were four brothers of them apostles: and if *Joses*, called Barsabas, was the same *Joses* that was brother to these, as seems probable, a fifth was put up for an apostle, though the lot fell on Matthias. James, and *Joses*, and Simon, and Jude, are mentioned together, Matt. xiii. 55. because they lived together, and were men of religion and seriousness, and known by their neighbours; but Matthew, or Levi, is not mentioned: it is thought, by some, probable, that he was a loose, extravagant young man, and so might depart from his father's family, and enter into this scandalous employment of a publican; and herein went contrary to his father's will, Cleophas, or Alphaeus, who was the husband of the sister of Mary, the mother of our Lord: *sitting at the receipt of custom*; the toll-booth, or custom-house, where he sat to take toll of passengers that came, or went in ships or boats, The Syriac version renders it, *sitting among the toll-gatherers*; and the Persic, *among publicans*; not only signifying the business in which he was, but the company he was among: which makes the grace of Christ the more illustrious and distinguishing, in looking upon him, and calling him: *and said unto him, follow me*; and he arose, and followed him. Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep, who came to seek, in order to save that which was lost, was now locking up his lost sheep; and Matthew, or Levi, being one of them, he finds him, and calls him by his grace. Christ is always first with his people; he first seeks them, and then they seek him; he first finds them, and then they find him; yea, he is found of them that sought him not. Levi took no notice of him, inquired not about him, and had no thought of leaving his employ; and going after him, but Christ knew him: his eye was upon him as he passed by him, and his time was a time of love, and so a time of life; he looked upon him, and said unto him, live; quickening power went along with his words, and he arose, and left all, and followed him: Christ, as the good shepherd, went before; and Levi, through the grace that was now given him, as one of his sheep, heard and knew his voice, and, without the least hesitation or reluctance, quitted his business, and became a follower of him. How powerful is efficacious grace! what is it, it cannot do! it turns the heart of a sinner at once, inclines it to Christ, and causes it to leave all for his sake; it at

once fills the soul with love to Christ, faith in him, and obedience to him; it works powerfully, and yet freely; it always obtains, and effects what it designs, yet puts no force upon the will: Levi, under the drawings of divine grace, followed Christ most willingly and cheerfully; see the note on Matt. ix. 9.

Ver. 15. *And it came to pass, that as Jesus sat at meat in his house, &c.*] In the house of Levi; not in the custom-house, or toll-booth, for that he left; but in his house in the city of Capernaum, where he had him, and made an entertainment for him, in token of gratitude, for the high favour bestowed on him: *many publicans and sinners sat also together, with Jesus, and his disciples*; being invited by Levi, and not objected to by Christ; see the note on Matt. ix. 10. *for there were many, and they followed him*: either Christ whom they had observed to have called Matthew, and had heard preach by the sea-side; or else Matthew; and so the Persic version renders it, *for many followed Matthew*. The Ethiopic version reads the words, *and they were many*, that is, publicans and sinners, *and the Scribes and Pharisees followed him*; mentioned in the next verre, from whence it seems to be taken; though true it is, that not only a large number of publicans and sinners followed Christ, but also many of the Scribes and Pharisees; yet with a different view from the former, not to get any advantage to themselves, but, if they could, an advantage against Christ.

Ver. 16. *And when the Scribes and Pharisees saw him eat, &c.*] They were offended at his eating and drinking, though it was in moderation; because he did not fast as they, and their disciples did; and especially, that he eat *with publicans and sinners*; men of very infamous characters, and bad lives, with whom the Pharisees disdained to keep company: *they said unto his disciples, how is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?* The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, *your master*, as in Matt. ix. 11. see the note there; so some Greek copies here.

Ver. 17. *When Jesus heard it, he saith to them, &c.*] Christ either overheard what they said to his disciples, or he heard it from the relation of the disciples; and when he did, he turned to the Scribes and Pharisees, and spoke to them the following words: *they that are whole, have no need of the physician, but they that are sick*; which seems to be a proverbial expression, signifying that he was a physician; that these publicans and sinners were sick persons, and needed his company and assistance; but that they, the Scribes and Pharisees, were whole, and in good health, in their own esteem, and so wanted no relief; and therefore ought not to take it amiss, that he attended the one, and not the other. These words give a general view of mankind, in their different sentiments of themselves and of Christ; and of the usefulness of Christ to one sort, and not another. There are some that cry up the power of man's free-will, and plead for the strength and purity of human nature, and extol its excellencies and abilities; and it is no wonder that these see no need of Christ, either for themselves or others: hence preachers of this complexion leave Christ out of their ministry for the most part; and generally speaking, lessen the glory and dignity of his person, depreciate his offices, reject his righteousness, and deny his satisfac-

tion and atonement: and such reckon themselves the favourites of heaven, and are ready to say, whom shall God delight to honour, but us, who are so pure and holy? they therefore trust in their own righteousness, and despise others, and submit not to the righteousness of Christ; they make their own works their saviours, and so neglect the great salvation by Christ. There are others that are sick, and are quite sick of themselves; they see the impurity of their nature, how unsound and unhealthful they are; that from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, there is no soundness in them, nothing but wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores: their loins are filled with the loathsome disease of sin; they are sensible of their inability to cure themselves, and that no mere creature can help them; and that all besides Christ, are physicians of no value: and therefore they apply to him, whose blood is a balm for every wound, and a medicine for every sickness and disease, and which cleanses from all sin: and whereas such, and such only, see their need of Christ as a physician, these only does he attend under this character; see the note on Matt. ix. 12. Adding this as a reason, *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*. These words explain, what is more obscurely and figuratively expressed in the former; it appears from hence, that by *the whole* are meant, *righteous* persons; not such who are made righteous, by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, but such who were outwardly righteous before men, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, depended on their own righteousness, and fancied themselves, with respect to the righteousness of the law, blameless; and so, in their own apprehensions, stood in no need of Christ and his righteousness: yea, even needed not repentance, according to their own thoughts of things, and therefore were not called to it, but were left to their own stupidity and blindness; these were the Scribes and Pharisees; and by the *sick*, are meant *sinners*: such who are made sensible of sin, and so of their need of Christ as a Saviour; and who have evangelical repentance given them, and are called to the exercise and profession of it: and Christ's calling sinners to repentance, and bestowing that grace, together with the remission of sins, which goes along with it, is doing his work and office as a *physician*. This evangelist makes no mention of the passage in Hos. vi. 6. with which these words are introduced in Matthew. The last words, *to repentance*, are omitted by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and are wanting in some ancient copies; but are retained in the Arabic version, and in most copies, as in Matt. ix. 13. see the note there.

Ver. 18. *And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast, &c.*] *Or were fasting*; perhaps that very day, and so were the more displeas'd at this entertainment, Matthew had made for Christ and his disciples, and at their being at it; or fasting was usual with them: they fasted often, both John's disciples, and the disciples of the Pharisees, or the Pharisees themselves; so the Vulgate Latin reads: of their frequent fasting, see the note on Matt. ix. 14. *and they came*: both the disciples of John, Matt. ix. 14. and the Scribes and Pharisees, Luke v. 30, 33. *and say unto him, why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees*

*fast, but thy disciples fast not?* see the note on Matt. ix. 14.

Ver. 19. *And Jesus said unto them, &c.*] Both to John's disciples and the Pharisees, *can the children of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?* Suggesting that he was the bridegroom, as John their master had called him, John iii. 29. and that his disciples were the children of the bride-chamber; and that it was very unsuitable for them, and very unreasonable to desire them to fast at such a time, and under such a character: wherefore the answer returned by Christ himself to the question is, *as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast*: all which the Syriac version expresses by  $\aleph$ , *no*: see the note on Matt. ix. 15.

Ver. 20. *But the days will come, &c.*] As they were in some sense now come to the disciples of John, their master being taken up by Herod, and confined in prison, and so it was a mourning time with them: *when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days*: referring to the time of the sufferings and death of Christ, which would be, and was a sorrowful season to his disciples.

Ver. 21. *No man also seweth a piece of new cloth, &c.*] The traditions of the elders are meant, particularly concerning eating and drinking, and fasting, things before spoken of; and which occasioned this parable, and which were new things in comparison of the commands of God: some of them were of very short standing, devised in that age; and most, if not all of them, were since the times of Ezra. *On an old garment*; the moral and ceremonial righteousness of the Jews, in obedience to the law of God; signifying, that the former were not to be joined with these, to make up a justifying righteousness before God; which were not sufficient for such a purpose, either singly, or both together: *else the new piece that filled it up, taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse*: for by attendance to the traditions of the elders, the Jews were taken off from, and neglected the commandments of God; nay, oftentimes the commands of God were made void by these traditions, so that the old garment of their own righteousness, which was very ragged and imperfect of itself, instead of being purer and more perfect, became much the worse, even for the purpose for which it was intended; see the note on Matt. ix. 16.

Ver. 22. *And no man putteth new wine into old bottles, &c.*] By *old bottles* are meant, the Scribes and Pharisees, the whole, which needed not a physician, and the righteous, Christ came not to call; and by *new wine*, either the love of God, which is not shed abroad in the hearts of such persons; or the blessings of the new covenant, which are not bestowed upon them; or the Gospel, which brings an account of both, which is not received by carnal men: *else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred*: the Gospel will only fill them with rage and fury, and they will despise it, and let it go; which will be an aggravation of their sin and misery, and so will prove the savour of death unto death unto them: *but new wine must be put into new bottles*; into the hearts of sinners, who are called to repentance, and are renewed in the spirit of their minds; are new-

born babes, that desire the sincere milk of the word, and wine of the Gospel; in these the love of God is exceeding abundant, and it comes in with full flows into their souls; all grace is made to abound towards them, and the word of Christ richly dwells in them; in whom these things remain and abide, and they themselves are saved with an everlasting salvation; see the note on Matt. ix. 17.

Ver. 23. *And it came to pass, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin adds, *again*; and so Beza says it was read in one of his copies: *that he went through the corn-fields on the sabbath-day, and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn*; and to rub them, and get the grain out of them, and eat them; see the note on Matt. xii. 1.

Ver. 24. *And the Pharisees said unto him, &c.*] To Christ, the same they said to his disciples, Luke vi. 2. *Behold, why do they on the sabbath-day, that which is not lawful?* see how they pluck the ears of corn and rub them, and eat things, which by the law, especially by the traditions of the elders, were not lawful to be done on the sabbath-day; see the note on Matt. xii. 2.

Ver. 25. *And he said unto them, &c.*] By way of answer to their question, and which was a full one, and enough to silence them: *have ye never read what David did*: referring to the history in 1 Sam. xxi. *when he had need*: of bread, was in great necessity, and in the utmost distress: *and was an hungered, he, and they that were with him?* which was a justifiable reason for what he and his company did; as it was for the action of the disciples; being in a like case, and therefore very apposite to the purpose; see the note on Matt. xii. 3.

Ver. 26. *How he went into the house of God, &c.*] The tabernacle; for the temple was not yet built: thither David went to get bread for himself and his men, being hungry: so in a spiritual sense, where should such go, who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness, but into the house of God? Here's bread enough, and to spare; here is a table furnished with excellent provisions; here the Gospel is dispensed, which is milk for babes, and meat for strong men; here Christ, the bread of life, is set forth, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed; here the ordinances are administered, which are breasts of consolation to the children of God; here is a feast of fat things, all things are ready, and souls are welcome, and therefore it must be right to attend here. And this was on the sabbath-day that David went into the house of God: when the shew-bread loaves were removed, and divided among the priests, and new ones were placed in their room: and so under the Gospel dispensation, on the Lord's day, the day set apart for public worship, it becomes the saints to go up to the house of the Lord, and feed upon the provisions of it: they are a royal priesthood, they are priests, as well as kings to God; and their business is in the house of the Lord, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to him; and as the goodness and fulness of his house appertains to them, they do well to attend and partake thereof. *In the days of Abiathar the high-priest*; and yet from the history it is clear, that it was in the days of Ahimelech the high-priest, the father of Abiathar; wherefore the Jew charges<sup>a</sup> Mark with an error, and

<sup>a</sup> R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 28. p. 419.

Matthew and Luke too: whereas the two last make no mention of the name of any high-priest; and it might be observed, that in the Persic version of Mark it is rendered, *under Ahimelech the high-priest*; and in an ancient copy of Beza's, the whole clause is omitted; though it must be owned, that so it is read in other Greek copies, and in the ancient versions, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and others: wherefore let it be further observed, that the fact referred to was done in the days of Abiathar, though it was before he was an high-priest; and the participle *ἦν* may be so rendered, about, or *before Abiathar was high-priest*, as it is in Matt. i. 11. Besides, Abiathar was the son of an high-priest, and succeeded his father in the office: and might be at this time his deputy, who acted for him, or he by his advice; and according to a rule the Jews themselves give, "the son of an high-priest, who is deputed by his father in his stead, דורי כזו נדול אומר, *lo! he is called an high-priest.*" So that Abiathar might at this time be called the high-priest; and is the rather mentioned, because he was the more eminent and famous man; and whom the Jews call <sup>m</sup> Urim and Thummim, because there was much inquiry made by them; in his and his father's days, and very little after: to which may be added, that the names of the father and the son are sometimes changed; Ahimelech is called Abiathar, and this Abiathar is called Ahimelech, the son of Abiathar, 2 Sam. viii. 17. and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, 1 Chron. xviii. 16. And it seems as if both father and son had two names, and were sometimes called by the one, and sometimes by the other: for as the father is sometimes called Abiathar, the son is called Ahimelech, or Ahimelech, as in the places mentioned; and which refer to the times when David was king of Israel, and long after the death of Saul, and consequently long after Ahimelech, and the rest of the priests at Nob, were killed by the order of Saul: wherefore Ahimelech, or Ahimelech, in the said places, must be the son of Abiathar; and who afterwards was thrust out of the priesthood by Solomon, for joining with Adonijah in his usurpation, 1 Kings i. 25. and ii. 26. And from whence it appears, that his father was called Abiathar also, and which some take to be their family name; and if so, then there is no difficulty, and the evangelist rightly says, that this affair was in the days of Abiathar: but be it that he intends the son, what has been before observed is a sufficient solution of this difficulty; for the evangelist does not say that Abiathar was high-priest, when David came and eat the shew-bread; he only says, *it was in the days of Abiathar the high-priest*: for certain it is, that this happened in his days; and as certain, that he was an high-priest; and Mark might with great propriety call him so, though he was not strictly one, till after this business was over: besides, he was not only the son of an high-priest, and it may be his deputy, and some have thought officiated at this time, his father being sick or infirm through old age; but inasmuch as his father was directly killed by the order of Saul, he narrowly escaping, immediately succeeded

him in the office of the high-priesthood; and therefore his being an high-priest so very near the time of this action, without any impropriety and impertinence, and especially without incurring the charge of falsehood, the evangelist might express himself as he does. *And did eat the shew-bread, which is not lawful to eat, but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?* Who not only ate the shew-bread, which was set before the Lord, and was sacred, and which none but the priests might eat of, after it was removed from the table; but he did this on the sabbath-day; and he not only eat of it himself, but the soldiers that were with him: and all this with the knowledge and leave of the high-priest: for the Jews<sup>n</sup> have no reason to charge this evangelist and the others with an error, that others besides David ate of the shew-bread, urging that he came alone to Ahimelech; since it is evident from 1 Sam. xxi. 2, 4, 5. that David had servants in company with him when he fled, though they did not attend him when he went to the high-priest; and that he asked bread, and it was given him, not only for himself, but for the young men that he had appointed to be at such a place: and therefore, if this was allowed to David and his men, when hungry, it ought not to be charged as an evil upon the disciples, for plucking and rubbing a few ears of corn to satisfy their hunger, though on a sabbath-day; and especially when he, who was Lord of the sabbath, was present, and admitted of it; see the note on Matt. xii. 4.

Ver. 27. *And he said unto them, &c.*] Continuing his answer to them, and adding, in confirmation of what he had said, and for the further vindication of his disciples, *the sabbath was made for man*; for his good, and not for his hurt; both for the good of his soul, that he might have an opportunity of attending divine worship, both in public and private; and for the good of his body, that he might have rest from his labour; and this was the end of the original institution and appointment of it; and therefore works of necessity are not forbidden on this day; such as are for the necessary comfort, support, and preservation of life; or otherwise it would be apparent, that the sabbath was not appointed for the good, but for the hurt of men. By *man*, is not meant all mankind; for the sabbath was never appointed for all mankind, nor binding upon all; only the Jews, who are emphatically called *man*, or *men*; see Ezek. xxxiv. 30, 31. upon which the Jewish writers remark<sup>o</sup>, that "they are called, אדם, *man*; but the idolatrous Gentiles, and nations of the world, are not called *men*;" but dogs, beasts, &c. Our Lord may here be thought to speak in their language, as he does in Matt. xv. 26. see the note there. And that the observation of the seventh day, was only designed for the children of Israel, seems manifest from Exod. xxxi. 16, 17. *wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant; it is a sign between me and the children of*

<sup>1</sup> Siphra, fol. 17. 2. apud Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, par. 2. p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 16. 2.

<sup>n</sup> R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 28. p. 420. Jacob Aben Amram apud Kidder, Demonstr. of the Messiah, par. 3. p. 48.

<sup>o</sup> T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 114. 2. Zohar in Exod. fol. 35. 4.

*Israel*; and not between him and the rest of the world: and in ver. 14. *ye shall keep the sabbath, for it is holy unto you*: on which the Jews<sup>p</sup> make this remark, *לכב ולא לשאר עממי*, to you, and not to the rest of the nations: nor did they ever think that the Gentiles were obliged to observe their sabbath, only such who became proselytes to their religion; even those who were proselytes of righteousness: for a proselyte of the gate, was not bound to observe it; for so says<sup>q</sup> Maimonides, “those who take upon them the seven commandments of Noah only, lo! they are as a proselyte of the gate, and they are free to do work on the sabbath-day for themselves, openly, as an Israelite on a common day.” Yea, they not only say, they were not obliged to keep the sabbath, but that it was not lawful for them to observe it; and that it was even punishable with death for them to regard it; for so they say<sup>r</sup>, “a Gentile

“that keeps the sabbath before he is circumcised, is guilty of death, because it is not commanded him.” They judged them unworthy of having this precept enjoined them, as being not men, but beasts, and worse than they, and had not the privilege the ass has: hence one of their commentators<sup>s</sup> says, “concerning the rest of an ass, thou (O Israelite!) art commanded; but concerning the rest of a Gentile, thou art not commanded.” *And not man for the sabbath*; who was in being long before that was appointed and enjoined.

Ver. 28. *Therefore the son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.*] Meaning himself, who had a power not only to dispense with it, but to abrogate it as he did, with the rest of the rituals of the ceremonial law; see the note on Matt. xii. 8. So that it did not become them to find fault with what his disciples did, with his leave and approbation.

## C H A P. III.

Ver. 1. *AND he entered again into the synagogue, &c.*] Perhaps in Capernaum, where he had before cast out the unclean spirit; but not on the same day, nor on that day he had had the debate with the Pharisees, about his disciples plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath-day; but on another sabbath, perhaps the next; see Luke vi. 6. *And there was a man there which had a withered hand*; who came there either for a cure, knowing Christ to be in the synagogue, or for the sake of worship; see the note on Matt. xii. 10.

Ver. 2. *And they watched him, &c.*] The ruler of the synagogue, and the principal men in it; particularly the Scribes and Pharisees, who followed him wherever he went; they observed him diligently, and kept their eyes upon him; this lame man being in the synagogue, to see whether he would heal him on the sabbath-day; which, knowing his readiness to do good, they might expect he would: that they might accuse him; as they had accused his disciples before, of the violation of the sabbath: according to the Evangelist Matthew, they put a question to him, whether it was lawful to heal on the sabbath-day? with this view, that they might, one way or another, have something to accuse him of, either to the people, or to the sanhedrim; see the note on Matt. xii. 10.

Ver. 3. *And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, &c.*] After he had reasoned with them from the lesser to the greater, upon their own principles and practices, in relieving and taking out a sheep fallen into a ditch, on a sabbath-day, Matt. xii. 10, 11. and knowing their thoughts, as Luke says, ch. vi. 8. their reasonings and designs; and as the Persic version here, from thence *understanding their conspiracy*, turns himself to the lame man, and bids him stand forth: or, as in Luke, *rise up and stand forth in the midst*. He bid him rise up from his seat,

and stand forth in the midst of the synagogue: this he said, partly to raise the attention of the people to the following miracle; and partly to move commiseration upon the sight of the object; and to aggravate the hard-heartedness of the Pharisees; as also, that it might be manifest to all, that the man's hand was really withered; and that there was no fraud in the following cure.

Ver. 4. *And he saith unto them, &c.*] Either to the whole multitude, to all the assembly in the synagogue; and so the Persic version renders it, *again he said to the multitude*; or rather, to the Scribes and Pharisees, who were watching him, and had put a question to him, which he answers by another: *is it lawful to do good on the sabbath-days, or to do evil, to save life, or to kill?* The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read, *or to destroy*, as in Luke vi. 9. To do evil, kill, or destroy, are not lawful at any time; and to do good, and to save life, must be right at all times: our Lord has a particular view to the Scribes and Pharisees, and the question is put home to their own consciences; whose hearts and thoughts, designs and views, were all open to Christ; and who were now watching to do evil to him, and even to destroy and take away his life: for the violation of the sabbath was death by the law, and this was what they sought to accuse him of: now he puts the question to them, and makes them judges which must appear most right and just in the sight of God and men, for him to heal this poor man of his withered hand, though on the sabbath-day; which would be doing a good and beneficent action to him, whereby his life would be saved, and preserved with comfort and usefulness, and he would be in a capacity of getting his livelihood; or for them to cherish an evil intention against him, to seek to bring mischief on him; and not only destroy his character and usefulness as much as

<sup>p</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 26. 4.<sup>q</sup> Hicbot Sabbat, c. 20. sect. 14.

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>r</sup> Debarim Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 234. 4.<sup>s</sup> Bartenora in Misn. Sabbat, c. 24. sect. 1.

in them lay, but even take away his very life also: he leaves it with them to consider of, which was most agreeable to the law of God, the nature of a sabbath, and the good of mankind; *but they held their peace; or were silent*, not being able to return an answer, but what must have been in his favour, and to their own confusion, and therefore chose to say nothing.

Ver. 5. *And when he had looked round about on them, &c.*] In the several parts of the synagogue; for there were many of them on every side of him; which he might do, to observe their countenances, which might justly fall, upon such a close question put to them, and what answer they would return to him: and his look upon them was *with anger*, with a stern countenance, which shewed indignation at them, though without sin, or any desire of revenge, for the evil they were meditating against him; for at the same time he had pity and compassion for them, *being grieved for the hardness of their hearts: or the blindness of their hearts*, as the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it; being troubled in his human soul, both at their inhumanity and cruelty to a miserable object, whose cure, in their opinion, would have been a breach of the sabbath; and to himself, having a malicious design against him, should he perform it; and at their stupidity and ignorance of the law of God, the nature and design of the sabbath, and of their duty to God, and their fellow-creatures: wherefore as one not to be intimidated by their evil designs against him, or prevented thereby from doing good, *he saith unto the man, stretch forth thine hand; that is, the lame one; and such power went along with his words, as at once effected a cure: and he stretched it out, and his hand was restored whole as the other.* This last clause, *whole as the other*, is not in the Vulgate Latin, nor in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; and may be added from Matt. xii. 13. see the note there; since it is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in Beza's most ancient copy, and in others.

Ver. 6. *And the Pharisees went forth, &c.*] Out of the synagogue, being dreadfully galled with the reasonings of Christ, at the silence and confusion they were put to, and with the miracle he wrought, to the exposing of them, and establishing his own credit: *and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him*; see the note on Matt. xxii. 16. *How they might destroy him*: persisting still in their evil intentions, though Christ had so fully and clearly exposed the wickedness of them: and it is to be observed, that those men who thought it was not lawful to heal a lame man on the sabbath-day, yet make no scruple of meeting and consulting together on that day, and even with profane men, what measures and methods were best to take, to destroy the life of an innocent person.

Ver. 7. *But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea, &c.*] Knowing their evil designs against him, he departed out of the synagogue, and city of Capernaum; and taking his disciples with him, he

went to the shore of the sea of Galilee; not out of fear, but because his time was not yet come, and he had more work to do: *and a great multitude from Galilee*; from the several parts of it, in which country he now was: *and from Judea*; that part of the land of Israel, which was particularly so called, and belonged to the tribe of Judah.

Ver. 8. *And from Jerusalem, &c.*] The metropolis of the country of Judea; *and from Idumea, or Edom*, as the Syriac version reads it; a country that lay on the south of Judea, formerly inhabited by the sons of Edom, but now by Jews; or at least the inhabitants of it were proselytes to the Jewish religion. Mention is made of the plains of Idumea, along with Gazera, Azotus, and Jamnia, in 1 Maccab. iv. 15. Pliny<sup>1</sup> speaks of Idumea and Judea together, as a part of Syria; and Ptolemy says<sup>2</sup>, this country lies on the west of the river Jordan; and it is here added, *and from beyond Jordan*; the country of Peræa, on the east of Jordan: *and they about Tyre and Sidon*; either the inhabitants of these places, as the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions favour, reading *a great company from Tyre and Sidon*; or those that lived near the borders, and upon the confines of these cities of Phœnicia: *a great multitude*; when all met together, from these several parts; *who when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him*: for his fame went through all the countries, for the miracles he wrought; which drew this vast concourse of people after him; and who, inquiring where he was, came to him at the sea of Galilee.

Ver. 9. *And he spake unto his disciples, &c.*] In an authoritative way; he ordered and commanded them, *that a small ship should wait on him*: that a boat should be got ready, be near at hand, and attend him, who was on shore; that he might go into it, should there be any occasion for it; and from thence preach to the people: *because of the multitude*; which came from the above parts, and all together made a very numerous body of people: *lest they should throng him*; crowd, press, afflict, and distress, and make him uneasy, that he could not be able to stand conveniently, and preach to them: so that should this be the case, as it was very likely it would, having a small vessel near the shore, he could go into it, and free himself from such an inconvenience.

Ver. 10. *For he had healed many, &c.*] Of various diseases, and the fame of this brought more still to him: *insomuch that they pressed upon him*; or *pushed upon him*, with great eagerness and violence. The Arabic version renders it, *they rushed upon him, so that they fell*: they pushed on, and pressed so hard to get to him, that they fell upon one another, and on him: the Persic version renders it, *they cast themselves on him, for the sake of touching him*; which must be very troublesome indeed. Though some think the phrase signifies no more, than that they fell down before him at his feet, in a submissive and petitionary way, entreating they might have the favour *for to touch him*; either any part of his body, or his garments, even the hem of them: and so the Ethiopic version translates

<sup>1</sup> Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Geograph. l. 5. c. 16:



the words; *they prayed him that they might touch him*; see ch. vi. 56. *As many as had plagues*: of leprosy, and other diseases, which were inflicted on them by God, as scourges and chastisements for their sins, as the word signifies, and which answers to נגעים, *Negaim*; concerning which, there is a whole treatise in the Misna; and which bears that name, and particularly regards the plagues of leprosy. Some versions join this with the beginning of the next verse. The Syriac version reads thus, *who had plagues of unclean spirits*; as if these plagues were their being possessed by unclean spirits. The Persic version thus, *having plagues from unclean spirits*: as if these plagues were inflicted upon them by them, and which was sometimes the case. The Arabic version after this manner, *who had diseases and unclean spirits*; both the one and the other.

Ver. 11. *And unclean spirits, when they saw him, &c.*] That is, as the Syriac and Arabic versions read, *they who had unclean spirits*; or, as the Ethiopic, *they that were possessed with unclean spirits*; as soon as ever they beheld Christ, though they had never seen him before, and he was an entire stranger to them, yet *fell down before him*: the unclean spirits being said to do that, which they that were possessed with them did; and which, notwithstanding their possession of them, they could not prevent, but were obliged to admit of it, as a token of their subjection to Christ: *and even the devils themselves in the men, cried, saying, thou art the son of God*; a divine person, equal with God; and such his power over them, and his healing all manner of diseases, by a word, or touch, shewed him to be.

Ver. 12. *And he straitly charged them, &c.*] Or vehemently rebuked them, as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; or threatened them much and vehemently, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic. The Persic version renders it, *threatened many*: both the devils that confessed him, and the many that were healed of their diseases: he gave them a strict and severe charge, *that they should not make him known*; or *his work*, as the Arabic, his miracles: he sought not vain glory and popular applause, nor did he need the testimony of men or devils; and especially did not choose the latter, lest his enemies should traduce him, as having familiarity with them, as they did.

Ver. 13. *And he goeth up into a mountain, &c.*] Near Capernaum, being solitary, and a place of recess and retirement, *to pray*, as Luke says, ch. vi. 12. who adds, *and continued all night in prayer to God*, notwithstanding the great fatigue of the day past. His prayer, as is very probable, was chiefly concerning the great and important work, which was upon his mind, and he was about to do; the making and constituting twelve of his disciples, as his apostles, to preach in his name, and work miracles: *and calleth unto him whom he would*; that is, *when it was day*, as the above evangelist observes; when he called his disciples, such as had been for some time followers of him, as many of them as he thought fit: for it seems by the same evangelist, that others were called to him besides the twelve; and out of them he chose them: the phrase *whom he would*, is in the Arabic version

rendered, *whom he loved*; and it is a common observation of expositors, that the choice and call of the apostles to office, were not according to their will, works and merits, but according to the sovereign will and grace of Christ, who chose them, and not they him: but to me there seems no foundation for such a remark here, though it is a truth; because this regards not the call of the twelve only, and much less of them to office, but a call of many of the followers of Christ to come to him on the mountain: *and they came unto him*; as many as he called out of the multitude; and from among these he made the following choice.

Ver. 14. *And he ordained twelve, &c.*] Or made, constituted, and appointed twelve men, out of those he called to him. The Arabic version adds, *and called them apostles*; which seems to be taken out of Luke vi. 13. *That they should be with him*; constantly, in private and in public; be taken into his family, and reckoned such; be his familiars, and privy to all his affairs; hear all his discourses, and see his miracles; that so they might be trained up and fitted for the great work he designed them for: *and that he might send them forth to preach*; the Gospel in Judea first, and then in all the world: for he did not at this time send them to preach, only chose, called, and appointed them; and after they had been with him some time, and were better qualified for such service, he sent them forth, as in Matt. x. 1, 5. for this constitution of them was before that mission, and was in order to it.

Ver. 15. *And to have power to heal sicknesses, &c.*] All manner of corporeal diseases that attend men and women: *and to cast out devils*; from such who were possessed with them: that is, he chose and appointed them to be his apostles, with a view of conferring such powers upon them hereafter; for as yet, they were not vested with them, nor sent out to exercise them; no, not till near twelve months after.

Ver. 16. *And Simon he surnamed Peter.*] Or Cephas, which signifies a rock, or stone, because of his courage and constancy, his strength and fortitude, his steadiness and firmness of mind: this name was imposed upon him, not at the time of his mission as an apostle; nor when he made that noble confession of his faith in Christ, as the son of the living God, at which time this name was taken notice of; but when Christ first called him to be his disciple and apostle; see John i. 42.

Ver. 17. *And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James, &c.*] These are mentioned next, as being first called after Peter and Andrew: *and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, the sons of thunder*: either because of their loud and sonorous voice; or their warm zeal for Christ, and fervency in their ministry: or for their courage in opposing the enemies of Christ, and the power that went along with their words; which either put to confusion and silence, or issued in conviction and conversion. The Syriac version reads *Benai Regesh*. and the Persic, *Beni Rog'sch*. The Jews, as our learned countryman Mr. Broughton has observed\*, sometimes pronounce *Scheva* by oa, as *Noabym*, for *Nebyim*; so here, *Boanerges* for *Bene-*

\* Broughton's Requ. of Consent, in his Works, p. 620.

*reges*, or *Benerges*. There is a city which was in the tribe of Dan, mentioned in Josh. xix. 45. which is called *Bene-berak*, the sons of lightning; and is spoken of in the Jewish \* writings, as a place where several of the Rabbins met, and conversed together: the reason of this name may be inquired after.

Ver. 18. *And Andrew, &c.*] The brother of Peter; and Philip, who was of Bethsaida; and Bartholomew, whom Dr. Lightfoot thinks is the same with Nathaniel: the name may be the same with תלמיץ בר, *Bar Talmion*, with the Jews?; see the note on Matt. x. 3. and on John i. 41. and Matthew, the publican, who was called Levi; and Thomas, who was called Didymus, from his being a twin; and James, the son of Alphaeus, to distinguish him from the other James, the son of Zebedee, and who is sometimes called the less; and Thaddeus, whose name was also Lebbeus, and likewise Jude, the author of the Epistle that bears that name; and Simon the Canaanite, or Zelotes; of these men, and their several names, see the note on Matt. x. 2, 3, 4.

Ver. 19. *And Judas Iscariot, &c.*] So called to distinguish him from the other Judas; and is mentioned last for the following reason: *which also betrayed him*; and which action of his will ever render his name infamous among men. This man, with the rest, our Lord chose to be an apostle of his, though he knew he would betray him; in order to fulfil the purposes of God, the prophecies of the Old Testament, and bring on the work of man's redemption he came into the world to perform. *And they went into an house at Capernaum*; the house of Simon and Andrew, where Jesus used to be when there: they went home with him from the mountain; and from that time became his domestics, and were looked upon by him as his family, and were admitted to the greatest nearness and intimacy with him.

Ver. 20. *And the multitude coming together again, &c.*] Either the multitude that were about the door of this house; insomuch that there was no room about, nor any coming near it, ch. ii. 2. or the multitude that came from different parts, and had thronged about him at the sea-side, before he went up into the mountain: these understanding that he was come down from thence, and was returned to Capernaum, and was at Simon's house, flocked thither, in great numbers, to see his person, hear his doctrines, and observe his miracles; so that *they could not so much as eat bread*; the press was so great, and their importunities so urgent, either to hear him preach, or have their sick healed, that Christ, and his disciples, had neither room nor opportunity to eat some food for the refreshment of nature; though it was very necessary, and high time they had, especially Christ, who had been up all night, which he had spent in prayer; and had been very busy that morning in calling and appointing his apostles, and instructing them what they should do.

Ver. 21. *When his friends heard of it, &c.*] Not his spiritual friends, his disciples and followers, that believed in him; but *his kinsmen*, as the Syriac and

Ethiopic versions render the words, who were so according to the flesh; when they heard where he was, and what a crowd was about him, so that he could not so much as take the necessaries of life for his refreshment and support, *they went out to lay hold on him*: either out of their houses at Capernaum, or they went forth from Nazareth, where they dwelt, to Capernaum, to take him from this house, where he was thronged and pressed, along with them; where he might have some refreshment without being incommoded, and take some rest, which seemed very necessary: so that this was done in kindness to him, and does not design any violent action upon him, in order to take him home with them, and to confine him as a madman; though the following words seem to incline to such a sense; *for they said, he is beside himself*: some render it, *he is gone out*: that is, out of doors, to preach again to the people, which they might fear would be greatly detrimental to his health, since he had had no sleep the night before; had been much fatigued all that morning, and for the throng of the people could take no food; so that for this reason they came to take him with them, to their own habitations, to prevent the ill consequences of such constant exercise without refreshment. Moreover, though this may not be the sense of the word, yet it is not to be understood of downright madness and distraction, but of some perturbation of mind, which they imagined, or heard, he was under; and answers to a phrase frequently used by the Jews, that such an one, נטרפה דעתו, *his knowledge is snatched away*, or his mind is disturbed; which was sometimes occasioned by disorder of body: so it is said <sup>z</sup>, “a deaf woman, or one that is foolish, or blind, ונטרפה דעתה, or *whose mind is disturbed*; and if there are any wise women, they prepare themselves, and eat of the *“oblation.”* On that phrase, *whose mind is disturbed*, the note of Maimonides is, “it means a sick person, whose understanding is disturbed through the force *“of the disease.”* and was sometimes the case of a person when near death<sup>a</sup>: and it was usual to give a person that was condemned to die, and going to be executed, a grain of frankincense in a cup of wine, כרי שתטרף דעתו, *that so his knowledge may be snatched away*, or his mind disturbed<sup>b</sup>, and be intoxicated; that so he might not be sensible of his pain, or feel his misery; in all which cases, there was nothing of proper madness: and so the kinsmen and friends of Christ, having heard of the situation that he was in, said one to another, he is in a transport and excess of mind; his zeal carries him beyond due bounds; he has certainly forgotten himself; his understanding is disturbed; he is unmindful of himself; takes no care of his health; he will certainly greatly impair it, if he goes on at this rate, praying all night, and preaching all day, without taking any rest or food: wherefore they came out, in order to dissuade him from such excessive labours, and engage him to go with them, where he might have rest and refreshment, and be composed, and retire.

Ver. 22. *And the Scribes which came down from Jeru-*

\* Haggada Shel Pesach. p. 6. Ed. Rittangel. & in Seder Tephillot, Ed. Basil, fol. 243. 1. Juchasin, fol. 36. 1.  
 † Vajikra Rabba, sect. 6, fol. 151. 1.

<sup>z</sup> Mian. Nidda, c. 9. sect. 1.

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 69. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Ib. fol. 42. 1. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 10. fol. 190. 4.

salem, &c.] Or, *but the Scribes, &c.* who had an aversion to Christ, and a different opinion of him: these were they, who having heard much of the doctrine and miracles of Christ, came down from Jerusalem, which lay in the upper, and higher part of the land of Israel, into Galilee, a low country, to make their observations upon him; and take every advantage they could against him, being men, in their way, letter-learned, and artful, and cunning: these said, *he hath Beelzebub*; or, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it, *Beelzebub is in him*: sometimes they call him Beelzebub; sometimes say that he cast out devils by him; and here, that he had him, or was in him; Beelzebub possessed him, and assisted him, and there was a confederacy and familiarity between them: *and by the prince of devils casteth he out devils*; for so they reckoned Beelzebub to be; see the notes on Matt. x. 25, and xii. 24.

Ver. 23. *And he called them unto him, &c.*] The Jerusalem Scribes, to come nearer to him, and attend to what he had to say in defence of his character and miracles: *and said unto them in parables*; similitudes, and proverbial expressions, as the following seem to be, *how can Satan cast out Satan?* or one devil cast out another? how unreasonable is it to suppose it? can it ever be thought that such, whose interest it is to unite, would ever oppose and dispossess one another? if therefore, as if he should say, I am Beelzebub, or have him, and he is in me, and I am in confederacy with him; was this the case, can any think I should ever cast him out of others, as I do?

Ver. 24. *And if a kingdom be divided against itself, &c.*] Any of the kingdoms of this world, and the kingdom of Satan: *that kingdom cannot stand*: not long; its intestine broils and divisions will soon bring it to desolation; see the note on Matt. xii. 25.

Ver. 25. *And if a house be divided against itself, &c.*] Any family, small or great, *that house cannot stand*; its contentions and discords will soon bring it down from a comfortable and flourishing situation, to a very distressed one; see the note on Matt. xii. 25.

Ver. 26. *And if Satan rise up against himself, &c.*] As he must do in such a case as this, if devils are cast out by Beelzebub, the prince of devils: *and be divided*; one devil against another, as the above calumny supposes; *he cannot stand, but hath an end*: his kingdom can't stand long, but must soon come to an end; his power and authority will soon be destroyed, both over his own species, and among men; see the note on Matt. xii. 26.

Ver. 27. *No man can enter into a strong man's house, &c.*] This is properly a parable; the other seem to be proverbs, or sayings, that were commonly used to shew the ill consequences of discords, factions, and divisions, as is explained at large in the note on Matt. xii. 29. which see.

Ver. 28. *Verily I say unto you, &c.*] The Scribes and Pharisees, who had not only blasphemed him, but the spirit of God also: *all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme*; God, of the son of God, angels, and men; and that through the blood of Christ, and when brought to a sense of the evil of them; for though

pardon is procured before, it is not applied till then; see the note on Matt. xii. 31.

Ver. 29. *But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, &c.*] Against his person, and the works performed by him, by ascribing them to diabolical power and influence, as the Scribes did, *hath never forgiveness*: there is no pardon provided in the covenant of grace, nor obtained by the blood of Christ for such persons, or ever applied to them by the spirit; *but is in danger of eternal damnation*. The Vulgate Latin reads it, and so it is read in an ancient copy of Beza's, *guilty of an eternal sin*; a sin which can never be blotted out, and will never be forgiven, but will be punished with everlasting destruction; see the note on Matt. xii. 32.

Ver. 30. *Because they said, he hath an unclean spirit.*] They charged Christ with having a devil, and his miracles with being wrought by the help of the devil; when, at the same time, they knew in their own consciences they were works which were wrought by the finger and spirit of God, and so were guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost; the unpardonable sin, for which there is no remission: and this is mentioned as a reason why our Lord said what he did concerning that sin; because they had been guilty of it, and so were liable to everlasting punishment on account of it.

Ver. 31. *There came then his brethren and his mother, &c.*] At the same time he was speaking to the Scribes, who seem to be different persons from his friends and kinsmen, ver. 21. *and standing without*; for Christ was within, in the house, talking with the Scribes and Pharisees, and preaching to the people; and the crowd being so great, that they could not get into the house; *they sent unto him, calling him*: they not only sent one in to let him know who they were, and that they were without doors, desirous to speak with him; but also, with a voice as loud as they could, called to him themselves; see the note on Matt. xii. 46.

Ver. 32. *And the multitude sat about him, &c.*] In a circle, all around him, to hear him preach; so that there was no such thing as the messenger coming near him; but the message being whispered from one to another, it came to those who sat nearest him: *and they said unto him, behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee*: in five of Beza's ancient copies, and in his most ancient one, are added, *and thy sisters*: agreeably, Christ hereafter makes mention of sister, as well as mother and brother; see the note on Matt. xii. 47. and so it is read in the Alexandrian copy.

Ver. 33. *And he answered them, &c.*] The multitude that sat about him, and informed him of his mother and brethren being without, and desirous of speaking with him: *saying, who is my mother, or my brethren?* which is said not through ignorance or contempt; but either, as displeased with the interruption given him; or with a view to take an opportunity from hence of expressing his superior value to his spiritual relations; which looks with no favourable aspect on the superstitious notions, and veneration of the virgin Mary among the papists; see the note on Matt. xii. 48.

Ver. 34. *And he looked round about on them which sat about him, &c.*] To find out his disciples among them, and point them out particularly, by stretching forth his hand towards them: *and said, behold my mother and my brethren;* not in a natural, but in a spiritual sense; his mother, because, in regeneration, he was formed in them; his brethren, because, by adoption, his God was their God, his father their father; see the note on Matt. xii. 49.

Ver. 35. *For whosoever shall do the will of God, &c.*] By believing in Christ, receiving him as a Saviour and Redeemer, and submitting to him in all

his ordinances, as King of saints: *the same is my brother, and my sister, and my mother:* such are openly, and manifestively related to Christ in a spiritual sense; and are as dear to him, and more so, than such persons are who stand in such a relation to others, or did to him according to the flesh. And this shews not only the near relation, and strong affection which Christ has for his people, but that he is not ashamed of them; and it may be concluded, that he will resent, in the keenest manner, every injury that is done them; see the note on Matt. xii. 50.

#### CH A P. IV.

Ver 1. *AND he began again to teach by the sea-side, &c.*] He went out of the house where he was at Capernaum, the same day he had the above discourse with the Scribes and Pharisees, and on which his mother and brethren came to speak with him; and from thence he went where he had been before, and taught the people; namely, to the sea-side, the shore of the sea of Galilee, or Tiberias: *and there was gathered unto him a great multitude;* which followed him from the house, and from other parts of the city, and perhaps from the adjacent places: *so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea;* in the ship at sea, at some little distance from the shore; the sea of Tiberias being rather a lake, and within land, had no tide, and so was still and quiet: *and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land;* stood on the land, all along the sea-shore; see the notes on Matt. xiii. 1, 2.

Ver. 2. *And he taught them many things by parables, &c.*] As he sat in the ship, and they stood on shore; *and said unto them in his doctrine;* as he was teaching them, and delivering unto them the doctrine he had received from his father: though the Jews say<sup>c</sup>, that "the Israelites will have no need ליתלמדו של מלך משיח, of the doctrine of the king Messiah, in the "time to come; because it is said, unto him shall the "Gentiles seek, and not the Israelites." But it appears from hence, and many other places, that the Israelites both stood in need of his doctrine, and sought after it; and very excellent it was; the doctrine of God, and of the grace of God; and was spoken with authority, and in such a manner as never man spake, and which he delivered to his apostles; and which, if ministers bring not with them, should not be bid God speed.

Ver. 3. *Hearken, behold, there went out a sower to sow.*] By whom is meant Jesus Christ, who came forth from God as a teacher, and went out into the land of Judea to preach the Gospel, which is sowing spiritual things among men; and this may be also applicable to any faithful minister of the word.

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass, as he sowed, &c.*] Whilst he was preaching the Gospel, casting about the precious seed of the word, he was laden with: *some fell by the way-side;* the common beaten path: the word was dispensed among some men comparable

to it, on whom it lighted, but made no impression; there it lay, though not long, and was not inwardly received, and took no root, and consequently was of no effect: *and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up;* the devils, who have their abode in the air, especially the prince of the posse of them; and the Syriac version reads it in the singular number, *and the fowl came;* that ravenous bird of prey, Satan, who goes about seeking what he may devour; and for this purpose attends where the word is preached, to hinder its usefulness as much as in him lies.

Ver. 5. *And some fell on stony ground, &c.*] The word was preached to some persons who had hearts of stone, and which remained so: *where it had not much earth;* and so could be received only in a notional and superficial way, but could take no place, so as to produce any good effect: *and immediately it sprang up;* a sudden and hasty profession of the word was made, without a powerful experience of it: *because it had no depth of earth;* if it had, it would have been longer in coming up; more work would have been done by it, which would have required more time, before a profession of it had been made.

Ver. 6. *But when the sun was up, it was scorched, &c.*] When persecution arose because of the word, and that became very hot and vehement, it tried and pierced through this thin speculative knowledge of the word, which could not stand before it, and bear the heat of it: *and because it had no root, it withered away;* the word had only a place in the head, and not in the heart; wherefore the profession of it was soon dropped, and came to nothing.

Ver. 7. *And some fell among thorns, &c.*] The word was ministered to some who were eat up with the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and other lusts: *and the thorns grew up, and choked it;* the word did not take place so as to beat down, overcome, and root out these things, nor even to weaken, and keep under, and prevent the influence of them; but these got the ascendant of the word, and prevailed over it, and made it altogether useless and unsuccessful: for whilst it was administered, the minds of these persons were after their riches and worldly things, and gave no heed to the word; and at last were prevailed upon, not to attend upon it,

but drop the profession of it: *and it yielded no fruit*: it was not the means of grace; faith did not come by it, nor any other grace; nor did it produce good works in the life and conversation.

Ver. 8. *And other fell on good ground, &c.*] The word was preached to some whose hearts were disposed by the spirit and grace of God to receive it; and their understandings were enlightened by it; and they had a savoury and comfortable experience of the truths of it, it coming with power to them; it was a good word to them, and through the grace of God they became good by it; a good work of grace was wrought upon their souls, and they were filled with all goodness and righteousness: *and did yield fruit that sprang up, and increased*; they not only appeared, and made an outward profession of the word, and brought forth a little show of fruit, which comes to nothing, as in others; but they were filled with the fruits of righteousness, and increased with the increase of God, and grew in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus, and continued to bring forth fruit to the end of their lives: *and brought forth some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred*; that is, so many fold: in some the word of God produced larger and greater effects; the grace of God was more in exercise in some, than in others, and some were more fruitful and useful; yet in all of them there was true grace, and a measure of it; some degree of lively exercise, and some usefulness.

Ver. 9. *And he said unto them, &c.*] To the multitude of hearers that were on the sea-shore attending to the word preached, and among whom, doubtless, there were all those sorts of hearers mentioned in this parable: *he that hath ears to hear, let him hear*; observe, and take notice of what has been said, as being of the greatest moment and importance: for a larger explanation and illustration of this parable, see the notes on Matt. xiii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

Ver. 10. *And when he was alone, &c.*] After the multitude was dismissed, and he either remained in the ship, or left it, and retired to some private place, it may be to Simon's house in Capernaum. The Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, *when they were alone*; meaning as follows, *they that were about him with the twelve*; that is, such disciples of his, who, besides the twelve, constantly attended him; perhaps those who now were, or hereafter were the seventy disciples. The Vulgate Latin reads, *the twelve that were with him*. In Beza's most ancient copy 'tis read, *his disciples*; and to this agrees the Persic version; and so the other evangelists, Matthew and Luke, relate, that his disciples came and *asked of him the parable*; the meaning of it, and why he chose this way of speaking to the people, Matt. xiii. 10. Luke viii. 9. though that word may include others besides the twelve.

Ver. 11. *And he said unto them, &c.*] His disciples; *unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God*; or the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, the secrets of the Gospel-dispensation, the mysterious doctrines of grace; see the note on Matt. xiii. 11. *but unto them that are without; to strangers*, as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, who were not the disciples of Christ, nor ad-

mitted to any intimacy with him; who came only to amuse themselves with the sight of his person and miracles: *all these things are done in parables*; are wrapped up in dark sayings, and figurative expressions, the sound of which they heard, and might be pleased with the pretty similes made use of, but understood not the spiritual meaning of them.

Ver. 12. *That seeing they may see, &c.*] Which is the end and reason of his speaking to them in parables. The passage referred to is in Isa. vi. 9. 10. See the note on Matt. xii. 14, 15.

Ver. 13. *And he saith unto them, know ye not this parable? &c.*] So easy to be understood, taken from things common, and which fall under every one's observation: *and how then will you know all parables?* if not this single one, and which is so plain, how will ye be able to understand the numerous parables hereafter to be related, and which will be much more difficult?

Ver. 14. *The sower soweth the word.*] Though our Lord thought fit to give the above gentle rebuke to his disciples for their dulness; yet he condescends to favour them with an interpretation of the above parable, which here begins: by this it appears, that the seed in the parable, before delivered, and which fell on different sorts of ground, is the word of God, which was preached to hearers of different dispositions: the word is the word of life and truth; the word of peace and reconciliation; the word of faith and righteousness; the word of salvation; the word which publishes and declares all these to be in and by Jesus Christ.

Ver. 15. *And these are they by the way-side, where the word is sown, &c.*] Such hearers are represented by the way-side, in which the seed fell; who, coming where the Gospel is preached, stop awhile and hear it, and so are only casual and accidental hearers of it: *but when they have heard*; and indeed whilst they are hearing, and before they are well got out of the place of hearing, *Satan cometh immediately and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts*. The devil, signified by the fowl, or fowls of the air, immediately takes notice of such hearers, and is very busy with them; filling their minds with other things suitable to their dispositions, and setting before them other objects, whereby their minds are, at once, taken off from what they have been hearing; so that all that they have observed, and laid up in their memories, is lost at once, and never thought of any more.

Ver. 16. *And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground, &c.*] Such sort of hearers of the word are signified by the stony ground, on which the seed were sown, who are constant hearers of the word, and have some understanding of it, and some sort of affection for it, and yet their hearts are not truly broken by it; they are not brought to a thorough sight and sense of sin, and of their need of Christ, and salvation by him; their stony hearts are not taken away, and hearts of flesh given them: *who when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness*; seem highly pleased, and greatly delighted with it, as being a well-connected scheme of things; and which declares things, as heaven and

eternal happiness, which they, from a principle of self-love, are desirous of enjoying.

Ver. 17. *And have no root in themselves, &c.*] The word has no root in their hearts, only in their natural affections: nor is the root of grace in them; there is no heart-work, only speculative notions, and flashy affections: *and so endure but for a time*: they continue hearers and professors of the Gospel but for a small season; like the Jews, who rejoiced in the ministry of John the Baptist for a while, and then left him: *afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.* As soon as any small degree of trouble comes upon them, and especially when there is a hot persecution of the professors of religion, because of the Gospel they have embraced; such hearers are stumbled at these things, and can't bear the loss of any thing, or endure any thing severe for the sake of the word they have professed a pleasure in; and therefore, rather than suffer, they relinquish at once their profession of it.

Ver. 18. *And these are they that are sown among thorns, &c.*] Such hearers of the word are designed by the thorny ground, upon which other seed fell, as it was sown, who are of worldly dispositions; who are immoderately careful and anxious about the things of this life, and are bent upon acquiring earthly riches, and gratifying their carnal and sensual appetites: *such as hear the word*; who notwithstanding are prevailed upon through custom, or the dictates of their consciences, to attend upon the ministry of the word.

Ver. 19. *And the cares of this world, &c.*] The perplexing and distressing cares of it to get as much of it as they can, for themselves and families, fill their minds, and possess their souls even when and while they are hearing the word: *and the deceitfulness of riches*; or riches which are deceitful, especially when trusted in, and being obtained, they don't give the satisfaction they promise: *and the lusts of other things entering in*: carnal desires after other objects, which are pleasing to the sensual mind, entering into their hearts, and gaining the ascendant there: *choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful*; these being more attended to than the word is, that is quite lost, and becomes useless, and unprofitable.

Ver. 20. *And these are they which are sown on good ground, &c.*] Such hearers who are intended by the good ground on which other seed fell, are those who are made good men by the grace of God; for there is none good naturally, nor that doeth good, nor not one; these are *such who hear the word, and receive it*; as the word of God, in whose hearts it works effectually; who receive it not into their heads only, but into their hearts; and having received it, hold it fast, and abide by it in the worst of times: *and bring forth fruit, some thirty fold, some sixty, and some an hundred*; all bring forth good fruit of the same quality, though not of the same quantity: for a larger exposition of this explanation of the parable, see the notes on Matt. xiii. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.

Ver. 21. *And he said unto them, &c.*] At the

same time, after he had explained the parable of the sower; for though the following parabolical and proverbial expressions were delivered by Christ at other, and different times, and some of them twice, as related by other evangelists; yet they might be all of them expressed or repeated at this time, by our Lord, shewing why he explained the above parable to his disciples; and that though he delivered the mysteries of the Gospel in parables to them that were without, yet it was not his design that these things should be always kept a secret, and that from all men: for as the Gospel might be compared to seed, so likewise to a candle, the design and use of which is to give light to men: wherefore he asks, *is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed, and not to be set on a candlestick?* when a candle is brought into a room, in the night, where company are together, to converse, or read, or work; is it proper that it should be covered with a bushel, or any other hollow vessel? or when brought into a bedchamber, is it right to put it under the bed? is it not most fitting and convenient, that it should be set in a candlestick, and then it will be of use to all in the room? so the Gospel, which is the candle of the Lord, he had lighted up in the evening of the Jewish world, in the land of Judea; it was not his will that it should be always, and altogether, and from all men, covered with parables, and dark sayings, without any explanation of them; but that the light of it should be communicated, especially to them his disciples, who were to be the lights of the world, and which were to shine openly before men, for their good, and the glory of his heavenly father; see Matt. v. 14, 15, 16.

Ver. 22. *For there is nothing hid, &c.*] In these parables, and figurative expressions used by Christ, *which shall not be manifested*, sooner or later, to his disciples: *neither was any thing kept secret*; any doctrine of the Gospel, or mystery of the kingdom: *but that it should come abroad*; it was designed to be published in all Judea, and afterwards, throughout the whole world, for the benefit of God's chosen ones, to their conversion, comfort, and edification: wherefore it becomes the ministers of the Gospel to keep back nothing that may be profitable to the churches, nor shun to declare the whole counsel of God; but faithfully dispense the mysteries of grace, and commend the truth to every man's conscience, without any fear of men, or dreading the effects and consequences of things: since nothing is declared in the word, or made known, but with a design to be published to others, to answer some divine end and purpose; see the note on Matt. x. 26:

Ver. 23. *If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.*] What is now delivered, being very momentous and important; see Matt. xi. 15.

Ver. 24. *And he said unto them, &c.*] At the same time, though he had said what follows at another time, still continuing his discourse with his disciples: *take heed what you hear*: diligently attend to it, seek to understand it, and lay it up in your minds and memories, that it may be of use to you in time to come, and you may be useful in communicating it to others: *with what measure ye mete,*

it shall be measured unto you; a common proverb among the Jews, used on various occasions, and to different purposes; see the note on Matt. vii. 2. Here it seems to intimate, that if the disciples carefully hearkened to what they heard from Christ, and studiously laboured to understand it, and faithfully dispensed it to others, in return, a larger measure, and greater degree of spiritual knowledge, would be bestowed upon them: for it follows, *and unto you that hear, shall more be given*; that is, that hear so as to understand, keep, and make a good use of what they hear, more shall be communicated to them; they shall have an increase of knowledge in the doctrines of grace, and mysteries of the Gospel.

Ver. 25. *For he that hath, to him shall be given, &c.*] He that has Gospel light and knowledge, and makes a proper use of it, he shall have more; his path shall be as the path of the just, which shines more and more to the perfect day; the means of grace and knowledge shall be blessed to him, he attending constantly thereon, that he shall arrive to such a knowledge of the son of God as to be a perfect man in comparison of others, who are in a lower class; and shall come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, shall grow up to maturity, and be a man in understanding: and he that has the truth of grace, though its beginning is but small, yet that making and keeping him humble, as it always does, he shall have more grace, or that he has shall open and enlarge in its actings and exercises; his faith shall grow exceedingly, he shall abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost; and his love to God, and Christ, and to the saints, shall be greater and greater; and he shall increase in humility, patience, self-denial, &c. and so he that has gifts for public usefulness, and does not neglect them, but stirs them up for the profit of others, he shall have an increase of them; he shall shine as a star in Christ's right hand, and appear brighter and brighter in the firmament of the church: *and he that hath not, from him shall be taken, even that which he hath*; or seemed to have, or thought he had, Luke viii. 18. a saying often used by Christ, both with respect to the ignorant Jews, and professing Christians, and even, as here, to the disciples themselves, respect perhaps being had to Judas. He that has only a speculative notion of the Gospel, and is without any experience and practice of it, in course of time his candle is put out; his light becomes darkness; he drops and denies the truths he held, and relinquishes the profession of them: and he that has only counterfeit grace, a feigned faith, a false hope, and a dissembled love, in due time these will be discovered, and the name of them, and the character he bore, on account of them, will be taken from him: for true grace is never taken away, nor lost; it is a solid, permanent thing, and is inseparable to everlasting glory and happiness: but bare notions of the Gospel, and a mere show of grace, are unstable and transient things; as also are the greatest gifts without the grace of God. Judas had doubtless all the appearance of a true Christian; he had the Gospel committed to him, and the knowledge of it, and gifts qualifying him to preach it, and a commis-

VOL. I.—NEW. TEST.

sion from Christ for it, yea, even a power of working miracles to confirm what he preached; and yet not having true grace, all was taken away from him, and were of no use unto him in the business of salvation: and so sometimes it is, that even in this life the idle and worthless shepherd has his right arm clean dried up, and his right eye utterly darkened; his ministerial light and abilities are taken away from him; these being either not used at all by him, or used to bad purposes; see Matt. xii. 12. and xxv. 29.

Ver. 26. *And he said, &c.*] He went on saying the following parable, which was delivered at the same time that the parable of the sower was, though omitted by Matthew; and is here placed between that, and the other concerning the grain of mustard-seed; which shews the time when it was spoken. The design of it is to set forth the nature of the word, and the ministration of it; the conduct of the ministers of the Gospel, when they have dispensed it; the imperceptibility of its springing and growth; the fruitfulness of it, when it has taken root, without the help of man; the gradual increase of grace under the instrumentality of the word; and the gathering of gracious souls, when grace is brought to maturity: *so is the kingdom of God*; such is the nature of the Gospel dispensation; and such are the things that are done in it, as may fitly be represented by the following; *as if a man should cast seed into the ground*: by the man, is not meant Christ, for he sleeps not; and besides, he knows how the seed springs and grows; but any Gospel minister, who is sent forth by Christ, bearing precious seed: and by seed is intended, not gracious persons, the children of the kingdom, as in the parable of the tares; nor the grace of God in them, though that is an incorruptible and an abiding seed; but the word of God, or Gospel of Christ, so called for its smallness, the diminutive character it bears, and contempt it is had in by some; and for its choiceness and excellency in itself, and in the account of others; and for its generative virtue under a divine influence: for the Gospel is like the manna, which was a small round thing, as a coriander-seed; and as that was contemptible in the eyes of the Israelites, so the preaching of the Gospel is, to them that perish, foolishness; and yet it is choice and precious seed in itself, and to those who know the value of it, by whom it is preferred to thousands of gold and silver; and, as worthless and unpromising as it may seem to be, it has a divine virtue put into it; and, under the influence of powerful and efficacious grace, it is the means of regenerating souls, and produces fruit in them, which will remain unto everlasting life: though, as the seed is of no use this way, unless it is sown in the earth, and covered there; so is the Gospel of no use for regeneration, unless it is by the power of God let into the heart, and received there, where, through that power, it works effectually. By casting it into the earth, the preaching of the word is designed; which, like casting seed into the earth, is done with the same sort of seed only, and not with different sorts, with plenty of it, and at the proper time, whatever discouragements there may be, and with great skill and judgment, committing it to God to raise it up again: for the faithful dispensers of the word don't spread divers and strange doctrines; their ministry is all of

apiece; they always sow the same like-precious seed, without any mixture of the tares of error and heresy; and they don't deal it out in a narrow and niggardly way; they don't restrain and conceal any part of truth, but plentifully distribute it, and declare the whole counsel of God; and though there may be many discouragements attend them, many temptations arise to put off from sowing the word; the weather bad, storms and tempests arise, reproaches and persecutions come thick and fast, still they go on; using all that heavenly skill, prudence, and discretion God has given them, preaching the word in season, and out of season; and when they have done, they leave their work with the Lord, knowing that Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but it is God only that gives the increase: and by the *ground*, into which it is cast, is meant the hearers of the word, who are of different sorts; some like the way-side, others like the stony ground, and others like the thorny earth, and some like good ground, as here; whose hearts are broke up by the spirit of God, the stoniness of them taken away, and they made susceptible of the good word.

Ver. 27. *And should sleep, &c.*] That is, the man that casts in the seed, who represents the ministers of the Gospel: and, as applied to them, is not to be understood of natural sleep, and indulging themselves in that; much less of spiritual sloth and indolence, as if they cared not what became of the seed sown, whether it sprung up, and came to any thing, or no; for neither of these belong to the characters of the true ministers of the word: for though bodily sleep in them, as in other men, is necessary for the support of nature, and to put them in a capacity of discharging their work; yet perhaps none have less of it than studious and laborious preachers of the Gospel; and much less do they indulge a spiritual sleep and slothfulness; though this may sometimes attend them, as well as others: but then, whilst they sleep, in this sense, tares are sown, and they spring up, and not the good seed of the word, as in this parable; besides, as they labour in the word and doctrine, by studying and preaching it, so they follow their ministrations with incessant prayers that they be succeeded to the conversion of sinners, and comfort of saints; nor can they be easy, unless they have some seals of their ministry: but rather, this may be understood of the sleep of death; for so it often is, that the seed sown by them does not appear in the fruits of it to the churches of Christ, among whom they have ministered, until after they are fallen asleep in Jesus: though it seems best to understand it of their holy security, confidence, and satisfaction in their own minds, that it will turn to profit and advantage, both to the good of souls, and glory of God, not despairing of success; but having left their work with their Lord, they sit down easy and satisfied, believing that the word shall prosper to the thing whereunto it is sent: *and rise night and day*; which shews their diligence and laboriousness, and their constant attendance to other parts of their work, rising up early, and sitting up late, to prepare for, and discharge their ministerial work; and their continued expectation of the springing-up of the seed sown, which accordingly does in proper time: *and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how*; 'tis a

mystery in nature, how the seed under the clods, where it dies before it is quickened, should spring and grow up, and bring forth fruit; and so it is in grace, how the word of God first operates on a sinner's heart, and becomes the ingrafted word there; the time when, and much less the manner how, grace, by this means, is implanted in the heart, are not known to a soul itself, and still less to the ministers of the word, who sometimes never know any thing of it; and when they do, not till some time after: this work is done secretly, and powerfully, under the influence of divine grace, without their knowledge, though by them as instruments; so that though the sowing and planting are theirs, all the increase is God's: this may encourage attendance on the ministry of the word, and teach us to ascribe the work of conversion entirely to the power and grace of God.

Ver. 28. *For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, &c.*] Without any further help, or cultivation from the husbandman; though under the influence of the sun, dews, and showers of rain from heaven: this is said, not to denote that man of himself, upon hearing the word, can bring forth the fruit of grace in himself; he cannot regenerate himself, nor quicken, nor convert himself; he can't believe in Christ, nor love the Lord of himself; nor repent of his sin, nor begin, or carry on the good work; he can neither sanctify his heart, nor mortify the deeds of the body; or even bring forth the fruits of good works, when converted. For all these things are owing to the spirit, power, and grace of God: men are regenerated according to the abundant mercy of God, of water and of the spirit, by the word of truth, through the sovereign will and pleasure of God; and they are quickened, who before were dead in trespasses and sins, and were as dry bones, by the spirit of God breathing upon them: conversion in the first production, is the Lord's work; *turn thou me, and I shall be turned*: faith in Christ is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; and so is repentance unto life; love is one of the fruits of the spirit, and in short, the whole work of grace is not by might, nor by power of man, but by the spirit of the Lord of hosts; who begins and carries on, and performs it until the day of Christ: the work of sanctification, is therefore called the sanctification of the spirit; and it is through him the deeds of the body are mortified: and indeed, without Christ, believers themselves can do nothing at all; even can't perform good works, or do any action that is truly and spiritually good. But the design is to shew, that as the earth without human power, without the husbandman, under the influence of the heavens, brings forth fruit; so without human power, without the Gospel minister, the word having taken root under divine influence, through the sun of righteousness, the dews of divine grace, and operations of the blessed spirit, it rises up and brings forth fruit: *first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear*; which, as it very aptly describes the progress of the seed from first to last; so it very beautifully represents the gradual increase of the work of grace, under the instrumentality of the word, accompanied with the spirit and power of God. Grace at first appearance is very small, like the small green spire, when it first shoots out of the earth: light into a man's self, his heart, his state and condition, in



the knowledge of Christ, and the doctrines of the Gospel, is but very small; he is one of little faith, and weak in the exercise of it: faith is but at first a small glimmering view of Christ, a venture upon him, a peradventure there may be life and salvation for such an one in him; it comes at length to a reliance and leaning upon him; and 'tis some time before the soul can walk alone by faith on him: its experience of the love of God is but small, but in process of time there's a growth and an increase; light increases, which shines more and more unto the perfect day; faith grows stronger and stronger; experience of the love of God is enlarged; and the believer wades in these waters of the sanctuary; not only as at first up to the ankles, but to the knees and loins; when at length they are a broad river to swim in, and which cannot be passed over.

Ver. 29. *But when the fruit is brought forth, &c.*] Unto perfection, and is fully ripe; signifying that when grace is brought to maturity, and faith is performed with power, and the good work begun is perfected; then, as the husbandman, *immediately he putteth in the sickle*; and cuts it down, and gathers it in; *because the harvest is come*; at death, or at the end of the world, which the harvest represents: when all the elect of God are called by grace, and grace in them is brought to its perfection, and they have brought forth all the fruit they were ordained to bear, they'll then be all gathered in; either by Christ himself, who comes into his garden, and gathers his lilies by death; or by the angels, the reapers, at the close of time, who will gather the elect from the four winds; or the ministers of the Gospel, who shall come again with joy, bringing their sheaves with them; being able to observe with pleasure a greater increase, and more fruit of their labours, than they knew of, or expected.

Ver. 30. *And he said, &c.*] Still continuing his discourse on this subject, and in order to convey to the minds of his disciples clearer ideas of the Gospel dispensation, the success of the Gospel, and the usefulness of their ministration of it, for their encouragement, how unpromising soever things might then be: *wherunto shall we liken the kingdom of God, or with what comparison shall we compare it?* It was usual with the Jewish doctors, when about to illustrate any thing in a parabolical way, to begin with such like questions; as, למה הרבר דומה, *to what is this thing like?* when the answer is to such or such thing, as here.

Ver. 31. *It is like a grain of mustard-seed, &c.*] That is, the kingdom of God spoken of in the preceding verse, is like unto a grain of mustard-seed; by which is meant, either the Gospel, or the Gospel church-state, or the grace of God in the hearts of his people, and it may include them all: the Gospel is so called, because it treats of the two latter; but more especially, because it brings life and immortality to light, or points to the kingdom of heaven, directs the way unto it, and shews what qualifies persons for it, and gives them a claim unto it: and the Gospel church-state may be so called, because here Christ dwells, and rules as king; the members of it are his subjects, and the ordinances of it are his laws, to which they are obedient: and the grace of God in the hearts of his people may be so

called, because it is a governing principle in them; it reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, and by it Christ reigns in and over them: now the kingdom of God in each of these senses, may be compared to a grain of mustard-seed, for the smallness of it, as follows; *which when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth.* The Gospel was first preached by very few persons, and these of no figure and account, especially at their first setting out. John the Baptist came preaching the kingdom of God, clothed with a garment of camel's hair, and with a leathern girdle about his loins; our Lord himself made no pompous appearance, there was no form nor comeliness in him; he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs, and of a mean descent and occupation; his disciples were fishermen, and illiterate persons; those to whom it was preached, and by whom it was received at first, were but few, and these were the poor and the unlearned, and publicans and sinners. The Gospel church-state at first, consisted of very few persons, of Christ and his twelve apostles; and at his death, the number of the disciples at Jerusalem, men and women, were but an hundred and twenty; the several Gospel churches formed in the Gentile world, rose from small beginnings; from the conversion of a very few persons, and these the fifth of the world, and the offscouring of all things. The grace of God in the hearts of his people at first, is very little; it can scarcely be discerned by themselves, and is ready to be despised by others; their light and knowledge, their faith and experience being so exceeding small.

Ver. 32. *But when it is sown, it groweth up, &c.*] So the Gospel, when it was preached, it spread notwithstanding all the opposition made against it by the Jews and Gentiles: there was no stopping it; though the Jewish sanhedrim charged the apostles to speak no more in the name of Jesus, they regarded them not; though Herod stretched forth his hands against the church, and killed one apostle, and put another in prison, yet the word of God grew and multiplied, Acts xii. 1, 2, 3, 24. and Gospel churches when set up, whether in Judea, or among the Gentiles, presently had additions made unto them, and grew up, as holy temples in the Lord: and wherever the grace of God is really implanted, there's a growing in it, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus: *and becometh greater than all herbs*: the Gospel exceeds the traditions of the Jews, and the philosophy of the Gentiles, and any human scheme whatever, in its nature, usefulness, and the largeness of its spread: and the Gospel church-state will ere long fill the world, and all nations shall flow unto it; when the Jews shall be converted, and the fullness of the Gentiles shall come, it will be a greater kingdom, than any of the kingdoms of the earth ever were: and the grace of God in the heart, is vastly above nature, and does that which nature can never perform; and which spreads and enlarges, and at last issues in eternal glory: *and shooteth out great branches, so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it*: by whom are meant, saints; such to whom the Gospel is come in power, and who have the grace of God wrought in their hearts, who are partakers of the hea-

† T. Hieros. Bava Bathra, fol. 16. 2. T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 82. 1. & Sabbat, fol. 108. 1. & passim.

venly calling: these come where the Gospel is preached, and where gracious souls are met together, even in the several Gospel churches; where they not only come and go, but where they lodge, abide, and continue, under the shadow of the Gospel, and Gospel ordinances, and that with great delight and pleasure; singing songs of praise to God, for his electing and redeeming love, and for calling grace, and for all spiritual blessings, and Gospel privileges: for a larger explanation and illustration of this parable, see the notes on Matt. xiii. 31, 32.

Ver. 33. *And with many such parables, &c.*] As those of the tares, of the leaven in three measures of meal, of the treasure hid in the field, the pearl of great price, the net cast into the sea, and of the Scribe instructed unto the kingdom of God; which though not related at length here, are by the Evangelist Matthew, in ch. xiii. together with others elsewhere: *spake he the word unto them*: preached the Gospel to the multitude, as they were able to hear it: meaning either that he condescended to their weakness, accommodated himself to their capacities, and made use of the plainest similes; and took his comparison from things in nature, the most known and obvious, that what he intended might more easily be understood; or rather, he spoke the word to them in parables, as they were able to hear, without understanding them; and in such a manner, on purpose that they might not understand; for had he more clearly expressed the things relating to himself, as the Messiah, and to the Gospel dispensation, so as that they could have took in his meaning, such were their pride, their wickedness, and the rancour of their minds, that they would have at once rose up, and attempted to have destroyed him.

Ver. 34. *But without a parable spake he not unto them, &c.*] For the above reason, as well as for the accomplishment of Scripture; see the note on Matt. xiii. 34, 35. *And when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples*: after they returned with him from the sea-side, to the house in Capernaum, where he usually was when there; see Matt. xiii. 36. The multitude being dismissed, he unfolded and explained all these parables to his disciples, and led them into a large knowledge of himself, and the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; whereby they were furnished for the work he had called them to, and designed them for.

Ver. 35. *And the same day, when the even was come, &c.*] After he had finished his parables among the multitude, and had explained them to his disciples: *he saith unto them*; his disciples, *let us pass over unto the other side*: that is, of the sea of Galilee, or lake of Gennesaret, to the country of the Gadarenes, and Gergesenes; with a view for retirement and rest, after the fatigue of the day; and for the trial of the faith of his disciples, by a storm which he knew would arise, whilst they were on the sea; and for the sake of a miracle he was to work on the other side, after related.

Ver. 36. *And when they had sent away the multitude, &c.*] Who had been attending him all day on the sea-shore; though they seem to have been dismissed by Christ, when he went into the house, and privately interpreted the parables to his disciples: see Matt. xiii. 36. wherefore it is possible, that upon Christ's going to the sea-shore again, in order to take boat for the

other side, they might gather together again; when the disciples acquainted them that he was not about to preach any more to them, but was going to the other side of the lake; upon which they departed: and *they took him even as he was in the ship*; which may be understood of his being taken and carried in the ship, in which he had been preaching all the day, without being moved into another; though this does not so well agree with his quitting that, and going home to his house in Capernaum; where, being alone with the disciples, he opened the parables to them. Some think it refers to the situation and posture in which he laid himself, as soon as he entered the ship; placing himself at the stern, and laying his head upon a pillow there, and so they carried him: others, that they took him into the ship, as he was alone without the multitude, who were sent away, only the disciples with him, which seems best: *and there were also with him other little ships*; or boats, that were in company with that, in which Christ was; and had in them either seafaring men upon business, taking fish, or carrying passengers over; or might have in them persons, who were going along with Christ to the other side: these seem to be ordered in providence to be in company, that they might be witnesses of the after miracle.

Ver. 37. *And there arose a great storm of wind, &c.*] Called Lælaps, a wind that is suddenly whirled about upwards and downwards, and is said to be a storm, or tempest of wind with rain; it was a sort of a hurricane: *and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was full*; of water, and ready to sink. Beza says in one copy it is read, *βουζισσα*, and so in one of Stephens's. It was immersed, covered all over with water, and was going down at once to the bottom; so that they were in imminent danger, in the utmost extremity; see the note on Matt. viii. 24.

Ver. 38. *And he was in the hinder part of the ship, &c.*] That is, Christ was in the stern of the ship: the Persic version renders it, *he was in the bottom of the ship, in a corner*, but very wrongly; here he was asleep on a pillow, which some say was a wooden one, framed at the stern: however, he was fast asleep on it, being greatly fatigued with the work of the day; see the note on Matt. viii. 24. *And they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?* The disciples came to him and jogged him, and awoke him out of sleep; saying, Master, arise, and save us, or we are lost: hast thou no concern for us? how canst thou lie sleeping here, when we are in such danger? are our lives of no account with thee? is it a matter of no moment with thee, whether we are saved or lost? They seem to say this, not so much praying and interrogating, as complaining and reproving.

Ver. 39. *And he arose and rebuked the wind, &c.*] He arose from off his pillow, and stood up; and in a majestic and authoritative way reproved the wind, as if it was a servant that had exceeded his commission; at which he shews some resentment: *and said unto the sea, peace, be still*; as if that which was very tumultuous and boisterous, and threatened with shipwreck and the loss of lives, had raged too much and too long: *and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm*: which was very unusual and extraordinary; for after the wind has ceased, and the storm is over, the waters of the sea

being agitated thereby, keep raging, and in a violent motion, for a considerable time; whereas here, as soon as ever the word was spoken, immediately, at once, the wind ceased, and the sea was calmed: a clear proof this, that he must be the most high God, who gathers the winds in his fists, and stills the noise of the seas and their waves.

Ver. 40. *And he said unto them, &c.*] His disciples, *why are ye so fearful?* since he was with them in person, whose power to keep and preserve them, they had no room to question, when they reflected on the miracles they had so lately seen performed by him: *how is it that ye have no faith?* That is, in exercise: faith they had, but it was very small, and scarcely to be called faith: they did indeed apply to him to save them, which shewed some faith in him; but then they

feared it was too late, and that they were past all hope, and were just perishing; see the note on Matt. viii. 26.

Ver. 41. *And they feared exceedingly, &c.*] That is, the men in the ship, the mariners to whom the ship belonged, and who had the management of it: *and said to one another, as persons in the greatest amazement, what manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?* Surely this person must not be a mere man; he must be more than a man; he must be truly God, that has such power over the wind and sea. This best suits with the mariners, since the disciples must have known before, who and what he was; though they might be more established and confirmed in the truth of Christ's deity, by this wonderful instance of his power.

C H A P. V.

Ver. 1. *AND they came over unto the other side of the sea, &c.*] Of Galilee, or Tiberias; into the country of the *Gadarenes*: in the Evangelist Matthew it is called, the country of the *Gergesenes*, as it is here in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions. The Vulgate Latin reads, of the *Gerasenes*, and so some copies, from *Gerasa*, a place in the same country; but the Syriac and Persic versions read, *Gadarenes*, as do most copies; so called from *Gadara*, a city either adjacent to, or within the country of the *Gergesenes*; which was called by both names, from these different places. It was not far from *Tiberias*, the place from whence this sea has its name, over which Christ and his disciples passed, John vi. 1. *Chammath* was a mile from *Tiberias*, and this *Chammath* was so near to the country of *Gadara*, that it is often called, *Chammath of Gadara*<sup>f</sup>; unless it should be rather rendered, *the hot baths of Gadara*: for so it is<sup>g</sup> said, that at *Gadara* are the hot baths of *Syria*; which may be the same with the hot baths of *Tiberias*, so often mentioned in the Jewish writings<sup>h</sup>; hence the town of *Chammath* had its name, which was so near to *Tiberias*, that it is sometimes reckoned the same with it<sup>i</sup>. *Pliny*<sup>k</sup> places this *Gadara* in *Decapolis*, and *Ptolemy*<sup>l</sup> in *Coele Syria*; and *Meleager*, the collector of epigrams, who is called a *Syrian*, is said<sup>m</sup> to be a *Gadarene*, a native of this *Gadara*. Mention is made of the whirlpool of *Gadara*<sup>n</sup>, which remained ever since the flood. It appears to be an Heathen country, both from its situation, and the manners of the people.

Ver. 2. *And when he was come out of the ship, &c.*] As soon as he was landed, immediately there met him out of the tombs, a man with an unclean spirit. The Jews have a notion, that a man by dwelling among the tombs, becomes possessed with an unclean spirit: hence they say of one that seeks to the dead, or a necromancer<sup>o</sup>, this is he that starves himself, and goes and lodges in the tombs; כְּדִי שֶׁתִּשְׂרַד עֲלָיו רִחוּ טוֹמָאִים, that so an unclean spirit may dwell upon him: which notion

may arise from unclean spirits hurrying persons possessed by them, unto such places; partly for the terror, both of themselves and others; and partly to possess the minds of men with a persuasion, that they have power over the dead, and which is very great in such places. This case is the same with that, which is mentioned in Matt. viii. 28. as appears partly from its following the storm, from which the disciples had a remarkable deliverance; and partly from the country, in which this affair happened; for the country of the *Gergesenes*, and of the *Gadarenes*, is the same, as has been observed; only it is called by different names, from two principal places in it: as also from various circumstances in this relation; as the character of the possessed being exceeding fierce, dwelling among the tombs, and coming out from thence; the expostulation of the devil with Christ, and adjuration not to torment him; his entreaty to go into the herd of swine, and the leave he had; the destruction of the swine in the sea; the fear and flight of the swineherds; the report they made to their masters and others; and the request of the people in general to Christ, that he would depart out of their coasts. And though Matthew makes mention of two that were possessed, and Mark but of one, there is no contradiction in the one to the other; for Mark does not say there were no more than one; had he, it would have been a glaring contradiction to the other evangelist; but as he has put it, there is none, and it creates no difficulty: wherefore the Jew<sup>p</sup> has no reason to object this as he does, as if the evangelists clashed with one another; and Mark may only take notice of this one, because he was the fiercest of the two, and had the most devils in him, having a legion of them; and because the conversation chiefly passed between Christ and him; and because the power of Christ was more manifestly seen in the dispossession of the devils out of him.

Ver. 3. *Who had his dwelling among the tombs,*

<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 2. 2.  
<sup>g</sup> T. Hieros. Erubin, fol. 23. 3. & Trumot, fol. 41. 3. & Sabbat, fol. 5. 4.  
<sup>h</sup> Euanapius in Vita Iamblicii, p. 26.  
<sup>i</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 108. 1. T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 6. 1.  
<sup>j</sup> T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 6. 1.  
<sup>k</sup> L. 5. c. 18.

<sup>l</sup> L. 5. c. 15.  
<sup>m</sup> Fabricii Bibliotheca Græc. T. 2. p. 683.  
<sup>n</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 108. 1.  
<sup>o</sup> Ib. fol. 65. 2. Nidda, fol. 17. 1. & Chagiga, fol. 3. 2.  
<sup>p</sup> Jacob Aben Amram, porta veritatis, N<sup>o</sup>. 1028. apud Kidder's Demonstr. of the Messiah, par. 3. p. 51.

&c.] Which is one of the characters of a madman among the Jews; who say it is<sup>4</sup> "the sign of a madman, that he goeth out in the night, וּרְלָן "נבית וקברות, and lodges among the tombs, and "rends his garments, and loses what is given "to him." The same they say, in the same place, of an hypochondriac, and melancholy man; and of Kordiacus, which they give out<sup>5</sup> is a demon that possesses, and has power over some sort of persons: and no man could bind him, no, not with chains; so as to hold him for any length of time: not only cords were insufficient to hold, but even chains of iron; so strong was he through the possession; for this could not be by his own natural strength.

Ver. 4. *Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, &c.*] Trial had been made several times, to no purpose; his arms had been bound with chains, and his feet with fetters, which was very proper to prevent doing hurt to himself, and injury to others: and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces; as if they had been twine threads; such was his strength, through the force of madness, and the possession of Satan, and his diabolical influence: neither could any man tame him; by any methods whatever; even such who undertook the cure of madness, or to exorcise those that were possessed: this man was so furious and outrageous, that he was not to be managed any way, either by art or force.

Ver. 5. *And always night and day, he was in the mountains, &c.*] And this being in an Heathen country, would have rendered him an unclean person, if he had not been possessed with an unclean spirit; for so runs one of the Jewish canons<sup>6</sup>: "he that "walks in an Heathen land, on mountains and rocks, "is unclean." And in the tombs; which very likely were on the mountains, and cut out of them, it being usual to cut their sepulchres out of rocks: crying, and cutting himself with stones; with sharp pieces of stone, which he picked up among the broken tomb-stones, or from off the mountains, where he was night and day; and besides taking up stones with his hands, and cutting himself with them, he might cut his feet with the sharp stones of the mountains, in which he ran about; these mountains were those, that encompassed the sea of Tiberias; for of it is said, שְׂדֵרִים כּוֹסְפִין אֹתוֹה, that the mountains surround it<sup>7</sup>: for the place where this man was, was near the sea of Tiberias, over which Christ was just now come; and soon as he arrived on shore, he met him, and found him in this condition. This man was a lively emblem of a man in a state of nature and unregeneracy: he had an unclean spirit, as every natural man has; his soul or spirit is defiled with sin, particularly his mind and conscience: this pollution is natural to him; he brings it into the world with him; it is very universal, it has spread itself over all the powers and faculties of his soul, and is what he can't cleanse himself from: who can say I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin? Prov. xx. 9. Nothing that he can do, or can be done for him by a mere creature,

can free him from it: nothing but the blood of Christ, and that cleanses from all sin: this man, through the possession of Satan, was a madman, and exceeding fierce and furious: there is a spirit of madness in all unregenerate men; they are exceeding mad against God, and Christ, and the saints, as Saul was before conversion, Acts xxvi. 9, 10, 11. For who but madmen would stretch out their hands against God, strengthen themselves against the Almighty, run upon him, even on his neck, and upon the thick bosses of his bucklers? Job xv. 25, 26. Who but such would oppose themselves to the son of God, or do despite to the spirit of grace, who are equal in power and glory with God the father? or kick against the pricks, by persecuting the members of Christ? Who but men out of their senses, would seek to ruin and destroy themselves, both soul and body? This man was altogether under the power and influence of Satan, and had a legion of devils within him. Satan is in every unconverted man, in every child of disobedience; and works effectually in him, and leads him captive at his will: and he has besides a swarm of fleshly lusts in him, which have the government over him. This man had his dwelling among the tombs, where the dead lay: so unregenerate men dwell among dead sinners, they have their conversation among the men of the world, who are dead in trespasses and sins, and according to the course of it: and as this man could not be bound with chains and fetters, but these were broke asunder by him; so wicked men are not to be bound, restrained, and governed, by the laws, commands, and ordinances of God; they despise them, break through them, and cannot be subject to them, their language is, let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us, Psal. ii. 3. And as no man could tame this man, so it is not in the power of men, by the force of moral suasion, by all the arguments, expostulations, exhortations, promises, or threatenings, they can make use of, to influence the carnal minds of men, or make any real change in them: or bring them into a subjection to the law of God, or Gospel of Christ, and remove from them the spirit of madness, and opposition to all that is good: and to say no more; as this man was mischievous to himself, and cut himself with stones, so carnal men are the worst enemies to themselves; they cut and wound themselves with their sins, though, like the madman, they are not sensible of it; and if grace prevent not, will destroy themselves, both soul and body, with their transgressions.

Ver. 6. *But when he saw Jesus afar off, &c.*] For it seems the tombs among which this man dwelt, were at some distance from the sea-shore: wherefore when it is said, ver. 2. that this man met Jesus, as soon as he came out of the ship: the meaning is, that he then came forth to meet him, as he might do upon sight of persons landing afar off; though he might not know then, who Jesus was: but coming nearer, and perceiving who he was, such

<sup>4</sup> T. Hieros. Gittin, fol. 48. 3. & Trumot, fol. 40. 2.  
<sup>5</sup> Jarchi & Bartenora in Misn. Gittin, c. 7. sect. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Misn. Oholot, c. 18. sect. 6.  
<sup>7</sup> T. Hieros. Erubin, fol. 25. 2.

was the power of Christ over the devils in him, that though sore against their wills, they obliged him to move on speedily towards him; so that *he ran and worshipped him*: he made all imaginable haste to him; and when he came up to him, fell down at his feet before him, acknowledging his superiority and power, whom no chains nor fetters could bind, nor any man tame; nor durst any man pass that way, for fear of him: and yet, upon sight of Christ, without a word spoken to him, he runs and prostrates himself before him. This is an instance of the superiority of Christ over the devils, who knowing who he is, are filled with horror at him, fall down before him, and in their way do homage to him; though it is impossible they should be spiritual worshippers of him: unless this is rather to be understood of the man himself, who, at the sight of Christ, might have his senses for the present restored, and a knowledge of Christ given: to whom he ran speedily, and threw himself at his feet, hoping for relief from him: however, it may be an emblem of a poor awakened sinner, having a distant sight of Christ, who, upon it, makes haste unto him, and prostrates itself before him, believing he is able, if willing, to save him from the power of Satan, the evil of sin, and from eternal ruin and damnation.

Ver. 7. *And cried with a loud voice, &c.*] The man possessed with the devil; or the devil in him, making use of his voice, expressing great fear, dread, and horror, at the appearance of Christ in these parts: *and said, what have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of the most high God?* The devils in the man, own the being of a God, and his supreme government over all, under the title of the Most High. The word here used, answers to the Hebrew word, *אלי, Elion*, a name of God known to the ancient Canaanites: hence Melchizedek, a Canaanitish king, is called the priest of the most high God, Gen. xiv. 18. And among the Phœnicians, he is called Elion, which a Phœnician writer<sup>\*</sup> says, signifies the *Most High*; and hence in Plautus<sup>†</sup>, he goes by the name of Alon, which is the same word a little differently pronounced; and by the same name he might be known among other neighbouring nations of the Jews, and by the Gadarenes; and the devil now being in a Gadarene, makes use of this name. Devils believe there is one God, and tremble at him; and they confess that Jesus of Nazareth, who was born of the virgin, according to the human nature, is the son of God, according to his divine nature: and whereas they had no interest in him, as a Saviour, they desired they might have nothing to do with him as God; and since they had no share in the blessings of his grace, they beg they might not feel the power of his hand. Truly they choose not to have any thing to do with God himself; they have cast off allegiance to him, and rebelled against him; and have left their estate, and departed from him; and still less do they care to have any thing to do with his son: and indeed it seems as if it was the decree and counsel of God, made known unto them, that

the son of God should assume human nature, and in it be the head over principalities and powers, as well as men, which gave umbrage to them: upon which they apostatized from God, being unwilling to be under subjection to the man Christ Jesus; though whether they will or no, they are obliged unto it: for though they desire to have nothing to do with Christ, yet Christ has something to do with them; he had when he was here on earth, and when he hung upon the cross, and will have when he comes again to judge both quick and dead: they might be glad, one would think, to have to do with him as a Redeemer; but this they are not, their sin being the same with that against the Holy Ghost: they are malicious, obstinate, and inflexible, they cannot repent; and there's no pardon, nor was there any provided for them; they were passed by in the counsel and purposes of God's grace, and were not taken notice of in the covenant of grace: Christ took not on him their nature, but the nature of men; yea he came to destroy them, and their works; so that indeed they had nothing to do with him as a Saviour, though he had something to do with them as a judge, and which they dreaded: however, they own, and acknowledge him to be the son of the most high God; they know and confess as much of him, and more too, than some that call themselves Christians, and hope to be saved by Christ; and yet at the same time own, they had nothing to do with him. Men may know much of Christ notionally; may know, and confess him to be God, to be the son of God, in the highest and true sense of the phrase; to be the Messiah, to have been incarnate, to have suffered, died, and risen again: to be ascended to heaven, from whence he'll come again; and yet have no more to do with him, or have no more interest in him, than the devils themselves; and will, at the last day, be bid to depart from him. *I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not*: not that he required an oath of Christ, that he would swear to him by the living God, that he would not distress him; but he most earnestly and importunately entreated and beseeched him, in the name of God; see Luke viii. 28. that he would not dispossess him from the man, and send him out of that country, to his own place, to his chains and prison; but suffer him either to lodge in the man, or walk about seeking, as a roaring lion, his prey: for it is torment to a devil to be cast out of a man, or to have his power curtailed, or to be confined in the bottomless pit, from doing hurt to men: see the note on Matt. viii. 29.

Ver. 8. *For he said unto him, &c.*] Or he had said unto him, as soon as he came up to him, and fell before him; even before he had confessed, and adjured him; and which indeed drew out the confession from him, that he was superior to him, and therefore became his supplicant: *come out of the man, thou unclean spirit*; which was said with so much authority and power, that there was no withstanding it: the devil knew he was not a match for him; that he must, at his com-

<sup>\*</sup> Sanchoniatho in Philo Bybl. apud Euseb. prepar. Evangel. l. 1. c. 10. p. 36.

<sup>†</sup> In Pœnulo.

mand, quit his possession, and therefore fell to confession and entreaty. Christ will not dwell where Satan does; when therefore he is about to take up his residence in the hearts of any, he outs with Satan; he binds the strong man armed, and dispossesses him; he causes the spirit of uncleanness to depart; he sanctifies the heart by his grace and spirit, and so makes it a proper habitation for him to dwell in by faith; and this is done by mighty power: a man can't deliver himself out of the hands of Satan, or cause him to quit his hold of him, or the unclean spirit to depart; nor can he sanctify and cleanse himself, and make himself meet for the master's use: this is all owing to efficacious grace.

Ver. 9. *And he asked him, what is thy name? &c.*] Which question Christ put, not for his own sake; for he was not ignorant of his name, nor of the number of the unclean spirits which were in the man; but partly, that it might be known what a miserable condition this poor man was in, being infested, and vexed with such a large company of devils; and partly, that his own pity and power in delivering him, might be more manifest; and he answered, saying, *my name is Legion*: the Syriac version renders it, *our name is Legion*; the reason of which name is given, *for we are many*: as a Roman legion did consist of many, though its number was not always alike: in the time of Romulus, a legion consisted of three thousand foot, and three hundred horse; afterwards, when the city was increased, of six thousand foot, and six hundred horse; sometimes it was six thousand and two hundred foot, and three hundred horse; sometimes four thousand foot, and three hundred horse; sometimes five thousand foot, and three hundred horse<sup>x</sup>. Some make a legion to consist of six thousand six hundred sixty-six; and others make it much larger, even twelve thousand five hundred: however, the number in a legion was many; hence the word is retained among the Jews, and is used for a large number, either of persons or things; as, *לגיון אחד כשל ייתים*, a legion of olives<sup>y</sup>: that is, a large number of them; though sometimes it is used of a single person, who has others under him, as the general of an army: thus it is said<sup>z</sup>, that one man should say to another, "from whence art thou? he replies, from such a legion am I;—the man went to the legion—the legion heard, and was afraid—the man said, woe unto me! now will the legion slay me—the legion heard, &c." And again<sup>a</sup>, "a certain legion asked R. Abba, is it not written," &c. Once more<sup>b</sup>, "Lo! such a legion shall go with thee, to keep thee," &c. Upon which the gloss is, *שך דלגיון*, the general of an army; so called, because he had a legion, or a large number of soldiers under his command: and just so this unclean spirit is called by this name, because he had a great many more with him, and under him, in that man; sometimes it is only used of a single person himself, as of a king's servant sent into a foreign country, to collect his<sup>c</sup> tax: a legion was reckoned by the Jews

unclean and defiled, whatsoever place they entered into<sup>d</sup>; how much more unclean must this man be, that had a legion of unclean spirits in him! From hence it appears, that the devils are very numerous; for if there was a legion of them in one man, how many must there be in all the children of disobedience, to maintain their ground, and support their interest among them? As there is an innumerable company of holy angels to encamp about the saints, and do them all the service they can, and are appointed to; so there is undoubtedly an innumerable company of devils, who do all the hurt they can, or are permitted to do, unto the sons of men: hence they are expressed by words, which signify number as well as power; as principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in high places, the power or posse of the air, the angels of Satan, the angels that sinned and left their habitations, &c. As also that they are in a body, and in the form of an army; with a general at the head of them, the prince of devils, and king of the bottomless pit: there are whole squadrons and regiments of them, yea, even legions; which are formed in battle array, and make war against Christ, the seed of the woman; as they did when he was in the garden, and hung upon the cross, which was the hour and power of darkness; and against his members; as they did in Rome pagan against the Christian church, and in Rome papal, against the same, Rev. xii. 7, 8, 17. and what a mercy it is for the saints, that besides twelve legions of good angels and more, which are ready to assist and protect them, they have God on their side, and therefore it signifies not who is against them; and they have Christ with them, who has spoiled principalities and powers; and greater is the Holy Spirit that is in them, than he that is in the world.

Ver. 10. *And he besought him much, &c.*] The devil that was at the head of this legion, who had the rest under his command, he, in their name, and on their behalf, entreated Jesus with great earnestness. This shews the authority Christ has over the devils, and their subjection to him; they are not only obliged to quit their former possession, when he gives orders, but they can't go any where else, or where they would, without his leave: though the man they were in could not be bound and held with chains and fetters of iron, through the great strength they put forth in him; yet these themselves are bound and held in chains, and can't move without Christ's permission, or as he is pleased to lengthen out the chain unto them: and though they are no humble supplicants to him for grace and mercy, yet they are, that they may continue where they are; or be suffered to be somewhere else, to do mischief to the souls and bodies of men: and though they are such proud spirits, they be, they are very willing to humble themselves, and in the most submissive and pressing manner ask a favour, even of him whom they hate, when they have an end to answer by doing injury to others; and in this, as well as in many other things, they are imitated by them who are truly called the

<sup>x</sup> Alexander ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 5. Liv. Hist. l. 8. c. 8.

<sup>y</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 20. fol. 17. 4.

<sup>z</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 96. 4. & Imre Binah in ib.

<sup>a</sup> Ib. in Exod. fol. 50. 2.

<sup>b</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 51. 4.

<sup>c</sup> Vajikra Rabba, sect. 30. fol. 170. 4. & Mattanot Cehuna in ib.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 123. 1.

children of the devil, and do the lusts of him their father. *That he would not send them away out of the country* that if he did think fit to dispossess them from that man, that however he would permit them to stay in that country, and not drive them wholly from thence; and which they might be the more desirous of, because it was an Heathen country, inhabited by the blind Gentiles, that knew not God, or apostate Jews, or both; among whom their power and authority were very great; and where they had long been, and had had a large experience of the tempers and dispositions of men, and knew how to bait their temptations with success.

Ver. 11. *Now there was there, nigh unto the mountains, &c.]* Where this man often was, ver. 5. according to Beza, the mountains of Galaad, which ran through that country, or the mountains that surrounded Tiberias. Some copies, as the Alexandrian copy and others, read *at*, or *about the mountain*, in the singular number. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read, *about the mountain*. The Syriac and Ethiopic, *at the mountain*; so in Luke viii. 32. *a great herd of swine feeding*; on one side of the mountain, or mountains; it may be called a great one, for there were about two thousand hogs in it.

Ver. 12. *And all the devils besought him, &c.]* The whole legion of them, not only their chief, in the name of the rest, but all of them earnestly entreated him; they were all humble supplicants, not from love, but fear, and with a view to do mischief: though the word *all* is omitted in some copies, as it is in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions; neither has the Ethiopic the word *devils*, but both are retained in the Arabic version: *saying, send us into the swine, that we may enter into them*. The Persic version renders it, *seeing thou drivest us from the man, give leave that we may enter into the swine*; which is rather a paraphrase than a version, and expresses the sense very well. They chose to be any where, rather than depart the country; and especially than to be sent into the deep, the abyss, or bottomless pit; and they chose to be sent into the swine, as being impure creatures like themselves; and no doubt with a view to destroy them, that they might satisfy themselves as much as they could with doing mischief; though not to that degree they would, nor to those persons they were desirous of; and so bring as much odium and reproach upon Christ as they could, who gave them leave. The devils are unwearied in doing mischief, they can't rest unless they are about it; and they choose to be concerned in doing it in a lesser way, if they are not allowed to do it as largely as they would; if they are not suffered to touch the lives of men, or ruin their souls, it is some satisfaction to them to be suffered to hurt their bodies; and if that is no longer permitted, rather than be doing nothing, they are desirous of doing injury to irrational creatures, the property of men; all which shows the malice and wickedness of these evil spirits: see the note on Matt. viii. 31.

Ver. 13. *And forthwith Jesus gave them leave, &c.]* For the reason of this see the note on Matt. viii. 32. *and the unclean spirits went out*; of the man, in whom they had for some time dwelt: *and entered into the herd of swine*; according to the leave given them by Christ: this shews not only the existence of spirits, but their going from one to another shews that they are circumscribed by space; that they are here, and not there, or there, and not here: there is an *ubi*, a somewhere, where they are; and whilst there, are not elsewhere: *and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea*. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, *the herd ran to the rock, or promontory, and fell into the sea*. The Ethiopic, *the herd grew mad, and was carried headlong into the sea*: the sense is, that the devils having entered into them, it had a like effect on them, as on the man possessed; they ran mad, and were hurried on by the devils, to the rocks on the sea-shore; where, falling down the precipice, they were all lost; and a considerable loss it was to their owners; for they were about two thousand; a very large herd, but there were devils enow in that one man, to possess all these, and run them into the sea: *and were choked in the sea*; not suffocated by the devils, but drowned in the waters of the sea, or lake, as Luke calls it; the lake of Genesareth, or sea of Tiberias and Galilee; which, as often observed, were the same. Though some think it was not this lake or sea, but some other place of water near Gadara. Strabo says<sup>c</sup>, that in the country of Gadara, there was a very bad laky water, of which if cattle tasted, they cast their hair, hoofs, and horns; which perhaps may be the same with what the Talmudists call<sup>d</sup>, בלועה דגדר, *the whirlpool of Gadara*; said to be from the time of the deluge, and so called from its swallowing up every thing that came into it; but the sea of Tiberias seems rather to be the place, where this herd perished. The Jew<sup>e</sup> objects to the destroying this herd of swine as an unjust action, being a great injury to the owners; and seeks to blacken the character of Christ, as being concerned in it: but, as Bishop Kidder<sup>f</sup> well observes, it does not appear that Jesus destroyed it; it were the devils that did it: he suffered them indeed to go into it, nor did he restrain the natural power which they had; nor did he think fit to do it, nor was he obliged to it: but had he destroyed it himself, since he is Lord of all, the proprietor of all creatures, who has all under him, and at his disposal, can give and take away as he pleases, no charge of evil and injustice can be brought against him: and this should be satisfactory to a Christian, who believes him to be God over all blessed for ever; though it will not be to a Jew: let it therefore be further observed, that the owners of these swine were either Jews or Gentiles; if they were Jews, and they brought up these swine in order to eat them themselves, to destroy them was a just punishment, for their violation of the law of God, Deut. xiv. 8. And if they brought them up to sell to others, this was contrary to their own canons; see the note on Matt. viii. 30. to the rules and customs of their own country,

<sup>c</sup> Geogr. p. 1. 6.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 108. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Jacob Aben Amram, port. ver. N<sup>o</sup>. 1098. apud Kidder, Demonstr. of the Messiah, par. 3. p. 51.

<sup>f</sup> Kidder ib. p. 52.

which were made as a fence to keep off from breaking the above law; and such a practice could only proceed from an avaricious disposition, of which this was a proper rebuke: or if they were Gentiles that were the owners of them, these were idolatrous persons, worshippers of devils; and it was but a righteous thing, to suffer the devils, whom they worshipped, to do this mischief to their property, to whom they devoted themselves soul and body; and a Jew can't well find fault with this, who believes that idolaters can't be punished too severely: add to this, what the above learned prelate observes; this practice of the Gentiles in breeding hogs, was a temptation to the Jews to follow the same business, and even to taste of the forbidden flesh; so that to use his words, it was in truth an act of grace and favour to the Jews, to remove from them so dangerous a snare, and so bad an example: and it may be added, by suffering the devils to go into the swine, several valuable ends were answered, infinitely preferable to the herd of swine; such as evincing the truth of the dispossession; shewing the greatness of the mercy to the dispossessed; the power of Christ over the devils; and making for the spread of the fame of this miracle the more; as well as giving further proof of the malignity and mischievous disposition and actions of these evil spirits; by which the inhabitants of the adjacent places might learn, how hurtful they were to them, and what a blessing it was to be rid of them: and therefore ought to have been thankful to Christ for this dispossession, notwithstanding the loss of their swine; but such an effect it had not upon them, but the reverse, as the words following shew.

Ver. 14. *And they that fed the swine, &c.*] Not the owners, but the keepers of them, the swineherds, *fled*; being astonished at the power of Christ, affrighted at the noise of the devils, and terrified at the sight and loss of the swine: *and told it in the city and country*; or *in the fields*: they went into the city of Gadara, and told the story of the dispossession of the devils out of the man, that had been for some time troublesome in those parts; and of their entrance into the swine, and the destruction of them: and they went into the fields, or country adjacent; they went to the *villages* thereabout, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render the word; or to those houses that were in the fields, scattered about, here, and there one, and where perhaps the owners of the herd lived: and they not only hasted away to the owners of the swine, to acquaint them with what had happened, in order to remove all blame from themselves, and any suspicion of negligence in them; to make it appear that it was not their fault, or owing to any carelessness of theirs the swine perished; as that they suffered them to go too near the sea-side, and did not keep a good look-out, and were not, as they should have been, between them and the sea, to have prevented such an accident: this they not only did, but the affair, in all its circumstances, being such an amazing one; as the dispossession of the devils out of the man; the health, the calmness, and happy condition the dispossessed was in; the entrance of the devils into the swine; their madness, and precipitant running

into the sea, and suffocation there; that they told it to every body they met with, whether in the fields belonging to Gadara, or in the city itself; which drew out a large concourse of people to see what was done to the man that had been possessed, and to the swine, and also to see the person who had done all this; and which made the miracle the more notorious; city and country rung of it: so that, as Matthew says, *the whole city came out to meet Jesus*; and Luke observes, that *the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart, &c.* So we sometimes read, in the Jewish writings, of the men, or inhabitants of the field, as opposed to the men, or inhabitants of the city, who differed both in their clothes and diet. "The garments, *רבני מרוחא*, of the children, or inhabitants of the city, who live deliciously, and do no work, are broad, like women's; but the garments, *רבני דוקליתא*, of the children of the field; such as do business in the field, are short<sup>1</sup>:" and so of their food, 'tis observed<sup>2</sup>, that the bread, *דרוקלא*, of the men of the field, which the gloss explains by *בני כפר*, the children, or inhabitants of a village, is what they put much flour into; but the bread, *דמרוחא*, of a city, which the gloss interprets of *בני כרך*, the children, or inhabitants of a walled town, or city, is what they do not put much flour into. *And they went out to see what it was that was done*: that is, the inhabitants of the city of Gadara, and those that dwelt in the villages, and in lone houses in the fields, went forth to the places where the possessed man used to be, and where Jesus and he now were, and where the swine used to feed, to see with their own eyes, and satisfy themselves of the truth of the narration the swineherds gave them.

Ver. 15. *And they come to Jesus, &c.*] Who had wrought this miracle, and of which, and whom, the keepers of the swine had given them some account: *and see him that was possessed of the devil, and had a legion.* The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out the last clause, *and had a legion*, and so Beza's ancient copy; the Persic version renders it, *the legion being gone out of him*: they saw, along with Jesus, the man who had been possessed with a legion of devils, whom they knew very well to be the same man; *sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind, and they were afraid*; not of the man, as they were before, when he was possessed, not daring to come that way because of him; but of Christ, and his amazing power; who was able to dispossess a legion of devils, and restore a man to his perfect senses, to such composure and decency, who was before in such a dreadful condition, and so exceeding furious and outrageous: they saw the man was still and quiet, harmless and inoffensive; they had nothing to fear from him; but they knew not what to make of Christ: they might take him for an exorcist, or a magician, and fear that he would exercise his art to the ruin and destruction of them: they did not fear and reverence him as a divine person, but they dreaded him, as one possessed of a power of doing hurt: they were conscious to themselves of their sins, and that they deserved the just judgments of God upon them; and they were afraid that Christ was sent to execute them upon them: and it is observable, that they say

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 12. 1. & Gloss. in ib.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 37. 2.



not one word to him, by way of complaint, for the loss of their swine; but thought themselves well off, could they but get rid of him. There was a strange change and alteration in the man; he, who before was running about among the tombs, and upon the mountains, and scarce ever sat still, but was always in motion, as persons distracted commonly are, was now *sitting* at the feet of Jesus, his kind benefactor, Luke viii. 35. and he who before was naked, and whenever any clothes were put upon him, tore them off again, and to pieces, as madmen usually do, was now *clothed*; perhaps with some the swineherds had left behind them, in their fright, or the disciples had with them: and he who before was quite out of his senses, knew not what he said, or did, was now *in his right mind*: of a sound mind, of a good understanding, sober, modest, and knowing. This man, as whilst under the possession of Satan, was an emblem of a man in a natural estate; so, being now dispossessed, he very aptly represented a converted man; who, being brought out of a state of nature, out of an horrible pit, a pit wherein is no water, is *sitting* at the feet of Jesus; where he places himself, imploring his grace and mercy, entreating him to receive and save him, resolving, if he perishes, he'll perish there; and where he is, as a scholar, at the feet of his master, hearing his words, and receiving instruction from him; and which also is expressive of his submission to his Gospel and ordinances, and of pleasure and continuance under them; as well as of that calmness and serenity of mind, which attends a sense of justification, pardon, reconciliation, and adoption, and hope of glory: and whereas, before he was naked, and without a righteousness, or, which was no better than filthy rags; he is now *clothed* with the robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation, with *fine* linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints, with change of raiment, and clothing of wrought gold; the righteousness of Christ being not only imputed to him by the father, but revealed in the Gospel, brought near by the spirit, and put upon him, and received by faith; as well as having put on the new man, and being clothed with humility, and other graces of the spirit, and with the garments of a holy conversation; and so will at last be clothed with the shining robes of immortality and glory. Such an one, who before was not himself, is now *in his right mind*: is come to himself like the prodigal; is become sensible of the evil of sin, and is brought to true repentance for it; and of his lost state and condition, of his need of Christ, and salvation by him; has his spiritual senses exercised upon Christ; beholds the loveliness and suitableness of him as a Saviour, hears his voice, handles him, the word of life, tastes the sweetness there is in him, and in his Gospel, and savours the things of his spirit; and whose senses also are exercised to discern between good and evil, and truth and error; who likewise has a new heart, and a right spirit created in him; and has the same mind in him, as was in Jesus Christ, for humility and lowliness; and whose mind is stayed upon him, and trusts in him.

Ver. 16. *And they that saw it, &c.*] Not the keepers of the swine, for they were fled and gone; but others that were eye-witnesses of the whole affair, who lived in houses hard by, or were working in the fields; or

the disciples of Christ: *told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil*; gave a particular account, how, upon first sight of Christ, he ran to meet him, and fell down and worshipped him: how Christ ordered the unclean spirit to come out of him; and how he was dispossessed of a legion of devils by a word speaking: *and also concerning the swine*; how, at the request of the devils, and by the leave of Christ, they entered into them; upon which they ran mad; and betaking themselves to the rocks by the sea-side, fell down the precipice, and were suffocated in the sea.

Ver. 17. *And they began to pray him, &c.*] That is, the inhabitants of the city of Gadara, and of the villages round about, very earnestly importuned him *to depart out of their coasts*; fearing, lest for their sins, some sorer judgment should fall upon them, than the loss of their swine; since they perceived he was a person of great power and authority; which shews great ignorance and worldly-mindedness: they knew not how great a person they had among them; that he was the son of God, and Saviour of the world: they might have known from the miracles wrought, that he was a very wonderful and extraordinary person; but then they considered him as one endowed with great power, rather to do them hurt, than good; as one sent to scourge them for their sins, than to save them from them: such very contrary notions have carnal men, of Christ; they are afraid of being sufferers, or losers by him; they don't care to part with their swinish lusts for him: these they prefer to a Saviour, and love the world, and the things of it, more than he, and therefore are not worthy of him; see the note on Matt. viii. 34.

Ver. 18. *And when he was come into the ship, &c.*] For at the request of these men, who were unworthy of his presence, and of any favour from him, either by his doctrine, or miracles, he turned back to the sea-side again; and as he was about to take ship, *he that had been possessed with the devil, prayed him that he might be with him*: for when Jesus turned his back upon the Gadarenes, and returned to the sea-shore, this poor man, who had received so great a benefit by him, rose up and followed him; and when he perceived that he was entering on ship-board, in order to go over into another country, earnestly entreated he might go over with him in the ship, and continue with him: which he did, partly to testify his great love to him, and the grateful sense he had of the mercy he had received from him; and partly, that he might enjoy his presence, and have his protection: for he might fear, that when he was gone, and should he remain in that country, the devils would repossess him with greater rage and fury. So gracious souls who know Christ, and have received out of his fulness, and grace for grace, earnestly desire to be with him, to enjoy communion with him, receive instruction from him, and be always under his care, influence, and protection. For to be with Christ, is to have his gracious presence; to have nearness to him, and fellowship with him; to have familiarity and acquaintance with him, yet more and more; to be guided with his counsel, and upheld with the right hand of his righteousness: than which, nothing can be more desirable to those that spiritually and savingly know him: for such desires arise from the knowledge they have of his personal glories and excellencies, as

the son of God; and as mediator, he has all power to protect them, all strength to support them, all grace to supply them, all wisdom to direct them, all provisions to feed them, and all blessings of grace and glory to bestow upon them; and from the gracious experience they have had of his favour and loving-kindness, which is better than life; and from the sense they have of their need of him; for without him they can do nothing; they can't perform any duty aright, nor withstand any temptation, or bear up under any affliction: they are sensible of the blessed effects of his presence; they know it brings light to their souls in darkness; that it quickens them when dead and lifeless in their frames and duties, and enlivens their spirits when dull and heavy; that it comforts and rejoices their hearts, and puts more joy and gladness into them, than any outward blessing whatever; that it removes their fears, and emboldens them against their enemies, and is their safety and defence; that it makes ordinances pleasant and delightful, and gives contentment in the meanest state; there is nothing enjoyed by them in this life which gives them the pleasure and satisfaction that does: and hence it is that they often desire even to depart out of this world, that they may be with Christ, which is far better; and indeed, if the presence of Christ is so sweet and desirable now, what will the everlasting, and uninterrupted enjoyment of his presence be in the world to come? for in his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore.

Ver. 19. *Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, &c.*] He being as able to preserve him from those evil spirits, when absent, as present; and besides, to take him along with him, would look like ostentation and boasting, which Christ was averse unto; and more especially, as is clear from what follows, he chose he should stay behind, because he had work for him to do in those parts, which would be for the glory of God, the spread of the knowledge of himself, and his Gospel, among his friends, relations, and countrymen: wherefore it follows, *but saith unto him, go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee*: he bids him go to his own house, as it is in Luke, ch. viii. 39. to the place of his former abode; to the town, or city, where he before dwelt, and where his father and mother, brethren and sisters, wife and children might live; and there relate to them what great things the Lord, or God, as the Ethiopic version reads, had done for him; by casting out a legion of devils from him, and had restored him to his perfect senses and health, and had had compassion on him, both as to his soul and body, and had wrought a great salvation for him. So such as are called by grace, and are turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, ought to go to their Christian friends, and to the church of God, and declare in Zion the great things which God has done for their souls; in enlightening, quickening, converting, and comforting them, to the glory of his rich mercy, and abundant grace. They are great things indeed which the Lord has done for his people: he has done great things for them in eternity; he has loved them with an everlasting love; he has chosen them in his son to holiness and happiness;

he has made a covenant with him, for them, full of spiritual blessings and promises; he has provided him, as a Saviour, for them, and has appointed, and called him to that work; all which is more or less made known to them in effectual vocation, when they receive the spirit of God, that they may know the things which are freely given to them of God. The Lord Jesus Christ has done great things for them, as before time, by engaging for them as their surety; so, in time, by taking upon him their nature, by bearing their sins, and suffering in their room and stead, thereby working out a great salvation, which, in conversion, is brought near, and applied unto them. And the Lord, the spirit, does great things for them, when he calls them by his grace, and afterwards; in opening their eyes who were born blind, and who otherwise must have lift them up in hell; and in bringing them into the marvellous light of the Gospel; in quickening them, when dead in trespasses and sins, who otherwise must have died the second death; in causing them to hear the voice of Christ in the joyful sound of the word, who otherwise must have heard the curses of a righteous law; in taking away their stony hearts, and giving them hearts of flesh; in rescuing them out of Satan's hands; in leading them to Christ for righteousness, life, and salvation; in discovering pardoning grace and mercy to them, through the blood of Christ; in delivering out of many and great temptations; in applying great and precious promises, suitably and seasonably; and in restoring them when backslidden, and speaking comfortably to them; in witnessing to their spirits, their adoption; and in sealing them up to the day of redemption; and all this flows from divine compassion, and not from any motive and merit in the creature. It was sovereign pity and compassion; the Lord has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and has compassion on whom he will have compassion, Rom. ix. 15. It was discriminating mercy: this man was not only possessed of Satan, but possessed of special grace, which caused him to desire to be with Christ, when his countrymen desired him to depart from them; it was shewn him, when he had no pity on himself, when he cut and wounded himself; and it was bestowed upon him, when he could not help himself, when he had a legion of devils within him: and now these great things, which spring from great love and mercy, should be told to others, especially to them that fear the Lord, to the churches of Christ: this is the will of God, and has been the practice of the saints in former ages; it rejoices the hearts of God's people to hear of these things, and enhances the glory of the grace of God: and what may serve to encourage souls to such a work is, that it is to their friends they are to declare these things; who are well disposed to them, rejoice at their conversion, sympathize with them in their troubles, know what the things they speak of mean, and gladly receive them into their affections and fellowship.

Ver. 20. *And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis, &c.*] He submitted to the will of Christ, though he could gladly have gone with him; he hearkened to his instructions, took his advice, and

obeyed his commands, as every one that has received favours from him ought to do: and he went not only to his own, or his father's house, and acquainted his nearest friends and relations with what had befallen him; but he published the account, as Luke says, ch. viii. 39. *throughout the whole city*, very likely of Gadara, where he might be a native; and which, as Pliny<sup>1</sup> relates, was in Decapolis, and agrees with the accounts of both the evangelists: here he published, as Christ had ordered him, *how great things Jesus had done for him*: only instead of saying the Lord had done them for him, he attributed them to Jesus, who is Lord and God; and by that miracle, as by many others, gave full proof of his deity, as well as Messiahship. This is an instance of the obedience of faith, and is a considerable branch of it; for, as with the heart, men believe in Christ unto righteousness, so, with the mouth, confession must be made to the glory of that salvation which Christ has wrought out: many are backward to this part of the service of faith, through fears, through unbelief, and Satan's temptations; but this man, though to have continued with Christ was greatly desirable by him, yet he submits to his will and pleasure, and is obedient to his orders; and that at once, immediately dropping his suit unto him, no longer insisting on his being with him; for he was sensible of the great obligations he was laid under to him, and saw it to be his duty to observe whatever he commanded him: and this was indeed but a reasonable piece of service, and what if he had not been ordered to do, one would think he could not have done otherwise; at least, had he not, he would not have acted the grateful and generous part: and indeed, if such for whom the Lord has done great things as these, should hold their peace, the stones would even cry out. *And all men did marvel*; at the power of Jesus, at the miracle wrought by him, and the benefit the man had received, who they all knew had been in so deplorable a condition. It is not only marvellous to the persons themselves, for whom great things are done by the Lord; but it is amazing to others, to angels and men, when it is considered who they are, on whose account they are wrought; great sinners, very unworthy of such high favours, yea, deserving of the wrath of God, and of eternal damnation; and likewise, who it is that has done these things for them, the Lord of heaven and earth; he against whom they have sinned, and is able both to save, and to destroy; he who is the great God, is their Saviour; to which may be added, the consequence of these things, they issue in everlasting glory and happiness.

Ver. 21. *And when Jesus was passed over again, &c.*] Over the sea of Tiberias, that part of it which was necessary to go over from the country of Gadara, to Capernaum, *by ship, or boat, unto the other side*. This may seem to some unnecessary to be added; and it may be asked, what way but by ship, or boat, could he have gone over to the other side of the sea of Galilee? To which it may be replied,

there was a bridge at Chammath of Gadara<sup>m</sup>, over an arm of this sea, over which Christ and his disciples might have passed, and have gone by land to Capernaum; so that this phrase is very necessarily and significantly used: *much people gathered unto him*; who had before attended on his ministry in these parts, and had seen his miracles; as the casting out of an unclean spirit from a man, healing the centurion's servant, curing the man sick of the palsy, and Simon's wife's mother of a fever, and a man that had a withered hand: *and he was nigh unto the sea*; he seems to have been at Capernaum, which was nigh unto the sea, and in the house of Matthew or Levi, whom he had called at the sea-side from the receipt of custom; see Matt. ix. 9, 10, 18.

Ver. 22. *And behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, &c.*] Having heard of his return, and where he was; see the note on Matt. ix. 18. *Jairus by name*; in Hebrew יַאִיר, *Jair*; and Jerom says<sup>n</sup>, it signifies *enlightening*, or *enlightened*: deriving it from אור, *to be light*: and it is no doubt a Jewish name, since he was a ruler of the synagogue; and besides, it is often mentioned in the Old Testament, and particularly in Ezech. ii. 5. where, in the Septuagint, it is read *ιαϊρος, Jairus*. Matthew makes no mention of his name; but both Mark and Luke do. *And when he saw him, he fell at his feet*: as soon as he came into his presence; though he was a person of such authority; yet having heard much of the doctrine and miracles of Christ, and believing him to be a great prophet, and man of God; though he might not know that he was the Messiah, and truly God, threw himself at his feet; and, as Matthew says, *worshipped him*; shewed great reverence and respect unto him, gave him homage, at least in a civil way, though he might not adore him as God.

Ver. 23. *And besought him greatly, &c.*] Used much importunity with him, and was very urgent in his requests: *saying, my little daughter lieth at the point of death, or is in the last extremity*; just breathing out her last; for she was not actually dead when he left her, though she was before he returned, and was at this time, as he might expect, expiring, or really gone; see the note on Matt. ix. 18. *I pray thee come and lay thine hands on her, that she may be healed, and she shall live*; expressing faith in the power of Christ to restore his daughter, though in the utmost extremity; yet seemed to think his presence, and the imposition of his hands were necessary to it.

Ver. 24. *And Jesus went with him, &c.*] Immediately without objecting to the weakness of his faith: *and much people followed him*; to see the miracle performed, which they were exceedingly fond of: *and thronged him*; so that it was with some difficulty and trouble that he passed along the streets to the ruler's house.

Ver. 25. *And a certain woman which had an issue of blood twelve years.*] See the note on Matt. ix. 20. This woman was in the crowd that thronged Jesus,

<sup>1</sup> Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19

<sup>m</sup> T. Hieros. Erebui, fol. 22. 4.

<sup>n</sup> De Hebr. Nominibus in Luc.

as he passed through the streets of Capernaum. Eusebius relates<sup>o</sup>, that it was reported, that this woman was of Casarea Philippi, where her house was to be seen; where were extant some wonderful monuments of the benefits conferred upon her by Christ; as that at the door of her house was an effigy of a woman in brass, set upon an high stone on her bended knees, and arms stretched out like a suppliant; and opposite to her, another effigy of a man, of the same metal, standing, and decently clothed in a tunic, and his hand stretched out to the woman; at whose feet, upon the pillar, a strange form of a plant arose, reaching up to the border of the brazen tunic, which is a remedy against all diseases; and he says it remained to his times, and was then to be seen: and Theophylact<sup>p</sup> says, in the times of Julian the apostate it was broke to pieces. But this woman rather seems to be an inhabitant of Capernaum, in the streets of which the after cure was wrought; and therefore what credit is to be given to the above accounts I leave to be judged of. It may be more useful to observe, that this profluous woman is an emblem of a sinner in a state of nature: as her disease was in itself an uncleanness, and rendered her unclean by the law, whereby she was unfit for the company and society of others; so the disease of sin, with which all are infected, is a pollution itself, and of a defiling nature; all the members of the body, and all the powers and faculties of the soul are polluted with it, and the whole man is filthy in the sight of God, and is pronounced unclean by the law of God; and such persons are very unfit for the society of saints on earth, and much less to be with those in heaven, nor even to be with moralized persons; for evil communications corrupt good manners: openly profane and impure sinners are infectious, and to be avoided. Likewise, as this woman's disease was of long standing, she had it twelve years, and it was become inveterate and stubborn, and not easy to be removed; so such is the disease of sin, and indeed it is much worse; it is what is brought into the world with men, and is as old as themselves; is natural to them, and cannot be removed by any ordinary and natural methods, but requires supernatural power and grace; and it is in such a like case and condition, that the spirit of God finds his people, when he quickens, sanctifies, and cleanses them: *and when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live, Ezek. xvi. 6.*

Ver. 26. *And had suffered many things of many physicians, &c.]* She took many a nauseous medicine, and had gone through courses of physic with different physicians; for there were many among the Jews that pretended to the cure of fluxes; and various are the prescriptions the Jewish doctors give for such a disorder, as may be seen in their Talmud<sup>q</sup>; and many of which Dr. Lightfoot<sup>r</sup> has transcribed: and among the rest, they direct to the use of gum of Alexandria, alum, saffron, Persian onions, cummin,

and *fœnum græcum*, put into wine and drank. *And had spent all that she had; had wasted her substance, and brought herself to poverty, by pursuing the directions given her; so that she was not in circumstances now to employ a physician; and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse:* the several medicines she had taken had done her no good, had not, in the least, restrained and checked the disorder, but it was rather increased thereby. This is often the case of persons who are, in some measure, sensible of the disease of sin, but are ignorant of the proper methods to be taken for the cure of it. They apply to their own works of righteousness, moral and civil, to the duties of religion, private and public, to a legal repentance, external humiliation and tears, and an outward reformation of life, hoping hereby, in process of time, to be rid of their disorder, and be in good health; whereas these are physicians of no value, and of no real service in their case: they are so far from being the better, that they are rather worse and worse, there being so much impurity, imperfection, and sin, in all these things, and which is increased by a dependence on them; that their iniquities grow upon them, and the score of their transgressions is become greater, and their distemper the more inveterate, and less easy to be cured; yea, not only they spend their money for that which does not bring them a cure, and exhaust all the stock of nature's power to no purpose, but they also *suffer* much hereby. For such a course of action, such conduct and methods as these bring them into a spirit of bondage; for when they fail in their duties, don't come up to the rules prescribed them, what terror of mind possesses them! what horror and wrath does the law work in their consciences! what a fearful looking for is there of fiery indignation, to consume them! It can't be expressed what some have suffered by following such prescriptions.

Ver. 27. *When she had heard of Jesus, &c.]* Of the many miracles he had wrought, and cures he had performed, in cases as difficult and desperate as her's, or more so; and that he was now passing along the streets, *came in the press behind;* though she was so weak, and much enfeebled, as she must needs be, by such, and so long a disorder; yet she ventures into the crowd, which were pushing and pressing after Christ; and got up to him, behind him, being ashamed to tell her case, and desire a cure: *and touched his garment;* the hem or border of it, with her hand, very softly, and in a private manner, so as not to be observed by any. Christ is the sinner's last shift; it tries every one first before it comes to him; it spends all its money, strength, and time, with others, to no purpose; and finding them all to be useless and un-serviceable, it applies to him, who is the only physician that can give relief in this case: like this woman, having heard of his ability to save to the uttermost those that come to him; and being encouraged by the many cures of the worst of sinners, of such who were in the most desperate condition, presses in the

<sup>o</sup> Eocl. Hist. l. 7. c. 18.

<sup>p</sup> In Matt. ix. 20.

<sup>q</sup> T. Bab. Sabbath, fol. 110. l. 2.

<sup>r</sup> Hor. Heb. in loc.

through, through a great many temptations, difficulties, and discouragements thrown in the way by Satan, and its own evil heart of unbelief, and which arise from a sense of vileness and unworthiness; and in a modest and bashful manner, fearing it should be thought presumption in him, and yet persuaded it is the only way for a cure, and that it is to be had in this way, lays hold on the robe of Christ's righteousness, and the garments of his salvation; or, in other words, thus reasons with himself: though I am such a vile, sinful, unrighteous, and impotent creature, yet surely in the Lord there is righteousness and strength, if I can but by faith lay hold thereon; though it be but in a weak way, only by a touch, and in a trembling manner; I shall be justified from all things, I could not be justified by all the works of righteousness I have been doing, and that evidentially and comfortably; and therefore I'll venture and draw nigh unto him, and though he slay me I'll trust in him; I'll throw off my own filthy rags of righteousness; I'll make mention of, and lay hold on his righteousness, and that only; he shall be my salvation. And such an one finds, as this woman afterwards did, a perfect cure, cleansing from all sin, a free and full forgiveness of it, and complete justification from it.

Ver. 28. *For she said, &c.*] Within herself, such were her thoughts, and so great her faith: *if I may touch but his clothes I shall be whole*; see the note on Matt. ix. 21.

Ver. 29. *And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up, &c.*] It was usual with the Jews to call the womb, in which the child is formed, *מִקְוֵה*, a fountain<sup>1</sup>; and because, from hence, issued the blood in a menstruous and profluvious person, they called it, as here, *מִקְוֵה דַמָּה*, the fountain of her blood<sup>2</sup>; and sometimes use the same phrase of the drying up of it, as in this place: they say<sup>3</sup>, when a woman is searched and found to be pure, she is forbidden her house, *עַד שֶׁיִּהְיֶה נֹבַח מֵעֵינָהּ*, until her fountain be dried up; so that as no blood issued from it, there was none in it, and which was now this woman's case, as she found; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague: she not only found by that quick alteration there was in her animal spirits, which were now free and vigorous; but she perceived, in that part of her body, from whence the issue sprung, that she was perfectly well, and that the disorder was entirely gone, which had been for so many years a sore affliction to her, and a severe correction and chastisement of her, as the word used implies. It properly signifies a scourge, as every affliction is, a scourge for sin; and very likely this woman's disease was on the same account: sometimes afflictions are God's scourges in a way of wrath, and sometimes in a fatherly way, in love: *for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth*, Heb. xii. 6. and who, as he wounds, he heals, and which is sensibly perceived by his people. The word *plague* carries in it something more dreadful, and fitly enough expresses the nature of sin, which is a pestilential disease; the

corruption of nature, in-dwelling sin is called the *plague of the heart*, 1 Kings viii. 38. It is a loathsome disease, and without the grace of God, a mortal one; the body of sin, is a body of death; and all sin is of the same nature and kind; the end of it is destruction and death: the healing of it is the forgiveness of sin, which is through the blood of Christ, and the application of it to the soul; which, when made, is sensibly felt, for it immediately produces spiritual joy, peace, and comfort: this makes the bones, which were broken, to rejoice; this bids every son and daughter of the Lord God Almighty to be of good cheer; it causes the inhabitants of Zion to hold their peace, and no more say they are sick, because their sins are forgiven them. And a man may as easily perceive when his spiritual maladies are healed in this way, as when he is cured of any bodily disorder.

Ver. 30. *And Jesus immediately knowing in himself, &c.*] As soon as ever the woman had touched his garments, and had a cure, Christ, who knew all things in his spirit, or divine nature, that dwelt in him, knew what was done, that the woman had touched him, and was healed thereby; though, as not without his knowledge, so neither without his will, and entirely by his power: *that virtue was gone out of him*; to the healing of some person, though not at all to the diminution of that virtue, which remained as powerful and effective in him as ever. This shews that there was an internal essential virtue in Christ to cure diseases: it was not what he derived from another, or exercised under another's influence; but what was his own, and which he put forth as the Lord God omnipotent. The apostles of Christ cured diseases, but not by their own power and holiness, by any innate virtue in them; but in the name of Christ, and by power derived and received from him: but Christ, being God, had infinite virtue within himself, which went forth from him when he pleased, to the curing of whatsoever disease he thought fit; and which was no ways lessened by the frequent exertions of it; no more than the light and heat of the sun by the continual emanations of them; only there is this difference between the emission of light and heat from the sun, and the sending forth virtue from Christ, that the one is by the necessity of nature, without knowledge, or will, but the other voluntarily, and when, and as he pleases. The same holds good with respect to healing spiritual diseases: Christ has a power within him to forgive all trespasses; and virtue may be said to go out of him to this purpose, when it is his will to make application of pardoning mercy to his people; which requires an exertion of power, as well as a display of grace. *Turned him about in the press, and said, who touched my clothes?* that is, turned himself towards the woman behind him, though the press was so large about him, and asked who touched his clothes; not for his own sake, who knew very well who had done it; but that the cure might be known to others: not for the sake of ostentation and popular applause, but for the manifestation of his glory, and for

<sup>1</sup> Maimon. Issure Bia, c. 4. sect. 90, 92. & 5. 3. & 6. 1. *Mish. Nidda*, c. 2. sect. 5.

<sup>2</sup> T. Hieros. Nidda, fol. 50. 2. *Moses Kotsensis Mitsyot Tora*, pr. neg. 111.

<sup>3</sup> T. Hieros. Nidda, fol. 42. 4.

the glory of God, and for the strengthening the faith of Jairus, who was with him, and with whom he was going to raise his daughter to life; and also that he might have an opportunity of shewing forth, and commending this poor woman's faith, and of confirming the cure wrought, and of dismissing her with the utmost pleasure and joy.

Ver. 31. *And his disciples said unto him, &c.*] Peter, and they that were with him; after the crowd that were about him denied that any of them had touched him; see Luke viii. 45. *thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou who touched me?* They seem astonished at his question, and answer with some degree of warmth, and almost ready to charge it as weak and impertinent; since, as there was such a crowd about him, pressing him on every side, he could not but be touched by many; and therefore to ask who touched him, when this was the case, they thought was a very strange and unnecessary question.

Ver. 32. *And he looked round about, &c.*] The press and throng of people, on every side of him; though he knew very well where she stood, who had done the thing, and had received the cure: *to see her that had done this thing;* how she looked, and whether her countenance, and the confusion she was thrown into by the question, would not betray her; though he himself wanted no such signs, by which to discover her. Christ, as God, being omniscient, knew who she was, and where she was; and, as man, did not want to see her to gratify his curiosity: nor was his view to chide her for what she had done, but to express his well-pleas'dness in her faith and actions, and to observe it to others, and the cure she had; not in an ostentatious way, to gain glory to himself, but to commend her faith, and encourage others in the exercise of it on him; and especially Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, who was with him, and in great distress, on account of his daughter, whom Christ was going to raise from the dead.

Ver. 33. *But the woman fearing and trembling, &c.*] Lest she should be reproved, and suffer the penalties of the law, for appearing in public during the time of her uncleanness, Lev. xv. 25. or that Christ was displeas'd with her, for her taking an improper method to obtain her cure; or lest he should recall it, or was angry with her for concealing it, and attempting to go away undiscovered, and without so much as thanking him for it. After conversion, after souls have laid hold on Christ for righteousness and life; after they have had the pardon of their sins, and are cured of their diseases, they are not without their fears and tremblings, though there is no just reason for them: they fear where no fear is; that is, where there is no true cause of fear; which was this woman's case: they are sometimes afraid they have no interest in Christ, and in his love; that they are hypocrites; that the truth of grace is not in them; that they shall never hold out to the end; that they shall perish, and come short of eternal glory, notwithstanding they know, as this woman did, what has been done in them, and done for them. *Knowing what was done in her, and by her;* being conscious to herself that she was the person that had touched him, and that upon it the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she was

thoroughly healed of her disease: *came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.* Christ did not point her out, though he knew her; or call her by her name, though he could have done it, and have ordered her to come to him, and account for her conduct: he had said enough to work upon her, and engage her to come; who came of herself, and with the greatest reverence to his person, and sense of her own unworthiness, threw herself at his feet, and gave him a relation of the whole matter, with the utmost truth and exactness; what had been her case, what was her faith, and what she had done, and what a cure she had received; and which she acknowledged with the greatest thankfulness. In some copies 'tis added, *before all;* before Christ and his disciples, and the throng of people that were along with him: she that came behind Christ, and privately took hold of the hem of his garment, her faith secretly going out unto him; now appears openly before him, not being able to hide herself any longer. Nor is she ashamed to tell what she had done, and had been done in her: truth is to be spoken, even all the truth; no one has reason to be ashamed of that, and especially of the truth of grace, truth in the inward parts; this is what God requires, and gives, and delights in. The secret experiences of grace in our souls we should not be ashamed to relate to others; this makes for the glory of divine grace, and the good of others. In some copies 'tis read, *and told him all her cause before all;* her whole affair, how it had been with her, and now was, and what was the cause of her taking such a method she did.

Ver. 34. *And he said unto her, daughter, &c.*] Instead of reproving her, or shewing any anger, or resentment at her, as she feared, he speaks to her in a very soft, kind, and tender manner, and called her *daughter;* which was not only an expression of affection and civility, this being an affable, courteous way of speaking used by the Jews; but might signify her spiritual relation through him, being a child of God by adopting grace. She was a daughter of Abraham by natural descent, as was the woman bound by Satan eighteen years, Luke xiii. 16. and so she was likewise in a spiritual sense, being one that walked in the steps of his faith, believing in hope against hope; and she was also a daughter of the Lord God Almighty, as her faith shewed her to be, Gal. iii. 26. and to this our Lord may chiefly refer; she was one of those that were predestinated to the adoption of children, and were given to Christ as such; and who are essentially the children of God by faith in him: and to have a testimony of adoption from the spirit of God, and from the mouth of Christ himself, as this woman had; how great a blessing is it! *thy faith hath made thee whole:* through faith in Christ she received the cure from him; for it was not her act of faith that either merited, or procured it, but his power, and he himself the object of her faith that effected it: though he is pleased to take no further notice of the virtue that went out from him; but commends her faith, for her further and future encouragement in the exercise of it, and for the encouragement of others to believe in him. In the Greek text it is, *thy faith hath saved thee;* both from her bodily disease, and from

her sins: not that there is such an intrinsic virtue in faith as to deliver from either; for certain it is, that it was not virtue that went out of her faith, but virtue which went out from Christ that cured her of her issue; though faith was the means of drawing it out; or it was that, through which, virtue from Christ exerted itself, and produced such an effect: and it is as certain, that not faith, but Christ, is the author and cause of spiritual salvation: faith looks to Christ for salvation, and receives every blessing of it from him, as righteousness, peace, pardon, adoption, and eternal life; so that believers are saved by grace, through faith; through the exercise of that grace they have the joy, and comfort of salvation now; and through it they are kept, by the power of God, unto the full possession of it hereafter. *Go in peace:* to thine house; all health and happiness attend thee; let no uneasy thought, about what has passed, dwell on thy mind; be joyful and thankful for the mercy received, and never fear, or dread, a return of the disorder. Peace is the effect of faith in Christ, of pardon through his blood, and salvation in him; true, spiritual, solid peace is enjoyed in a way of believing; it is the fruit of a view of interest in justification by faith in Christ's righteousness; and nothing more effectually produces and secures it than a sense of all spiritual diseases being healed, or an application of pardoning grace and mercy, through the blood of Christ; which itself speaks better things than that of Abel, even pardon, and so peace: such who are blessed in this manner, and walk under a view and sense of these things, go in peace all their days, and at last enter into peace, even into the joy of their Lord. *And be whole of thy plague:* she was so already; but this was a confirmation of it, and what might assure her, that she should remain so, and no more be afflicted with that chastisement. Sin pardoned, though sought for, shall not be found; nor condemnation come upon the pardoned sinner; he is whole and sound, and shall be no more sick, and much less die the second death.

Ver. 35. *While he yet spake, &c.*] The above things to the poor woman, in commendation of her faith, and for her future encouragement, peace, and comfort in soul and body: *there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain that said.* The Vulgate Latin renders it, *from the ruler of the synagogue*, and which is indeed the literal version of the phrase; but they could not come from him in person, for he was with Jesus: hence some versions, as the Arabic and Ethiopic, read, *there came to the ruler of the synagogue*; but the sense is easy, by supplying the word *house*, as we do, and as the Syriac and Persic versions also do. Luke speaks but of *one* that came, ch. viii. 49. whereas this evangelist suggests there were more, which is no contradiction; for Luke does not say there was but one; there might be more that came with the news, though but one related it as the mouth of the rest; or they might come one after another with it. *Which said, thy daughter is dead, why troublest thou the master any further?* these brought him the account that his daughter was actually dead, which he himself feared before; and therefore they thought it was in vain to give Christ any further trouble to drag along through a crowd of people pressing him; whom they looked

upon as a very worthy person, an eminent doctor and prophet, a master in Israel, and one that had done great cures on living persons in distress; yet imagined it was wholly out of his power to raise one from the dead, of which, as yet, they had had no instance, unless the raising of the widow of Naim's son was before this, as indeed it seems to be; but perhaps these persons, who were some of the relations, or domestics of the ruler, had heard nothing of it; for if they had, they might have hoped he would have exerted his power in raising the ruler's daughter, as well as the widow's son.

Ver. 36. *As soon as Jesus had heard the word that was spoken, &c.*] By those that came from the ruler's house; as that his daughter was dead, and it was to no purpose to give him any further trouble, since all hope of recovery was now gone: *he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue:* who was overwhelmed with trouble, and quite dispirited, and ready to swoon and die away; *be not afraid, only believe:* don't be discouraged at these tidings, or distrust my power to help thee, only believe that I am able to raise her, even from the dead; and fear not, but it will be done. If a man can but believe, he has no reason to fear; for what is it that almighty power can't do? it can raise the dead; there is nothing can stand in its way, or stop its course; and faith in it surmounts difficulties which are insuperable to carnal sense and reason: this was the support and foundation of Abraham's faith; hence he was strong in the exercise of it, and believed in hope against hope, because he was fully persuaded that God was able to perform what he had promised, Rom. iv. 18, 20, 21. And whereas the ruler had expressed some faith in Christ, that his daughter, though at the point of death, would be healed by him and live, provided he would but come and lay his hands on her; and Christ had assented to go along with him, and had given him an intimation that he would restore her; he had nothing to do but to believe in him, that even though she was dead, he was able to raise her from the dead, as well as to recover her at the point of death, and that he would do it; but, oh! this thing, *only believe*, how hard a matter is it, though there is so much encouragement to it both in the power and will of Christ! Faith is not of a man's self at first; it is the gift of God, and the operation of his spirit; and the lively and comfortable exercise of it is owing to the influence of efficacious grace: but if Christ, who is the author and finisher of faith, says *believe*, or *only believe*; such power goes along with his words, as doubtless did at this time, as causes souls to exercise faith in him; and the more faith, the less fear; and such walk most comfortably in themselves, and most to the glory of Christ, who walk by faith on him. This word *only* does not exclude the exercise of other graces, but rather implies it, for where this grace is in exercise, generally speaking, others are; nor the performance of good works, which are the fruits and effects of true faith, and without which faith is dead; but it stands opposed to fears and doubting, and to all carnal reasonings, as well as to all trust and confidence in other objects besides Christ.

Ver. 37. *And he suffered no man to follow him, &c.*] To the house of the ruler, but dismissed the multitude,

being not desirous of the honour and applause of men: probably what he said to the ruler, was privately, and with a low voice, so that the multitude did not hear him; and understanding by the messengers that the child was dead, were the more easily prevailed upon to depart, since they might conclude there was nothing now to be done; *save Peter, and James, and John, the brother of James: three favourite disciples, who were a sufficient number of witnesses; and who were taken alone along with Christ on some other occasions, as at his transfiguration, and when in the garden.*

Ver. 38. *And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, &c.]* Along with him, and the three disciples above mentioned; and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read, *and they came*, the above persons: *and seeing the tumult; the throng and crowd of people, of relations, friends, neighbours, and acquaintance, on this occasion, all in a hurry, and in one motion or another, expressing their concern by words and gestures. And them that wept and wailed bitterly; the mourning women, the same with the prefecta of the Romans, who sung mournful songs, and made hideous noises, being hired for this purpose; as also those who played doleful tunes on musical instruments; see the note on Matt. ix. 23.*

Ver. 39. *And when he was come in, &c.]* Into the house, within doors, into one of the apartments, and where the company of mourners, and the pipers, and mourning women were, singing and saying their doleful ditties: *he saith unto them, why make ye this ado and weep? why all this tumult and noise? this grief and mourning, whether real or artificial? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth: not but that she was truly dead, but not so as to remain under the power of death: she was like a person in a sleep, who would in a little time be awaked out of it: and which was as easily performed by Christ, as if she had been only in a natural sleep; see the note on Matt. ix. 24.*

Ver. 40. *And they laughed him to scorn, &c.]* The servants of the house that had laid her out; and the neighbours and relations that were come in on this occasion, and had satisfied themselves that she was dead; and the players on the pipe and flute, with the mourning women, who got their livelihood this way; see the note on Matt. ix. 24. *but when he had put them all out; of the house, or that part of it where he was; that is, ordered them to depart, with the leave and consent of the master of the house: he taketh the father, and the mother, of the damsel, and them that were with him: either with Jairus, who had accompanied him to Christ, and returned with him; the Ethiopic version reads it, with them, who were with the father and the mother of the damsel, their near relations, and intimate friends; or rather with Christ, namely, the three disciples, Peter, James, and John; and entereth in where the damsel was lying; into an inner room, where the child was laid out on a bed.*

Ver. 41. *And he took the damsel by the hand, &c.]*

See the note on Matt. ix. 25. *And said unto her; in the Syriac language, which was then commonly spoken by the Jews, and well understood: hence the Syriac version expresses the following words without an interpretation, Talitha Cumi. The Ethiopic version reads it, Tabitha Cumi; and so do some Greek copies, and Latin versions, taking it to be the same word as in Acts ix. 36. whereas that signifies Dorcas, a roe; but this word is of another signification, as here explained, which is, being interpreted, damsel (I say unto thee) arise. The phrase, I say unto thee, is no part of the interpretation of the above Syriac words; but is added, by the evangelist, as being what was expressed by Christ at the same time, signifying his authority and power over death; only damsel arise, is the interpretation of them. טלית, Tali, signifies a boy, and מלית, Talitha, a girl; and so they are often used in the Targums\*, and in the Talmud: the one is used for a boy of seventeen years of age†, and the other for a girl of sixteen or seventeen years of age‡; so that this child might well be called by this name, since she was but twelve years of age; and קומי, Cumi, is the imperative of קום, to arise.*

Ver. 42. *And straightway the damsel arose, and walked, &c.]* As soon as ever the above words were pronounced by Christ, such divine power went along with them, that the child returned to life; and raised herself up from the bed, got off of it, and walked about the room in perfect health and strength: *for she was of the age of twelve years; and so, when alive and well, was able to walk; though one of this age was called a little one, as this is by another evangelist; see the note on Matt. ix. 18. and they were astonished with a great astonishment; they were exceedingly amazed at such a signal instance of the power of our Lord, even both the parents of the child, and the disciples of Christ.*

Ver. 43. *And he charged them straitly that no man should know it, &c.]* From them, immediately, and whilst he was upon the spot; for that the thing could be long concealed, it was not reasonable to suppose: this charge he gave, to shew his dislike of ostentation and popular applause, and to avoid the envy of the Scribes and Pharisees, and prevent the people from making any attempts to proclaim him king; his time not being yet come to die, he having some other work to do; and a more full manifestation of him being reserved for another time, and to be done in another way. *And commanded that something should be given her to eat; which would be an evidence not only that she was really alive, but that she was restored to perfect health: she was both raised from the dead, and entirely freed from the distemper she laboured under before her death; death had cured her of that, as it does of all distempers: she did not rise with it, but was free from it; and was now like one that had been asleep for a while, and was hungry upon it; as children of such an age generally are upon rising from sleep.*

\* Targum Hiera. in Deut. xxii. 21. & Targum Sheni in Esther. ii. 9.

† T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 142. 2. Gloss. in ib.  
‡ Ib. fol. 91. 2.



## C H A P. VI.

Ver. 1. **AND** he went out from thence, &c.] From Capernaum; and came into his own country; or city, as the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, the city of Nazareth; so called because it was the place where Christ was conceived, and where he was educated; for which he had a regard, and was willing it should partake of the benefit of his doctrine and miracles: and his disciples follow him; as they did wherever he went; and which is a true characteristic of a disciple of Jesus.

Ver. 2. *And when the sabbath-day was come, &c.*] For it seems that it was on a week-day, or on one of the common days of the week, that he entered into the city, where he remained without making himself known, till the sabbath-day came: and then he began to teach in the synagogue; that is, at Nazareth; where he expounded the law and the prophets, and preached the Gospel: and many hearing him were astonished. The Vulgate Latin adds, *at his doctrine*; and so it is read in Beza's most ancient copy: *saying, from whence hath this man these things?* This skill of explaining Scripture, this doctrine which he teaches, and these miracles he is said to work? This question they the rather put, because they had known him from the beginning: he had lived long among them, and they knew he had not learnt of men, and therefore wondered how he came by such things as these: *and what wisdom is this which is given to him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?* which were but the other day employed in servile work, and mechanical operations.

Ver. 3. *Is not this the carpenter? &c.*] Some copies read, *the carpenter's son*, as in Matt. xiii. 55. and so the Arabic and Ethiopic versions; but all the ancient copies, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions, read *the carpenter*: such may Christ be reasonably thought to be, since his father was; and which business he might follow, partly through the meanness and poverty of his parents; and partly that he might set an example of industry and diligence; and chiefly to bear that part of the first Adam's curse, which was to eat his bread with the sweat of his brow: nor ought this to have been objected to him by the Jews, with whom it was usual for their greatest doctors and Rabbins to be of some trade or secular employment; so R. Jochanan was a shoemaker<sup>a</sup>, R. Isaac was a blacksmith<sup>b</sup>, R. Juda was a tailor<sup>c</sup>, Abba Saul and R. Jochanan, were undertakers for funerals<sup>d</sup>; R. Simeon

was a seller of cotton<sup>e</sup>, R. Nehemiah was a ditcher<sup>f</sup>, R. Jose bar Chelphetha was a skinner<sup>g</sup>; and others of them were of other trades, and some exceeding mean: the famous R. Hillel was a hewer of wood, and Carna, a judge in Israel, was a drawer of water<sup>h</sup>; and so Maimonides says, "the great wise men of Israel were some of them hewers of wood and drawers of water<sup>i</sup>." They say, "a man is obliged to learn his son an honest and easy trade<sup>j</sup>:" there are some businesses they except against<sup>k</sup>, but this of a carpenter is not one; yea, they say, "if a man does not teach his son a trade, it is all one as if he taught him thievery<sup>l</sup>." Nor did they think it at all inconsistent with learning; for they have a saying<sup>m</sup>, that "beautiful is the learning of the law, along with a trade." The Jews ought not to have flouted Christ with this trade of a carpenter, since, according to them, it was necessary that a carpenter, in some cases, should be a regular priest; as in repairing of the temple, especially the holy of holies. So says Maimonides<sup>n</sup>; "there was a trap-door, or an open place in the floor of the chamber, open to the holy of holies, that workmen might enter thereby into the holy of holies, when there was a necessity of repairing any thing; and since we make mention of workmen, it may be observed here, when there is need of building in the midst of the temple, great care should be taken, שְׂדֵי הָאוֹמֵן כִּי־בָשָׂר, *that the workman, or carpenter, be a right priest.*" Yea, they expressly say, that the Messiah is one of the four carpenters in Zech. i. 20. *And the Lord shewed me four carpenters; they ask<sup>o</sup>, "who are the four carpenters?" Says R. Chana bar Bizna, says R. Simeon the saint, "Messiah the son of David, Messiah the son of Joseph, and Elijah, and a priest of righteousness."* This is with some variation elsewhere expressed thus<sup>p</sup>, "and the Lord shewed me four carpenters; and these are they, Elijah, and the king Messiah, and Melchizedek, and the anointed for war." And one of their commentators<sup>q</sup> on the same text says, "our Rabbins of blessed memory, explain this verse of the days of the Messiah;" and then cites the above passage out of the Talmud; and another<sup>r</sup> refers unto it; see the note on Matt. xiii. 55. The inhabitants of Nazareth go on, in order to reproach Jesus, calling him *the son of Mary*; a poor woman of their town, and perhaps now a widow, since no mention is made of Joseph: *the brother of James and Joses, and of Juda*

<sup>a</sup> Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 11. T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 104. 2. Cetubot, fol. 34. 1. & 58. 2. Bava Kama, fol. 71. 1.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 24. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 96. 1. Bava Bathra, fol. 170. 1.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 164. 2.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 24. 2.

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 28. 2. Megilla, fol. 17. 1. & 18. 2.

<sup>f</sup> Caphthor, fol. 75. 2.

<sup>g</sup> Ganz Tzenuch David, par. 1. fol. 30. 1.

<sup>h</sup> Maimon. in Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 5.

<sup>i</sup> Ib. Hilch. Talmud Tora, c. 1. sect. 9.

<sup>1</sup> Misn. Kiddush. c. 4. sect. 14. T. Bab. Kiddush. fol. 82. 1. & Beracot, fol. 63. 1.

<sup>2</sup> T. Kiddush. ib.

<sup>3</sup> Ib. fol. 80. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 2.

<sup>5</sup> In Misn. Middot, c. 4. sect. 5.

<sup>6</sup> T. Bab. Succa.

<sup>7</sup> Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 11. 4.

<sup>8</sup> R. David Kimchi in Zech. i. 20.

<sup>9</sup> R. Sol. Jarchi in ib.

and Simon? who were all of them the sons of Alpheus or Cleophas, who was himself brother, or his wife sister, to Joseph or Mary; so that Christ was the near kinsman of these his sons: and it was usual with the Jews to call such an one a brother, and even indeed a more distant relation. The Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, instead of *Joses*, read *Joseph*: and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him: either at the manner he came by his wisdom, with which he delivered such doctrine he did; and by his power, through which he wrought his mighty works, or miracles; they suspecting he came by them in an unlawful way, through familiarity with the devil, which they sometimes charged him with having: or at the meanness of his trade and employment; they could by no means think of him as the Messiah, who made so contemptible a figure, and was brought up in such a low way of life; and the rather, since one of their kings in common, was not to be a mechanic, or at least of any mean occupation: one of their canons runs thus<sup>1</sup>; "they don't appoint to be a king, or an high-priest, one that has been a butcher, or a barber, or a bath-keeper, or a tanner; not because they were unfit, but because their business was mean, and the people would always despise them." Other trades are elsewhere mentioned, from among whom a king, or an high-priest, were never taken; as founders, combers, borers of hand-mills, druggists, weavers, notaries, fullers, a letter of blood, or a surgeon, &c. particularly such as related to women's business. Now, as it was not usual to choose any one to be a king that wrought at a trade, they could not bear that the king Messiah should be of one; and because Jesus was, they were offended at him, and rejected him as the Messiah. Or they were offended at the meanness of his extraction and descent, his father, and mother, and brethren, and sisters, being all persons in low circumstances of life; whereas they expected the Messiah would be born and brought up as a temporal prince, in great grandeur and splendour; see the notes on Matt. xiii. 55, 56, 57.

Ver. 4. *But Jesus said unto them, &c.*] The following proverb; *a prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house*; the same as in Matt. xiii. 57. see the note there. Only the phrase, *among his own kin*, is here added: very probably some of those that made these reflections, were some distant relations of Joseph, or Mary; for as Jesus was now in his own country and city, and in his own native place, so among his kindred and relations; who envied his gifts and attainments, and objected to him his rise from that branch of their family, which was the most mean and abject.

Ver. 5. *And he could there do no mighty work, &c.*] Or miracle; not that Christ had no power in himself to work miracles, though their unbelief and contempt of him were very great; but it was not fit and proper that he should do any there, since such were their prejudices against him: it is an usual way of speaking

with the Hebrews, when either it is not fit and proper that a thing should be done, or they will not do it, to say it *can't* be done; see Gen. xix. 22. and xxxvii. 4. and even it is said of God himself, *So that the Lord could no longer bear, because of your evil doings*, Jer. xlv. 22. Not but that he could if he would, but he would not; nor was it fit and proper that he should; the same is the sense here: besides, in Matt. xiii. 58. 'tis said, *he did not many mighty works there*; and so the Arabic version here, *and he did not many mighty works there*; he did not think it proper to do any of any great consequence, nor did he. Wherefore the Jew<sup>2</sup> has no reason to object this to the divinity of Christ, as if there was a want of power in him. Christ is omnipotent, and he has given proof of his almighty power, by the miracles which he has wrought; and though he wrought no mighty work there, yet he wrought many elsewhere, which sufficiently attest the truth of his proper deity: the emphasis lies upon the word *there*; though he did not work any considerable miracle in that place, he did in others; which shews, that it was not a defect of power in him, that was the reason of it, but something else; and Matthew gives the reason of it, and says, it was *because of their unbelief*: not that their unbelief was an over-match for his power; he could have removed that, if he had thought fit, but he did not do it; he, who is the author and finisher of faith, could have took away their unbelief, as the man that brought his dumb child to Christ, concluded he could; and therefore said to him, *Lord, help my unbelief*, Mark ix. 24. Christ sometimes required of the persons he was about to heal, faith in him, that he could heal them; and so did his apostles, Matt. ix. 28. Acts xiv. 9. Not that faith contributed any thing to the cure, but it was the way and means in which Christ was pleased to communicate his healing virtue: besides, when persons applied to him for healing, and expressed their faith in him, it gave him an opportunity of working a miracle for that purpose; but now these people did not so much as ask such a favour of him, and so gave him no occasion of doing any mighty work; for which reason it may be said, he could not, no opportunity offering: and moreover, seeing they disbelieved him, and rejected him as the Messiah, they were unworthy of having any wrought among them; and it was but just and right, to do none: nay, it was rather an instance of kindness not to do any among them; since had he, and they had remained impenitent and unbelieving, as he knew they would, these would have been aggravations of their condemnation. *Save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them*. There were some few sick people that had faith in him, and came to him, beseeching him to heal them; and accordingly he did lay his hands on them, and cured them, which was a way he sometimes used: and these cures he wrought, to shew his power, what he could do, and what benefits they might have enjoyed by him, and to leave them inexcusable.

Ver. 6. *And he marvelled because of their unbelief, &c.*] Which was the reason, as Matthew says, ch.

<sup>1</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Melachim, c. 1. sect. 6.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 82. 1.

<sup>2</sup> MS. Lusit. N. 83. apud Kidder, Demonstr. of the Messiah, par. 2. p. 59.

xiii. 58. why he did not many mighty works there, because they continued their prejudices against him, and their unbelief in him, notwithstanding what he did do, which was matter of admiration to him; wherefore he took his leave of them, as an ungrateful and unworthy people; and it is never after observed, that he returned there any more. It was a surprise to Christ, as man, that his countrymen should not believe in him, but reject him as the *Méssiah*, on account of the above things: since they knew his parentage and education, and mean employ among them, even almost to that time; and yet such were his ministry and miracles, and such were his wisdom and power he was possessed of, that they could not account for; they might at least have concluded, seeing it was clear to them he had not them from men, that he had a mission and commission from God, and was qualified by him for such service and work; though they might have carried their reasonings further, and it was marvellous they should not, and have believed him to be more than a man, to have been a divine person, and the true *Messiah*; the proofs of Christ's deity and *Messiahship* are so plain and incontestable, that it is amazing that there should be any, who have read them or heard of them, that should be deists, or continue unbelievers. Such unbelief must be owing to a wretched stupidity, and judicial blindness of mind. *And he went round about the villages teaching*: he took a circuit throughout all the little towns and villages round about Nazareth, instructing the ignorant country-people, in the things concerning the kingdom of God.

Ver. 7. *And he called unto him the twelve, &c.*] *His twelve disciples*, as some copies read; whom he had before called by his grace, and had appointed and ordained them his apostles, but had not yet publicly sent forth; in order to which, he now called them to him; and gave them their commission, qualifications, and instructions: *and began to send them forth by two and two*: he first sent forth one couple, and then another; the reason of his sending them by pairs, was partly for the sake of company, and that they might be useful and assisting to one another; and partly to shew their agreement in doctrine; and that they might be proper and sufficient witnesses of it, whereby it might be established; and the rather, being thus sent by pairs into different parts, their message would be the sooner dispatched, than if they had all went together: *and gave them power over unclean spirits*; that is, *to cast them out*; as it is expressed in Matt. x. 1. see the note there; and which is here added in the Syriac and Persic versions. Many things are omitted by this evangelist, which are mentioned by Matthew: he does not give us the names of the twelve apostles; the reason of that indeed may be, because they are related by him in ch. iii. 16—19. and he did not choose to repeat them here: nor does he take any notice of the places where the apostles were to go, and where not; nor of the persons to whom, or not; as not into the way of the Gentiles, nor into any of the cities of the Samaritans, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel: nor does he say any thing of the subject-matter of their ministry, or what they had in charge to publish; as that the kingdom of heaven

is at hand, or the Gospel dispensation: nor does he observe the several things they were to do in confirmation of their doctrine and mission; as healing the sick, cleansing lepers, raising the dead, and casting out devils: he only relates the directions given them with respect to their journey, in the following verses; the reason of all which seems to be, because he refers not to the same time as Matthew does, to their appointment and ordination; but to the time they were sent out, and proceeded on their journey.

Ver. 8. *And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, &c.*] To accommodate them in it, except those things after directed to: *save a staff only*; a single one, for staves in the plural number are forbidden, Matt. x. 10. see the note there; *no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse*. Travellers used to put their bread, or any other sort of food into their scrips, and their money in their girdles; but the disciples were not allowed to carry either, because provision was to be made for them wherever they came at free cost, it being what their labour was worthy of; see the notes on Matt. x. 9. 10.

Ver. 9. *But he shod with sandals, &c.*] Which were different from shoes, and more fit to travel with, and therefore allowed when shoes were forbidden; see the note on Matt. x. 10. though some think there was no difference between shoes and sandals, and that Christ, in Matt. x. 10. does not forbid the taking of shoes, but two pair of shoes; as not two coats, nor two staves, but one of a sort only. *And not put on two coats*; that is, at a time; an inner and an outward one, or one at one time, and another at another: they were forbid change of raiment; the reasons for it see in the note on Matt. x. 10. From all which it appears, that as a minister of the Gospel ought not to be a worldly-minded man, that minds earth and earthly things, and seeks to amass wealth and riches to himself, and preaches for filthy lucre's sake; nor to be a sensual and voluptuous man, serving his own belly; and not the Lord Jesus Christ, feeding himself, and not the flock; so neither should he be filled with worldly cares, overwhelmed in worldly business, and entangled with the affairs of this life: he ought to have his mind free from all solicitude and anxious concern, about a subsistence for himself and his, that so he may with greater and more close application attend to his ministry, to preparations for it, and the performance of it; and give up himself entirely to the word and prayer, and not have his mind distracted with other things: upon which account it is highly necessary, that the people to whom he ministers should take care, that a sufficient provision be made for him; that he may live without any anxious care and thought about such things, and his mind be more intent about the work he is called unto: and which is what our Lord chiefly designs by all this, who has ordained that they that preach the Gospel, should be comfortably provided for, and live of it; and which, as it makes for the peace of their minds that minister, it issues in the advantage of those who are ministered to.

Ver. 10. *And he said unto them, &c.*] He con-

tinued giving orders and directions to them, saying, *in what place soever you enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place*: that is, in whatsoever city or town they should come to, the first house they went into, they should continue in, during their stay in that city or town, and not shift from house to house; see the note on Matt. x. 11.

Ver. 11. *And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, &c.*] Who would neither take them into their houses, nor hear what they had to say to them: *when ye depart thence*; from the house or the city, or town, in which it is, *shake off the dust under your feet, for a testimony against them*; that they had been with them, and attempted to preach the Gospel to them, but they despised and rejected it; wherefore they departed from them as an unworthy people, against whom the dust of their feet would rise as a testimony, in the day of judgment; see the note on Matt. x. 14. *Verily, I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.* This clause is omitted in some copies, and so it is in the Vulgate Latin version, and may perhaps be transcribed from Matt. x. 15. see the note there; though it is in most copies, and is read in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions. It is certain that there will be a day of judgment; it is fixed, God has appointed it, though it is not known by men or angels: this will be universal; all must appear in it before God, the judge of all, Jews and Gentiles; such who have lived in the earlier ages of time, as well as those that will live nearer that day; such who have only had the dim light of nature to guide them, and also who have been favoured with the Gospel revelation: the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha, though they have had the judgments of God upon them in this world, they will not escape the righteous judgment of God hereafter; things are not over with them, there is still a reckoning to be made, an account to pass with them; their full punishment is not yet executed, even though they have been suffering the vengeance of eternal fire; their bodies must be raised, and they must receive for the things which they have done in them, and which they have so dreadfully and unnaturally abused; and yet, as vile sinners as they have been, and as sore a punishment as they are worthy of, their punishment will be milder and more tolerable, than that of the inhabitants of such places, where the Gospel has been preached, and they have despised and rejected it. May the inhabitants of our land, especially of some parts of it, as of London, and others, consider this!

Ver. 12. *And they went out, &c.*] From that part of the country where they then were, some one way, and some another, two by two, with these instructions, and according to these directions; in order to preach the word, and work miracles, in the several parts where they were sent: *and preached that men should repent*; both of the evil practices which they were guilty of, and of the bad principles they had imbibed, and change both their sentiments and their

conduct: this they exhorted them to, as John the Baptist, and Christ, had done before, who set out in their ministry the same way; and these, as they did also, preached the Gospel, and the things appertaining to the kingdom of God, and Gospel dispensation, and called upon men to believe them. For faith and repentance went together in Christ's ministry, Mark i. 15. and so they did in the ministry of John the Baptist, Acts xix. 4. and in the ministry of the apostles, Acts xx. 21. When they preached that men should repent, it does not from hence follow, that they have a power to repent of themselves: for such is the condition of men by nature, that they neither see their need of repentance, and their hearts are so hard and obdurate, that they cannot work themselves up to it, or work it in them, and exercise it; this requires the powerful and efficacious grace of God to produce it, and it is a gift of his grace; and if he gives the means, and not the grace of repentance itself, it will never appear: but the apostles preaching that men should repent, shews that they were in such a state as to need it; and how necessary it was for them to have it, seeing without it they must all perish: and such a ministration is proper, to awaken the minds of men to a sense of the need of it, and to direct them to Christ the Saviour, who is exalted to give it, as well as the remission of sins.

Ver. 13. *And they cast out many devils, &c.*] Which they had power given them to do; and this they did, in confirmation of their mission and doctrine, and for the benefit of miserable creatures, who were possessed by them; and to shew their power over the devils, and as a prelude of what they were to be the instruments of, in casting Satan out of the souls of men, both Jews and Gentiles; and especially, in the ejection of him out of the Gentile world: *and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.* This they were doubtless directed to by Christ, as an outward sign of healing; but not as a medicine; otherwise there would have been no miracle in the cure: though it is certain, the Jews used anointing with oil medicinally in many cases, as the means of healing; but they did not always succeed, as the apostles did: on the day of atonement\*, "it was not lawful to anoint part of the body, as the whole body; but if a man was sick, or had ulcers on his head, he might anoint according to his usual way, and no notice was taken on't." Again†, "a man may not anoint with wine, or vinegar, but he may anoint with oil: he that has a pain in his head, or has ulcers upon him, מִן שֶׁנֶּן, *he may anoint with oil*, but he may not anoint with wine and vinegar: wine of the second tithe, which they mix, is forbidden to anoint with; oil of the second tithe, which they mix, is lawful to anoint with." And it is elsewhere said‡, that R. Meir allowed of the mixing of oil and wine, "לִסְדֵךְ לְדוּלְיָהּ, *to anoint the sick on a sabbath*; but when he was sick, and we sought to do so to him, he would not suffer us." But that oil was used by the apostles as a medicine for the healing

\* T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 77. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Shebitat Ashur, c. 3. sect. 9.

† T. Hieros. Maaser Sheni, fol. 53. 2.

‡ Ib. Beracot, fol. 3. 1. & Sabbat, fol. 14. 3.

of diseases, cannot well be thought; since oil, though it may be useful in some cases, it is not an universal medicine, which is proper to all; nor were the apostles instructed by Christ in the art of physic, but were possessed by him with extraordinary gifts, to cure the disorders of the body, for the confirmation of the Gospel, which they preached; and it is easy to observe, that healing the sick by anointing with oil, is joined with the extraordinary power of casting out devils; and it was the same power by which they performed the one, as the other; see Luke ix. 1, 2, 6. Hence it appears, that this passage gives no countenance to the use of such a practice in our days; since these were apostles only, who used it, who were extraordinary persons, and whose office in the church was an extraordinary one, and is now ceased; and healing in this way, was by an extraordinary power bestowed upon them, which has ceased; and therefore the rite, or ceremony of anointing with oil, for such a purpose, should be of course discontinued; however, it cannot be supported by this instance, whatever countenance it may seem to have from James v. 14. for it must be owned, there is some difference in the passages: the persons that anointed here were apostles, there the elders of the church; the persons anointed there, were good people, the members of the church, but here any sort of persons, and chiefly, if not altogether unbelievers; the healing of them is ascribed to the prayer of faith in James, but here to the extraordinary power of the apostles, by anointing with oil; though it may be, the healing was equally miraculous in the one, as the other: but be this as it will, nothing can be concluded from hence, in favour of the sacrament of extreme unction, used by the Papists; who administer that to persons, just at the point of death, and that for the remission of their sins, and the saving of their souls; whereas oil was used by the apostles to sick persons, and for the recovery of their bodily health. But since these were extraordinary cures which they performed this way, why did they make use of oil at all, seeing the virtue of healing did not come from that, and they could as well have healed sicknesses without it, as with it? To which it may be replied, that they did not always make use of it; sometimes only words were expressed, sometimes only hands were laid on the sick, and sometimes the sick persons were healed by handkerchiefs and aprons taken from them; which shew, that the *healing* virtue was not in the means, nor was it tied to any: moreover, this was only used as an outward sign of healing, and might have some spiritual significance in it; it might shew, that they were sent forth by Christ the anointed one, who is anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows; it might be symbolical of the grace of the spirit, which is often compared to oil, which they themselves were possessed of in a large measure, and which is communicated through the ministration of the Gospel; and it might be significative of the Gospel itself, which brings light and joy, health and comfort along with it, to the souls of men, which they were the happy messengers of.

Ver. 14. *And king Herod heard of him, &c.] Of*

*Jesus*, as the Syriac version supplies it; or *the miracles of Jesus*, as the Persic version. This Herod here called a *king*, as he might be by his courtiers, and the common people, is the same with the Tetrarch in Matt. xiv. 1. Luke ix. 7. for he was only Tetrarch of Galilee. This was Herod Antipater, the son of Herod the Great; the fame of Jesus reached his ears, he being governor of those parts, which were mostly visited by Christ: *for his name was spread abroad*; by means of his ministry and miracles, and through those of his disciples, whom he had sent two by two into all parts of the country: *and he said that John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him*; for Herod had some time before put John to death; and hearing of these wonderful things that were done by Christ, his conscience smote him for the murder of John; and such a thought struck into his mind, that he was risen from the dead, and did these miracles: and the more he thought of it, the more strongly he was persuaded of it; and told it to his courtiers with a great deal of assurance, that it was certainly he; see the note on Matt. xiv. 2.

Ver. 15. *Others said that it is Elias, &c.]* This was the opinion, either of many of the Jews, who expected that Elias the Tishbite would come in person, before the coming of the Messiah; and thought by the appearance and wonderful works of Jesus, that he was now come: or of Herod's courtiers, who said this to divert him from his notion of John the Baptist, which they might perceive was very distressing to him; though the former seems rather to be the sense: *others said, that it is a prophet: or the prophet*, that was to come, whom Moses had spoken of, and the Jews expected; this was the opinion of others of them: *or as one of the prophets*. The word *or*, is left out in some copies; and so it is in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; and then the sense is, this new prophet lately raised up, is as one of the old prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others; or one of them had risen up.

Ver. 16. *But when Herod heard thereof, &c.]* Either of Christ, or rather of the different opinions about him, *he said, it is John, whom I have beheaded*: the thought stuck close to him, and continued with him; he could not get rid of it, nor persuade himself to the contrary; nor could any of his servants get him off of it, but he affirmed it with the greatest assurance imaginable. These different sentiments of the people concerning Jesus, greatly perplexed the mind of Herod, as appears from Luke ix. 7, 8, 9. for it was first given out by others, and not by Herod, that John the Baptist was risen from the dead; which he hearing of, gave him great uneasiness: he thoroughly considered the matter; he called to mind how he had used him, imprisoned him, and put him to death. At first he could not receive it, that since he was beheaded by him, he should be restored to life; but hearing of the miracles that were done by him, his conscience accused him, his fancy worked, and at length he firmly believed it, that he must be risen: and this sentiment, which he himself gave into at last, distressed him above all the rest, because of his concern in his death, fearing he

was come to life to take vengeance on him: it might not sit very easy upon his mind, to hear that Elias had appeared the forerunner of the Messiah, the king of the Jews; who himself might be quickly expected, and who, he might fear, would seize upon, and take away that part of the kingdom which he was possessed of: and even to be told, that one of the prophets was risen from the dead, might be shocking to him; imagining that something of considerable moment was to be done, some revolution to be made; that the people would be stirred up by him, to attempt a change of government: but the first of these made the greatest impression on him, and what he could not get off, but fully gave into, as a thing unquestionable. He owns he beheaded John; he was conscious to himself of the sin, and confesses it; he does not lay it to the charge of Herodias and her daughter, though they requested it; the guilt of it lay upon his conscience, and he dreaded this appearance of John, as he fancied. And if he was a Sadducee before, as he has been thought to be, he now changed his mind, and believed a resurrection from the dead. So men may be convinced of sin, and entertain other and better notions of religion, and yet not be converted persons.

Ver. 17. *For Herod himself had sent forth, &c.*] Some of his guard, a detachment of soldiers, and laid hold upon John; who seized upon him, and took him up: and bound him in prison; in the castle of Machærus: for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife, for he had married her; whilst his brother was living, and who had had children by her; see the note on Matt. xiv. 3.

Ver. 18. *For John had said unto Herod, &c.*] He had been personally with him, and had plainly and freely told him of his sin, and faithfully reproved him for it; alleging what he had done was contrary to the law of God: *it is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife*; see the note on Matt. xiv. 4.

Ver. 19. *Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, &c.*] Was angry with him, conceived wrath, and laid up hatred against him, and was an adversary to him; which is the sense of the Oriental versions. She bore him an inward grudge, and lay in wait to take the first opportunity of dispatching him: and would have killed him, but she could not; being hindered by Herod, who as yet would not suffer it; partly through fear of the people, and partly through the respect he had for John.

Ver. 20. *For Herod feared John, &c.*] Had him in great respect; he had a great veneration for him; which was the reason that Herodias could not as yet accomplish her design against him, and vent her rage upon him. Though some understand this not of his reverence, but of his dread of him: he knew as follows, that he was a man exemplary for justice and holiness, which gained him great esteem among the people; wherefore, though Herod, as well as Herodias, could very willingly have put him to death, yet, as Matthew says, *he feared the multitude*: who, in general, had an high opinion of John as a pro-

phet, and a holy good man: he feared therefore to take away his life, lest they should rise and rebel against him; nor would he suffer Herodias to do it, for the same reason. *Knowing that he was a just man, and an holy*; by what he had heard of him, by his own conversation with him, and the observation he had made upon his tenets and conduct. He was a *just, or righteous man*, in a civil, legal, and evangelical sense: he did that which was just, between man and man; he did to others, as he would be done by himself; he was outwardly righteous before men, he lived soberly and righteously; nor was he chargeable with any notorious breach of the law; his conversation was strictly moral: and he was just or righteous before God, through the righteousness of Christ imputed to him; in whom he believed, and to whom he looked as the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world: but it was in the former sense, that he was known by Herod to be a just man; who only could pass such a judgment upon him, by his outward conduct and manner of life: and so as he had true principles of internal holiness wrought in him by the spirit of God, with which he was filled from his mother's womb; he was externally holy in his walk and conversation, which was visible to others, and was taken notice of by this wicked prince: the former of these characters may regard his justice, uprightness, and integrity among men; the latter, his piety and devotion unto God: and the whole agrees with the account the Jewish historian<sup>2</sup> gives of him, that he was "an excellent good man, who stirred up the Jews to the study of virtue, and especially piety and justice." These were epithets, which used to be given to men, famous for religion and piety; so we read of Simeon, צדיק, *the just*<sup>2</sup>, and of R. Simeon, קדוש, *the holy one*<sup>3</sup>: and observed him: or kept him in custody, in prison, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic render it; and did not put him to death, but preserved him from the designs of Herodias against him. Or he observed and took notice of what he had heard him say in his ministry; he laid it up, and kept it in his mind, and memory; the remembrance of which kept him in awe, and he durst not, and could not for the present, give heed to the solicitations of Herodias, or suffer her to take away his life: and he also observed his exemplary life and conversation, which was so just and upright, that his conscience would not admit him to give him up to her will and pleasure. *And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly*: when he heard John explain the law and the prophets, open the writings of the Old Testament, preach the doctrine of repentance towards God, and faith in the Messiah to come; set forth the evil, danger, and punishment of sin, and exhorted to a holy life and conversation; taught the doctrine of baptism for the remission of sin by Christ, and spoke of the glories and happiness of a future state, and of the nature of the Gospel dispensation, just now ushering in; Herod, like one of the stony-ground hearers, received the word with joy, was

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. Antiqu. l. 18. c. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 2.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Succah, fol. 52. 2.

pleased with it, and in some things outwardly reformed: but the word did not take root in his heart, and therefore what external effects it produced, came to nothing; nor was he able to withstand the lusts and corruptions of his heart. The sense seems to be, that while he was hearing John, his natural affections were moved, and he had a kind of pleasure in the things he delivered; just as the Jews for a season rejoiced in his light, John v. 35. his natural conscience dictating to him, that the things which were spoken, were right, and just, and good; and they were delivered in such a solemn and striking manner, as commanded attention and awe; and were things of such a nature and importance, that from a principle of self-love, he could not but wish himself an interest in: and so far they had such an influence upon him, as to engage him to do many things in an external way, which had the appearance of good, at least of moral good: so that it is manifest from hence, that persons may have a natural affection for the ministry of the word, and seem delighted with it for a while; yea, may do a great many good actions, which seem to be such; and yet the word come in word only, and not in power: there may be all this, and yet true grace may not be wrought, and the word not be the engrafted word, which is able to save. In one of Beza's copies, and so in one of Stephens's, and in the Coptic version, instead of *he did many things*, it is read, *he hesitated much*: he was perplexed and distressed, he did not know what to do with himself; his conscience was uneasy, some things were pleasing to him, and others greatly afflicted him; his mind was distracted, he could not tell what to think, say, or do: however, it had such an effect upon him, that he had some respect for John; a veneration of him; at least, some fear and dread of him, which kept him from taking away his life, or suffering any others to do it.

Ver. 21. *And when a convenient day was come, &c.*] For Herodias; who had long sought and watched for an opportunity of avenging herself on John, and such a time Herod's birth-day proved; though some think, that this phrase is the same with יום טוב, a good day; often used by the Jews for a festival, any one of their feast-days; there is a tract in their Misna which bears this name; and that such a day was this. But not one of the festivals of the Jews was this, as either their passover, or pentecost, or feast of tabernacles, which Herod had no regard to; but his own birth-day, which he kept as a festival, in eating, and drinking, and dancing; and so was a very opportune and reasonable time for Herodias to take the advantage of Herod when in a good humour, amidst his company, and in his cups, to solicit that, which she had often done without success: and so it was now, that Herod on his birth-day made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee: this birth-day, was either the day of his natural, or civil birth; the day when he was born into the world, or of his accession to the throne; see the note on Matt. xiv. 6. when he made a grand entertainment in the evening for his nobles, and the officers of the army, the captains of thousands, and the principal men, those

of the first rank and quality in Galilee, of which he was Tetrarch.

Ver. 22. *And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, &c.*] To the hall, where Herod and his guests were, after supper was over; or rather, whilst at it: she is called the daughter of Herodias, and not of Herod; she having had her not by him, but by his brother Philip: her name is thought to be Salome; see the note on Matt. xiv. 6. *and danced and pleased Herod, and them that were with him*; at supper, his lords, captains, and principal men in his dominions; see the note as before. *The king said unto the damsel, ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee*; which shews how exceedingly pleased he was; and the more, in that she gave such general pleasure to his whole company.

Ver. 23. *And he swore unto her, &c.*] He added an oath to what he had before said, the more to confirm it, and to encourage her in her request, and which he repeated in stronger language: *whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom*: see the note on Matt. xiv. 7.

Ver. 24. *And she went forth and said unto her mother, &c.*] The king having made such a promise to her, and annexed his oath to it, she thought proper before she asked any thing of him, to withdraw from the hall and company, and consider with herself, and consult with her mother, who was not at the entertainment; it being not usual in those eastern countries, for women to sit at table, at any grand festival: to whom she reported the offer the king had made, and desired she would be pleased to direct her, what request to make: saying, *what shall I ask?* To which her mother made answer, without taking any further time to think of it, being prepared for it, and determined in her mind, whenever she had an opportunity of asking a favour of the king, what it should be: *and she said, the head of John the Baptist*. So sweet is revenge, that to have her will on that great and good man, was more to her, than to have half the king's dominions.

Ver. 25. *And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, &c.*] Having had her mother's advice, and being hastened by her, she immediately returned to the hall, where the king and his guests were, with much concern, eagerness, and diligence: *and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger, the head of John the Baptist*: her petition proceeding upon a promise with an oath, is presented by way of demand; insisting upon it, that in a very little time, *this hour*, as the Syriac version renders it, within an hour's time, or less; *and here*, as Matthew has it, in that very place, and whilst the company was there; that orders should be given to cut off the head of John the Baptist, and that that should be brought, in a large dish, unto her; and this was what she had to ask, and insisted upon the immediate and punctual performance of it; see the note on Matt. xiv. 8.

Ver. 26. *And the king was exceeding sorry, &c.*] See the note on Matt. xiv. 9. *yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him*; as Matthew adds, *at meat*; for it seems as if supper was not over, when all this was transacting. *He would not reject her*; deny

her her request, or send her away without granting it; which could not be without grieving her, and treating her with contempt, and defrauding her of the promise; all which ideas are expressed by some versions.

Ver. 27. *And immediately the king sent an executioner, &c.]* See the note on Matt. xiv. 10. *and commanded his head to be brought;* ordered him to cut off his head in prison, and bring it away forthwith in a charger to him: *and he went and beheaded him in the prison;* according to his orders.

Ver. 28. *And brought his head in a charger, &c.]* In a large dish, to Herod, who gave it to the damsel; the daughter of Herodias, as she had requested: *and the damsel gave it to her mother;* who had instigated her to it; see the note on Matt. xiv. 11.

Ver. 29. *And when his disciples heard of it, &c.]* That is, when the disciples of John heard of this barbarous execution of their master, *they came;* to the prison in the castle of Machærus, *and took up his corpse;* the trunk of his body; for his head was carried away, to glut the revenge of Herodias; *and laid it in a tomb;* see the note on Matt. xiv. 12.

Ver. 30. *And the apostles gathered themselves together, &c.]* The twelve apostles of Christ, whom he had sent out, two by two, into different parts, having gone through them, and finished the embassy, they were sent about, met together in one place, and came in a body together, *unto Jesus:* their Lord and master, who had sent them, and to whom they were accountable, as all the ministers of the Gospel are: *and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught;* they gave him an exact and full account of what miracles were wrought by them, what diseases they had cured, and what a number of devils they had cast out; and also what doctrines they had preached, and what success in all they had had: so every Gospel minister must give an account of his ministrations to Christ.

Ver. 31. *And he said unto them, &c.]* After he had heard their account, was satisfied with it, and approved of what they had said and done: *come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while:* where they might be free from noise and hurry, and take some rest and refreshment, after their wearisome journey, hard labours, and great fatigue in preaching and working miracles; which shews the great compassion, tenderness, and care of Christ for his disciples: *for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat;* the people were continually going to and fro; as soon as one company was gone, who came with their sick and diseased to be healed, or upon one account or another, another came: so that there was no opportunity of private meditation and prayer, nor of spiritual converse together: nor even so much as to eat a meal's meat for the refreshment of nature.

Ver. 32. *And they departed into a desert place, &c.]* Which belonged to the city of Bethsaida, Luke ix. 10. *by ship, privately;* over some part of the sea of Tiberias, this place lying on a more remote side of it.

Ver. 33. *And the people saw them departing, &c.]* The multitude that came to and fro, saw Christ and his disciples taking ship, and launching off; for though they were as private as could be, and intended to have

gone in a very private manner, yet the people observed them: *and many knew him:* Jesus; some copies read, *them;* and so do the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; they knew both Christ and his disciples, though they were in the ship, and at some distance: *and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and out-went them, and came together unto him;* they went on foot, as they might from Capernaum, Nazareth, and the parts adjacent, over the bridge at Chammath of Gadara, to this place, that belonged to Bethsaida; whither they perceived they steered, and made such haste, that they got thither before them; and the people that flocked from several cities met together, and came to Jesus, to hear his doctrine, and see his miracles.

Ver. 34. *And Jesus, when he came out, &c.]* Of the ship, and was got ashore, *saw much people;* who came partly from the places where he came from, and partly from the cities and towns adjacent: *and was moved with compassion towards them;* see the note on Matt. xiv. 14. the reason follows, *because they were as sheep, not having a shepherd.* Christ observed, that they were hungering and thirsting after the word of righteousness, and had no faithful, spiritual pastors to feed them with knowledge and understanding; for the Scribes and Pharisees were blind guides, and shepherds that could not understand; so that the people were ready to perish for lack of knowledge, not having any spiritual comfort and refreshment under their ministry: hence they followed Christ, wherever he went, with great zeal and fervency, earnestly desiring the bread of life: this moved his compassion, so that though his view in coming to this place was retirement, and that his disciples might have some rest and refreshment, and might solace themselves in private conversation with him, and each other; yet postponing private advantage to public good, instead of reproving them for giving him this fresh trouble, kindly and tenderly received them: *and he began to teach them many things;* relating to the kingdom of God, the Gospel dispensation, the doctrines and ordinances of it; things relating to their spiritual and eternal welfare, the comfort, and salvation of their immortal souls: and he dwelt long upon these subjects, because he found they were very ignorant, and needed instruction, and were very desirous of it; as well as healed all such of bodily diseases that stood in need thereof; of which Matthew only takes notice; as Mark only of doctrine; but Luke mentions both doctrine and miracles of healing.

Ver. 35. *And when the day was now far spent, &c.]* Or much time was gone, in teaching the people, and healing the sick: *his disciples came unto him;* nearer to him, as he was preaching, or healing the sick; *and said, this is a desert place, and now the time is far passed;* see the note on Matt. xiv. 15.

Ver. 36. *Send them away, &c.]* Leave off preaching, dismiss the assembly; see Matt. xiv. 15. *that they may go into the country round about;* or into the fields; that is, to the odd houses; which were here and there in the fields; see the note on ch. v. 14. *and into the villages;* the little country-towns that were near at hand: *and buy themselves bread, for they have nothing to eat;* they brought no provisions with them, and there were none to be had in that desert place; and it was high



time they had some refreshment; for the usual time of dining was past, the first evening was come, the day was on the decline, and was far spent.

Ver. 37. *He answered and said unto them, give ye them to eat, &c.*] This he said to try their faith, and make way for the following miracle: *and they say unto him, shall we go and buy two hundred penny-worth of bread, and give them to eat?* This might be just the sum of money they now had in the bag, as Grotius, and others conjecture; and the sense be, shall we lay out the two hundred pence, which is all we have in hand, to buy bread for this multitude? is it proper we should? is it thy will that so it should be? and if we should do so, as Philip suggests, John. vi. 7. it would not be enough to give every one a little: wherefore they say this, as amazed that he should propose such a thing unto them: or the reason of mentioning such a sum, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, might be, because that this was a noted and celebrated sum among the Jews, and frequently mentioned by them. A virgin's dowry, upon marriage, was *two hundred pence*<sup>c</sup>; and so was a widow's; and one that was divorced<sup>d</sup>, if she insisted on it, and could make good her claim: this was the fine of an adult man, that lay with one under age; and of a male under age, that lay with a female adult<sup>e</sup>; and of one man that gave another a slap of the face<sup>f</sup>. This sum answered to six pounds and five shillings of our money.

Ver. 38. *And he saith unto them, how many loaves have ye? &c.*] This he said, not as ignorant, but as willing to try their faith yet more, and that the after miracle might be more manifest and illustrious: *go and see*; meaning, either that they should examine their own store, if they had any; or rather go and see what was to be had upon the spot, among the company, for money; *and when they knew, they say five loaves and two fishes*: when they had made inquiry what provisions there were, and the most that could be got at any rate, they tell him, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, particularly, that there was a boy among the multitude that had five barley loaves, and two small fishes; and, at the same time, suggests, that they were nothing for so great a company.

Ver. 39. *And he commanded them to make all sit down, &c.*] Christ ordered his disciples, without any more ado, to cause the whole multitude, men, women, and children, to sit, or lie down, as they used to do at table when about to take a meal: and as they had no table before them, nor beds, or couches to sit, or lie down upon, he directed them to place them *by companies upon the green grass*; that there might be some order among them, as at a meal; and that their number might be the more easily known; and that all of them might more plainly see the miracle that was to be wrought: and the provision be more orderly distributed to them.

Ver. 40. *And they sat down in ranks, &c.*] Or *beds*: in such form as little beds are placed in a garden, or as rows of vines in a vineyard, in which form the scholars of the wise men sat in their schools: it is said<sup>g</sup>,

“ R. Eliezer ben Azariah expounded before the wise “ men in the vineyard (*i. e.* the university) of Jabneh: “ though was there a vineyard there? but these are “ the disciples of the wise men, who are made, or “ placed, שורות שורות, rows, rows, or in ranks, as a “ vineyard.” *By hundreds, and by fifties*; that is, an hundred in each bed, or row, and fifty in each bed, or row, as the word *ארא* signifies: each distinct bed, or row, had either a hundred, or fifty in it.

Ver. 41. *And when he had taken the five loaves and two fishes, &c.*] Out of the hands of those that brought them into his own: *he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves*: see the note on Matt. xiv. 19. *and gave them to his disciples to set before them*; the multitude, in order to eat of them: *and the two fishes divided he among them all*: that every one might have a part. The Syriac and Persic versions read, *they divided*: that is, the apostles.

Ver. 42. *And they did all eat, and were filled.*] See the note on Matt. xiv. 20.

Ver. 43. *And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, &c.*] Of the broken pieces of bread, after all had eaten, and were satisfied: *and of the fishes*; what remained of them: for though there was but one loaf for a thousand persons and more, and two small fishes to be divided among five thousand and more; yet, through the wonderful power of Christ increasing both, as they were distributing and eating, there was enough of both for them all, and such a quantity of each left as filled twelve baskets.

Ver. 44. *And they that did eat of the loaves, &c.*] And also of the fishes; for they all ate of both; *were about five thousand men*; the word *אורי*, about, is omitted in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persic and Ethiopic versions, reading five thousand men certain. The Evangelist Matthew adds, *beside children and women*.

Ver. 45. *And straightway he constrained his disciples, &c.*] The reasons of this see in the note on Matt. xiv. 22. *to get into the ship*: in which they came to this place, and which was waiting for them: *and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida*; or rather *to go to the other side over-against Bethsaida*; for they were now in a desert belonging to that city, wherefore they were ordered to go, and did go to the other side of the sea of Tiberias, or Galilee, even to Capernaum, as appears from John vi. 17, 24, 25. *while he sent away the people*; see the note on Matt. xiv. 22.

Ver. 46. *And when he had sent them away, &c.*] Either his disciples, or rather the multitude: *he departed into a mountain to pray*: after his disciples were gone, and he had dismissed the people, he went from the desert where he had been, up into a mountain; being a retired place, to spend some time in private prayer to God; see the note on Matt. xiv. 23.

Ver. 47. *And when even was come, &c.*] The second evening, and it was properly night: *the ship was in the midst of the sea*; of Galilee, about twenty-five or thirty furlongs from the shore; see John vi. 19. *and he alone on the land*; upon the mountain. This is ob-

<sup>c</sup> Miss. Cetubot, c. 1. sect. 2. & 4. 7. & 5. 1.

<sup>d</sup> Ib. c. 2. sect. 1. & 11. 4.

<sup>e</sup> Ib. c. 1. sect. 3.

<sup>f</sup> Miss. Bava Kama, c. 6. sect. 8.

<sup>g</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 7. 4. Vid. Gloss. in T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 49. 2.

served, partly to shew what distress the disciples were in, in the midst of the sea, having a hard gale of wind, and their master not with them; and partly to shew that there was no way, humanly speaking, of Christ's getting to the ship, in order to go over; and is an illustration of the following miracle, of walking so many furlongs, as he must, upon the water, in a stormy, blustering night, to get to it.

Ver. 48. *And he saw them toiling in rowing, &c.*] He saw them either with his bodily eyes from the mountain on which he was; or he perceived in his spirit, he knew, by virtue of his omniscience as God, what distress his disciples were in; being tossed about with the waves of the sea, and were labouring with all their might and main against the wind: and were vexed and tortured, as the word signifies; they were in the utmost pain and uneasiness of mind, as well as fatigue of body, assisting the men in rowing; for the ship they were in was no other than a vessel managed by oars; and hard work it was to keep it from being overset: *for the wind was contrary unto them*; it blew from the other side they were making to, full in their face, hard against them; so that it was with great toil and difficulty, that they got any thing forward: *and about the fourth watch of the night*; or three o'clock in the morning: so that it is very likely, that as the evening when they took to the vessel was sun-setting, or about six o'clock, they had been nine hours at sea, and had got but twenty-five or thirty furlongs from shore; see the note on Matt. xiv. 25. *he cometh unto them walking upon the sea*: being in this distress, Christ came down from the mountain to the sea-side; and then, by his divine power, as the mighty God, that treadeth on the waves of the sea, he walked upon the surface of the waters of it; *as on dry land*, as the Persic version adds: *and would have passed by them*; that is, he made as though he would; see Luke xxiv. 28. By the course he steered, by the swiftness of his motion, and his seeming negligence of them, it looked as though he intended to have gone by them, and said nothing to them, though this was far from his real design.

Ver. 49. *But when they saw him walking on the sea, &c.*] See the note on Matt. xiv. 26. *they supposed it had been a spirit*; a phantom, a spectre, an apparition, a nocturnal demon: *and cried out*; as men affrighted at the sight, and fearing they should be hurt by it, or that it portended some evil to them; see the note, as before.

Ver. 50. *For they all saw him, and were troubled, &c.*] Had it been only seen by one, it might have been thought a fancy, and the effect of mere imagination; but as every one saw it, it was out of all doubt that so it was, and which gave them the greater concern: *and immediately he talked with them*; as soon as they saw him, *that very moment*, as the Syriac renders it; that so by hearing his voice their fears might be allayed: *and saith unto them, be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid*; see the note on Matt. xiv. 27.

Ver. 51. *And he went up unto them in the ship, &c.*]

That is, after Peter had desired he might be bid to come to him upon the water, and having got leave, made an essay; but the wind being boisterous, and beginning to sink, he cried out for help; when Christ stretched out his hand, and saved him; and then he, together with Peter, went up into the ship to the rest of the disciples, as is related by Matthew, though omitted by this evangelist: *and the wind ceased*; from blowing; it was laid at once, as soon as ever Christ entered the ship: *and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered*. The Ethiopic version adds, *at him*; they were astonished, when they found it was Christ, and not a spirit; and they were more amazed at his walking upon the sea; and they marvelled still more abundantly, when they observed that the wind ceased upon his coming into the ship; their amazement was beyond expression, and therefore a heap of words are made use of to signify it by.

Ver. 52. *For they considered not the miracle of the loaves, &c.*] Which they had seen but the day before; they did not attend to it, nor learn from it, as they might, the wonderful glory of Christ, and the greatness of his power; which was as much an act of omnipotence, as either his walking upon the water, or causing the wind to cease, or more so. *For their heart was hardened*; or *blinded*; not by sin, or against Christ, much less in a judicial way: but there was a great deal of dulness and stupidity, and want of attention in them. The glory of Christ, which he manifested, and shewed forth in his miracles, was not so clearly and fully discerned, attended to, and acknowledged by them, at it might reasonably be thought it would; for notwithstanding these miracles, which they daily saw, they stood in need of divine illuminations, that the darkness of their minds being removed, they might behold the glory of Christ, as the glory of the only-begotten of the father.

Ver. 53. *And when they had passed over, &c.*] The lake of Gennesaret, or sea of Galilee, they came into the land of Gennesaret; see the note on Matt. xiv. 34. to Capernaum, as appears from John vi. 17, 24. for Capernaum was in the land of Gennesaret; to which agrees what Josephus says, that the land of Gennesaret was watered with a very excellent spring, which the inhabitants of that place called Capernaum<sup>a</sup>: *and drew to the shore*: this is omitted in the Syriac and Persic versions: and the Arabic reads, *and they cast anchors*.

Ver. 54. *And when they were come out of the ship, &c.*] Christ and his disciples, and were ashore, *straightway they knew him*; that is, the men of that place, as in Matt. xiv. 35. see the note there; and so the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read here, *the inhabitants of that country*, the country of Gennesaret; they knew him, having seen and heard him before.

Ver. 55. *And ran through that whole region round about, &c.*] That is, the inhabitants of that part of the country where Christ landed, ran many of them themselves, and others sent messengers into all parts of it, on every side: *and began to carry about*

<sup>a</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 35.

in beds those that were sick; or lame, or so disordered that they could not walk, or bear any other way of being carried: these they brought to him, where they heard he was: in whatsoever part of the country they could learn he was in; for he went about from place to place doing good.

Ver. 56. *And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, &c.]* Whether in smaller towns, or larger cities, or the fields, where were houses, here

and there one: they laid the sick in the streets; or markets, in any public places: and besought him that they but might touch the border of his garment; if they might not be admitted to touch his person, or he did not choose to lay his hands on them: and as many as touched him; or it, the border of his garment, as they desired: were made whole; of whatsoever sickness, or disease, they were afflicted with; see the note on Matt. xiv. 36.

## C H A P. VII.

Ver. 1. *THEN came together unto him the Pharisees, &c.]* Having heard of his miracles, and that he was come into the land of Gennesaret; they consulted with one another, and came together to Jesus, to watch and observe what was said and done by him, and take what advantage they could against him. These were not of that country, but were of Jerusalem, as were their companions the Scribes: and certain of the Scribes, which were of Jerusalem; for the fame of Christ had reached the metropolis of the nation; and these men being the more artful and cunning of the whole sect, either came of themselves, or were sent by the sanhedrim, to make their observations upon his doctrine and conduct; see the note on Matt. xv. 1.

Ver. 2. *And when they saw some of his disciples, &c.]* An opportunity soon offered of giving them an handle against him: for observing some of his disciples to sit down to meat, they took notice that they eat bread with defiled (that is to say, with unwashed) hands, and they found fault; with them, and charged them with the breach of the traditions of the elders, and took an occasion from hence of quarrelling with Christ. The Jews use the same phrase the evangelist here does, and interpret it in just the same manner: so, speaking of things eaten, בידים מטיאבות, with defiled hands; that is, says the commentator<sup>1</sup>, it is all one as if it was said, בלא נשילת ידים, without washing of hands; which was esteemed a very great crime, and especially if done in a contemptuous way: for they say<sup>2</sup>, "he that despiseth washing of hands, shall be rooted out of the world; for in it is the secret of the decalogue:" and particularly to eat with unwashed hands, was unpardonable in a disciple of a wise man; for they looked upon this to be the characteristic of one of the vulgar people, a common and illiterate man: for they ask<sup>3</sup>, "who is one of the people of the earth, or a plebeian? he that does not eat his common food with purity." By this also they distinguished a Jew from a Gentile; if he washed his hands, and blessed, he was known to be an Israelite, but if not, a Gentile<sup>4</sup>; see the note on Matt. xv. 2.

Ver. 3. *For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, &c.]*

The far greater part of them; all, excepting the Sadducees; and especially the Pharisees, were very tenacious of this tradition of washing hands before eating: hence Pharisees are described as such, אוכלי תולדותיהם במהרה, that eat their common food with cleanliness, i. e. of hands: these, except they wash their hands oft, eat not; or except they wash very curiously, with great care, diligence, and exactness, as the Syriac version suggests; and about which there are various rules given, to be observed with great strictness<sup>5</sup>. Some render the words, they wash their hands to the elbow; and this is a rule with the Jews, which is closely to be abode by, that the washing of hands is to be, עד פרק, to the joint, which joins the hand and arm together<sup>6</sup>: particularly 'tis observed<sup>7</sup>, that "washing of the hands for the eating of the offering, is unto the elbow, and for common food, to the joints of the fingers: he that eats with an ancient man, and does not wash his hands to the elbow, he may not eat with him." Well may it be added, holding the tradition of the elders; nor do the Jews pretend the authority of the Scriptures as obliging them to such rules; for, they say, the command concerning washing of hands is, מדרבי סופרים, from the words of the Scribes<sup>8</sup>; and is, מצות חכמים, a command of the wise men<sup>9</sup>. The tradition is this: "they wash hands for common food, but for the tithe, and for the first offering, and for that which is holy, they dip them, and for the sin-offering; for if the hands are defiled, the body is defiled." And this tradition of the elders, the Scribes, and Pharisees, strictly observed.

Ver. 4. *And when they come from the market, &c.]* In Beza's most ancient copy, and in one of Stephens's, it is read as we supply, when they come: wherefore this respects not things bought in the market, a sense favoured by all the Oriental versions, for many of them could not be washed; but the persons of the Scribes and Pharisees, who when they came from market, or from any court of judicature, immersed themselves all over in water, according to the true sense of the word βαπτίζω here used: for, "if the Pharisees touched but the garments of the common people, they were defiled, all one as if they

<sup>1</sup> Bartenora in Misn. Cholin, c. 2. sect. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Zohar in Numb. fol. 100. 3.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 61. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 298. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 18. 2. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Chagiga, c. 2. sect. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Beracot, c. 6.

<sup>7</sup> T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 106. 1. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Beracot, c. 6. 4. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Eracin, c. 5. sect. 1. Zohar in Deut. fol. 115. 2.

<sup>8</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 12. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Mikvaot, c. 11. sect. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Ib. Beracot, c. 6. sect. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Misn. Chagiga, c. 2. sect. 5.

" had touched a profluvius person, וצריכין טבילה, " and needed immersion;" and were obliged to it": hence, when they walked the streets, they walked on the sides of the way, that they might not be defiled by touching the common people": *wherefore, except they wash, they eat not, or immerse themselves in water, as well as used, מטבילת ידים, immersion of the hands, or washing of the hands by immersion; and which, if only intended, is sufficient to support the primary sense of the word, baptizo: and many other things there be which they have received to hold; by tradition from their elders; as the washing of cups and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables: and here the word βαπτισμος, baptism, is rightly used in its proper and primary signification; for all these things were, according to the traditions of the elders, washed by immersion: " in a laver, (they say<sup>a</sup>,) which holds forty seas of water, which are not drawn, every defiled man dips himself, except a profluvius man; and in it מטבילין את כל מטבילין, they dip all unclean vessels:" as cups, pots, and brazen vessels: very particularly brazen vessels are mentioned, because earthen ones that were unclean, were to be broken<sup>b</sup>; which were all washed before eaten in, even on a sabbath-day, and that by dipping: <sup>c</sup> " dishes, in which they eat at evening, (i. e. of the sabbath,) they wash them, to eat in in the morning; in the morning they wash them, to eat in at noon; at noon they wash them, to eat in at the minchah; and from the minchah, and forward, they don't wash again: but cups, and jugs, and pots they wash, and it goes through all the day; for there is no fixed time for drinking." All such vessels, whether had of a Gentile, or an Israelite, or even a wise man, were to be immersed before used<sup>d</sup>. " He that buys a vessel for the use of a feast, of Gentiles, whether molten vessels, or glass vessels—מטבילין, they dip them, in the waters of the laver; and after that they may eat and drink in them: and such as they use for cold things, as cups, and pots, and jugs, they wash them, ומטבילין, and dip them, and they are free for use: and such as they use for hot things, as cauldrons and kettles, (brazen vessels,) they heat them with hot water, and scour them, ומטבילין, and immerse them, and they are fit to be used: and things which they use at the fire, as spits and gridirons, they heat them in the fire, till the crust (the covering of rust, or dirt) falls off, ומטבילין, and dip them, and they may be lawfully made use of. " This is the immersion with which they immerse vessels for a feast, bought of Gentiles; and after that they are free for eating and drinking; for the business of uncleanness and purification is only from the words of the Scribes—and none are obliged to this immersion, but molten vessels for a feast, bought of Gentiles; but if he borrows of Gentiles, or a Gentile leaves in pawn molten vessels, (made of cast brass, or iron,) he washes, or boils, or heats in the fire, but*

" need not immerse them; and so if he buys vessels of wood, or vessels of stone, he washes, or boils them, but need not dip them; and so earthen vessels need not be immersed; but those that are covered with lead, are as molten vessels, וצריכין טבילה, and need immersion." And not only such that were bought of Gentiles, but even that were made by Jews, and scholars too, were to be immersed in water. " Vessels, (they say<sup>e</sup>,) that are finished in purity, even though a disciple of a wise man makes them, care is to be taken about them, lo! these ought to be immersed:" and also tables, at which they eat; and because their posture at them were lying, reclining, or leaning: hence the word מטבילין is used for them here: these were capable of defilement in a ceremonial sense, according to the traditions of the Jews: one of their rules is this<sup>f</sup>; " every vessel of wood, which is made for the use of vessels, and of men, as, דושולחן, a table, a bed, &c. receive defilement." And there were several sorts of tables, which, by their laws, were unclean, or might be defiled by the touch of unclean persons, or things: so they say<sup>g</sup>, " a table, and sideboard, which are made less, or covered with marble, if there is a space left, in which cups may be set, they may be defiled. R. Judah says, if a space is left, in which may be put pieces, i. e. of bread or flesh: a table of which the first of its feet is taken away is clean; if the second is taken away it is clean; if the third is taken away it may be defiled." Again<sup>h</sup>, every vessel of wood, that is divided into two parts, is clean, excepting a double table, &c. i. e. a table which consisted of various parts, and were folded together when it was removed: and these were washed by covering them in water; and very nice they were in washing them, that the water might reach every part, and that they might be covered all over; that there might be nothing which might separate between them and the water, and hinder its coming to them: as for instance, pitch being upon a table, whether within or without, divided between that and the water; and when this was the case, it was not rightly washed<sup>i</sup>: but to washing tables by immersion, there is no objection; wherefore, to perplex this matter, and give further trouble, it is insisted on, that the word should be rendered beds; and it must be owned that it is so rendered in the Syriac, Persian, and Ethiopic versions, (in the Arabic version the clause is omitted,) and in many modern translations: and we are contented it should be so rendered. And these beds design either the couches they lay, or leaned upon at meals; or the beds they slept in at nights: these were capable of being polluted, in a ceremonial sense; for of such pollution, and such washing, are we to understand these traditions: for those things regard not the bare washing of them when naturally unclean, when they ought to be washed; and it is the custom of all people to wash them when this is the case. A bed, and bedstead, are capable of such pollution as soon as they are shaved with a fish-skin, or are completed without po-

<sup>a</sup> Maimon. in Misn. Chagiga, c. 9. sect. 7.

<sup>b</sup> Ib. Hilch. Abot Tumaot, c. 13. sect. 8.

<sup>c</sup> Ib. Hilch. Mikvaot, c. 9. sect. 5.

<sup>d</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Mikvaot, c. 1. sect. 3.

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 118. 1. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat, c. 23. 7.

<sup>f</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Maacolat Asurot, c. 17. sect. 3, 5, 6.

<sup>b</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Abot Hatumaot, c. 13. sect. 6.

<sup>c</sup> Ib. Hilch. Celim, c. 4. sect. 1.

<sup>d</sup> Mien. Celim, c. 23. sect. 1, 2.

<sup>e</sup> Ib. c. 16. sect. 1.

<sup>f</sup> Misn. Mikvaot, c. 9. sect. 5. Maimon. Hilchot Mikvaot, c. 7. sect. 2.

lishing<sup>a</sup>; that is, as soon as they are finished; and there are several ways by which they are defiled. A bed is defiled, *טמא מת*, *by one that is defiled with the dead*<sup>b</sup>; that is, who has touched a dead body, and he sits upon the bed, or touches it, he defiles it. Again, a bed that is made to lie upon, is defiled, *בדרס*, *by treading*<sup>c</sup>; that is, it is defiled if a man, or a woman, that has a *gonorrhœa*, or a menstruous woman, or one in child-birth, or a leper, should sit, stand, lie, hang, or lean upon it; yea, if any thing should touch it, which has been touched by any of these. Also, a bed which is not made for to lie upon, but to lay a dead body on, is defiled in the same way; and so are even the pillow and bolster<sup>d</sup>. Now these were to be washed when they had received any defilement, and that by immersion. Their canons run thus: "טמא, *a bed*, that is wholly defiled, if *הטבילה*, *he dips it*, part by part, it is pure<sup>e</sup>;" again, "הטביל בו את המטה, *if he dips the bed in it*, (the pool of water,) although its feet are plunged into the thick clay (at the bottom of the pool), it is clean." If it should be insisted upon, that it ought to be shewn and proved, that the very bolsters and pillows on which they lay and leaned, were washed in this way, we are able to do it: "הכר והכסתי, *a pillow, or a bolster of skin*, when a man lifts up the ends, or mouths of them, out of the water, the water which is within them will be drawn; what shall he do? *בטבילן*, *he must dip them*, and lift them up by their fringes." In short, it is a rule with the Jews, that "wheresoever, in the law, washing of the flesh, or of clothes, is mentioned, it means nothing else than the dipping of the whole body in water—for if any man wash himself all over, except the top of his little finger, he is still in his uncleanness." So that the evangelist uses the words *βαπτίζω*, and *βαπτισμός*, most properly, without departing from their primary and literal sense; nor could he have used words more apposite and fit. Various rules, concerning these things, may be seen in the treatises *Celim* and *Mikvaot*. Hence it appears, with what little shew of reason, and to what a vain purpose this passage is so often appealed to, to lessen the sense of the word *βαπτίζω*, *baptizo*: as if it did not signify to dip, but a sort of washing, short of dipping; though what that washing is, is not easy to say, since vessels and clothes are in common washed by putting them into water, and covering them with it: this passage therefore is of no service to those who plead for sprinkling, or pouring water in baptism, in opposition to immersion; nor of any disservice, but of real use to those who practise immersion, and must confirm them in it. Nor need they have recourse to a various reading, which one of the manuscripts in the Bodleian Library furnishes with, which is, *unless they are sprinkled*; which reading must be wrong, not only because, contrary to all other copies, but also to the usages of the Jews in the washing of themselves.

Ver. 5. *Then the Pharisees and Scribes asked him, &c.*] Not the disciples, but Christ himself; for their chief view was to find fault, and quarrel with him:

*why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with unwashen hands? or with common, that is, defiled hands, as in ver. 2.* So the words are read in Beza's most ancient copy, and in one of Stephens's copies, and in the Vulgate Latin version. The word *common* is used for that which is unclean or unholy, Acts x. 14, 28. Rom. xiv. 14. Heb. x. 29. and so signifies unwashen hands, as we read, and render it: besides, *common hands* may have some respect to the hands of the common people, the vulgar and illiterate, who shewed no regard to this tradition, but ate their common food without washing their hands. Instead of the *tradition of the elders*, the Ethiopic version reads, *the constitution of the Scribes and Pharisees*; and which are sometimes by the Jews called, *דברי סופרים*, *the words, or sayings of the Scribes*, and are preferred by them to the written law; and the same are commonly called *הליכות*, *ways*, in which a man is to walk, and according to which he is to steer his course of life; and to which reference is here had in the word, *walk*, used by the Pharisees; who suggest, that these decisions, constitutions, and traditions of the elders, were the rule, according to which men ought to order their manner of life and conversation; blaming the disciples, that they did not conform to them, and particularly in the case of eating bread, which they did without washing their hands, which was strictly enjoined among these canons; and they wanted to know the sense of Christ upon it. Though they might have known from the Scriptures, particularly from Ezek. xx. 18, 19. that it was their duty, as well as the disciples of Christ, to walk, not in the statutes of their fathers, nor observe their judgments, the laws and ordinances instituted by them; but to walk in the statutes of the Lord, and to keep his judgments, and do them: not the traditions of men, but the word of God, should be the rule of walk and conversation; and as many as walk according to this rule, peace will be upon them; but those that walk according to the commandments of men, justly deserve the character given of such by the prophet Isaiah, whose words our Lord produces in the following verses.

Ver. 6. *He answered and said unto them, &c.*] Matthew postpones the following citation and application of the prophecy of Isaiah, to the account of the command of God being broken by the tradition of Corban; which Mark makes the answer of Christ to begin with: *well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites*; which in Matthew is read, *ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you*: to the same sense as here: for the prophecy of Isaiah not only described the hypocrites of his time, but had respect chiefly to the Jews in succeeding ages, in the times of Christ, and both before and after; when they would, as they did, greatly degenerate, and lost the power and spirituality of religion, and had only the form of it; left the word of God for the traditions of men, and were given up to great stupidity, and to judicial blindness: hence the Apostle Paul refers to a passage in the same chapter, Isa. xxix.

<sup>a</sup> Misn. Celim, c. 16. sect. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Celim, c. 5. sect. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Maimon. ib. c. 27. sect. 2.

<sup>c</sup> Misn. Celim, c. 18. sect. 5, 6. & c. 24. sect. 8. Maimon. ib. c. 27.

sect. 7.

<sup>d</sup> Misn. Celim, c. 23. sect. 4.

<sup>1</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Celim, c. 26. sect. 14.

<sup>m</sup> Misn. Mikvaot, c. 7. sect. 7.

<sup>n</sup> Ib. sect. 6. & Celim, c. 16. 4.

<sup>o</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Mikvaot, c. 1. sect. 2.

<sup>p</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 3. 2.

10. and applies it to the Jews in his time. Rom. xi. 8. see the note on Matt. xv. 7. saying, *as it is written in Isa. xxix. 13. this people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.* In the Prophet Isaiah more is said than is here cited; and so in Matthew more is produced, and the whole is there expressed thus: *this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me:* they presented their bodies before the Lord in the synagogues, or in the temple, and prayed to him with an air of devotion and fervency, and offered up their praises to him, for their external privileges and blessings; but, alas! this was all lip-labour; there was no lifting up their hearts, with their hands, unto God; these were not united to fear his name, but were distracted in his worship, and carried away from him to other objects; see the note on Matt. xv. 8.

Ver. 7. *Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, &c.*] This is the continuation of the citation out of Isaiah, as is also what follows: *teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* As all these traditions mentioned were such; as washing their hands before they ate bread, and their whole bodies, when they came from the market, or from any court of judicature, or conference of men, where they had been touched by the common people, and the washing of cups, pots, brazen vessels, and tables, or beds; these they taught the people, and enjoined them the observance of them, instead of instructing them in the doctrines of the Bible, respecting the Messiah, and salvation by him, the right fear, and true worship of God, his ordinances and statutes; wherefore their worship of him, though attended with a great shew of sanctity and religion, was a vain thing, a mere empty thing, devoid of life, power, and spirituality, unacceptable to God, and of no real use, profit, and advantage to themselves: it neither issued in the glory of God, nor brought any true pleasure, or solid peace to themselves; and they would find, by sad experience, that their hope of being in the favour of God, and of enjoying eternal happiness on account of it, would prove a vain hope; see the note on Matt. xv. 9.

Ver. 8. *For laying aside the commandment of God, &c.*] Meaning not any particular commandment; but all the commandments of God, the whole written law; to which they preferred the oral law, or the traditions of the elders, and the decisions of their doctors. So the Syriac, Arabic, Persian, and Ethiopic versions read, *the commandments of God.* *Ye hold the tradition of men:* very significantly are the elders, whom the Jews revered, and whose traditions and constitutions they extolled above the Scriptures, called *men*, in distinction from *God*, whose commands they neglected; which exposes and aggravates their sin, that they should leave the one, which had the stamp of divine authority on them, and hold the other, which were only the devices of men's brains; *as the washing of pots and cups.* The Arabic version adds, *and vessels,* from ver. 4. and the Ethiopic version, between *chalices* and *cups*, places *monies*; as if they also contracted uncleanness in some cases, and needed washing: and indeed, there is a

tradition to this purpose<sup>2</sup>, “*דינר שנפסל, a penny which is rejected* (that is, as the commentators say<sup>3</sup>, which a kingdom or province has made void, or which wants weight), if any one prepares it to hang about the neck of a child, it is *unclean*; and so a *sela* (which was the value of four-pence) and it is prepared to weigh with it, is *unclean.*” *And many other such like things you do;* so many, that it is almost endless to reckon up. The treatise *Celim*, or *of vessels*, in the Misna, is full of rules, concerning the cleanness and uncleanness, of almost all things in use with men; and so of what do, and what do not stand in need of washing. And these things they did, not according to the commandment of God, nor did they pretend to it; but according to the words of the Scribes, and traditions of the elders, which reached to all sorts of vessels: their rule is this<sup>4</sup>; “*vessels made of wood, and of skin, and of bone, and of glass, if they are plain, they are clean; but if they are hollow, (or made to hold things,) they are liable to pollution.*” Which Maimonides<sup>5</sup> explains thus; “*vessels of wood, and of skin, and of bone, if hollow, receive defilement from the words of the law; but if they are plain, as tables, a seat, a skin on which they eat, they don't receive defilement, but, מבררי טופרים, from the words of the Scribes.*” And this washing of vessels, not only concerned such as were for private use, but the vessels of the sanctuary: so it is said<sup>6</sup>; “*after a feast, at the close of a good day, or festival, they dip all the vessels in the sanctuary; because the common people have touched them at the feast, in the time of keeping it: wherefore they say, touch not the table (the shew-bread table), when they shew it to them that come up to the feast, that it may not be defiled by touching it; and if after the feast, it is found (polluted), it must be dipped—and all the vessels are obliged to immersion, excepting the golden altar, and the altar of brass.*” So that our Lord might well say, *and many such like things ye do.*

Ver. 9. *And he said unto them, &c.*] He continued his discourse, saying, *full well, or fairly, ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition:* these words may be considered, as spoken ironically, thus; as pious and excellently good men, you in a very fair and handsome manner, reject and make void the commandments and laws of God; and it is very fit it should be so, in order to preserve your own traditions, that nothing may be wanting to keep up the honour of them, and a due regard to them. The Arabic version reads the words by way of interrogation, *is it fit that you should omit the commandments of God, and keep your own statutes?* and so the Ethiopic, *do ye rightly make void the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own commandment?* Which makes them come nearer to the passage in Matthew; see the note on Matt. xv. 3.

Ver. 10. *For Moses said, &c.*] That is, God by Moses; for the following precept was spoken by God, and written by him on one of the tables of stone, and delivered into the hands of Moses, to be given to the children of Israel: *honour thy father and thy mother,*

<sup>2</sup> Misn. Celim, c. 1. sect. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Jarchi & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>4</sup> Misn. Celim, c. 2. sect. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Hilch. Celim, c. 1. sect. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Mishcab Umshab, c. 11. sect. 11.

Exod. xx. 12. the sanction of which law is, *and whose curseth father or mother, let him die the death*, Exod. xxi. 17. As the former of these commands is to be understood, not only of honouring parents in thought, word, and deed, but also of providing for them, when in want and distress, through poverty and old age; so the latter is to be interpreted, not merely of wishing or imprecating the most dreadful things upon parents, which some may not be guilty of, and yet transgress this command; but likewise of every slight put upon them, and neglect of them, when in necessitous circumstances: and both these laws were broken by the Jews, through their tradition hereafter mentioned; see the note on Matt. xv. 4.

Ver. 11. *But ye say, &c.*] Your elders, doctors, and wise men, in opposition to God and Moses: *if a man shall say to his father or his mother, it is Corban, that is to say, a gift*; in the same manner is this word interpreted by Josephus, who speaking of some that call themselves *Corban* unto God, says "in the Greek tongue, *δορον δι τωτο σωματιν, this signifies a gift*: now, according to the traditions of the elders, whoever made use of that word to his father or his mother, signifying thereby, that what they might have expected relief from at his hands, he had devoted it; or it was as if it was devoted to sacred uses; adding, *by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me*, he shall be free; and not under any obligation to regard and relieve his parents, let their case and circumstances be what they would. This is the form of a vow, which a man having made on purpose, to free himself from the charge of the maintenance of his parents, when reduced, repeats unto them; or which he makes upon their application to him: various forms of this kind of vows, are produced in the note on Matt. xv. 5. which see: this was not the form of an oath, or swearing by *Corban*, or the sacred treasury in the temple, mentioned in Matt. xxvii. 6. of which I don't remember any instance; nor was it a dedication of his substance to holy and religious uses; to the service of God and the temple; but it was a vow he made, that what he had, should be as *Corban*, as a gift devoted to sacred uses: that as that could not be appropriated to any other use, so his substance, after such a vow, could not be applied to the relief of his parents; though he was not obliged by it to give it for the use of the temple, but might keep it himself, or bestow it upon others. L. Capellus has wrote a very learned dissertation upon this vow, at the end of his *Spicilegium on the New Testament*; and our very learned countryman, Dr. Pocock, has said many excellent things upon it, in his miscellaneous notes on his *Porta Mosis*; both which ought to be read and consulted, by those who have learning and leisure.

Ver. 12. *And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father, or his mother.*] According to the Jewish canons, if a man vowed a thing which is contrary to a command, he was obliged to keep his vow, and break the command: thus, if a man vowed that his father or his mother should never receive any benefit from what he had, but that his substance was as *Corban*, or as any thing devoted to divine service, he was obliged to keep his vow; nor was he allowed after this to do any thing

for his father, or mother, however poor or helpless they might be; unless he applied to a wise man to revoke his vow, or to give him liberty to do it; for he could not do it of himself, as wicked as it was; and though he might heartily repent of it, and was ever so willing to make it null and void: and though a dissolution of it by a wise man was allowed of, yet hereby they set up their own power and authority against God, and his law; they did not rescind the vow, because it was contrary to the command of God: for notwithstanding its being contrary to the command of God, it was to be observed, though to the breaking of that, unless loosed by a wise man, at the man's request; whereby they established their magisterial power and authority, without any regard to the honour and glory of God; and therefore what follows, is justly observed by our Lord; see the note on Matt. xv. 6.

Ver. 13. *Making the word of God of none effect, through your tradition, &c.*] Beza says, in his most ancient copy 'tis read, *your foolish tradition*; and such it was indeed, that a vow made rashly, and in a passion, or if ever so deliberately entered into, should be more binding upon a man than the law of God; that rather than break this, he should transgress a divine command; and that though he might see his folly, and repent of his sin in making such a wicked vow, he could not go back from it, without the permission of a wise man: should his poor distressed parents come to him for assistance, he was obliged to answer them, that he had bound himself by a vow, that they should receive no advantage from his substance; and should they remonstrate to him the command of God, to honour them and take care of them, and observe that that command is enforced by promises and threatenings; he had this to reply, and was instructed to do it, that it was the sense of the wise men and doctors, and agreeably to the traditions of the elders, to which he ought rather to attend, than to the words of the law, that he should keep and fulfil his vow, whatever command was neglected or broken by it. *Which ye have delivered*: they received it from their ancestors, and delivered it to their disciples; and 'tis in this way, that all their traditions were delivered: they say, that "Moses received the law (the oral law) at Sinai, *בסיני*, and delivered it to Joshua; and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets; and the prophets to the men of the great synagogue; the last of which was Simeon the just; and Antigonus, a man of Socho, received it from him; and Jose ben Joezer, a man of Tzeredah, and Jose ben Jochanan, a man of Jerusalem, received it from Antigonus; and Joshua ben Perachiah (said to be the master of Jesus Christ), and Nitthai the Arbelite, received it from them; and Judah ben Tabai, and Simeon ben Shetach, received it from them; and Shemaiah and Abtalion received it from them; and from them Hillel and Shammai." Who were now the heads of the two grand schools of the Jews; these received, and delivered out these traditions to the Scribes and Pharisees, and they to their disciples: *and many such like things do ye*; meaning, that there were many other traditions besides

\* Antiqu. Jud. l. 4. c. 4. sect. 4.

† Maimon. Hilch. Nedarim, c. 3. sect. 1.

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

\* Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

this now mentioned; whereby, instead of preserving the written law, which, they pretended, these were an hedge unto  $\gamma$ , they, in a great many instances, made it void.

Ver. 14. *And when he had called all the people unto him, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, instead of *all*, read *again*, and so do some copies: having said what was sufficient to stop the mouths of the Scribes and Pharisees, about their unwarrantable traditions; he turns himself to the common people, who stood at some distance, because of these venerable doctors, and called to them to come nearer to him: *he said unto them, hearken to me every one of you, and understand*; signifying, he had something of moment to say to them, which they would do well to attend unto, and what they should be desirous of understanding aright, it being what concerned every one of them; see the note on Matt. xv. 10.

Ver. 15. *There is nothing from without a man, &c.*] As any sort of food and drink, whether it be received, with, or without washing of the hands: *that entering into him can defile him*; in a moral sense, or render him loathsome and unacceptable in the sight of God: *but the things which come out of him*; the Arabic version reads, *out of the mouth of man*, as in Matt. xv. 11. for the things are, all sinful words which proceed from the imaginations and lusts of the heart; as all idle, unchaste, blasphemous, and wrathful words and expressions: and may include evil thoughts, words, and actions; which actions first in thought, take their rise from the corrupt heart of man; and in word, come out of the mouth; and in action, are performed by some one or other of the members of the body: these are *they that defile the man*: his mind and conscience, the faculties of his soul, and the members of his body; and render him abominable in the sight of God, and expose him to his wrath and displeasure; see the note on Matt. xv. 11. The sense of the whole is, that not what a man eats and drinks, and in whatsoever way he does either, though he may eat and drink with unwashed hands, or out of cups, pots, and platters, not properly washed, according to the traditions of the elders, renders him a polluted sinful man, in the sight of God; or such as one, whose company and conversation are to be avoided by good men; but that it is sin in the heart, and what proceeds from it; as all evil thoughts, wicked words, and impure actions; which denominate a man filthy and unclean, and expose him to the abhorrence of God, and of his people: the words may be rendered, *there is nothing from without a man—can make him common*; that is, as a plebeian, a vulgar common man, a sinful wicked man, as the common people were, or at least were so esteemed by the Pharisees; nothing that he took into his body, by eating or drinking, could put him into the class of such persons: *but the things which come out of him*; out of his heart, by his lips: *those are they that make a man common*; or a vulgar wicked man. The Ethiopic version renders it, *it is not what enters from without into the mouth of man, which can defile him; but only what goes out of the heart of man, this defiles the man*: the Persic version adds, *and is the sin of death*; or sin unto death, a deadly, mortal sin.

Ver. 16. *If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.*] See the note on Matt. xi. 15.

Ver. 17. *And when he was entered into the house, &c.*] Very probably at Capernaum, and it may be the house of Simon and Andrew, where he used to be when there: *from the people*; being separated from them, having dismissed and left them, when he and his disciples were by themselves alone: *his disciples asked him concerning the parable*; that saying of his to the people, which was somewhat dark and intricate to them; that nothing without a man going into him defiled him, but what comes out of him: this was asked by Peter, in the name of the rest; see the note on Matt. xv. 15.

Ver. 18. *And he saith unto them, &c.*] With some warmth of spirit and resentment, at their stupidity; *are ye so without understanding also?* As well as others, and to such a degree; and yet, as Matthew expresses it, so wretchedly stupid, and so long, and as much, as others: *do ye not perceive?* common sense will tell you, *that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him*; see the note on Matt. xv. 16.

Ver. 19. *Because it entereth not into his heart, &c.*] Which is the seat and fountain of all moral pollution; and if that is not defiled, no other part can be; and that that is not defiled by eating and drinking, unless in case of intemperance, is clear; because food and drink do not go into it: *but into the belly*; it is taken in at the mouth, goes down the throat, and is received into the stomach, and from thence it passes through the bowels: *and goeth into the vault*; בֵּית הַדְּמָא, *the private house*, as the Jews call it, without going into the heart at all: *purging all meats*; that which it leaves behind, is pure and nourishing; and whatever is gross and impure, is carried with it into the vault, so that nothing remains in the man that is defiling.

Ver. 20. *And he said, &c.*] Continued to say in his discourse; though this is left out in the Syriac version; *that which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man*; meaning, not his excrements, which were unclean by the law, Deut. xxiii. 13. but what comes out of his heart, by his mouth; or is expressed in action, as appears by what follows; see the note on Matt. xv. 18.

Ver. 21. *For from within, out of the heart of man, &c.*] The inside of man is very bad, his inward part is not only wicked, but wickedness itself, yea, very wickedness, Psal. v. 9. in him dwells no good thing naturally, his heart is wicked, and desperately so; it is full of evil; and out of the abundance of it, proceed the evil things hereafter mentioned; all its powers and faculties are vitiated, there is no place clean; the understanding and judgment are dreadfully corrupted; the mind and conscience are defiled; the affections are inordinate; not only the thought, but every imagination of the thought of the heart is evil, and that continually: what good thing therefore, can come out of such a Nazareth as this? Nothing, but what follows: *for from hence proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders*; which several things are related in Matt. xv. 19. see the note there; only the order here



is a little different; *murders*, which are here mentioned last, are there put after *evil thoughts*.

Ver. 22. *Thefts, &c.*] These also are mentioned in Matthew, but Mark omits *false witnesses*, and adds the following; which, excepting *blasphemy*, are not taken notice of by the other evangelists; *covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness*; see the note on Matt. xv. 19.

Ver. 23. *All these evil things come from within, &c.*] All evil thoughts, words, and actions, take their rise from the inward parts of man; from his heart; which is sadly corrupted, and is the fountain from whence all these impure streams flow. And if these come from within, then not from without; they are not by initiation, or are the mere effects of example in others: example may indeed, and often does, draw out the evil that is within; but it does not produce it there; if it was not there before, it could not draw it out from thence: and if all these evils come from within, then the inward part of man must be sinful and polluted, previous to the commission of these evil things; and from whence springs then that inward pollution? It is the fruit of original sin, of Adam's transgression; the consequence of which is, a corrupt nature, which is derived to all his posterity: for his nature being corrupted by sinning, and he having all human nature in him, the individuals of it could not be propagated by ordinary generation, without the pollution of sin cleaving to them; *who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one*, Job. xiv. 4. Nor has there ever been any instance to the contrary, but the man Christ Jesus; whose human nature was holy, it not descending from Adam by ordinary generation; otherwise, all men, as David was, are *shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin*, Psal. li. 5. and this is the source and spring of all sinful action, internal and external. *And defile the man*; both soul and body; all the powers and faculties of the soul, and all the members of the body; or *make a man common*: these shew him to be one of the common people, a very sinful man; as such were reckoned, and therefore are called emphatically, *sinners*; and are joined with *publicans*, who were esteemed the worst of sinners: from all which it appears, that sin in thought, word, and deed, is the defiling thing, and is what ought to be carefully avoided; and not meats, and the manner of eating them, provided moderation is used.

Ver. 24. *And from thence he arose, &c.*] From the land of Gennesaret, or from Capernaum, which was in it: *and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon*; two cities of Phœnicia: not into them, but into the borders of them; into those parts of Galilee, which bordered on Phœnicia; see the note on Matt. xv. 21. *And entered into an house*; in some one of the towns, or cities, in those parts; which house might be, for the entertainment and lodging of strangers: *and would have no man know it*; took all proper precaution as man, that nobody should know who, and where he was; that the Gentiles, on whose borders he was, might not flock to him, which would create envy and disgust in the Jews: *but he could not be hid*; he had wrought so many miracles in Galilee, and his fame

was so much spread, and he had been seen, and was known by so many persons, that, humanly speaking, it was next to impossible, that he should be long unknown in such a place.

Ver. 25. *For a certain woman, &c.*] One way and means by which he came to be more openly discovered who he was, was this; a woman in those parts, *whose young daughter had an unclean spirit*; a devil, with which she was possessed; hearing of some miracles he had wrought in healing the sick, and casting out devils; and understanding that he was in such a place, made all haste to him; and with great respect and reverence to so venerable a person, threw herself at his feet, and earnestly entreated mercy for her child; believing he had power to cast the devil out of her, though at a distance from her.

Ver. 26. *The woman was a Greek, &c.*] Or Gentile, an Heathen woman, which made her faith the more remarkable. So the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions call her; which she might be, and was, though she was a woman of Canaan, as she is said to be in Matt. xv. 22. for though the land of Israel in general, was called the land of Canaan, yet there was a particular part, which was at first inhabited by Canaan himself, which bore this name; and is the same with Phœnicia, of which this woman was an inhabitant, and therefore she is afterwards called a Syrophenician; see the note on Matt. xv. 22. And this place was now inhabited by Gentiles; hence the Jews often distinguish between an Hebrew and a Canaanitish servant; of which take an instance or two; "an Hebrew servant is obtained by money, and by writing—a Canaanitish servant is obtained by money, and by writing, and by possession." Again, "he that does injury to an Hebrew servant, is bound to all these (i. e. to make compensation for loss, pain, healing, cessation from business, and reproach), excepting cessation from business—but he that hurts a Canaanitish servant, that belongs to others, is bound to them all." And by a Canaanitish servant, they understand any one that is not an Israelite; for an Hebrew and a Canaanite, are manifestly opposed to one another. This woman being of Phœnicia, as appears by what follows, which was sometimes called Canaan, might be said to be a woman of Canaan, and also a Gentile. *A Syrophenician by nation*; or *extract*. The Syriac and Persic versions say she was of *Phœnicia of Syria*; and the latter, by way of explanation, of *Emisa*. The Arabic version adds, *her extraction was of Gaur*; and the Ethiopic version says, she was *the wife of a Syrophenician man*; see the note on Matt. xv. 22. *And she besought him, that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter*; which she was persuaded, by what she had heard of him, he was able to do, by a word speaking, though her daughter was not present.

Ver. 27. *But Jesus said unto her, &c.*] Not directly and immediately, upon her first request; for he answered not a word to that; but after his disciples had desired she might be sent away, her cries being so troublesome to them; and after she had renewed her request to him; see Matt. xv. 23, 24, 25. *Let the*

\* Miss. Kiddushin, c. 1. sect. 2, 3.

\* Miss. Bava Kama, c. 8. sect. 3.

*children first be filled*: according to this method, our Lord directed his apostles, and they proceeded: as he himself was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, he ordered his disciples to go to them, and preach the Gospel to them, and work miracles among them; and not go in the way of the Gentiles, nor into any of the cities of the Samaritans; but when they had gone through the cities of Judea, he ordered them, after his resurrection, to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem: and this order they observed in other places, where there were Jews; they first preached to them, and then to the Gentiles; knowing that it was necessary, that the word of God should be first spoken to them; and it was the power of God to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile: and the expression here used, though it gives the preference to the Jew, does not exclude the Gentile; nay, it supposes, that after the Jews had had the doctrines of Christ, confirmed by his miracles, sufficiently ministered unto them, for the gathering in the chosen ones among them, and to leave the rest inexcusable; and so long as until they should despise it, and put it away from them, judging themselves unworthy of it; that then the Gentiles should have plenty of Gospel provisions set before them, and should eat of them, and be filled; and should have a large number of miracles wrought among them, and a fulness of the blessings of grace bestowed on them. The Jews are meant, who were the children of God by national adoption; who were first to be filled with the doctrines and miracles of Christ, before the Gentiles were to have them among them; as they were, even to a loathing and contempt of them: *for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs*: as by the children are meant the Israelites, who were not only the children of Abraham by natural descent, but the children of God, to whom pertained the adoption, by virtue of the national covenant made with them; so by the dogs, are meant the Gentiles, who were reckoned as such by the Jews; and by the bread, which it was not fit and proper should be taken from the one for the present, and cast to the other, is designed the ministry of the Gospel; which is as bread, solid, substantial, wholesome, and nourishing; and the miraculous cures wrought on the bodies of men, which accompanied it: now it was not meet and convenient as yet, that these things should be taken away from the Jewish nation, until they had answered the ends for which they were designed, and the Jews should express their loathing and abhorrence of them: which when they did, they were taken away from them, and were ministered to the nations of the world, they contemptuously called dogs; see the note on Matt. xv. 26.

Ver. 28. *And she answered and said unto him, yes, Lord, &c.*] Agreeing to, and acquiescing in, what he said; which she seemed to have understood, though delivered in a proverbial way; and very appositely replies, *yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs*: which they leave, or let fall: signifying that she did not envy the blessings of the Jews, or desire any thing might be done injurious to them; only that this favour might be granted her, which she owned she was unworthy of, that her daughter might be healed. She tacitly owns, that the character of dogs

belonged to the Gentiles, and to her and her's among the rest; that they were vile and base in themselves, inferior to the Jews, as to privileges, like dogs under the table; that the provisions with which the table of the Gospel ministry was furnished, was not for them; at least, that they were quite undeserving of them: but however, whereas dogs were allowed to eat crumbs, which now and then fell from the table, or out of the children's hands and laps; so such unworthy Gentiles as she, might be allowed a small benefit or favour by the bye, when it did not take from, and was no disadvantage to the Jews; see the note on Matt. xv. 27.

Ver. 29. *And he said unto her, for this saying, &c.*] Or word of faith; in which she expressed such great faith in him: the Persic version reads it, *go thy way; for with the blessing of this word, the devil is gone out of thy daughter*: as if this saying referred to the word of Christ, and the divine power that went along with it, to the ejection of the devil; when it refers to the saying of the woman, and not to the words of Christ, which follow, *go thy way*; in peace, thy request is granted; it is as thou wouldst have it: *the devil is gone out of thy daughter*. Christ, who as God is every where, and whose divine power reaches to all places, persons, and things, had, in a secret and powerful manner, cast the devil out of this woman's daughter; without going to her, or speaking to him, his power had wrought the miracle effectually.

Ver. 30. *And when she was come to her house, &c.*] For with those words of Christ, she was abundantly satisfied, and went away with as great a faith, and as strong a persuasion of the dispossession, as that she came with, that Christ was able to effect it: and accordingly *she found the devil gone out*: of her daughter; that she was entirely dispossessed of him, and no more vexed and tormented with him, but in perfect ease, and at rest: *and her daughter laid upon the bed*: without any violent motions, convulsions, and tossings to and fro, as before; but composed and still, taking some rest, having been for some time greatly fatigued with the possession. The Ethiopic version reads, *she found her daughter clothed, and sat upon the bed*: for persons in these possessions, would often put off their clothes, and tear them in pieces; and were seldom composed, and rarely sat long in a place or posture; but now it was otherwise with her.

Ver. 31. *And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin version reads, *and coming out again from the borders of Tyre, he came through Sidon*; and so two of Beza's copies; the Arabic version, which De Dieu made use of, reads *to Sidon*; as he must needs come to it, if he came through it; though the version in the Polyglot Bible of Walton's reads, *מִן, from Sidon*: but the greater number of copies, and the Syriac and Persic versions read as we do, and which is rightest; since it does not appear, that Christ went out of the land of Israel, into any Heathen cities: and besides, Sidon was further off from Galilee than Tyre, and so did not lie in his way to it; and therefore 'tis not likely he should pass through that city, in order to go to it. The Ethiopic version reads, *and coming out again from Tyre, he went through Sidon*: both these places were in Phœnicia, and it is probable that the woman before mentioned

might belong to one or other of them. According to this version, she may be thought to be of Tyre, and that it was there, where the above discourse passed between Christ and her; though some Dutch pictures, Dr. Lightfoot<sup>b</sup> takes notice of, represent her as praying for her daughter, at the gate of Sidon; and Borchard the monk, as he relates from him, says, that before the gate of Sidon eastward, there is a chapel built in the place, where the Canaanitish woman prayed to our Saviour for her daughter. But Christ, for the reason before given, could be in neither of these places, being out of the land of Israel; besides, the text is express, that it was to the borders of this country he came, and from thence he went; and not to, or from, or through any of these places. *He came unto the sea of Galilee*; or Tiberias, the same with the lake of Gennesaret: he came to those parts of Galilee, which lay by it, where he had been, before he went to the borders of Tyre and Sidon: *through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis*; of this place, see the note on Matt. iv. 25. It was a country which consisted of ten cities, from whence it had its name: now not through the middle of these cities, or of this country, as the Ethiopic version reads; but through the midst of the borders of it Christ passed, which lay in his way from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, to the sea of Galilee. The Syriac and Persic versions render the words, *unto the borders of Decapolis, or the ten cities*; and the Arabic version, *unto the middle of the coasts of the ten cities*; see the note on Matt. xv. 29.

Ver. 32. *And they bring unto him one that was deaf, &c.*] There were two sorts of persons that were called deaf among the Jews; one that could neither hear nor speak; such were they who were born deaf; and so having never heard any thing, it was impossible they should ever speak: the other sort were they that could speak, but not hear; who lost their hearing by some disaster or another, but retained their speech: of this sort seems to be this man, who though he had some difficulty in speaking, yet could speak a little, and had an impediment in his speech; or could scarcely speak, as the word signifies; though it is sometimes used by the Septuagint, for one that was entirely dumb, as in Isa. xxxv. 6. and so it is here rendered *dumb*, by the Vulgate Latin, and other versions; yet it seems to design one that stammered, and could not speak plainly, and without great difficulty: he was tongue-tied, as it should seem from ver. 35. This man, the inhabitants of the parts where Christ now was, his relations or friends, bring to him, having heard of his fame, and perhaps they had seen miracles performed by him: *and they beseech him to put his hand upon him*; firmly believing, that upon his so doing, the man's hearing would come to him, and he would speak without difficulty: very likely they had seen cures performed by Christ in this way, or at least had heard, that by laying his hands on persons disordered, they had been restored to the right use of their senses, or limbs; wherefore they most earnestly entreated, he would be pleased to do the same favour to this poor man. The case of this man much resembles that of a sinner in a state of nature, who is deaf to the

voice, both of law and Gospel: he does not hearken to the commanding voice of the law, or attend to its precepts, nor can he be subject to it; nor does he hear its menaces and curses, nor is he at all affected and disturbed with these things; and, like the deaf adder, he stops his ear to the charming voice of the Gospel; he despises it, and has it in the utmost abhorrence: he is deaf to all the instructions, directions, cautions, and exhortations, of the ministers of the word; and even of his best friends, relations, and acquaintance: nor can he speak the language of Canaan; it is a strange language to him; he can neither talk it himself, nor understand it in others; for as he has no experience of the grace of God in him, he must be dumb, and cannot speak of what he has no knowledge: and indeed, it may be observed of such who are under the first workings of the spirit of God upon the soul, that they are often as it were tongue-tied, and through fear or bashfulness, or the temptations of Satan, care not to speak; or with great difficulty are brought to speak of what God has done for them; and at first, it is but in a lisping, stammering way, they do speak of these things: and as the friends and relations of this man, having a great opinion of Christ, and a persuasion of his ability to relieve and cure him, bring him unto him, that he might put his hands upon him; so do such who know Christ themselves, and have felt the power of his grace upon their own souls, bring their deaf and dumb, their relations in a state of nature, under the means of grace; being very desirous that Christ would make bare, and put forth his mighty arm of grace, and lay hold upon them, and work a good work in them, and give them ears to hear his voice, and a tongue to speak his praise.

Ver. 33. *And he took him aside from the multitude, &c.*] To shun all appearance of ostentation and vain glory: *and put his fingers into his ears*; the finger of his right hand into his left ear, and the finger of his left hand into his right ear: *and he spit and touched his tongue*; that is, either he spit upon his tongue, for so the Vulgate Latin renders it, *spitting he touched his tongue*; and the Persic version thus, *he cast his spittle on his tongue*; or rather, he spit on his finger, and touched his tongue with it. These actions were not done as means of healing, or as having any natural virtue, or tendency in them, to effect a cure; but to shew the power of Christ, that by the mere touch of his finger, and by the spittle of his mouth, as well as by laying on of hands, as was desired, and by a word speaking, he could at once remove this, or any such disorder. The taking this man aside from the multitude, is an emblem of the Lord's separating his people from the rest of the world, when he calls them by his grace; for as they are distinguished from others, in the choice of them in Christ, and in redemption by him; so in effectual vocation, they are bid to come out from among them, and by the power of divine grace, they are brought out from among them, and give up themselves to Christ, and to his churches: and Christ's putting his fingers into the ears of this man, represents the exertion of his power, and his removing by the finger of his spirit, the obstructions of spiritual hear-

<sup>b</sup> Chorograph. Decad. in Mark, ch. vi. sect. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Mish. Trumot, c. 1. sect. 2. & Maimon. & Bartonora in ib.

ing; or rather, the planting of the spiritual ear, or forming a principle of spiritual hearing in the soul: and his touching his tongue with the spittle of his mouth, may lead us to observe the application of his word, through the efficacy of his grace, as a means of loosing his tongue and opening his lips to shew forth his praise.

Ver. 34. *And looking up to heaven, &c.*] To his father there, by whom he was sent, and from whom, as man, he received his authority and power; though this was not for assistance in the working of this miracle, which he had power to do of himself; nor do we find that he put up any request to his father: but he seems to have made use of this motion, not for his own sake, but for the sake of the man: to teach him, that every good gift, blessing, mercy, and favour, and so this he was about to partake of, was from above: *he sighed*; not as unequal to the work of healing the man, or as despairing of doing it; but as commiserating the case of the poor man, and reflecting with concern upon his sin, that had been the occasion of it. These actions of looking up to heaven and sighing, as they may be understood in a spiritual sense, or with relation to the spiritual healing of a sinner, may shew that such a blessing comes from above: it is received from heaven; it is God that gives the hearing ear, as well as the seeing eye; and that in a spiritual, as well as in a natural sense: and therefore this directs to apply to God for it, whether for a man's self, or for others; and when enjoyed, to look up again to heaven, and return thanks for it: and also that such a favour flows from divine mercy and compassion, Christ pitying the case of persons in such a condition; and he being an high-priest that can have compassion on those that are in distress, and having ability to help them, makes use of it, and expresses both his pity and his power, as in the following manner. *And saith unto him*; in the Syriac language, which he then spoke, *אפתח, Ethphatha, or Ephphatha*; that is, being interpreted, *be opened*, both ears and mouth. And this way of speaking is used by the Jews, of a deaf man being restored to hearing, as of a blind man's being restored to sight; of which, take the following instance<sup>d</sup>; "a minor that receives (*i. e.* a divorce), and afterwards becomes adult, or a deaf man, *ונתפקח, and is opened* (*i. e.* his ears are opened, or his hearing is restored), or a blind man, *ונתפתח, and is opened* (has his sight again), or a fool, and he is restored to his reason, or a Gentile, and he becomes a proselyte, is unfit or unlawful (to carry a divorce from a man to his wife), but *פתח, one that is open*, and afterwards becomes deaf, and then again *opened*; *פתרו, or open*, and afterwards become blind, and again *opened*; or a fool, and is restored to his senses, and again becomes "a fool, he is right or fit" (for the above purpose). It is common with them to call one that hears well, in distinction from a deaf man, *one that is open*<sup>e</sup>. This is an instance of the power of Christ in curing disorders, merely by a word speaking, without the use of means; for what he did before, were not as means of healing, but significative of his power; which now went along with his word, and which was expressed with great majesty and authority: and

such a power attends the word of his grace, to the opening of the heart, to give heed to the things which are spoken; and to the opening of the ear to discipline, and sealing instruction to it; and to the opening of the mouth and lips, in praise and thankfulness.

Ver. 35. *And straightway his ears were opened, &c.*] 'Tis in the Greek text, *his hearings*; the instruments of his hearing, and so rightly rendered, *his ears*; the Persic version reads, *both his ears*; but the word *both* is unnecessary, since the word, *ears*, takes in both. Such a power went along with the words of Christ, when he said, *be opened*; that immediately, as soon as ever the words were pronounced, the man's hearing came to him, and he heard as quick as ever he did before he lost it, or as any other man: *and the string of his tongue*; which caused it to cleave to his jaws, or the roof of his mouth, and hindered him from speaking plainly, *was loosed, and he spake plain*; *פשיקאית, easily*, as the Syriac version renders it; without any difficulty to himself, and so as to be readily understood by others. 'Tus those whose ears are opened, and whose tongues are loosed in a spiritual manner by Christ, speak plainly of what they have heard and seen, and felt; they can give a plain and clear account of the work of God upon their souls; how they have been convinced of the impurity of their nature, the corruptions of their hearts, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin, in heart, lip, and life; how they have seen Christ to be an all-sufficient and suitable Saviour, and have been directed, and encouraged, to go to him for healing, pardon, righteousness, and everlasting salvation; they can tell what promises have been applied to them, and what comforts they have enjoyed; how busy Satan has been with them, and what temptations of his they have been delivered out of, and by what means: in a word, they can speak plainly of the love of God to them; of the glories and excellencies of Christ; of their faith and hope in him, and love to him; and of the operations of the spirit of God upon their hearts; and of the glories of the world to come, they are in the expectation of, so far as they are taught of God.

Ver. 36. *And he charged them, &c.*] The man that had his hearing and speech restored to him, and those that brought him, and as many as were witnesses of the miracle: *that they should tell no man*; of the cure that was wrought, being not desirous of the applause of men; and knowing it would bring upon him the envy of the Scribes and Pharisees; and be a means of putting the common people upon setting him up as a temporal king, such as they expected the Messiah would be: *but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it*; or *spake of him*, as the Ethiopic version reads it; for they looked upon his charge merely to proceed from modesty, and that made them the more forward to speak of his greatness and in his praise, to publish his mighty works, and spread the fame of his miracles far and near. So, such who have received the grace of God, are become acquainted with Christ, and have a real experience of divine things, cannot but speak

<sup>d</sup> Misn. Gitin, c. 2. sect. 6.

<sup>e</sup> Vid. Misn. Yebamot, c. 14. sect. 10. & T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 114. 2.

of them ; they are like new wine which hath no vent ; and are ready to burst like new bottles ; to forbear speaking is a pain, and weariness to them ; nay, they think, should they hold their peace, the stones in the walls would cry out. Wherefore, partly for the glory of God, the magnifying of the riches of his grace, and the honour of Christ, and the blessed spirit ; and partly to shew their own sense of things, the gratitude of their minds, and the thankfulness of their hearts, as well as for the use, comfort, edification, and instruction of others, they must speak, and cannot be silent, whatever restraints are laid upon them.

Ver. 37. *And were beyond measure astonished, &c.*] The man that was cured, the men that brought him, and the whole multitude were exceedingly, beyond all expression, amazed at what was done, in this case, and many others ; for there were other miracles also wrought at this time ; see Matt. xv. 30, 31. The grace of God, in opening the ears and heart of a sinner, and causing the tongue of the dumb to sing his praise, is very astonishing, to men and angels ; to the persons themselves that partake of it ; and to all the saints that hear of it ; it is amazing that such grace should be bestowed at all ; and it is more, that it should be communicated to such unworthy persons it is ; as also that it should produce such effects it does ; that it should make such a surprising change, and be attended with such blessed consequences : *saying, he hath done all things well ;* not by Beelzebub, the prince of devils, as said the Scribes and Pharisees ; nor in any ostentatious manner, for the sake of the honour and applause of men, as they plainly saw ; but for the good of mankind, and for the glory of God : and as all the miraculous works, which Christ did, were well done by him, so all other works of his : all that he did in eternity before the world was, he did well ; what he did in the council and covenant

of grace, in espousing the persons and cause of his people, and in all his federal transactions and suretyship-engagements for them : he drew nigh to God on their account ; he cheerfully agreed to what his father proposed ; he entered into a covenant with him, and took the care and charge of all his people, and of all promises and blessings of grace for them : and whatsoever he has done in time is well done ; as his assumption of human nature ; taking a nature, and not a person, this of a virgin, and an holy nature, though subject to sinless infirmities, and this in due and proper time ; also his subjection to the law, moral, civil, and ceremonial, as it became him to fulfil all righteousness ; and his preaching the Gospel, which he did with authority, and which he spake as never man did, and which he confirmed by his miracles ; but especially the great work of redemption he came about, was well done by him : this he has thoroughly done ; he has redeemed his people from the law, its curse, and condemnation ; he has ransomed them out of the hands of Satan ; he has saved them from all their sins ; he has procured the remission of them, made reconciliation for them, and brought in an everlasting righteousness : he has done this work to the satisfaction of all parties ; to the glory of all the divine perfections, of justice, as well as of grace and mercy ; to the contentment and pleasure of all the divine persons, his father, himself, and the blessed spirit : and to the joy of angels and men : and all that he has done, or is now doing in heaven, as an advocate and intercessor, is done well ; and we may be assured, that all that he will do hereafter, as the judge of quick and dead, will be done in like manner. *He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb, or those that could not speak, at least without a great deal of difficulty, to speak ;* an instance of both which there was in this single man's case.

## C H A P. VIII.

Ver. 1. *IN those days, &c.*] The Ethiopic version reads, *on that day* ; as if it was on the same day that the deaf man was healed ; and so it might be ; and on the third day from Christ's coming into those parts ; and so is very properly expressed, *in those days* ; see ch. vii. 31. compared with the following *verse* : *the multitude being very great* : for the number of men that ate, when the following miracle was wrought, were about four thousand ; see ver. 9. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions add, *again* : referring to the former miracle of the five thousand, who were fed with five loaves, and two fishes, ch. vii. 44. *And having nothing to eat* ; what they might have brought with them being expended, and they in a desert, where nothing was to be had, nor bought for money : *Jesus called his disciples to him, and saith unto them* : see the note on Matt. xv. 32.

Ver. 2. *I have compassion on the multitude, &c.*] Christ is a compassionate Saviour both of the Bodies and souls of men : he had compassion on the souls of this multitude, and therefore had been teaching them sound doctrine ; and he had compassion on the bodies of many of them, and had healed them of their diseases ;

and his bowels yearned towards them all ; *because, says he, they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat* ; for if they brought any food with them, it was all spent, and they were in a wilderness, where nothing was to be got ; where they had no house to go into, nor bed to lie upon, and no provisions to be bought ; and in this case they had been two nights and three days ; which shewed great affection and zeal in these people, and a close attachment to Christ, in exposing themselves to all these difficulties and hardships, which they seemed to bear with much patience and unconcernedness. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persian, and Ethiopic versions prefix the word *behold* to this clause, as expressing admiration at their stay with him so long in such a place.

Ver. 3. *And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, &c.*] Gr. *to their own house*, or home ; but all the Oriental versions render it as we do, in the plural, *their own houses*, or habitations ; and it seems from hence that they were now fasting, and at least had had no food all that day, whatever they might have the day before, which it not certain. *They will faint by the way* ; for want of food their strength will be

exhausted, their animal spirits will fail, their nerves will be loosened, they will not be able to perform their journey, or get to the end of it: *for divers of them came from far*; perhaps some had followed him from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, from whence he came last; and others from Decapolis, through the midst of the borders of which he passed hither; and others from different parts, who had heard of his coming; see the note on Matt. xv. 32.

Ver. 4. *And his disciples answered him, &c.*] The Syriac version renders it, *say unto him*; and the Persic and Ethiopic, *said unto him*; forgetting the late miracle of feeding five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, when they had now a less number, and more provisions: *from whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?* from what place, and by what ways and means can it be thought, that such a quantity of bread can be got at any rate in a desert, as to satisfy so large a number of hungry men? see the note on Matt. xv. 33.

Ver. 5. *And he asked them, how many loaves have ye? &c.*] See the note on Matt. xv. 34. *and they said, seven.* Matthew adds, *and a few little fishes*, which are here afterwards mentioned.

Ver. 6. *And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground, &c.*] See the note on Matt. xv. 35. *and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake them*; see the note on Matt. xv. 36. *and gave to his disciples to set before them, the multitude, and they did set them before the people*; in which they were obedient to their Lord's commands, though they were so forgetful, unbelieving, and stupid.

Ver. 7. *And they had a few small fishes, &c.*] Which they also acquainted Christ with, and brought out unto him: *and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them.* It looks, by this account, as if the fishes were blessed, and brake, and distributed separately, after the blessing, breaking, and distribution of the bread; and so the Syriac version renders it, *upon whom also he blessed*; and the Persic thus, *and he also blessed the fishes*; but, according to Matthew they were both blessed, and brake, and distributed together, as it is highly reasonable to suppose they were both ate together; see the note on Matt. xv. 36.

Ver. 8. *So they did eat, and were filled, &c.*] Christ and his disciples, and the whole multitude; they not only had some, but they had all enough, a full meal. It was surprising that it could be divided so, as that every one should have a bit; but that they should all be satisfied to the full, is amazing: *and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets*; as many as there were loaves; see the note on Matt. xv. 37.

Ver. 9. *And they that had eaten were about four thousand, &c.*] That is, men, besides women and children, as Matthew observes; see the note on Matt. xv. 38. *and he sent them away*; some that came dumb, with their speech, and deaf, with their hearing; others that were maimed, with perfect healing of their wounds, and with their limbs sound and whole; others that came lame, he dismissed leaping; and others that were blind, with their sight restored to them, and all of them full.

Ver. 10. *And straightway he entered into a ship, with his disciples, &c.*] As soon as ever he had dismissed the multitude, he took shipping with his disciples; for he was at the sea of Galilee, either at a place near it, or upon the shore of it; see ch. vii. 31. *and came into the parts of Dalmanutha*; which Matthew calls, *the coasts of Magdala*; see the note on Matt. xv. 39. The Arabic version reads it, *Magdal*; and in two of Beza's copies it is read, *Madgedada*; but the Syriac version reads, *Dalmanutha*; and the Persic, *Dalmanuth*; and the Ethiopic, *Dalmathy*: it was a city in the coasts of Magdala, and is thought by Dr. Lightfoot to be the same with Tzalmon, or Salmon, a place often mentioned<sup>f</sup> in the Jewish writings.

Ver. 11. *And the Pharisees came forth, &c.*] Out of their houses; who dwelt in the coasts of Magdala, and parts of Dalmanutha, and came to Jesus, hearing of his being arrived in their neighbourhood: *and began to question with him*; or to dispute with him, it being their manner to carry on disputations by questions and answers. The Persic version has the question they put, and about which they disputed, *if thou art the Christ*; in proof of which they required a sign: *seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him*; see the note on Matt. xvi. 1.

Ver. 12. *And he sighed deeply in his spirit, &c.*] In his human soul; who dwelt in the coasts of Magdala, and was subject to grief and sorrow, and all passions and infirmities, excepting sin. This deep sigh was on account of the hardness of their hearts, the malignity of their minds, and insincerity of their intentions; who had no view to come at truth by this inquiry, but to ensnare him: *and saith, why doth this generation seek after a sign?* when so many have been shewn among them, and they will not believe: *verily I say unto you, there shall no sign be given to this generation*: such as they desired; namely, one from heaven. The Evangelist Matthew adds, *but the sign of the Prophet Jonas*; see the note on Matt. xvi. 4. and xii. 40.

Ver. 13. *And he left them, &c.*] As a perverse and hardened generation of men, and as such with whom it was not worth while to discourse: *and entering into the ship again*; which brought him over, and waited for him: *departed to the other side*; of the sea of Galilee, towards Bethsaida, ver. 22.

Ver. 14. *Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, &c.*] At Dalmanutha, or Magdala, or whatever place in those parts they were at, before they took shipping, as was their usual method. *Neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf*; for thirteen passengers of them. The Persic version reads the whole thus: *and they forgot to take bread with them, not indeed one loaf, and there was no bread with them in the ship*; see the note on Matt. xvi. 5.

Ver. 15. *And he charged them, &c.*] When they were in the ship, and had just recollected themselves, that they had took no care to bring any provisions with them: *saying, take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod*: in Matthew, instead of *the leaven of Herod*, it is read, *the leaven of the Sadducees*: which are either the same, Herod and his courtiers being Sadducees, or favourers of them;

<sup>f</sup> Misn. Celaim, c. 4. sect. 9. & Yebamot, c. 16. sect. 6. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 82. 2.

or the Sadducees being sticklers for Herod, and his government, which the Pharisees had no good opinion of; or else distinct from one another; and so Christ cautions against the doctrines of the Pharisees, which regarded the traditions of the elders, and of the Sadducees, concerning the resurrection, and of the Herodians, who thought Herod to be the Messiah; and against the unreasonable request and demand of them all to have a sign from heaven, in proof of his own Messiahship; see the note on Matt. xvi. 6.

Ver. 16. *And they reasoned among themselves, &c.*] Upon Christ's giving this caution, and recollecting with themselves, that they had forgot to buy any provisions, and take with them: *saying, it is because we have no bread*; that he says these words; tacitly chiding and reproving us, for our want of thought and care; see the note on Matt. xvi. 7.

Ver. 17. *And when Jesus knew it, &c.*] As he did immediately, by his omniscience; for as he knew the thoughts and reasonings of the Scribes and Pharisees, Matt. ix. 4. so he did those of his own disciples: *he saith unto them, why reason ye because ye have no bread?* or imagine that I have given you this caution on that account; or are distressed because this is your case, as if you should be reduced to great difficulties, by reason of your forgetfulness and negligence: *perceive ye not yet, neither undertsand?* the meaning of the parabolical expressions, which he had used them to; or his power in providing food for them, and supporting a great number of persons with very little food, of which they had some very late instances: *have ye your heart yet hardened?* as after the first miracle; see ch. vi. 52. for it might have been expected, that by a second miracle of the loaves, their understandings would have been more enlightened, and their faith increased, and that they would have relinquished their gross notions, their anxieties, doubts, and unbelief.

Ver. 18. *Having eyes, see ye not? &c.*] Meaning perhaps both the eyes of their bodies, and of their understandings: they had bodily eyes, and with them saw the miracles he wrought, and yet took little notice of them; and the eyes of their understandings were enlightened by Christ, and yet saw things but very darkly: *and having ears, hear ye not?* They had their natural hearing, and yet made but little use of it; and did not so diligently attend to the sound of Christ's words: and though they had spiritual ears given them to hear, yet were very dull of understanding, and taking in things: *and do ye not remember?* the interpretation of parables formerly given, and the miracles of the loaves lately wrought.

Ver. 19. *When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, &c.*] This, with what follows, chiefly regards the last question: *how many baskets full of fragments took ye up?* don't you remember? have you forgot what was so lately done? surely you cannot: *they say unto him, twelve.* Their memories were hereby refreshed, and they call to mind the exact number of the baskets of fragments that were taken up, which were above double the number of the loaves, the multitude were fed with.

Ver. 20. *And when the seven among four thousand, &c.*] That is, when seven loaves were broken among four thousand men, *how many baskets full of fragments*

*took ye up?* this surely you must remember, it being so recent an action, but just done, as it were: *and they said, seven*; for this, as yet, could not have slipped their memories; though they had been reasoning among themselves because of their straitness of provisions, as if these things had never been done.

Ver. 21. *And he said unto them, &c.*] Since this was the case, and they so well remembered the miracles he had wrought, and the circumstances of them: *how is it that ye do not understand?* my words concerning the leaven of the Pharisees, of the Sadducees, and of Herod, as to imagine I spoke of bread, taken in a literal sense; or that I concerned myself about the scantiness of your provisions, when you might have learnt from my late miracles, how able I am to support you, if you had not so much as one loaf with you: wherefore it argues great want both of understanding and faith, and shews great stupidity, ignorance, and unbelief, to give such a sense of my words, and to be anxiously concerned on the score of your provisions.

Ver. 22. *And he cometh to Bethsaida, &c.*] The city of Andrew, Peter, and Philip, John i. 44. a fishing-town, which was situated by the sea of Galilee. Beza's ancient copy, and the Gothic version, wrongly read Bethany. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, *they came*: Christ, and his twelve apostles, who landed at this place: *and they bring a blind man unto him*; for Christ had been here before, and was known by the inhabitants of the place; who, as soon as they heard of his arrival, and knowing what miracles were done by him, brought a poor blind man, of their town, to him, to be cured by him: *and besought him to touch him*; having heard of, or seen cures performed by him this way. This man is an emblem of such who are spiritually blind: he had no natural sight at all; he could see nothing; he had not the least glimmering of any thing, until he was touched by Christ: so men, in a state of nature, are quite dark, even darkness itself, until they are made light by the Lord: they have no sight, nor sense of themselves, of their sinful, lost, and dangerous estate and condition they are in; they know not because they are blind, that they are wretched, and poor, and miserable, and naked: they have no sight of Christ, neither of the glory of his person, nor of the fulness of his grace, nor of the nature, necessity, and suitableness of his salvation: they are quite blind as to any saving knowledge of God in Christ, the way of life and peace by him, and the work of the spirit of God upon the soul; or with regard to any spiritual experience of the power of Gospel-truths, or views of the glories of another world: and as this man seemed to be unconcerned himself about the cure of his blindness, only his friends were affected with his case, and brought him to Christ, and solicited a cure, so it is with unregenerate men; they are insensible of their case, and so thoughtless of it, and unaffected with it, and do not, of themselves, seek for a deliverance out of it; nor do they make use of means for that purpose; but it becomes their friends, relations, and acquaintance, that are spiritual, who know their case, and their need of Christ, and his grace, to bring them to him under the means, and pray unto him, that he would put forth the mighty power of his grace upon them, and give them spiritual

sight to see in what a lost condition they are, and their need of him.

Ver. 23. *And he took the blind man by the hand, &c.*] Not for the sake of touching him, in order to heal him, as they desired, but to be his guide: *and led him out of the town*; to shun all appearance of vain glory and popular applause, being willing to do the miracle in a private manner; and because of the obstinacy and unbelief of the inhabitants of this place, who were not worthy to be witnesses of such a cure; see Matt. xi. 21. *and when he had spit on his eyes*; not as a cause of healing him; for whatever use spittle may be of to such that have weak eyes, it can have no causal influence upon, or be of any service, in a natural way, to a blind man to restore his sight unto him: *and put his hands upon him*; as he sometimes did, when he healed persons of any disorder: *he asked him, if he saw ought*; any object whatever, whether he could perceive he had any sight at all. Christ's taking the blind man by the hand, and leading him out of the town, and spitting on his eyes, and putting his hands upon him, and then asking him if he saw ought, are emblematical of what he does in spiritual conversion, when he turns men from darkness to light: he takes them by the hand, which expresses his condescension, grace, and mercy, and becomes their guide and leader; and a better, and safer guide they cannot have; he brings them by a way they know not, and leads them in paths they had not known before; makes darkness light before them, and crooked things straight, and does not forsake them: he takes them apart, and separates them from the rest of the world; he calls them out from thence to go with him, teaching them, that, when enlightened by him, they should have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, and the workers of them; for what communion has light with darkness? his putting spittle upon his eyes, may signify the means of grace, the eye-salve of the word, which, when attended with a divine power, enlightens the eyes; and which power may be represented here by Christ's putting his hands upon the man; for the Gospel, without the power of Christ, is insufficient to produce such an effect; but when it is accompanied with that, it always succeeds.

Ver. 24. *And he looked up, &c.*] This is omitted in the Arabic and Persic versions. The sense is, that he opened his eyelids, and lifted up his eyes, to try if he could see, and he could, and did see again; his sight was returned again, though very imperfectly as yet: *and said, I see men, as trees, walking*: he saw some objects at a little distance from him, which, by their motion, he supposed to be men; otherwise his sight was so imperfect, that he could not have distinguished them from trees: he was capable of discerning the bulk of their bodies, and that they walked, or moved forward; but he could not distinguish the particular parts of their bodies; they seemed to be like trunks of trees, in an erect posture, and which he should have took for such, had it not been for their walking. As this man immediately, upon Christ's putting spittle on his eyes, and laying his hands on him, had sight given him, though it was very obscure and glimmering; so, as soon as ever the Gospel comes with power, it dispels the darkness of the mind, and introduces

light; though at first it is but very small; it is let in gradually: the sinner is first convinced of the evil of his actions, and then of the sinfulness of his nature; he first sees the ability and suitableness of Christ as a Saviour, and after that his willingness, and his interest in him as such; and all this is commonly before he is so well acquainted with the dignity and infiniteness of his person, as the son of God: and it is some time before he has his spiritual senses exercised to discern between good and evil, between truth and error; or arrives to a clear and distinct knowledge of Gospel-truths, and a stability in them. Hence it is, that such are greatly harassed with Satan's temptations; are disquieted in their souls; are filled with doubts and fears, and are in danger of being imposed upon by false teachers.

Ver. 25. *After that he had put his hands again upon his eyes, &c.*] By the former account it does not appear on what part of him he put his hands; but this determines it; and from hence it seems plain, that he first spit on his eyes, and then closed them, and put his hands on them; which last action of his he repeated, though not the former: *and made him look up*. This is omitted in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions. The Vulgate Latin reads it, *he began to see*; and so Beza's ancient copy: but this he did before, upon the first imposition of hands on him. The Arabic version renders it, *he saw well*: this is expressed afterwards. The words are an order, or command of Christ to the man to lift up his eyes, and try again how he could see, and whether any better than before, which he did: *and he was restored*; his sight was restored to him as before, and he was perfectly cured of his blindness; *and saw every man clearly*; or *all things*, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read: he saw every object distinctly, and afar off, as the word used also signifies; he could distinguish men from trees, and trees from men. This man, as before observed, was a very lively emblem of one that is spiritually enlightened by the grace of God: Christ first separated this man from the rest of the multitude; and such are first distinguished from others in election, and redemption, and vocation, who are illuminated by the spirit of God: means were made use of by Christ for healing this man; though the bare actions, without a divine power, would have been insufficient, as the spittle of his mouth, and the imposition of his hands: and, generally speaking, in the illumination of a sinner the word of Christ's mouth is a means; though this, without the efficacy of his grace, is not of itself sufficient. This man, upon his first reception of sight, had a very dim, obscure, and imperfect view of things; could not well distinguish one thing from another, though he saw. As at first conversion, the enlightened soul has but a very glimmering view of things, particularly of Christ, the glory and fulness of his person, the efficacy of his blood, the excellency of his righteousness, of his ability, willingness, and suitableness as a Saviour; and especially of those doctrines of the Gospel, that are more sublime and distinguishing. But as this man afterwards had a more clear, and distinct view of objects; so it is with true believers in Christ; their shining light increases, and shines more and more unto the perfect day. For



Gospel-light at present is not perfect in any; such who have the clearest views of things, have some darkness and imperfection in them; though they may be said to see all things clearly, in comparison of what they sometimes did, and others do: particularly saints, under the Gospel dispensation, see more clearly than those under the legal dispensation did; the object was at a greater distance from them; they saw the promises afar off; and the medium of their sight, or through which they saw, were obscure types, shadows, and sacrifices, and dark prophecies. Moses, and his law, had a veil over them; but New-Testament saints, with open face, without a veil, behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord Jesus, and of Gospel-truths: indeed, they that know most, see things most clearly, and speak of them most distinctly, know but in part, and prophesy but in part, in comparison of the beatific vision; when saints shall see face to face, and know, as they are known; they now see but through a glass darkly. How clearly will all things be seen in the new Jerusalem state, when there will be no need of the light of the sun, or moon of ordinances; but Christ, the Lamb, will be the everlasting light thereof, in which the nations of them that are saved shall walk!

Ver. 26. *And he sent him away to his house, &c.*] Which seems to have been in one of the neighbouring villages, or was one of the houses scattered about in the fields for the conveniency of rural business. *Saying, neither go into the town; or that town,* as the Syriac, the town, or city of Bethsaida: *nor tell it to any in the town;* to any of the inhabitants of the town, that he should meet with any where, or at any time: the reason of this was not merely, or only because Christ would have the miracle concealed; but chiefly because the inhabitants of this place were notorious for their impenitence and unbelief. Christ had done many wonderful works among them, and yet they repented not; nor did they believe in him; but despised him, his doctrine, and his miracles; and therefore for their neglect and contempt of such means, he was determined to withdraw them from them. So Christ sometimes deals with nations, cities, and towns, that disbelieve, reject, and despise his Gospel; he takes it away from them, he orders his ministering servants to preach no more to them; no more to tell them of the good news of life and salvation by him: thus he dealt with the Jews, who contradicted, and blasphemed, and judged themselves, or by their conduct made themselves appear to be unworthy of the words of eternal life; he took away the kingdom of God, or the Gospel, from them, and sent it among the Gentiles: and thus he threatened the church of Ephesus, for leaving its first love, to remove the candlestick out of its place, in case of non-repentance; and a grievous judgment it is upon a place and people, when God commands the clouds to rain no rain upon them, Isa. v. 6. or, in other words, when he enjoins his ministers no more to tell, or publish his Gospel to them; he determining to withdraw from them, and have no more to do with them; so Christ, and his disciples, departed from this place, as is declared in the following verse.

Ver. 27. *And Jesus went out, and his disciples, &c.*] From Bethsaida, and even from Galilee, into the towns of *Cæsarea Philippi*; in the jurisdiction of Philip,

*tetrarch* of Iturea and Trachonitis; for this Cæsarea was rebuilt by him, and called so in honour of Tiberius Cæsar; and the towns and villages adjacent to it are here intended: see the note on Matt. xvi. 13. *and by the way he asked his disciples;* as they were going from Galilee to those parts: *staying unto them, whom do men say that I am?* not that he needed any information of this; for he knew not only what was said by men, but what was in them; but he put this question, in order to bring out their sense of, and faith in him, and to impart something to them which was necessary they should be acquainted with; see the note on Matt. xvi. 13. where it is read, *whom do men say, that I, the son of man, am?*

Ver. 28. *And they answered, &c.*] That some said he was John the Baptist; which was the opinion of Herod, and others: *but some say Elias;* that is, the *Tishbite*, whom the Jews in general, expected in person before the coming of the Messiah, and imagined that Jesus was he: *and others one of the prophets;* as Jeremiah, or Isaiah, or some other. The Vulgate Latin reads, *as one of the prophets;* and so Beza's ancient copy, as in ch. vi. 15. All spake highly and honourably of him: the people in common did not look upon him as a mean person; they perceived by his doctrine, and more especially by his miracles, that he was an extraordinary one: the several persons which they differently took him to be, and make mention of, were such as were of great repute; as John the Baptist, who had lately been among them, and whom all held to be a prophet, and indeed was more than a prophet; and Elias, who was so very zealous for the Lord of hosts, and wrought many miracles in his day; and whose coming the Jews were in expectation of to usher in the Messiah; and none thought him less than one of the prophets; and all agreed he was an uncommon man; even one raised from the dead, as he must be, if he was John the Baptist, or Elias, or one of the old prophets; but they knew him not, at least did not confess him to be the Messiah; he not appearing as a temporal prince, they were taught to believe he would be; see the note in Matt. xvi. 14.

Ver. 29. *And he saith unto them, but whom say ye that I am? &c.*] 'Twas for the sake of this question he put the former; see the note on Matt. xvi. 15. and *Peter answereth and saith unto him, thou art the Christ;* the Messiah that was long ago promised, and so often prophesied of in the books of Moses, and the prophets; and whom the Jews have so much and long expected. This confession of Peter's, in which all the apostles agreed with him, speaks out what Jesus really was, and exceeds the most exalted sentiments which the people had of him: he was not the harbinger of the Messiah, but the Messiah himself; not Elias, in whose spirit his forerunner was to come, and did come; nor any one of the prophets; but he, who was spoken of by all the holy prophets; which have been since the beginning of the world. Not one of the various opinions of the people being just, and answering the true character of Jesus, he demands the sense of his disciples, which is here given by Peter in their name, and which was right; and on account of which he declared Peter blessed, and ascribed his knowledge of him not to flesh and blood, but to the revelation of

his father. The Syriac and Persic versions add, *the son of the living God*; and so Beza found it in one ancient copy; but it may be it is only taken from Matt. xvi. 16. see the note there.

Ver. 30. *And he charged them, &c.*] His disciples, after he had declared his approbation of Peter's confession of faith, and signified he would build his church on that rock, and the gates of hell should not prevail against it: and promised Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and that whatsoever was bound, or loosed by him on earth, should be bound and loosed in heaven; which are omitted by Mark, but related by Matthew: after this he gave a strict and severe charge, *that they should tell no man of him*; that he was the Messiah, and the son of God; see the note on Matt. xvi. 20.

Ver. 31. *And he began to teach them, &c.*] For as yet he had said nothing to them about his sufferings and death, at least in express terms; but now they being firmly established in the faith of him, as the Messiah, he thought it proper to inform them, *that the son of man must suffer many things*; meaning himself, as that he should be betrayed, apprehended, and bound, should be smitten, spit upon, buffeted, and scourged; and which things must be done, and he suffer them, because it was so determined by God, and foretold in the Scriptures: *and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests and Scribes*; which composed the grand sanhedrim of the nation, and are the builders that were prophesied of by whom he should be rejected, Psal. cxviii. 22. *and be killed*; in a violent manner; his life be taken away by force, without law, or justice: *and after three days rise again*; not after three days were ended, and on the fourth day, but after the third day was come; that is, *on the third day*, as the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read; and even the Pharisees themselves thus understood Christ, Matt. xxvii. 63, 64. so the phrase, *after eight days*, is used for the eighth day, being come, or that day se'nnight; see Luke ix. 28. compared with Matt. xvii. 1. John xx. 26.

Ver. 32. *And he spake that saying openly, &c.*] Concerning his sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead. He not only spoke it before them all, but in plain words, without a figure; so that it might be, and was clearly understood by them; and he spake it as the word will also bear, not only very freely, but likewise boldly, with an undaunted courage, with intrepidity of mind; being not in the least discouraged, nor shewing any concern or fear about what was to befall him: *and Peter took him, and began to rebuke him*. Peter might more especially be concerned at this free and open account Christ gave of his sufferings and death, because he had just now acquainted him, that he should have the keys of the kingdom of heaven; by which he might understand some high post in the temporal kingdom of the Messiah he expected; and immediately to hear of his sufferings and death, damped his spirits, and destroyed his hopes, and threw him into such difficulties he was not able to remove; and therefore he takes Christ aside, and very warmly expostulates with him about what he had said, and chides him for it, and entreats him that he would not think, or talk of such-like

things: the words of Peter are recorded by Matthew, ch. xvi. 22. see the note there.

Ver. 33. *But when he had turned about, &c.*] Upon Peter, and shewed quick resentment at what he said: *and looked on his disciples*; he cast his eye towards them at the same time, and expressed to them the same displeasure in his countenance, they being of the same mind: *he rebuked Peter, saying, get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God*; things which were according to the will of God, as the sufferings of Christ were: they were according to the determinate counsel of his will; what he had determined in his purposes and council should be; and what he had declared in the Scriptures of truth, the revelation of his will, would be; and in which, according to them, he should have a great concern himself, Isa. liii. 6, 10. and whereby all his divine perfections would be glorified, and therefore may well be said to be the things of God; and which ought to be savoured, minded, and attended to, as things of the greatest moment and importance: and which, though the apostle had often read of in the books of the Old Testament, yet either had not a clear understanding of them, as being the will of God; or however, they were greatly out of his view at this time, his mind being possessed with notions of a temporal kingdom, and of worldly honour and grandeur: wherefore it follows, *but the things that be of men*; as were the notions of Christ's being a temporal prince, that would set up a worldly kingdom, and deliver the Jews from the Roman yoke, and make his subjects happy, with an affluence of all worldly things; and particularly his favourites, as the disciples were: these were schemes of men's devising, and were suited to the corrupt nature, and carnal inclinations of men; and these things at present too much possessed Peter's mind: wherefore the Lord rebuked him in a very severe, though just manner; being touched in his most tender part, and dissuaded from that which his heart was set upon, and he came into the world for; whose keen resentment is seen by using a phrase he never did but to the devil himself, Matt. iv. 10. see the note on Matt. xvi. 23.

Ver. 34. *And when he had called the people unto him, &c.*] Who, it seems, followed him out of Galilee, from Bethsaida, and these parts; for it was in the way from thence to Cæsarea Philippi, that Christ had this conversation with his disciples; who walked together alone, the multitude following at some distance; and the private conversation being ended, Christ called, or beckoned to the people, to come nearer to him: *with his disciples also*; for what he was about to say, concerned them both: *whosoever will come after me*; in a spiritual sense, as this multitude did in a natural one, and which is the same as to be a disciple of his: *let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me*; signifying, that his followers must deny themselves of worldly advantages, and suffer many things, as well as he, which he had been but just before acquainting his disciples with; see the note on Matt. xvi. 24.

Ver. 35. *For whosoever will save his life, &c.*] Life is a valuable thing, and all that a man has he will give for it; self-preservation is a principle in nature;

and it becomes every man to take all lawful methods to save his life, when it is threatened, or is in danger: but whoever is willing to save it, when it is called for to be laid down for Christ's sake; and rather than lay it down, will deny Christ, and give up a profession of him, and his Gospel, *shall lose it*: he shall not enjoy it with honour and comfort now, and much less with peace, pleasure, and happiness hereafter, but shall be under the power of the second death: *but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's*; that is, shall willingly part with it when he is called to it, rather than deny Christ and his Gospel, *the same shall save it*: though he will lose it now, he will find it again in the resurrection of life; for he will rise to eternal life; when such, who have apostatized from Christ, will rise to shame, and everlasting contempt: this man will have greatly the advantage over such; they'll die the second death, or be destroyed soul and body in hell; and he'll live for ever with Christ, in endless pleasure and glory; see the note on Matt. xvi. 25.

Ver. 36. *For what shall it profit a man, &c.*] In the long run, in the issue of things, who by denying Christ, and his Gospel, may not only save his life for the present, but procure for himself great riches and wealth: *if he shall gain the whole world*; were that possible to be done, and which the ambitious, worldly man is desirous of; yet supposing he had his desire, of what avail would this be in the upshot of things, should the following be his case, as it will, *and lose his own soul?* which is immortal and everlasting, when the world, and the glory of it pass away, and so is of more worth than the whole world. The world can only be enjoyed for a season, and that with a great deal of fatigue and trouble; but the soul continues for ever; and if it is lost and damned, its torment always abides, and the smoke of it ascends for ever, its worm never dies, and its fire is never quenched; see the note on Matt. xvi. 26.

Ver. 37. *Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*] To deliver it out of its miserable state and condition; all the riches of the world, and the whole world itself, are not an equivalent to it, or a suffi-

cient ransom for it; riches will not profit in the day of wrath, or deliver a soul from damnation and ruin: wherefore, if he had the whole world, he could not redeem his soul with it; and he has nothing else to give for it, and therefore it is past all recovery: see the note on Matt. xvi. 26.

Ver. 38. *Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, &c.*] As suffering, crucified, and put to death; things he had been speaking of before: whoever through scandal of the cross, and fear of men, will be ashamed of Christ, and dare not profess faith in him, but shall conceal and keep it to themselves: *and of my words*; the doctrines of the Gospel, of remission of sins by his blood, of justification by his righteousness, and of salvation alone by him, with every other truth relating to him, or connected with these; *in this adulterous and sinful generation*; which was so both in a moral and spiritual sense; for both corporeal and spiritual adultery prevailed among them. And particularly the Scribes and Pharisees adulterated the word of God by their false glosses, in which they acted a very sinful part; and such was their authority, that few durst contradict them, or profess doctrines which were the reverse of them. Wherefore our Lord assures his disciples and followers, that should they be deterred by these men from a free and open profession of him, and his Gospel, by which it would appear that they were ashamed of both, *of him also shall the son of man be ashamed*; will not own such an one for his; he'll take no notice of him; he'll not confess his name; but, as one that he is ashamed of, he'll turn away from him; not so much as look at him, or say one favourable word to him, or for him; but bid him be gone from him, as a worker of iniquity: this he will do, *when he cometh in the glory of his father*; the same that the father has; being his son, of the same nature with him, and equal to him; and as mediator, endued with power and authority from him, to judge the world; and when he'll be accompanied *with the holy angels*; who will descend from heaven with him, and be employed on earth by him; see the note on Matt. xvi. 27.

## C H A P. IX.

Ver. 1. *AND he said unto them, &c.*] Both to his disciples, and the multitude, *verily I say unto you, there be some of them that stand here*; that were then living, and upon the spot, *which shall not taste of death, or die, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power*. When Jesus was declared both Lord and Christ, by the wonderful effusion of the Holy Spirit; the Gospel spread in the world both among Jews and Gentiles, in spite of all opposition, under the power and influence of the grace of God, to the conversion of thousands of souls; and that branch of Christ's regal power exerted in the destruction of the Jewish nation; see the note on Matt. xvi. 28. This verse properly belongs to the foregoing chapter, to which it is placed in the Vulgate Latin version; and so it concludes one in Matthew, and ought not to begin a new chapter.

Ver. 2. *And after six days, &c.*] Six days after this discourse with his disciples, in their way to Cæsarea Philippi, and after they were come into those parts: *Jesus taketh with him Peter, James, and John*; favourite disciples, and a sufficient number, to be witnesses of his transfiguration: *and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves*; where he and they were alone. This was not Mount Tabor, as is generally said, but either the mountain which Cæsarea was at the foot of, or it may be Mount Lebanon; see the note on Matt. xvii. 1. *and he was transfigured before them*; the above three disciples; see the note on Matt. xvii. 2.

Ver. 3. *And his raiment became shining, &c.*] With the rays of glory and brightness which darted from his body through his clothes, and made them as bright as the light of the sun at noon-day: *and exceeding white*

as snow; than which nothing is whiter; so as no fuller on earth can white them. The Syriac version renders it, as men cannot white on earth; and the Persic thus, so as men could not behold him. Just as the Israelites could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, because of the glory of his countenance, when he came down from the mount; see the note on Matt. xvii. 2.

Ver. 4. *And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses, &c.*] Or Moses and Elias, as all the Oriental versions read, as in Matt. xvii. 3. see the note there: and they were talking with Jesus; concerning his decease, and what he was to do and suffer at Jerusalem, and of which he himself had lately talked with his disciples; so that this might have been a confirmation of these things to them; see the note on Matt. xvii. 3.

Ver. 5. *And Peter answered and said to Jesus, &c.*] He addressed himself to him, as being more familiar with him; as also because he was the principal person: wherefore he says, *master, it is good for us to be here*: the company and conversation were exceeding agreeable to him and his fellow-disciples; and the glory that Christ appeared in surpassed every thing they had seen before: *and let us make three tabernacles*; or, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, *and we will make, &c.* expressing not a petition, but a resolution; to which the Persic version premises, *if thou wilt give us commandment*; submitting it to the will of Christ: *one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias*; see the note on Matt. xvi. 4.

Ver. 6. *For he wist not what to say, &c.*] He did not know what he should say, or what was proper to be said by him, at such a time, in such circumstances, and before such persons; *for they were sore afraid*. The Persic version reads, *he was*; and so the Latin translation of the Syriac, though that itself is, *they were*; for all three were filled with consternation at what they saw and heard; so that they were scarcely themselves, and knew not well what they said or did.

Ver. 7. *And there was a cloud that overshadowed them, &c.*] Jesus, Moses, and Elias, and also the disciples; who, according to Luke, entered into it, and so were covered by it. *And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, this is my beloved son, hear him*. This was the voice of God the father, bearing a testimony to the sonship of Christ; and was directed, not to Moses and Elias, but to the disciples, enjoining them to hear and obey him, who was the end of the law and prophets; was the great prophet Moses had spoken of, and was to be hearkened to, and whom all the prophets had testified of, and in whom they all centred; see the note on Matt. xvii. 5.

Ver. 8. *And suddenly, when they had looked round about, &c.*] Upon hearing the voice, to see if they could observe any other object, by whom it was pronounced, and whether the same they had seen continued: *they saw no man any more*; neither Moses, nor Elias, not at that time, nor ever after; *save Jesus only with themselves*: the voice only regarded him, and being directed to them; see the note on Matt. xvii. 8.

Ver. 9. *And as they came down from the mountain, &c.*] Christ and his three disciples, Peter, James, and John, whom he led up thither: *he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen*; on the mount, as the transfiguration of himself, the

persons of Moses and Elias, and the bright cloud from whence the voice came, which bore testimony of Christ's sonship: he ordered to keep the whole of this a secret from every man, even from their fellow-disciples, *till the son of man were risen from the dead*; see the note on Matt. xvii. 9.

Ver. 10. *And they kept that saying with themselves &c.*] *They retained it in their own mind*, as the Persic version renders it; *they kept it close*, as Luke says, among themselves, and acquainted no man with it; and which refers either to the whole of Christ's charge, relating to the vision on the mount; or else, only to what he said about his resurrection from the dead; and which they took notice of particularly, and laid hold upon, as the word will bear to be rendered; and so the Ethiopic version does render it, *and they observed his saying*: what he last said concerning the son of man's rising from the dead; *questioning with one another what the rising from the dead should mean*: they inquired, disputed, and reasoned with one another, what should be the meaning of such an expression: not that they were ignorant of the general resurrection of the dead; for this was the hope of Israel, and the general sense of the Jewish nation: but they did not know what he meant by his particular rising from the dead: whether he meant it in a literal sense, which supposed his death; and that though he had lately told them of, they knew not how to reconcile to the notions they had of a long and flourishing temporal kingdom of the Messiah; or whether he meant a resurrection and glorious enlargement of his kingdom and interest, in such manner as they expected.

Ver. 11. *And they asked him, saying, &c.*] Being put in mind of it, by seeing Elias on the mount, or else by what Christ had said concerning his resurrection, or both: *why say the Scribes, the Vulgate Latin adds, and Pharisees, that Elias must first come?* before the Messiah comes, or before the setting up his kingdom in greater glory; see the note on Matt. xvii. 10.

Ver. 12. *And he answered, and told them, &c.*] Allowing that their observation was right, and that this was the sense of the Scribes, and that there was something of truth in it, when rightly understood: *Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things*; see the note on Matt. xvii. 11. *and how it is written of the son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought*. The sense of Christ is, that John the Baptist, whom he means by Elias, comes first, and restores all things: and among the rest of the things he sets right, this is one, and not of the least; namely, that he gives the true sense of such passages of the sacred writings, which related to the contemptuous usage, rejection, and sufferings of the Messiah; as that in these he was the Lamb of God typified in the sacrifices of the law, who by his sufferings and death takes away the sin of the world; and therefore he exhorted and directed those to whom he ministered, to look unto him, and believe in him; see John i. 29. Acts xix. 4.

Ver. 13. *But I say unto you, that Elias is indeed come, &c.*] Meaning John the Baptist, who in prophecy is designed by him. *And they have done unto him whatsoever thny listed*; see the note on Matt. xvii. 12.

which words should be read in a parenthesis, as they are in the Vulgate Latin version; for what follows, as it is written of him, respects not what the Scribes and Pharisees, and the people of the Jews did to John at their pleasure; despising his ministry and message, rejecting the counsel of God delivered by him, and remaining impenitent and unbelieving, notwithstanding his powerful and awakening ministry, with many other things, which are no where written of him; but the words regard his coming, and the prophecies concerning him, and particularly, that under the name of Elijah, in Mal. iv. 5. and which had had their accomplishment.

Ver. 14. *And when he came, to his disciples, &c.*] The other nine, who were left at the bottom of the mountain, and were waiting for him: *he saw a great multitude about them*: there was a multitude that followed him from Bethsaida hither; and which, very likely, was greatly increased upon Christ's arrival in those parts, and the people hearing of it; and the Scribes questioning with them; disputing and contending with them about their master, his doctrines and miracles, and their mission and authority from him; insulting them, on account of their inability to dispossess a dumb spirit, hereafter related.

Ver. 15. *And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, &c.*] As soon as ever they saw him, to many of whom, especially those that followed him out of Galilee, he was personally known. *Were greatly amazed*; either that he should come at that juncture, to assist and relieve his disciples, when the Scribes were triumphing over them, as some think; or rather, as others, on account of that remaining lustre and glory which was on his countenance, through his transfiguration, and not yet wholly gone off; like that which was on the face of Moses, when he came down from Mount Sinai: *and running to him, saluted him*; wishing him all peace and prosperity, expressing their great joy at his coming to them; which was very desirable by them, and exceedingly pleasing to them, and especially at this time, as both their words and gesture shewed.

Ver. 16. *And he asked the Scribes, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin renders it, *he asked them*; and the Ethiopic version, *he said unto them*; meaning either that he asked the disciples when he came to them, or else the people that ran to salute him; but the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read, *the Scribes*; seeing them about his disciples, in close debate with them, and running hard upon them, he asks them, *what question ye with them?* what is it ye seek and require of them? what is your dispute with them? what is your debate about? The Vulgate Latin version reads, *what question ye among you?* among themselves, and one another; and so Beza's most ancient copy.

Ver. 17. *And one of the multitude answered and said, &c.*] The Scribes made no reply, being afraid to engage with him, whom they had often found too hard for them; and the disciples, if they were spoken to, were silent, through shame, because they had not succeeded in the cure of the person brought to them, which gave their enemies an handle against them:

wherefore the parent of the afflicted child made answer, saying; the occasion of this debate between the Scribes, and thy disciples, is as follows: *Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit*; signifying, that he had heard much of him, as a very great man, and he believed him to be a master in Israel, who was famous both for doctrine and miracles, and therefore he brought his son to him, to be cured by him; but Christ not being in the way, he proposed him to his disciples, who attempted it without success. The case of his son was, he had a *dumb spirit*. The Evangelist Matthew says he was a *lunatic*; and by his account of him it appears, that he had the *epilepsy*, or falling sickness; and which, when upon him, took away the use of his speech. And so the Jews ascribe dumbness to the violence of a disease: thus they ask; "what is *Cordiacus* (*καρδιακος*)?" one that "has a disorder which affects the heart, and causes a deliquium (a fainting and swooning away)," but a man, *שבעשה ארבע*, *who is become dumb*, through "the force of a disease;" which was the case of this child: though this disease did not arise from natural causes, but from a diabolical possession; for he had a spirit, a foul spirit, a devil, as he is called: some further account is given of this unhappy case, in the next verse.

Ver. 18. *And wheresoever he taketh him, &c.*] The spirit, or devil, whether it be near fire, or water, whatsoever danger, or dangerous place: *he teareth him*; or throws him into it, or dashes him against it; or inwardly racks, tortures, and convulses him: *and he foameth*; at the mouth, like one that is mad: *and gnasheth with his teeth*; through the excessive pain he is in: *and pineth away*; his flesh is withered, dried up, and consumed away. This was the sad deplorable case this child was in, who was his father's only child, and therefore his health and life were very desirable: now he further observes to Christ, saying, *and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out, and they could not*. Christ being absent, he entreated the disciples, who had power against unclean spirits, to cast them out; that they would make use of it, and dispossess this dumb and evil spirit; and who did make trial to cast him out, but were not able to effect it; see the note on Matt. xvii. 16.

Ver. 19. *He answereth him, &c.*] The father of the child, and who is included in the reproof afterwards given, for his unbelief, and taking part with the Scribes against his disciples; though the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, read, *them*; meaning not his disciples, but the Scribes and Pharisees, with the father of the child: *and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me*; see the note on Matt. xvii. 17.

Ver. 20. *And they brought him unto him, &c.*] The father of the child, and those that were with him, brought the child to Jesus, into his presence, before him: *and when he saw him*; that is, either when Jesus saw the child, or the child saw Jesus; or the evil spirit in him, and by him, which were all at once: *straightway the spirit tare him*; threw him into a violent fit, shook him, and convulsed him

in a dreadful manner; knowing his time was short, and being filled with indignation and rage, that he should be obliged, as he knew he must, to quit the child very speedily; and was therefore resolved to do all the mischief, and put him to all the pain he could: *and he fell on the ground*; at the feet of Jesus, not being able to stand, through the violent motions and convulsions he threw him into: *and wallowed, foaming*; rolled about from side to side, foaming at the mouth, and in the most exquisite rack and torture.

Ver. 21. *And he asked his father, &c.*] As he lay rolling about in this miserable condition, that the length and stubbornness of his disorder might be known, and so the cure the more remarkable, and appear the more expressive of his divine power and goodness: *how long is it ago since this came unto him?* since this evil spirit entered into him, and these disorders have attended him? *and he said of a child*; or *from his infancy*; so that it was not for any actual sin that he had committed, that this sore affliction came upon him; and yet he could not be without sin, since it was not agreeable to the justice, mercy, and goodness of God, to afflict, or suffer to be afflicted, one that is innocent; and therefore must be tainted with original sin, which is the source and spring of all afflictions, calamities and judgments.

Ver. 22. *And oft-times it hath cast him into the fire, &c.*] When he has been near it; so that one part or other of his body has been scorched, or burnt, and his life in danger: *and into the waters to destroy him*: when he has been near any brook, or river, it has thrown him into it, in order to drown him, as into the fire to burn him. The Ethiopic version before fire and water reads, *into the deep*; meaning either the sea or some deep pit, or off a precipice. All this is said to aggravate the case, and shew the miserable condition the child was in, from the frequency of the fits, and the danger he was exposed to: *but if thou canst do any thing*. This man's faith was very weak, and perhaps weaker than when he first came from home with his child. He had brought him to the disciples of Christ, and they could not cure him; the evil spirit was as strong, or stronger in him than ever; he now lay in a violent fit, and in a most miserable condition; so that he was almost ready to despair of healing: some small hopes he had that Christ might be able to relieve in this case; but he puts an *if* upon his power, and earnestly entreats him, if he had any, he would put it forth: *have compassion on us, and help us*: his child that lay in such a deplorable condition, rolling on the ground at his feet; and himself, who was greatly afflicted for him: he tries, in very moving language, both the power and pity of Christ; and begs that if he had either, he would exert them on this occasion.

Ver. 23. *Jesus said unto him, if thou canst believe, &c.*] As the man put an *if* on the power of Christ, Christ puts an *if* on the faith of the man; and tacitly suggests, that power was not wanting in himself, but faith in him; and should that cure not be performed, it would not be owing to any inability in him, but to his own incredulity. The Arabic version

renders it, *what is this thy saying, if thou canst do any thing?* What dost thou mean by it? Thou oughtest not to doubt of my power; there's no reason for it, after so many miracles wrought; upbraiding the man with his unbelief; and the Ethiopic version renders it thus, *because thou sayest, if thou canst*: wherefore to shew that power was not wanting in him, provided he had but faith, it follows, *all things are possible to him that believeth*; that is, *to be done to him*, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions supply: for all things are not possible to be done by the believer himself, but all things are possible to be done for him, by God, or Christ, or the spirit of God: thus our Lord, as he elsewhere does, ascribes that to faith, which is done by a divine power.

Ver. 24. *And straightway the father of the child cried out, &c.*] As soon as ever he found it was put upon his faith, and that the issue of things would be according to that, he expressed himself with much vehemency, being in great distress; partly with indignation at his unbelief, and partly through fear of missing a cure, by reason of it: *and said with tears*; repenting of his unbelief, and grieved at the present weakness of his faith; which he very ingeniously confesses, saying, *Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief*; not forward, but out of the way: he found in himself some small degree of faith in the power of Christ, but it was mixed with much unbelief, through the greatness of the child's disorder; and therefore desires it might be removed from him, and he might be helped against it: he saw it was not in his own power to believe; nor had he strength of himself to oppose his unbelief; but that both faith must be given him, and power against unbelief. The Syriac version renders it, *help, להסיר את חסרונותי, the defect of my faith*: fill up that which is lacking in it, 'tis very deficient, Lord, increase it; and the Arabic and Ethiopic translate thus, *help the weakness of my faith*. He found his faith very weak, he desires it might be strengthened, that he might be strong in faith, and give glory to God; and in this way unbelief is helped, or men helped against it: every believer, more or less, at one time or another, finds himself in this man's case; and also that it is necessary to make use of the same petition; for faith is but imperfect in this life, and often very weak and defective in its exercise.

Ver. 25. *When Jesus saw that the people came running together, &c.*] *ולתוהו, to him*, as the Syriac version adds, and so the Persic; *upon* hearing the vehement cry of the father of the child, and the earnest solicitations he made, expecting that something would be done: *he rebuked the foul spirit*; that brought this disorder on the child, had continued it so long, and with so much violence. Matthew calls this foul spirit, *the devil*, ch. xvii. 18. see the note there: *saying unto him, thou dumb and deaf spirit*; so calling him, not because the spirit was dumb and deaf, but because he had been the cause of dumbness and deafness in the child: he had at times taken away both his speech and hearing: *I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him*. Christ, in an authoritative way, ordered the unclean spirit to quit his possession, and never at-

tempt to regain it more. This he said, partly with regard to the devil, who would be desirous of re-possession; and partly with respect to the disease, which had its intervals, and returned at certain times; and also with respect to the father of the child, to confirm his faith in the cure, and that he might be in no pain about the return of the disorder.

Ver. 26. *And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, &c.*] We rightly supply, *the spirit*, as do the Syriac and Persic versions, *the demon*; for it was he, and not the child, that cried, and made an hideous noise, at his ejection; being filled with wrath and rage, that he must be obliged to quit the possession he had so long held; and therefore, in spite and malice, before it left him, shook and tore him, and threw him into dreadful convulsions: *and came out of him*; though sore against his will, being obliged to it, by the superior power of Christ: *and he was as one dead*: that is, the child, when the devil had left him, lay as still as if he had no breath, nor life in him: *inso-much that many said, he is dead*; really dead: that there was no life in him, nor any hopes of his coming to himself again.

Ver. 27. *But Jesus, took him by the hand, &c.*] *Took hold of the hand of the child*, as the Persic version renders it; *and lifted him up*; from the ground, on which he was cast by the spirit; *and he arose*: this is omitted in the Syriac and Arabic versions, though in one edition of the latter, according to De Dieu, it is rendered, *and he stood*; to which is added, *and went into his own house*. The Persic version, instead of this clause, reads, *and the child was healed*; and all the expressions shew, that he was perfectly well.

Ver. 28. *And when he was come into the house, &c.*] Perhaps into the man's house whose child he had healed, or into some other in these parts, for the sake both of retirement and refreshment: *his disciples asked him privately, why could not we cast him out?* The nine disciples, who were particularly concerned in this matter, fearing they had lost the power of casting out devils, conferred upon them, inquired of Jesus, when he was alone, why they could not cast the demon out of the child, when they had ejected unclean spirits out of many others; see the note on Matt. xvii. 19.

Ver. 29. *And he said unto them, &c.*] Matthew, besides the following reason, assigns another, as given by our Lord, why they could not cast out the foul spirit, which was their unbelief; of which they were guilty in some sort, as well as the Jews, and the father of the child; but Mark omits it, and only relates this as the reason; *this kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting*; which they had not observed; see the note on Matt. xvii. 21.

Ver. 30. *And they departed thence, &c.*] From the coasts of Casarea Philippi, from that part of the country where the mountain was, on which Christ was transfigured, and at the foot of which the above miracle was wrought. This is to be understood of Christ and his twelve disciples, though the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read in the singular number, *he went out*; not alone, but with his disciples, as the following account shews: *and passed through*

*Galilee*; in order to go to the coasts of Judea, and so to Jerusalem, where he was shortly to suffer: and therefore that his journey might not be retarded, and he be hindered by the conversation of the people in Galilee, and their importunity to stay with them, and teach, and work miracles among them, he passed through the country, in as private a manner as could be: *and he would not that any man should know it*; partly for the reason just mentioned, and partly that he might have the opportunity of conversing alone with his disciples, and of reminding, and informing them, of some important things, which 'twas necessary they should be acquainted with, and observe.

Ver. 31. *For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, &c.*] What he had some little time before suggested to them; see ch. viii. 31. *The son of man is delivered into the hands of men*: in one of Beza's copies it is read, *sinful men*, as in Luke xxiv. 7. and so the Persic version reads here, and adds *rebellious*. This is represented as if it was already done, because it was determined and agreed upon, that it should be; and because, in a very little time, the son of man would be delivered into the hands of wicked men, according to the will of God, with his own consent, by the means of Judas, the Jews, and Pilate: *and they shall kill him*; put him to death, in a violent manner, contrary to all law and justice: *and after that he is killed*; this is omitted in the Arabic version, and in the Persic version in the room of it 'tis read, *and shall put him into a sepulchre*; that being what followed next upon his death: *and he shall rise the third day*. This Christ always takes care to mention, for the comfort of his disciples, when he tells them of his death.

Ver. 32. *But they understood not that saying, &c.*] Meaning either the whole of what he had said, concerning his delivery, death, and resurrection: and which then must be interpreted with some limitation; for they must understand the sense of his words, which were clear and express; especially concerning his death, which affected their minds with trouble and grief; for Matthew says, *they were exceeding sorry* upon it, ch. xvii. 23. see the note there; but they could not understand how it could be, and upon what account, and for what end, so holy and good, and innocent a man as he was, could be put to death; nor how this could consist with his character, as the son of God, the Messiah, and king of Israel; and with the notions they had of the Messiah's abiding for ever, and setting up a temporal kingdom on earth: or this may regard only his resurrection from the dead; which whether it was to be taken in a literal or mystical sense, they could not tell: *and were afraid to ask him*; lest they should be upbraided with their ignorance and stupidity, as they had been lately rebuked by him for their unbelief, and the neglect of their duty; and as Peter had been severely reprimanded for expostulating with him about the self-same things, delivered by him to them, not long before.

Ver. 33. *And he came to Capernaum, &c.*] Where he met with the collectors of the tribute-money, and paid it to them, as related by Matthew, ch. xvii. 24. though Mark takes no notice of it. The Vulgate

Latin and the Syriac versions, read in the plural number, *they came*; Christ and his twelve apostles; and which is the sense of the words, read in the singular number; for Christ came not alone, but with his disciples: *and being in the house*: of Simon and Andrew, very likely where he used to be when at Capernaum: *he asked them, what was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?* Whilst in their journey from Cæsarea Philippi, to Galilee; or as they travelled through the parts of Galilee to Capernaum. This question Christ put, not as ignorant of what had passed among them, but in order to have the case laid before him; that he might reprove them for their pride and ambition, and have an opportunity of teaching them humility, and of informing them of the nature of his kingdom, and subjects; concerning which, they had entertained very wrong notions. The phrase *among yourselves*, is omitted in the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, but stands in the Syriac, Persian, and Ethiopic.

Ver. 34. *But they held their peace, &c.*] Fearing a reprimand, for their vanity and affectation of worldly grandeur: *for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest*; that is, who should be advanced to the highest post, and have the greatest place of authority, honour, and dignity, in the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, they expected would be in a little time set up; for notwithstanding what Christ had said to them, concerning his being given up to the power of men, and concerning his death and resurrection, they still retained their former principle, to which they knew not how to reconcile his dying; and therefore chose rather to leave his meaning in suspense, and remain ignorant about it, than quit so darling a notion: and doubtless this dispute was occasioned by what Christ had said to them; who afterwards, getting by themselves, talked about it, which led on to a warm contest, about precedence in his kingdom.

Ver. 35. *And he sat down, &c.*] As their master, as one having authority; and in order to examine into this matter, and pass judgment upon it: *and called the twelve*; all the disciples, who though they might not be all engaged in this dispute, nor equally criminal, yet were all possessed of the same notion; and therefore Christ calls them all unto him, what he had to say, being pertinent unto them all: *and saith unto them, if any man desire to be first*: to have the pre-eminence, and be in the chief place in the kingdom of the Messiah, *the same shall be last of all, and servant of all*: his pride and vanity shall be checked; his ambitious views shall be frustrated; instead of being first, he shall be last; and instead of having superior reverence and respect, he shall be debased, and treated with neglect and contempt; and instead of being the master over others, shall be the servant of all. Some copies read, *let him be*; and so the Persian version, *let him be last, and minister to every one*; and the Ethiopic thus, *let him subject himself to all, and be servant to all*; for the only way to preferment in Christ's kingdom, or in the Gospel dispensation, is humility and meekness, and performing the lowest services to all, with diligence and cheerfulness.

Ver. 36. *And he took a child, &c.*] Which was in the house, and which he called unto him, and set by him, as the other evangelists observe: *and set him in the midst of them*; his disciples, that all might see and learn from this instance; *and when he had taken him in his arms*; and embraced him, to shew his great regard to humility, and humble persons: *he said unto them*; the following words.

Ver. 37. *Whosoever shall receive one of such children, &c.*] That is, any believer, who is like to such a child, for humility, meekness, and lowliness of mind; and so the Syriac version renders it, אֵת דָּוָן שְׂלֵי, *one like to this child*; and so the Arabic and Persian versions; for it can't be thought that Christ's meaning is, that whoever takes up any little child, embraces, and takes notice of it, as he did, does what is after related; but that whoever shews respect, and performs the least office of love and kindness to the meanest believer, comparable to a little child, for the above excellent qualities, and he does this, says Christ, *in my name*; on account that he belongs to Christ, is one of his, bears his image, partakes of his grace, is loved by him, and shall be glorified with him: such is Christ's great regard to his humble followers, that he takes it all one as if done to himself: *he receiveth me*; this humble believer, being a member of his, and like unto him, and respected by him; *and whosoever shall receive me*; Christ, in any of his members: *receiveth not me*; that is, not him only; for he does receive him, otherwise there would be a contradiction in the words; but his meaning is, that he does not hereby receive him, by receiving one of his, nor him so much, as his father: *but him that sent me*; for as shewing respect to one of Christ's members, is shewing respect to him; so shewing respect to Christ, is shewing respect to his father, from whence he came, by whom he was sent, in whose name he acted, and whose work and service he was concerned in.

Ver. 38. *And John answered him, saying, &c.*] Taking notice of what Christ just now said, and observing how well-pleasing it was to him, to receive in a meek and humble manner, the least believer in his name; and reflecting upon an action, in which he and some of his fellow-disciples were concerned, and which he perceived was not so agreeable to this rule of Christ, thought proper to relate it to him; that he might have his sense of it, and give him an opportunity of enlarging on a subject, so suitable to the temper and disposition of this beloved disciple. *Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name*: very likely he called him Rabbi, as the Syriac version renders it, or Rabboni, as in John xx. 16. a title commonly given to Christ, both by his disciples and others: the case related, very probably happened, when the disciples being sent forth by Christ to preach the Gospel, and cast out devils, took a tour through Judea and Galilee, where they saw this man. John was not alone; there were others with him, at least another, who was an eye-witness with him; for the apostles were sent out, by two and two: who this man was, is not said, his name is not mentioned, perhaps was unknown to the apostles; though Beza says, in one ancient exemplar 'tis read, *we knew one*.



This person not only attempted to cast out devils, but really did; and that more than one; but in which of Christ's names he did it, is not expressed; if in the name of the Messiah, Dr. Lightfoot's conjecture may be right, that he was one of John's disciples; who had been baptized in the name of the Messiah, that was just expected to come; to whom, as to others of his disciples, was given a power of casting out devils, to make the way of the Messiah more plain; wherefore the reason why he did not cast out devils in the name of Jesus, but in the name of the Messiah, and did not follow him, nor his disciples, was not out of contempt, but ignorance, not knowing that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah: or if he cast out devils in the name of Jesus, which seems most likely, he might be, as others think, a disciple of John's, who really did believe in Jesus, though he did not associate with his disciples, but continued with the disciples of John: wherefore it is said, *and he followeth not us*; was neither one of the twelve apostles; nor one of the seventy disciples; nor even one of the lower class of the professed disciples of Jesus. This clause is omitted in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions: *and we forbid him*; going on in this way, casting out any more devils: *because he followeth not us*; was not one of their company, nor any of Christ's disciples; who had received no authority and commission from Christ, to do what he did: wherefore they feared, that by such an irregular way of proceeding, the dignity of Christ would be lessened, and some dishonour and reproach reflected on him: and besides the honour of Christ, they might consult their own; and their case be too much like that of Joshua, when Eldad and Medad prophesied in the camp. This clause is left out in the Vulgate Latin, but stands in all the eastern versions.

Ver. 39. *But Jesus said, forbid him not, &c.*] Neither him, nor any other they should hereafter meet with, who might be casting out devils in his name, giving this as a reason for it; *for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name*; or *miracles*, as the Syriac version, as to cast out devils, or heal any sickness and disease, *that can lightly speak evil of me*: such a man can never reproach and blaspheme that name, which he makes use of in doing, and by which he does wonderful works; no man can call Jesus accursed, who casts out devils in his name; see 1 Cor. xii. 3. if he has spoken evil of him before, he can't do it *again*, as the Persic version renders it, with any face; or he can't do it *quickly, immediately*, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions interpret it: there must be some time before such an one apostatizes, if he ever does; he can't very easily and readily go into a way of blaspheming that name, by which he does his mighty works: his conscience will not admit of it; and besides, it would be contrary to his interest; it must sink his credit, and he lose the esteem and applause of men, he had gained by his miracles; for to dishonour that name, would be to reproach himself.

Ver. 40. *For he that is not against us, is on our part.*] Many copies read, *he that is not against you, is for*

*you*; as this man; he was not against either Christ, or his disciples; he was doing the same work, promoting the same interest, and destroying the kingdom of Satan: and therefore, though he did not follow them, and had not his commission immediately from Christ; yet, inasmuch as he was opposing the same common enemy, and did nothing against them, he ought to be reckoned as one for them, and on their side. 'Tis a proverbial expression, signifying that all that are not against a man, and take not the part of his enemy, are to be accounted his friends.

Ver. 41. *For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, &c.*] Not only one that does a miracle in the name of Christ, but he that shews the least respect, or does the least kindness to any one of his; see the note on Matt. x. 42. is to be reckoned a friend, and is so accounted by Christ; and will be sooner or later taken notice of by him, especially, if what he does, be it ever so little, is done on his account: *in my name, because ye belong to Christ*; or as the Syriac version renders it, *on account that ye are Christ's*; are his disciples, are called by his name, are partakers of his grace, bear his image and likeness, are loved by him, interested in him, given to him, redeemed by him, called by his grace, and shall be with him: *verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward*; see the note on Matt. x. 42.

Ver. 42. *And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, &c.*] Whosoever shall do the least injury to the meanest person that believes in Christ, who are mean both in their own eyes, and the eyes of others; for Christ is not speaking of little children in age, who are neither capable of believing in Christ, nor are they ready to take offence; but of such as belong to him; his disciples and followers, of whom he is speaking in the preceding verse: *it is better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea*; and drowned there: the allusion is to the drowning of malefactors, by tying a stone, or any heavy thing about their necks, and casting them into the sea. Casaubon, and others, have shewn out of Heathen writers, that this has been a practice of some nations, particularly the Grecians: Jerom says, Christ speaks according to the custom of the country; this being a punishment of the greatest crimes among the Jews; but I have no where met with it in their writings: Christ's sense is, that such who give offence to any of his ministers or people, how mean soever they may appear, shall undergo the severest punishment; see the note on Matt. xviii. 6.

Ver. 43. *And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off, &c.*] I have observed on Matt. v. 30. that by the Jewish canons, cutting off of the hand was ordered in some cases there mentioned; which, though literally enjoined, must not be understood, as though the Jewish sanhedrim had a power of inflicting such a punishment, on persons found guilty of the things instanced in; or that it was required they should do this to themselves; but such rules were delivered in such language, to shew the heinousness of the crimes committed, to express an abhorrence of them, and to deter persons from them; and to shew, as the

gloss<sup>b</sup> on one place observes, that it is better that the hand be cut off; or it should be more eligible to the person himself, to have it cut off, than to be guilty of such evil: and in like manner, Christ there and here, directs to what is most proper and fit to be done; even to part with what is ever so near and dear, rather than be drawn into evil by it: and his sense in this place is, that the dearest friends and acquaintance, or be they what they will, though ever so near and dear, like a right hand, the instrument of action, that obstruct the spiritual welfare of men, are to be renounced and parted with, and treated as real enemies, and of the most pernicious consequence; see the note on Matt. v. 29, 30. *It is better for thee to enter into life maimed*: not that there will be any such thing, as upon the resurrection, going into heaven without a limb; for the words are to be understood, not literally, but figuratively; and the sense is, it is better to part with every thing here, that is detrimental to a man's doing, or enjoying, what is spiritually good, and enter into eternal life, *than having two hands, to go into hell*: than by enjoying such persons and things, agreeable to the flesh, to the ruin of the soul, and be cast into hell; *into the fire that never shall be quenched*. This is a paraphrase of hell, and is an allusion to the valley of Hinnom, from whence hell has its name, here and elsewhere; where a constant fire was kept, for the burning of polluted things: one of the Jewish writers says<sup>c</sup>, that it "was a place in the land near to Jerusalem, and was a place contemptible: where they cast things defiled, and carcases; and there was there, אש תמיד, a continual fire, to burn polluted things and bones; and therefore the condemnation of the wicked, in a parabolical way, is called Gehinnom." And says another of them<sup>k</sup>, "Gehinnom is a place known, near to Jerusalem, and a valley, שאת הדיש נכבית, whose fire is never quenched; and in which they burn bones of defilement, and carcases, and other polluted things." This whole clause is left out in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; and the phrase, *that never shall be quenched*, is not in the Arabic version.

Ver. 44. *Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*] The passage referred to, is in Isa. lxvi. 24. and as there, the words are spoken of such, as transgressed against the Lord; so here, of such as offended any of Christ's little ones, or were offended by an hand, a foot, or eye, and retained them: by their worm is meant, their conscience; for as a worm that is continually gnawing upon the entrails of a man, gives him exquisite pain; so the consciences of sinners, will be continually flying in their faces, bringing their sins to remembrance, accusing them of them, upbraiding them with them, aggravating them, tormenting them for them, filling them with dreadful anguish and misery, with twinging remorses, and severe reflections, and which will never have an end. This will be always the case; conscience will be ever distressing, racking, and torturing them; it will never

cease, nor cease doing this office; and so the Chaldee paraphrase of Isa. lxvi. 24. renders this phrase, נשמותיהן לא ימותין, *their souls shall not die*; but shall ever continue in the dreadful torments and unspeakable horrors of a corroding conscience; and by *the fire* may be meant the fire of divine wrath let into their souls, which will never be extinguished; and so Jarchi interprets the phrase in Isaiah, *their fire*, בנידונם, *in hell*. It is a tradition of the Jews<sup>l</sup>, that the light, or fire, which God created on the second day, *there is no quenching it for ever*; as it is said, *for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched*, Isa. lxvi. 24. the passage which is here referred to; the reason they give is, because it is the fire of hell; the sense of which is sometimes given by the Jewish doctors thus<sup>m</sup>; *their worm shall not die from the body, and the fire shall not be quenched from the soul*.

Ver. 45. *And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off, &c.*] Such who are that to men, as the foot is to the body, the support of them, through whom they have their maintenance and subsistence; and yet these, if they are a means of causing them to stumble and fall, or of leading out of the ways of Christ, and off from him, their company is to be shunned and abstained from; *it is better for thee to enter halt into life*. The Vulgate Latin version reads, *eternal life*, which is undoubtedly intended by *life*; and so reads the Cambridge copy of Beza's; and the meaning is, that it is better to go alone without such company into heaven, *than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched*; see the note on the preceding verse.

Ver. 46. *Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*] The Persic version renders it, *because from thence there can be no deliverance*: which is rather an interpretation of these figurative expressions, and is a good one; since they design the eternity of hell torments, as well as point at the anguish and misery of them.

Ver. 47. *And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, &c.*] Than which, nothing is dearer to man, it being very tender, and exceeding useful: this metaphor the Lord sometimes makes use of, to shew how dear his people are unto him, and what a tender concern he has for them, Deut. xxxii. 10. Psal. xvii. 8. Zech. ii. 8. And here it may design such, as are most beloved by men, and are their most intimate acquaintance, and bosom friends; and yet these are to be parted with, when they prove snares and stumbling-blocks, or give offence, by endeavouring to draw into sin, and from Christ: *it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye*; that kingdom, which God has prepared for his people, from the foundation of the world; and of his rich grace, gives unto them, and in which they will enjoy him to all eternity; *than having two eyes, to be cast into hell-fire*. In the two instances before it is added, *that never shall be quenched*.

Ver. 48. *Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*] This is repeated again, not only to assure the truth of the thing, but to raise the attention of the mind unto it, and fix an awful impression upon

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 108. 2.

<sup>b</sup> Kimchi in Psal. xxvii. 13.

<sup>c</sup> R. Isaac Saugari, Sopher Cosri, fol. 57. 2.

<sup>l</sup> T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 54. 1. & Gloss. in ib.

<sup>m</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 62. 2.

it: the Persic version renders it, *from whence thou shalt never find redemption*: there's no redemption from hell, as Origen and others have thought.

Ver. 49. *For every one shall be salted with fire, &c.*] That is, every one of those that transgress the law of God, offend any that believe in Christ, retain their sins, and sinful companions; every one of them that are cast into hell, where the worm of conscience is always gnawing, and the fire of divine wrath is always burning, with that fire every one of them shall be salted: that fire shall be to them, what salt is to flesh; as that keeps flesh from putrefaction and corruption, so the fire of hell, as it will burn, torture, and distress rebellious sinners, it will preserve them in their beings; they shall not be consumed by it, but continued in it: so that these words are a reason of the former, shewing and proving, that the soul in torment shall never die, or lose any of its powers and faculties; and particularly, not its gnawing, torturing conscience; and that the fire of hell is inextinguishable; for though sinners will be inexpressibly tormented in it, they'll not be consumed by it; but the smoke of their torments shall ascend for ever and ever; and that they will be so far from being annihilated by the fire of hell, that they shall be preserved in their beings in it, as flesh is preserved by salt: *and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt*; referring to Lev. ii. 13. *With all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt*: not only the meat-offerings, but the burnt-offerings, and all others, were to be offered with salt<sup>a</sup>; of which, the Jews say the following things<sup>b</sup>: "It is an affirmative precept to salt "all the sacrifices, before they go up to the altar, as "it is said, Lev. ii. 13. *With all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt*; and there is nothing brought to the altar without salt, except the wine of drink-offerings, and blood, and wood; and this thing is a tradition, and there is no Scripture to support it; and the commandment is to salt the flesh very well, as "one salts flesh for roasting, who turns the part, and salts it; though if he salts the whole, with even one "grain of salt, it is right; he that offers without any salt at all, is to be beaten; as it is said, *thou shalt not suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking*: and though he is to be beaten, the offering is "right, and acceptable, except the meat-offering.— "The salt, with which they salt all the sacrifices, is "from the congregation, as the wood; and a private "person does not bring salt, or wood, for his offering, "from his own house: and in three places<sup>c</sup> they put on salt, in the chamber of salt, and upon the ascent of the altar, and upon the top of the altar: in the "chamber of salt they salt the skins of the holy "things; and upon the ascent of the altar they salt the parts (of the sacrifice); and upon the top of the

"altar they salt the handful, and the frankincense "and the meat-offerings, that are burnt, and the burnt-offerings of fowls." Something of this kind also obtained among the Heathens, who thought their sacrifices were not rightly offered, nor acceptable to God, unless salt was used with them<sup>d</sup>. Now our Lord in this has either respect to the same persons, as before; and signifies hereby, that the wicked in hell shall be victims to divine justice, and sacrifices to his wrath and vengeance; and that as the sacrifices under the law were salted with salt, these shall be salted with the fire of hell, and shall never be utterly destroyed; but shall ever remain the objects of God's sore displeasure; and fiery indignation: or he may have respect to a different sort of persons, even to the saints and people of God, who are an holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice to him; and in the prophecy referred to in the context, Isa. lxvi. 20. they are said to be brought for *an offering to the Lord—as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord*: and so as the sacrifices of the Jews were salted with salt, and became acceptable to God; such who are seasoned with the grace of God, are preserved from the corruptions of the world, are acceptable in the sight of God, and are kept safe to his kingdom and glory.

Ver. 50. *Salt is good, &c.*] To make meat savoury, and keep flesh from corrupting; and so is the grace of God, to season men's hearts, make their discourse savoury, and preserve them from the corruption of sin: and so men made partakers of the grace of God; they are good and useful to others, both by their words and actions, and especially ministers of the Gospel, who are *the salt of the earth*, Matt. v. 13. see the note there; and here Christ may chiefly intend his apostles: *but if the salt hath lost its saltness, wherewith will ye season it?* there's no recovering it, it becomes good for nothing; see the note on Matt. v. 13. *have salt in yourselves*; the doctrine of grace, and word of Christ, prudence in talk and conversation, and holiness of heart and life, so as to behave wisely towards them that are without; and have peace one with another; which the God of peace calls unto, the Gospel of peace requires, and the grace of God teaches. Salt is an emblem of firm union, concord, and agreement: hence the covenant of peace is called a covenant of salt, Numb. xviii. 19. compared with ch. xxv. 12. This exhortation very appositely follows upon the making mention of salt in different senses; especially, this exhortation was the more necessary to the disciples at this time, since they had been very lately warmly disputing the point among themselves, who should be greatest in the kingdom of the Messiah; and which had occasioned this discourse of Christ's.

<sup>a</sup> Piske Tosph. Ceritot, c. 1. art. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Matimon. Hilch. Issure Mizbeach, c. 5. sect. 11, 12, 13. Vid. ib. in Misn. Menachot, c. 3. sect. 2.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 91. 2. & Baal Hatturim in Lev. ii. 13.

<sup>d</sup> Servius in Virgil. Æneid. l. 2. p. 568, 569. & in l. 12. p. 1751. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 17.

## C H A P. X.

Ver. 1. *AND he arose from thence, &c.*] From Galilee, and particularly from Capernaum: *and cometh into the coasts of Judea*; into those places, which bordered on that part of the land of Israel, called Judea, as distinct from Galilee: *by*, or rather *to the further side of Jordan*; which he crossed at the bridge of Cham-math: the particular place he came to was Bethabara; see John x. 40. and i. 28. where John formerly preached, and baptized: *and the people resorted unto him again*; great multitudes followed him out of Galilee, and more doubtless flocked to him from the adjacent parts, when they heard of his coming again to them. *And, as he was wont, he taught them again*: it had been his custom before, and so it was wherever he went, to preach the word of God, and teach men what was profitable to them, and useful for the good of their immortal souls; and so he did now, and here: and not only so, but healed many of them of their bodily disorders, as Matthew relates, ch. xix. 2.

Ver. 2. *And the Pharisees came unto him, &c.*] As they every where did; not to be instructed by him, but to ensnare him; *and asked him, is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?* that is, as Matthew adds, *for every cause*, ch. xix. 3. see the note there: for a divorce might be lawfully made for a cause, or reason, namely, adultery, but not for any, or every cause; which is the sense of this question of the Pharisees; and which they put, not for information, but *tempting him*; trying to entangle him by opposing the authority of Moses, should he deny the lawfulness of divorces, or by objecting his former doctrine, Matt. v. 32. and so expose him as an inconsistent preacher, should he allow them to be lawful for every reason. This clause is placed in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions before the question.

Ver. 3. *And he answered and said unto them, &c.*] Very prudently and wisely, *what did Moses command you?* according to Matthew, he put another question to them; see ch. xix. 4. no doubt but both were put, and this after they had urged the authority and law of Moses: and therefore he very pertinently asks them, what Moses had said about divorces, what law he had left; and puts them upon producing and repeating it, that the sense of it might be examined, and it be considered, upon what account it was given.

Ver. 4. *And they said, &c.*] By way of reply, *Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away*, Moses did not command them to divorce their wives, only suffered them to do so: and gave orders that if they could not bear that they should live with them, but would divorce them, that they should give them a bill, which should certify, they were so divorced, and then send them out of their houses, free to marry other men; this law, or permission, is in Deut. xxiv. 1. of the form of a bill of divorcement, see the note on Matt. v. 31.

Ver. 5. *And Jesus answered and said unto them, &c.*] With respect to this command, or sufferance

of Moses, which they urged: *for the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept*; it was not because it was right in its own nature, or according to the original will of God; but, because the Jews were such cruel, and hard-hearted men, that if this had not been permitted, some of them, that had wives not so agreeable to them, would have used them in a very inhuman manner, if not murdered them; and therefore to prevent further, and greater mischief, Moses indulged them with such a precept; see the note on Matt. xix. 8.

Ver. 6. *But from the beginning of the creation, &c.*] Of the world, or of man: מְחֵלֶת בְּרִייתוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, *from the beginning of the creation of the world*, is a way of speaking often used by the Jews: the phrase *of the creation* is left out in the Syriac and Persic versions; and so it was in Beza's most ancient copy, and 'tis only read, *from the beginning*, as in Matt. xix. 4, 8. see the note there: *God made them male and female*: the first that were created, Adam and Eve, the first parents of mankind, the first couple that came together were one male and one female; so that there could be no polygamy or divorce: Adam could not have more wives than one: nor could he put away Eve, and marry another; no provision was made for any such usages and practices; see the note on Matt. xix. 4. In the Complutensian edition, 'tis added, *and said*, the following words.

Ver. 7. *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, &c.*] The Persic version adds, *and brethren and sisters*, though without any foundation in the original text, in Gen. ii. 24. from whence this passage is cited; or in any copy of the evangelist: *and cleave to his wife*; see the note on Matt. xix. 5.

Ver. 8. *And they twain shall be one flesh, &c.*] This is the remaining part of the citation out of Gen. ii. 24. see the note on Matt. xix. 5. *so then they are no more twain; but one flesh*; as Adam and Eve were both by creation and marriage: and so two persons, a man and woman, being lawfully married together, become one flesh, or *one body*, as the Arabic and Persic versions render the phrase; and therefore the wife is to be loved by the husband as his own body, and from whom there should be no separation, until death, but in case of adultery; see the note on Matt. xix. 6.

Ver. 9. *What therefore God hath joined together, &c.*] See the note on Matt. xix. 6.

Ver. 10. *And in the house, &c.*] To which Christ retired, after he had put the Pharisees to silence, and dismissed the multitude: *his disciples asked him again of the same matter*; concerning the affair of divorces, he had been discoursing with the Pharisees about; some things being said, they had not been used to, and which they did not thoroughly understand; and therefore chose privately to converse with him on this subject, for their further information.

Ver. 11. *And he saith unto them, &c.*] The same things as in Matt. v. 32. and xix. 9. see the notes there: *whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another*;

when there is no uncleanness in the case; when his former wife has not injured him by violating the marriage-bed: *committeth adultery against her*; to the injury of his lawful wife; or upon her, or with her, with the person he marries. The Syriac and Persic versions leave out the phrase, *against her*.

Ver. 12. *And if a woman shall put away her husband, &c.*] Not that there was the same law, or the same sufferance by the law of Moses, for a woman to put away her husband, as for the husband to put away the wife; nor was it practised among the Jews, unless it came to be in use about this time, in their declining state, having taken it from the Gentiles; of whom they say<sup>1</sup>, that "they divorce one another: says R. Jo-  
chanan, אִשְׁתּוֹ מִנְרֵשֶׁתוֹ, *his wife divorces him*, and "gives him the dowry." So Salome, the sister of Herod the Great, sent a bill of divorce to her husband Costobarus; and in this she was followed by Herodias, the daughter of Aristobulus, as Josephus<sup>2</sup> relates; and which his own wife also did. And by such examples the practice might prevail among the Jews: and we have a story told<sup>3</sup> us of a holy man, and a holy woman, who were married, and had no children, וְנִרְשָׁו זֶה אֶת זֶה, *and they divorced one another*; and the one went and married a wicked woman, and she made him wicked; and the other went and married a wicked man, and she made him righteous: but I do not find that this practice was approved, or established by any rule, or canon. They allow<sup>4</sup> indeed a woman to write her husband's divorce of her, with proper witnesses; and they also oblige one, that was espoused in her minority, and refuses her husband, when adult, to write a bill of refusal; the form of that, and the rules about it, take as follow<sup>5</sup>: "they don't allow one to marry a minor; he that marries a minor that is fatherless, and she is not pleased with her husband, lo! she may refuse, and go away, and she has no need of a divorce from him, because the espousals of a minor are not perfect espousals, as we have explained: and so a minor, whom her father marries, and she becomes a widow, or is divorced whilst she is a minor, lo! she is as one fatherless, in her father's life-time; and if she marries whilst she is a minor, she may refuse—how does she refuse? she says before two witnesses, I don't like such an one my husband; or I don't like the espousals with which my father, or my brother, espoused me; and such-like words.—The two, before whom the minor refuses, write for her; on such a day, such an one, the daughter of such an one, refused, before us, such an one her husband; and they seal, and give it to her: and this is the body, or substance of a bill of refusal—in such a week, on such a day of the month, in such a year, such an one, the daughter of such an one, refused before us, and said, that my mother, or my brother, forced me, and married me, or espoused me, and I, a minor, to such an one, the son of such an one; and now I reveal my mind before you, that I do not like him, and I will not

"abide with him: and we have searched such an one; and this is manifest to us, that she is yet a minor, and we have written, and sealed, and have given this to her, for her justification, and a clear proof.

"Such an one, the son of such an one, witness.

"Such an one, the son of such an one, witness."

And such a writing was called, כְּטוּב מִיָּמִין, *a bill of refusal*, and sometimes כְּטוּב מִיָּמִין שְׂמֵרִי, *letters of refusal*; but a bill of divorcement given by a married woman to her husband, I have not met with. Justin Martyr speaks<sup>6</sup> of a Christian woman that, ἐπιστάσει δεσφα, *gave a bill of divorce* to her husband: such things, therefore, have been done, and might be done in Christ's time, to which he refers; and concerning which he says, that if a woman do so, *and be married to another, she committeth adultery*: with the man she marries, and against, and to the injury of her former husband, unjustly left by her.

Ver. 13. *And they brought young children to him, &c.*]

The parents, or friends, or nurses of the children in those parts, having heard of the fame of Jesus; and having entertained an high opinion of him, as a great prophet, and a holy, good man, brought their children in their arms, or hands, *that he should touch them*: as he did when he healed diseased persons, as these might be, though not expressed: *and his disciples rebuked those that brought them*; see the note on Matt. xix. 13.

Ver. 14. *But when Jesus saw it, &c.*] Observed that his disciples reproved those that brought their children to him, *he was much displeased*; with his disciples, who took too much upon them; for they ought first to have known their master's will; whether it was his pleasure to grant the favour desired for these children, and not to have forbid them of themselves: *and said unto them*; the disciples, as the Persic version reads: *suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God*; or of them who are, אֵין דּוֹלִין, *as these*, as the Syriac version renders the words; or, as the Arabic, who are like to these; and the Persic, who are like to these little children; in innocence and humility; see the note on Matt. xix. 14.

Ver. 15. *Verily I say unto you, &c.*] A form of speech used when our Lord was about to asseverate a thing, and assert something of moment and importance, and which he would have attended to. *Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God*; the Gospel, and the mysteries of it: *as a little child*; laying aside all pride and prejudice, attending thereunto with humility and meekness: *he shall not enter therein*; he shall attain to no true spiritual knowledge of the Gospel; nor should he be admitted into a Gospel church-state, and to the ordinances of it.

Ver. 16. *And he took them up in his arms, &c.*] Upon his arms, the Syriac version says; *he put them into his bosom*, according to the Ethiopic; and the Persic renders it, *he took them into his bosom*: all which expresses great tenderness towards them, and affection for them:

<sup>1</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 18. fol. 15. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Antiqu. l. 15. c. 11. & 18. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 17. fol. 14. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Misn. Ediot. c. 2. sect. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Gerushim, c. 11. sect. 1, 8, 9, 11.

<sup>6</sup> Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 1. sect. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Apolog. 1. p. 42. Vid. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 17.

put his hands upon them, and blessed them. The Ethiopic version transposes these clauses, and puts blessing first, contrary to the natural order of the words, and things; for he first put his hands on the children, according to the custom of the Jews, and then prayed over them, and wished all happiness and prosperity to them; see the note on Matt. xix. 15.

Ver. 17. *And when he was gone forth into the way, &c.*] For when he had blessed the children he departed from the coasts of Judea, on the further side of Jordan, and steered his course towards Jerusalem, ver. 32. and as he was on the road thitherwards, *there came one running*; a young man, a ruler among the Jews, and very rich, a person of great dignity, and large substance; he hearing that Christ was going from those parts, ran in great haste to him, to have some conversation with him, before he was entirely gone; *and kneeled to him*; as a token of great respect and civility: some versions, as the Persic and Ethiopic, render it, *and worshipped him*; which must be understood not in a religious, but in a civil way: the words might be literally rendered, *and kneeled him*; and Dr. Lightfoot suspects, that more is meant than bending his knees to Christ; that he also might take hold of the knees of Christ, and kiss them, as was usual with the Jewish Rabbins, and which he illustrates by several instances: *and asked him, good master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?* This man, though a young man, and also a rich man, was thoughtful of the world to come, and the life of it: he believed there was an eternal life after this state of things, and so was no Sadducee; but he had wrong notions about the way and manner of attaining it: he thought it was to be had by the works of the law, which shews him to be a Pharisee; whereas eternal life is the gift of God, through the Messiah, the person he now applied to, and who had the words of eternal life; and to a more proper person he could not have put the question, he being himself the way, the truth, and the life, or the true way to eternal life: and had he attended to his own words, which suggest, that eternal life is an inheritance, he might have learned, that it is not to be acquired by the industry and works of men; but, that it is the bequest of our heavenly father to his children, and comes by will, by promise, and as a free gift; so that it is not of the law; nor are they that are of the law heirs of it, Rom. iv. 14. Gal. iii. 18. see the note on Matt. xix. 16.

Ver. 18. *And Jesus said unto him, &c.*] The same as in Matt. xix. 17. see the note there. *Why callest thou me good?* This is said, not as denying that he was good, or as being angry with him for calling him so, but in order to lead this young man to a true knowledge of him, and his goodness, and even of his proper deity: there is *none good, but one*, that is, *God*; some render it, *but one God*, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and so the words are a proof of the unity of the divine being, and agree with Deut. vi. 4. but are not to be understood to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit, who, with the Father, are the

one God: nor do these words at all militate against the deity of Christ, or prove that he is not God, as the Jew objects<sup>a</sup>; seeing this is not to be understood of the person of the Father, in opposition to the Son and Spirit, who are equally good: nor does Christ, in these words, deny himself to be God, but rather tacitly suggests it; since he is good in the same sense in which God is good: in Matthew 'tis added, *but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments*: this Christ said not as his sense, that the way to eternal life lies in keeping the commandments of the law; but he speaks in the language of the Pharisees, and of this man; and his view is, to bring him to a sense of the impossibility of obtaining eternal life by these things, as the sequel shews: wherefore the above Jew<sup>b</sup> has no reason to confront the followers of Jesus with this passage, as if it was a concession of his, that it is impossible any should be saved without keeping the commands of the law of Moses.

Ver. 19. *Thou knowest the commandments, &c.*] Which God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai; these the Jews taught their children; so that this young man might reasonably be thought to know what, and how many they were, though he was ignorant of the extent and spirituality of them; *do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, defraud not, honour thy father and mother*. In which may be observed, that the strict order in which the commandments stood is not kept; the seventh commandment, *thou shalt not commit adultery*, is set before the sixth, *thou shalt not kill*; though the Arabic version places them in their order; and the fifth command, *honour thy father and thy mother*, is placed last of all: but a Jew has no reason to object to this, when it is a rule with them, that *אין מוקדם ומאחר בתורה*<sup>c</sup>, *there is no first nor last in the law*; that is, order is not strictly attended to; but sometimes, that which is first is mentioned last, and the last first. There is one precept, *defraud not*; wrong no man of his property, either by force or fraud, which none of the other evangelists have. Dr. Hammond, and others, think, that it is an explanation of the tenth command, *thou shalt not covet*; signifying, that a man should be so satisfied with his own condition, as not to desire another's goods, or, by any means, seek to lessen them to enlarge his own. A certain Jew<sup>d</sup> objects against our Lord Jesus, that he did not mention the other precepts in Exod. xx. and Deut. v. by which he seems to mean the precepts of the first table, which respect the unity of God, and his worship, which are of greater moment; to which may be replied, that our Lord does suggest the unity of the Divine Being, and his essential, infinite, and independent goodness, which are the ground and foundation of his fear and worship in the preceding verse; and besides, as Bishop Kidder observes<sup>e</sup>, nothing is more common than to put some precepts for the whole; see Mic. vi. 8. yea, that Jesus may be justified from the Old Testament in this method, as from Psal. xv. 1. where a question, very like this of the young

<sup>a</sup> R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 19. p. 408.

<sup>b</sup> Ib.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 6. 2.

<sup>d</sup> R. Jacob Aben Amram, Porta Verit. num. 1026. Apud Kidder's Demonstr. of the Messiah, par. 3. p. 50.

<sup>e</sup> Demonstrat. ib. p. 50. 1.

man, is put; and yet in answer to it we find nothing mentioned but obedience to the second table: to which reply of the learned prelate, may be added, that Christ instances in the commandments of the second table, as being more known, and better understood by this young man; *thou knowest the commandments*; that is, the following ones he mentions: and besides the argument runs strong from the lesser to the greater, which is implied, that if the commands of the second table, which respect the neighbour, are necessary to be observed, then much more those which concern God himself; and if men fall short in keeping the lesser commands, it can hardly be thought they should be perfect in the observance of greater ones; and so consequently, and which is our Lord's drift, eternal life is never to be obtained by the works of the law.

Ver. 20. *And he answered and said unto him, &c.*] With a great deal of perverseness, *master, all these have I observed from my youth*; see the note on Matt. xix. 20. In a certain copy, Beza says, 'tis added, as there, *what lack I yet?* and so in one of Stephens's copies.

Ver. 21. *Then Jesus, beholding him, loved him, &c.*] Not as God, with that special love, with which he loves his people, who were given him by the father, are redeemed by his blood, whom he calls by his grace, justifies by his righteousness, forgives their iniquities, and, at last, glorifies: but as man, he had an human affection for him; so far as there was any appearance of moral good in him, it was agreeable to him, who loves righteousness, and hates iniquity; and though the young man betrayed much vanity, pride, and conceit, he did not use him roughly, but kindly, and tenderly; he beheld him, he looked wistly upon him, when he said the above words; which look intimated, that he could not believe he had perfectly, and completely kept all the commandments; however, he did not choose to reproach him with a lie, and charge him with pride and arrogance, but gave him good words, and spoke friendly to him; and, as far as he could, commended him for his diligence in observing the commands: in this sense the word is observed to be used by the Septuagint interpreters, as when it is said of Ahab, 2 Chron. xviii. 2. that he persuaded him (Jehoshaphat), they render it, *ἠγάπησεν*, he loved him to go up to Ramoth Gilead: he gave him good words, he spake friendly to him, and by fair speeches prevailed upon him: and so when it is said of the Israelites, Psal. lxxviii. 36. they did flatter him, (God,) they render it, *ἠγάπησαν*, they loved him with their mouth; spoke very well to him, and of him, praised him, and his works, and in this way expressed affection to him, though it was only with their mouths. Moreover, Christ might not only speak kindly to this young man, but he might make use of some external gesture: which shewed an human affection to him, and respect for him. Dr. Lightfoot conjectures it might be by kissing his head, which might be conveniently done, as he was now on his knees; and since this was frequently used by the Jewish doctors, as an expression of respect, of which he gives various instances; and more might be added, especially out of the book of Zohar, where we often read of one Rabbi kissing the head of another, or of

his pupil. But the sense of this phrase, which pleases me best of all, is what may be collected from the use of it among the seventy interpreters, who often render the Hebrew רחם, which signifies to have compassion, or shew pity, by the word here used: so Prov. xxviii. 13. *whoso confesseth and forsaketh, shall have mercy*, they interpret *ἠγαπήσεια*, shall be loved, and Hos. ii. 23. *I will have mercy on her that had not obtained mercy*, they render *ἠγαπήσω*, I will love her that was not beloved; once more, Zech. x. 6. *I will bring them again to place them, for I have mercy upon them*, they translate *ὅτι ἠγαπήσα αὐτούς*, because I have loved them; see also Isa. lx. 10. and then, according to this use of the word, the sense is, that Jesus looked upon him when he expressed himself in such a pert manner, and had a compassionate concern for him; he pitied him for his ignorance of the law, in its spirituality and large extent; for his pride and vanity, his conceit of, and glorying in himself: wherefore, in order to mortify him, and abate these swelling thoughts of himself; he said unto him, *one thing thou lackest*; before which last clause the Ethiopic version puts this, *if thou wilt be perfect*, out of Matt. xix. 21. see the note there: and the Coptic version, and two of Stephens's copies read it before the following, *go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me*. This young man's reigning sin seems to have been an overweening affection for the things of this world; his riches were his idol, on which his heart was set, and in which he trusted: wherefore he was so far from keeping all the commandments, that he had not kept the first; *thou shalt have no other gods before me*: there was more than one thing wanting in him, but Christ takes notice of this as the first; and there was no need to mention any other; this touched him sensibly, and fully tried, and sufficiently exposed the vanity of his boasted perfection. That clause, *take up the cross*, is omitted in the Vulgate Latin version, as it is not mentioned by Matthew. The Ethiopic version reads it, *the cross of thy death*, and places it before, *come and follow me*; as do also the Syriac and Persic versions; but the Arabic reads it last of all; see the note on Matt. xix. 21.

Ver. 22. *And he was sad at that saying, &c.*] That he lacked one thing, and especially that he should be bid to sell all that he had, and give it away; and what might add to his sadness is, that he must take up the cross of reproach, affliction, persecution, and death; his countenance fell upon this, and went away grieved: finding that he must part with two things his heart was set upon, his idol of self-righteousness, and his mammon of unrighteousness; the bladder of his pride was pricked, and his vanity and self-conceit were exposed; and he was called upon to part with his substance; all which were sadly mortifying, and exceedingly disagreeable to him: *for he had great possessions*; see the note on Matt. xix. 22.

Ver. 23. *And Jesus looked round about, &c.*] To see what effect the discourse he had with the young man, and the consequence of it, had upon his disciples; as also to raise their attention to what he was about to say: *and saith unto his disciples, how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!*

the Gospel dispensation, by embracing the doctrines, and submitting to the ordinances of it; see the note on Matt. xix. 23.

Ver. 24. *And the disciples were astonished at his words, &c.*] For they expected, in a little while, that the kingdom of the Messiah would be set up in great worldly pomp and grandeur; and that all the rich men of the nation would come into it, become his subjects, and join to support the glory and splendour of it: but Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, children: it was common with the Jews to call the disciples, or scholars of the wise men, children; hence that saying of their's<sup>f</sup>, *וְהַתְּלָמִידִים קָרוּם בְּנִים*, the disciples are called children, which they prove from 2 Kings ii. 3. Isa. viii. 18. *How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!* This he said partly to confirm what he had before said, at which his disciples were astonished; and partly to explain it, as that he was to be understood of such that trusted in their riches, set their hearts upon them, and placed their hope and happiness in them: and the great difficulty, or rather impossibility of such, at least continuing so, entering into the kingdom of God, is still more strongly expressed in the following words.

Ver. 25. *It is easier for a camel, &c.*] See the note on Matt. xix. 24.

Ver. 26. *And they were astonished out of measure, &c.*] They were still more amazed, their surprise increased exceedingly upon our Lord's using the above comparison; which, in their apprehension, shewed, that it was utterly impossible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God; and they expressed their astonishment, saying, among themselves, *who then can be saved?* in the Messiah's kingdom, if rich men are not? see the note on Matt. xix. 25. The Persic version renders it, *how can this man be saved?* as if the words had a particular respect to the young man, that had great possessions, and was gone away sorrowful.

Ver. 27. *And Jesus, looking upon them, &c.*] And by their countenances saw the surprise and anxiety of mind they were in, as well as by his omniscience, knew their private reasonings among themselves: *saith, with men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible;* even to reduce a camel to so small a size, as to go through the eye of a needle; and to work upon a rich man's heart, so as to take him off of his trust and confidence in his worldly riches, and bring him to a compliance with his will, and into his kingdom; and also to protect, and save his poor and mean followers, notwithstanding all the difficulties, dangers, and oppositions they meet with; see the note on Matt. xix. 26.

Ver. 28. *Then Peter began to say unto him, &c.*] Not only observing that Christ promised treasure in heaven to the young man, provided he sold all that he had, and gave it to the poor; but being, in some measure, freed from that surprise and astonishment, which had seized him, and his fellow-disciples, at the representation of the difficulty of a rich man's entering into the kingdom of God, by the last words; and

taking heart from thence, began to take notice of the following case, as an instance and illustration of what Christ had said; for that same power, which had caused them to quit all their worldly substance for Christ, though it was but small, could also work a like effect upon the heart of a man ever so rich: *lo! we have left all, and have followed thee:* in Matthew 'tis added, *what shall we have therefore?* see the note on Matt. xix. 27.

Ver. 29. *And Jesus answered and said, verily I say unto you, &c.*] This evangelist omits what Matthew relates; that whereas Peter, and his fellow-disciples had followed Christ in the present time, hereafter, when he appeared in his glory, they should sit upon twelve thrones, and judge the twelve tribes of Israel; see Matt. xix. 28. and where 'tis added to the same sense as here; *there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sister, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the Gospel's;* for the sake of preaching, or professing Christ, and his Gospel. The word *wife* is left out in the Vulgate Latin version, perhaps because it is not repeated in the following verse; but all copies, and other versions have it; see the note on Matt. xix. 29.

Ver. 30. *But he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, &c.*] Not that he should have an hundred houses, brethren, &c. but that he should enjoy that even in this present life, which was an hundred times better than any of the things mentioned; namely, *houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands;* see the note on Matt. xix. 29. 'tis added here, *with persecutions.* The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read in the singular, *with persecution;* signifying that this must be expected amidst the greatest happiness, and highest enjoyments of this life; though often even that which the saints enjoy, whilst they are, in the severest manner, persecuted for Christ, is an hundred times better than, yea, infinitely above, all that they part with, or lose for his sake; and so is an ample compensation for all: and yet this is not all they shall have; for it follows, *and in the world to come eternal life:* so that they will be doubly recompensed; once in this life, and again in the other world: in the Targum on Cant. viii. 7. is a passage somewhat like this, where the Lord of the world is represented saying; "if a man will give all the substance of his house to obtain wisdom in the captivity, I will return unto him, כָּפֹל לְעֵלְמָא דְּאֵתִי, double in the world to come."

Ver. 31. *But many that are first shall be last, &c.*] See the note on Matt. xix. 30.

Ver. 32. *And they were in the way, &c.*] Upon the road, having left the coasts of Judea on the further side of Jordan: *going up to Jerusalem;* to the passover there, which was to be in a short time, and where Christ was to suffer and die; for this was the last journey he took, and the last passover he was to eat there: *and Jesus went before them;* as their forerunner, their guide and leader, with unconcernedness and intrepidity; though he knew what would befall him, and what designs were forming against him: and this he did to inspire his disciples with courage, and to

<sup>f</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Talmud Torah, c. 1. sect. 9. Moses Kotsensis Mitvot Torah, pr. affirm. 12. Vid. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 19. 2. Bere-

shit Rabba, sect. 42. fol. 36. 4. & Vajikra Rabba, sect. 11. fol. 154. 4.



leave them an example that they should tread in his steps: *and they were amazed*; at his readiness to go up to Jerusalem, and the cheerful spirit he discovered, when he had so many, and such powerful enemies at that place, in going to which he exposed himself to the greatest dangers. *And as they followed*; for they did not choose to leave him, but were determined to continue with him at all events, though *they were afraid*; what would be the consequence of it to themselves, as well as to him; for they being his followers, could not expect any other than ill usage from his enemies. *And he took again the twelve*: the disciples, as he had done before, ch. viii. 31. *and began to tell them what things should happen unto him*; being what were determined by God, agreed unto by himself, and foretold in the Scriptures; for these were not casual and contingent events.

Ver. 33. *Saying, behold we go up to Jerusalem, &c.*] They were now upon the road thither. *And the son of man*; meaning himself, *shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the Scribes*; by the determinate counsel, and fore-knowledge of God, and by the means of a treacherous disciple of his, Judas. The Vulgate Latin version adds, *and to the elders*; but this is not in any of the copies, nor in other versions: *and they shall condemn him to death*; as they did in the palace of the high-priest, *nemine contradicente*; see ch. xiv. 64. *and shall deliver him to the Gentiles*; the Romans, to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor; either because they had not then power to put him to death themselves, or because they were desirous he should die the death of the cross, a Roman punishment.

Ver. 34. *And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, &c.*] The Gentiles, as the Roman soldiers did; the one at the connivance, and the other by the order of their governor: *and shall spit upon him*; on his face, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it, and as they did; see ch. xv. 19. This clause is placed by the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, between the two former; though, according to the order in which these things were executed, he was first scourged, then mocked, and then spit upon: all which express both the cruel and indecent usage he was to meet with: *and shall kill him, and the third day he shall rise again*. The Persic version between these two clauses read, *and shall put him in a grave*; which is not in any copy of this text, nor in any other version; nor indeed was this done by the Gentiles, but by Joseph of Arimathea.

Ver. 35. *And James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, came unto him, &c.*] Along with their mother, who was their mouth, and spoke for them, and they by her: *saying, master, we would that thou shouldst do for us whatsoever we shall desire*: that is, we earnestly desire, that whereas we have a favour to ask of thee, that thou wouldst not deny us it, be it what it will; see the note on Matt. xx. 20.

Ver. 36. *And he said unto them, &c.*] And also to their mother, and to them by her, *what would ye that I should do for you?* Christ insists upon their telling him the particular thing they wanted to have done for them, before he would give them any promise, though he knew very well what it was they were desirous of.

Ver. 37. *They said unto him, &c.*] By their mother,

or seconding her motion: *grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory*; or glorious kingdom, which they expected would be quickly set up; and which they might conclude from his having lately promised to all the twelve, that when he should sit on his throne, they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel; and from his having just now mentioned his rising from the dead, which they might understand of some revival, or breaking forth of this glorious state; see the note on Matt. xx. 21.

Ver. 38. *But Jesus said unto them, &c.*] Not by granting them what they desired, but by observing their ignorance to them; *ye know not what ye ask*: for sometimes good men are ignorant petitioners at the throne of grace; they are under the influence of their own spirits, and not the spirit of God; they are prompted to ask things from a selfish principle, and not with a view to the glory of God, and their own spiritual welfare, and that of others: and indeed, the best of saints know not what they should pray for as they ought; and always stand in need of the help, assistance, and intercession of the spirit of God; who is a spirit of grace and supplication, and searches the deep things of God, and knows his mind and will, and what is suitable and convenient for his people; and whenever they pray without him, there is much darkness and ignorance in them, and in their petitions. In particular, these disciples knew not what they were asking for; they had no true notion of Christ's kingdom and glory, they were asking the chief places in; they were dreaming of worldly glory and grandeur, in which they imagined the kingdom of the Messiah would quickly appear: whereas his kingdom, in the present state of things, is not of this world, but of a spiritual nature; namely, the Gospel dispensation, which lies in the ministration of his word and ordinances, and in the distribution of his gifts and grace; and his kingdom and glory in the world to come, are things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard: they talked of things which would never be, either in Christ's kingdom, in earth, or in heaven; fancying there would be posts of honour and profit, which some would be advanced to in it, signified by sitting at his right hand and left; whereas in the Gospel church-state, the apostles, governors, and officers of the church were alike, and had no superiority over one another, but were all brethren, having one master, Christ; and the members of the churches are of the same body, and members one of another; and in the ultimate glory, there will be no degrees, but all the saints will share the same happiness: *can ye drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?* Which Christ speaks of in the present time, partly because his sorrows and sufferings were already begun: he had already been drinking of the cup of sorrows, being a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs, all his days; and he was wading in the waters of affliction, though as yet they were not come into his soul, and he as it were immersed in them; he was not yet baptized with the bloody baptism he came into this world for, and he was desirous of, Luke xii. 50. and partly because of the certainty of these things, the cup was not to pass from him, and the baptism of his sufferings

was to be surely accomplished; see the note on Matt. xx. 22.

Ver. 39. *And they said unto him, we can, &c.*] That is, drink of Christ's cup, and be baptized with his baptism, which is another instance of their ignorance; for as they knew not the glorious state of things, and the nature of it, they desired places in, so they were unacquainted with themselves; they were ignorant of their own weakness, as well as of the greatness of the sufferings Christ should endure, or even they should be called unto: had they had a just notion of either, they would not have expressed themselves in this manner, without any mention of the grace of God, or any dependence on the strength of Christ; see the note on Matt. xx. 22. *And Jesus said unto them, ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized;* meaning, not that they should undergo the same sufferings he did, and much less for the same end and purpose: he trod the wine-press alone, and bore the whole punishment, due to the sins of his people, himself; and of them, there were none with him, to take a part: but that they should endure sufferings, in some sort like to his, for his sake, as they both afterwards did; see the note on Matt. xx. 23.

Ver. 40. *But to sit on my right hand and on my left, is not mine to give, &c.*] There being no such places in his kingdom, in the sense they petitioned; and as for the glories of the heavenly state, or eternal life, the gift of these was not to be settled now, it being done already: and though he had a power to give, yet only to them, who were given him of his father, and who were ordained to such happiness, as it follows: *but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared;* that is, of his father, as is expressed in Matt. xx. 23. which is not to be understood as excluding these two persons, but as including all others with them, for whom the kingdom was prepared, before the foundation of the world: the Ethiopic version therefore wrongly renders the words, *but to sit on my right hand and on my left, I do not give to you, it is prepared for others:* the Jew<sup>s</sup> very badly concludes from hence against the deity of Christ, and his unity with the father, he not having power to do this; whereas Christ does not say he had no power to give this honour, but only describes the persons to whom he should give it; and these being persons, for whom it is prepared by his father, instead of destroying, proves their unity.

Ver. 41. *And when the ten heard it, &c.*] The request made by the sons of Zebedee, or their mother for them: *they began to be much displeas'd with James and John;* Matthew says, *they were mov'd with indignation against them;* they were filled with wrath, and were very angry with them; which they shewed in their countenances, and by their behaviour towards them, as well as by words: the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, *they began to murmur against them;* they highly resented it, and were ready to break out into an open quarrel upon it; see the note on Matt. xx. 24.

Ver. 42. *But Jesus called them to him, &c.*] Who were at some little distance from him, though so nigh, that he could discern the heat and passion they were in,

and knowing that they had the same ambitious views with the two brethren: *and saith unto them,* to check their pride and vanity, and reprove them for their ambitious desires of superiority and pre-eminence over one another; by shewing them, that this was a part which the Heathens, that knew not God, acted, and therefore was very unbecoming them: *you know that they which are accounted, or seem to, or rather do, rule over the Gentiles;* or are reckoned worthy of government, who are, *וְשׂוֹרֵי*, men of honour, reputation, and esteem; who are either by birth, or merit, thought to be deserving of high places: these *exercise lordship over them;* rule over them, in a lordly, tyrannical, and arbitrary way: *and their great ones;* their nobles and lords under them, *exercise authority over them;* the Gentiles; by a delegated power, from those who have the supreme rule; see the note on Matt. xx. 25.

Ver. 43. *But so shall it not be among you, &c.*] Or so let it not be, as in many copies; or, as the Persic version renders it, *it ought not to be so among you;* such a lordly spirit does not become you; this is heathenish: *but whosoever will be great among you, shall be, as in Matthew, let him be, your minister.* This was just the reverse of what the two disciples were seeking for; they were indeed for being ministers, but then they were for being prime ministers of state; and would have had all the rest subject to them, and attendants on them, to be sent out and employed as they should think fit: whereas the only way to preferment and greatness in Christ's kingdom, or in the Gospel church-state, is to labour in the work of the ministry, more abundantly than others; to take great pains, and endure great hardships, in order to bring great glory to God, and do great good to the souls of men; see the note on Matt. xx. 26.

Ver. 44. *And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, &c.*] Is desirous of the highest place, and the greatest honour, *shall be servant of all:* for the ministers of the Gospel, are not only the servants of Christ Jesus, but also of the churches for his sake; and in serving them, they serve Christ: not that they are to be the servants of men, and to take their instructions from them, and act according to rules prescribed by them; or seek to please men, for then they would not be the servants of Christ: but they become servants to all, that they may win souls to Christ, and increase his churches, and enlarge his interest; and such as are most useful this way, are the chiefest in the Gospel church-state; they are honoured by Christ, and esteemed by his people; see the note on Matt. xx. 27.

Ver. 45. *For even the son of man, &c.*] That is, Christ himself; a name, by which he frequently goes, both in the Old and New Testament: to the arguments before produced, Christ adds his own example, to teach his disciples humility, and lowliness of mind, and to check their ambitious views and desires: *came not to be ministered unto:* not but that he was ministered unto, even by the angels of God; who ministered to him in the wilderness, after he had been tempted by Satan; and he was also ministered unto by some women, out of their substance; but these shew the low estate he was in, to stand in need of such ministrations: here the sense is, that he

did not appear as an earthly prince, with a fine equipage, a large retinue and attendance, *but to minister*; to be a servant, as he is in his mediatorial office and capacity: he was sent, and came as the servant of the Lord; and he ministered, in his prophetic office, the Gospel unto men; and went about in the form of a servant, doing good, ministering medicine both to the souls and bodies of men: but the great work he came about, was the work of man's redemption; which he willingly and cheerfully undertook, diligently and faithfully prosecuted, and has completely finished; to which respect is had in the next clause: *and to give his life a ransom for many*; even for all the elect of God, to redeem them from sin, Satan, and the law; and secure them from the wrath of God, and eternal death; and this he has done, by laying down his life as the ransom price for them; see the note on Matt. xx. 28.

Ver. 46. *And they came to Jericho, &c.*] Christ and his disciples, from the coasts of Judea, beyond Jordan, in their way to Jerusalem; where Christ met with Zaccheus and converted him, and after some short stay at his house, departed thence; *and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples, and a great number of people*: which followed him out of that city, to go with him to Jerusalem, being but ten miles off: *blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, sat by the highway-side begging*; who was one of the two blind men Matthew makes mention of in ch. xx. 30. see the note there.

Ver. 47. *And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, &c.*] *That passed by*, as reads the Persic version; which he might learn, by inquiring the meaning of such a multitude of people, and the noise; or he might hear his name frequently mentioned, and it said, that he was coming, or passing by: *he began to cry out*; aloud, and with great vehemency, and often repeating it: *and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me*: he did not call him Jesus of Nazareth, as the common people did, but Jesus, the son of David, a title of the Messiah; nor did he ask for money, but for mercy; see the note on Matt. xx. 30.

Ver. 48. *And many charged him that he should hold his peace, &c.*] And be silent, and not call him the son of David, at least; nor ask any thing of him: *but he cried the more a great deal*: he lifted up his voice more loudly, and repeated the same words quicker and oftener, and with greater vehemency and importunity: *thou son of David, have mercy on me*; see the note on Matt. xx. 31.

Ver. 49. *And Jesus stood still, &c.*] Hearing his voice, and knowing what charges and reproofs were given him to be silent: *and commanded him to be called* and led and brought unto him: this order was given, either to his disciples, or to some of the multitude, probably the latter: *and they call the blind man, saying unto him, be of good comfort, rise, he calleth thee*; or *because he calleth thee*, as the Arabic version renders it; suggesting, that some hopes might be conceived from thence, that something would be done in his favour. The Persic version renders it, *our master calleth thee* so that that interpreter thought, that the disciples were the persons that were ordered to call, and did call the blind man: the word *rise*, is left out

in the Persic and Ethiopic versions. It may be observed from hence, that such whom Christ effectually calls by his grace, of which this instance is emblematical, have reason to be of good comfort; or that effectual vocation is a ground of comfort: called ones may take comfort from it, and be assured that they are loved by God; since it is a fruit, effect, and evidence, of God's everlasting love to them; and that they are the chosen of God, for, whom he did predestinate, he calls; and that they are Christ's, and are redeemed by him, seeing he has called them by name: and they may expect all good things from him; seeing they are called according to grace, given them in him before the world began; and are called to the participation of the blessings of grace; and it is affirmed that all things work together for their good: wherefore they may live in the faith of eternal glory and happiness; since they that are called, are justified, and shall be glorified.

Ver. 50. *And he casting away his garment, &c.*] His upper garment, and which no doubt was little worth; though this he did, that he might make the quicker dispatch to Christ: *rose*: from off the bank, or ground, whereon he sat, in an instant: and *sprung up*, as the Vulgate Latin, and Beza's ancient copy read, with great nimbleness, and in haste: *and came to Jesus*; being led by the persons that were sent to call him. It may be observed from hence, that such who are effectually called by the grace of Christ, of which this man was an emblem, hate the garment spotted with the flesh; and put off the old man, as to the former conversation, being called by an holy God, with an holy calling, to holiness in heart and life; and that by the Gospel, which teaches to deny sin, and live a holy conversation: and these also cast away the garment of their own righteousness, it being as fig-leaves, a spider's web, filthy rags, and a beggarly robe, as this man's was; and come nakedly to Christ, for righteousness, and renounce their own in point of justification, that being an hinderance to their coming to him for his. The Gospel reveals a better righteousness to them than their own, more suitable to them, who are called from the dunghill, to sit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory; and then such rise in the strength of grace, and come forth to Christ, for righteousness, peace, pardon, life, and salvation.

Ver. 51. *And Jesus answered and said unto him, &c.*] Being come to him, and standing before him: *what wilt thou that I should do unto thee?* What means this vehement cry? what is it: thou designest by mercy? is it money thou askest for, to relieve thy wants? or is it that thy sight may be restored? *The blind man said unto him, Lord; Rabboni*, or, as the Syriac version reads it, *Rabbi*: thou great master in Israel, and Lord of the whole world, my request to thee, and which thou art able to effect; is, *that I might receive my sight*; see the note on Matt. xx. 33.

Ver. 52. *And Jesus said unto him, go thy way, &c.*] The Syriac version reads it, *ܡܝܬ, see*: receive thy sight, be it: unto thee as thou dost desire; and which is the sense of, *go thy way*; to thine own house, or place of abode; and about thy business; thy request is granted: *thy faith hath made thee whole*; or *saved thee*; and which respected not only the power of

Christ in restoring his sight, but his faith in Jesus as the Messiah, the son of David: so that by Christ, the object of his faith, he was saved, both in soul and body; and had his spiritual sight, before he had his bodily sight, and both from Christ: *and immediately he received his sight*; or saw again as well as ever he did, or as other men: *and followed Jesus in the way*: that is, to Jerusalem. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read *him*, instead of *Jesus*; but the Syriac and Persic versions read neither. This man was an emblem of the people of God, before, at, and after conversion: before conversion; for, as he was blind, so are they; they are without any spiritual sight and discerning of God, as in Christ, as the God of all grace, as their Covenant-God and Father; and of themselves, being without any true sight of sin, or sense of their state and condition; and of Christ, and of the way of peace, life, and salvation by him, seeing no beauty in him, nor any need they stand in of him; and of the spirit, of his person, grace, and operations, of the things of the spirit, which they know not, because they are spiritually discerned: at conversion; when they receive their sight from Christ, as he did, are made light in the Lord, and become the children of the day; when the eyes of their understandings are enlightened, to see their sad and

ruinous state, the pollution of their hearts, the sinfulness of their thoughts, as well as of their actions; the imperfection and insufficiency of their righteousness, to justify them before God; the lovelessness of Christ, the fulness of his grace, and righteousness; the suitableness, ability, and willingness of him, as a Saviour; and that salvation by him, is all of free grace; and that eternal glory and happiness, is secured by him, for them. All which light they have, not from themselves, nor from any mere creature, but from Christ; and which they receive as a benefit and favour; they have it as a gift, and in a way of receiving; and that at once, suddenly, and immediately: and after conversion; for, as this man, when he had received his sight from Christ, followed him in the way; so the people of God, being enlightened by Christ, follow him as their leader and commander, as the captain of their salvation, as the shepherd of the flock, as their guide and forerunner, as their pattern and exemplar, and as the light of the world: him they follow and imitate, in the duties of morality, in the way of public instituted worship, and in Gospel ordinances; as baptism, and the Lord's supper; and to follow him in the way of duty, is safe, honourable, pleasant, comfortable, and profitable; it issues in good here, and in happiness hereafter.

#### C H A P. XI.

Ver. 1. *AND when they came nigh to Jerusalem, &c.*] The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, *when he came nigh*; that is, Jesus; though not without his disciples, nor the multitude: *unto Bethphage and Bethany*; two places so called, near Jerusalem: Bethphage began where Bethany ended, and reached to the city itself. The Vulgate Latin only makes mention of Bethany; see the note on Matt. xxi. 1. *At the Mount of Olives*; near which, the above places were: *he sendeth forth two of his disciples*; perhaps Peter and John.

Ver. 2. *And saith unto them, go your way into the village, &c.* Either of Bethany or of Nob. The Ethiopic version renders it *the city*, and so reads a copy of Stephens's: some have thought the city of Jerusalem is intended, but without any reason; see the note on Matt. xxi. 2. *over-against you*. The Syriac and Persic versions read, *over-against us*: the sense is the same; for Christ and his disciples were together: this suits with either of the above-mentioned places: *and as soon as ye be entered into it*; are come to the town's end, and to one of the first houses in it, *ye shall find a colt tied*: Matthew says, *an ass tied, and a colt with her*; both no doubt true: *whereon never man sat*; which had never been backed and broke, and which makes it the more wonderful, that Christ should choose to ride upon it, and that that should quietly carry him: *loose him, and bring him*; that is, away to me.

Ver. 3. *And if any man say unto you, &c.*] As very likely they would, and it would be strange if they should not say something to them, especially the owners of it: *why do ye this?* Why do ye untie the ass, and attempt to carry it away, when it is none of

your own, and it belongs to another man? *Say ye that the Lord hath need of him*; our Lord and yours, the Lord of heaven and earth, and all things in it; it looks as if this title, *the Lord*, was what Jesus was well known by; see John xi. 28. unless it can be thought, that the owners of the colt were such, that believed in Christ, as is not improbable; and so would at once understand by the language who it was for, and let it go: *and straightway he will send him hither*; as soon as ever he hears that the Lord, by whom he would presently understand Jesus, wanted him for his present purpose; he'll send him with all readiness and cheerfulness, without the least hesitation, or making any dispute about it.

Ver. 4. *And they went their way, &c.*] The two disciples went to the village, where Christ sent them, without objecting any difficulties that might present, in the execution of these orders: *and found the colt tied by the door without*; in the street, fastened to the door of the owner's house, at the town's end: *in a place where two ways met*; to go into and out of the village; at the corner house, where two ways met; so that the place was very public, and such an affair could not be transacted, without being seen: *and they loose him*; as soon as ever they came to the place, they immediately began to untie the colt, and were going away with him.

Ver. 5. *And certain of them that stood there, &c.*] The Ethiopic version reads, *who walked there*; who were either standing hard by, or walking about the place, being inhabitants of it; and either the owners of the colt, or their servants, or both: *said unto them, what do ye loosing the colt?* What do ye mean by it?

do you intend to take the colt away? what business have you with it? what right have you to do so? and what's your end in it? or reason for it?

Ver. 6. *And they said unto them, &c.*] The very express words, *even as Jesus had commanded*: not that these were the words they said, but *the Lord hath need of him*: upon which they said no more, were satisfied and contented, that they should untie the colt, and take it with them: *and they let them go*; and the colt with them, very freely; see the note on Matt. xxi. 6.

Ver. 7. *And they brought the colt to Jesus, &c.*] Where he was, and *cast their garments on him*: their clothes to be instead of a saddle, for Christ to sit upon: *and he sat upon him*; or *Jesus rode on him*, as the Syriac version renders it. The Ethiopic version reads, *they made him to mount him*; that is, the disciples assisted him in getting upon it, and having mounted it, he sat on it without any trouble, though it had never been backed before, and rode on his way to Jerusalem; see the note on Matt. xxi. 7.

Ver. 8. *And many spread their garments in the way, &c.*] Instead of carpets to ride on, and in honour to him as a king; *and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way*; in token of joy, as at the feast of tabernacles; see the note on Matt. xxi. 8.

Ver. 9. *And they that went before, and they that followed, &c.*] They that came from Jerusalem to meet him, and they that followed him from Jericho and other parts; which two bodies, the one went before him, and the other followed after him: and *cried, saying, Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*; see the note on Matt. xxi. 9.

Ver. 10. *Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, &c.*] It was more usual with the Jews to call Abraham their father; but, because the Messiah was David's son, therefore, with respect to him, they here call him their father: and their meaning is, let the kingdom promised to our father David, and to his seed for ever, *that cometh in the name of the Lord*; which is now coming, and appears in the auspicious reign and government of his son, the Messiah, who is clothed with majesty and authority; be prosperous and successful, and be established, and endure for ever; to the glory and happiness of him as king, and of all the subjects of it. Unless the words should be rendered, as by their situation they may be, thus, *blessed be the kingdom that cometh in the name of the Lord, of our father David*; and the sense be, let the kingdom of the Messiah, which is now come, and is set up in his name, who, as God, is David's Lord, greatly flourish, and long continue; may its king be blessed, and all its subjects happy. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, leave out the clause, *in the name of the Lord*; it is also left out in Beza's ancient copy, and in another; but the Ethiopic version retains it, reading it *in the name of God*. 'Tis added, *Hosanna in the highest*: see the note on Matt. xxi. 9.

Ver. 11. *And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, &c.*] In this public manner, riding upon an ass, with the multitude attending him, some going before, and others after, crying, *Hosanna* to him: *and into the temple* which he rode up directly to; the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, leave out the co-

plulative *and*; his great concern being there; and having dismounted, and dismissed the colt, and sent it by proper persons to the owner of it, he went into the temple, into the court of the Gentiles; where he found and overturned the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and healed the lame and the blind: *and when he had looked round about upon all things*; that is, in the temple, as the Lord and proprietor of it; and made a thorough visitation of it, and search into it, and corrected what was amiss in it: *and now the even-tide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve*; having spent great part of the day in reforming abuses in the temple, in healing diseases, and disputing with the chief priests and Scribes: the evening being come, he did not think fit, for some reasons, to stay in the city; but went out to Bethany, which was near two miles off, and lodged there; see the note on Matt. xxi. 17.

Ver. 12. *And on the morrow, &c.*] The next day early in the morning, *when they were come from Bethany*; Christ, and his twelve disciples. The Syriac and Persic versions read, *when he came out of Bethany*; though not alone, but with the twelve disciples, who went with him there, and returned with him, as appears from ver. 14. as he and they came out of that place betimes in the morning, having ate nothing, before they came from thence, *he was hungry*; see the note on Matt. xxi. 18.

Ver. 13. *And seeing a fig-tree afar off, &c.*] By the way-side, at some distance from him: *having leaves*; very large and spreading, which made a great shew, as if there might be fruit on it: *he came*; unto it; either he went out of his way to it, or having seen it before him a good way off, at length came up to it: *if haply he might find any thing thereon*; that is, any fruit; for he saw at a distance, there were leaves upon it; and which was the more remarkable, since it was the time of the fig-tree just putting forth its tender branches, leaves, and fruit: *and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves*; no fruit at all upon it, contrary to his expectation as man, and the promising appearance the tree made: *for the time of figs was not yet*; or, *for it was not the time of figs*; for the word *yet*, is not in the text: and the words seem rather to be a reason, why Christ should not have expected fruit on it, than that he should: but the sense is, either because the time of gathering figs was not come; and since therefore they were not gathered, he might the rather hope to find some on it; or because it was not a kind season for figs, a good fig-year; and this tree appearing in such a flourishing condition, might raise his expectation of finding fruit, yet he found none but leaves only; because it was so bad a season for figs, that even the most promising trees had none upon them: or this tree being of an uncommon sort, though Christ expected to find no fruit on other trees, because the time of common figs was not come, yet he might hope to find some on this. Some critics neglecting the accents, render the words, *where he was, it was the season of figs*; see the note on Matt. xxi. 19.

Ver. 14. *And Jesus answered and said unto it, &c.*] The fig-tree; a Jewish way of speaking, often used when nothing before is said; the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, leave out the word *answered*, as they

do also the word *Jesus*; and which is likewise omitted by the Vulgate Latin, though the other is retained: *no man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever*; which is all one, as if he had said, as the other evangelist does, let no fruit grow on thee; for where no fruit is, none can be had, or eaten of. This tree may not only be an emblem of the Jewish people, who made a great shew of religion, and enjoyed a great many privileges; and from whom, speaking after the manner of men, the fruits of good works, righteousness, and holiness, might have been hoped and looked for; when instead thereof, there was nothing but talk about them, and an observance of some insignificant rites and traditions of the *elders*: on which account, utter ruin and destruction ensued; but also of any outward professor of religion, who enjoying the means of grace, and making great pretensions to devotion and piety, it might be expected that he should do good works, well-pleasing to God, and bring forth fruit to the glory of his name: whereas he only talks of good works, but does none; at least, no fruits of grace and righteousness are to be found on him; and at the last day, he'll be cast as dry wood, as a withered branch, into everlasting burnings, being fit fuel for them. *And his disciples heard it; this saying, as the Persic version adds, and took notice of it, being in company with him.*

Ver. 15. *And they came to Jerusalem, &c.*] The Ethiopic version reads, *he came*; that is, Christ; but not alone, for his disciples were with him: Beza says, that one exemplar he had met with, adds *again*, and so one of Stephens's copies; for they had been there the day before: *and Jesus went into the temple*: the Syriac and Persic versions add, *of God*; into the court of the Gentiles, as he did the preceding day: *and began to cast out them that bought and sold in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves*; which was done, as Matthew relates, the same day that he made his public entry into Jerusalem: wherefore it is highly probable, that upon Christ's leaving the city, they returned *again*, and were the next morning sitting and trafficking in the temple as before; and were drove out again by Christ, who, upon his return, found them there. *They that bought and sold in the temple*, were those that bought and sold lambs for the passover, which was now at hand; and the sheep and oxen for the *Chagiga*, or feast the day following; as well as doves hereafter mentioned, for lying-in women, and such as had fluxes: and that part of the temple where this traffic was carried on, was in a large space within the area of the temple, where shops were built for that purpose: and by the *money-changers*, whose tables are said to be *overthrown*, are meant, such as sat at tables to receive the half shekel, who changed those that brought whole shekels, or foreign money: and who had so much for changing, which was called *Kolbon*; from whence they had the name of *Collybistæ*, in the text: and *doves*, as before observed, were the offering of the poorer sort of women after lying-in, at the time of their purification, and of profusious persons; of which many came from all parts, at the time of the passover: upon which ac-

count, there was a great demand for these creatures; and many sat upon seats to sell them, which Christ overturned; see the note on Matt. xxi. 12.

Ver. 16. *And would not suffer that any man, &c.*] He was more strict and severe than the day before; and gave orders, that they should be so far from being allowed to sit and trade in that sacred place, that no man *should carry any vessel through the temple*; should make a thoroughfare of it, by carrying through to any other place, any vessel that was for common use, or any sort of burden whatever: and this they could not well find fault with, nor complain of, since it was agreeable to one of their own canons; for they say<sup>b</sup>, "a man may not go into the mountain of the house, with his staff (in his hands); nor with shoes (on his feet); nor with his girdle, and his money in it; nor with a bag thrown over his shoulders; nor with dust upon his feet; nor might he make it, כפנדריא, a thoroughfare, and much less spit in it."

Ver. 17. *And he taught, saying unto them, is it not written, &c.*] In Isa. lvi. 7. *My house shall be called of all nations, the house of prayer*? For not only the Jews went up to the temple to pray, see Luke xviii. 10. but the Gentiles also, who became of the Jewish religion, and had a court built for that purpose; and so the whole temple, from hence, was called an house of prayer: and the meaning is, not only that it should be called so by the Gentiles, but that it should be so to them, and made use of by them as such. Jarchi's note on the clause in Isa. lvi. 7. is, "not for Israel only, but also for the proselytes." *But ye have made it a den of thieves*; for no other, in our Lord's esteem, were the buyers and sellers of sheep, oxen, and doves, and the money-changers, and the priests that encouraged them, and had a profit out of them: now these had their seats, shops, and tables, within the mountain of the house; and even in that part of it, which was assigned to the Gentiles, the nations of the world, who became proselytes, and came up to Jerusalem to worship there at certain times; see the note on Matt. xxi. 13.

Ver. 18. *And the Scribes and chief priests heard it, &c.*] The reproof he gave to the money-changers, and buyers, and sellers in the temple; and his strict prohibition that none should carry any vessels through it; and the argument he used from the prophecy of Isaiah, and the sharp rebuke he gave for the profanation of the holy place: *and sought how they might destroy him*: they took counsel together to take away his life, for they hated reformation: *for they feared him*; lest he should go on to make great changes and alterations among them, which would affect their credit and character, and their gains also, and draw the people after him: *because all the people were astonished at his doctrine*: both as to the matter of it, which were such words as never man spake; and as to the manner of it, being with such majesty, power, and authority, as the Scribes and Pharisees taught not with; and also at the miracles, by which it was confirmed, as well as at the reformation and discipline he was introducing; which was done with such an air of sovereignty and power, as was amazing.

<sup>b</sup> Misa. Beraco, c. 9. sect. 5. Vid. T. Bab. Beraco, fol. 62. 2. &

Yebamot, fol. 6. 2. & Midrash Kohelet, fol. 70. 3. & Maimon. Hilch. Beth Habbechira, c. 7. sect. 1, 2, 3.

Ver. 19. *And when even was come, he went out of the city, &c.*] Of Jerusalem, as he did the evening before, and for the same reasons: probably he went to Bethany, where he had lodged the last night, with Lazarus, Martha, and Mary; or to the Mount of Olives, where he sometimes spent the night in prayer: the Syriac version renders it, *they went out*; for Christ took his disciples with him, as is evident from the following verse.

Ver. 20. *And in the morning, as they passed by, &c.*] The fig-tree; when they returned the next morning from Bethany, or the Mount of Olives, or the place, wherever it was, they had been that night: *they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots*; they did not see it immediately wither as it did, nor could they see it, as they went from Jerusalem to this place, because it was then in the evening; but in the morning, as they came along, they observed it; not only that the tender branches and boughs of it, but the trunk and body of the tree, and even the roots of it, were all dried up; so that it was entirely dead, and there was no room ever to expect it would revive, and bear any more fruit.

Ver. 21. *And Peter, calling to remembrance, &c.*] Not so much the tree, and its spreading leaves, and the greatness of it, and the flourishing condition it was in, the other day, as the imprecation of Christ upon it: *saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away*; which he observed, as matter of astonishment, and as an instance of Christ's surprising power and authority; see the note on Matt. xxi. 20.

Ver. 22. *And Jesus answering, saith unto them, &c.*] To all the disciples; for what Peter said, he said in the name of them all; and according to Matthew, the disciples said, *how soon is the fig-tree withered away?* To which this is an answer; though the Arabic version renders it, *to him*; as if the words were directed particularly to Peter: *have faith in God; or the faith of God*, so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; that is, exercise, and make use of that faith which has God for its author, which is the work of God, and of his operation, a free-grace gift of his; and which has God for its object; and is supported by his power, and encouraged by his goodness, truth, and faithfulness: and so the Arabic version renders it, *believe in God*; not only that such things may be done, as the drying up a fig-tree, but those that are much greater.

Ver. 23. *For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, &c.*] The Mount of Olives, at, or near which they now were, *be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea*; that is, of Galilee, which was nearest, and yet many miles off: *and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass*; not only as to removing a mountain, and casting it into the sea, but any thing equally difficult; *he shall have whatsoever he saith*: whatever he commands shall be done; see the note on Matt. xxi. 21.

Ver. 24. *Therefore I say unto you, &c.*] For encouragement in prayer more particularly, without which nothing should be attempted, and especially which is above the power of nature, and is of a miraculous kind: *whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray*; that is, according to the revealed will of God, is for the confirmation of his Gospel, and for the glory of his name: *believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have*

them; the petitions that are desired, and the things asked in them: that is, be as much assured of having them, as if you had already received them, and you shall have them; for the sense can never be, that they should believe they received them before they had them; this would be a contradiction in terms; and Beza's ancient copy, and one of Stephens's copies read it, *believe that ye shall receive*, as in Matt. xxi. 22. and so the Vulgate Latin version; with which agree the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, which render it, *believe that ye shall enjoy, or obtain*; and the Syriac version, *believe that ye are about to receive*; and great faith it is so to believe; and this is the prayer of faith; see 1 John v. 14, 15.

Ver. 25. *And when ye stand praying, &c.*] Are about to engage in that work, or are engaged in it, performing it in such a posture; for standing was an usual posture in praying; see the note on Matt. vi. 5. *forgive, if ye have ought against any, that your father also in heaven may forgive you your trespasses*. The sense is, that if, while a man is praying, it comes into his mind that such an one has committed a trespass against him, has done him an injury, of which he has just reason to complain; but instead of complaining of it before God, and calling upon him to avenge his cause, he should immediately in his heart, and from his heart, forgive him, even though he is not present to acknowledge his sin, and ask his pardon; and such an one may expect forgiveness of God, and a manifestation of it to his soul; which is one of the things he is constantly praying for, as his daily case makes it necessary: not that it is to be understood as though his forgiving the person that has offended him, is the cause, or condition, of his receiving remission of sin at the hand of God; for then it would not be through the blood of Christ, and according to the riches of his grace; but this points at a temper and disposition of mind well-pleasing to God, and describes persons who may expect this favour from him; see the note on Matt. vi. 14.

Ver. 26. *But if ye do not forgive, &c.*] Freely and fully, such as have trespassed against you, remit the debts they owe, and pass by the offences and injuries done you, and put up with every affront and indignity: *neither will your heavenly father forgive your trespasses*; that is, such persons don't appear to have any true, or right notions of forgiveness; nor is there any evidence that their hearts are duly affected, or truly impressed with a sense of it; nor can they, upon their own principles and conduct, expect it: not but that to whomsoever God stands in the relation of a father, and they are his children by adopting grace; these he pities and pardons, for Christ's sake; the same covenant which contains the blessing of adoption, provides for pardoning mercy, and a non-remembrance of sin; the same persons that are predestinated to the adoption of children by Christ, and whom he has redeemed, that they might receive it, have the forgiveness of their sins, according to the riches of God's grace; for redemption and forgiveness of sins go together; and as many as are the children of God by faith in Christ, by the same faith receive the remission of sins; and without a view of pardon through the blood of

Christ, a child of God can't draw nigh to its heavenly father, with that boldness, and cheerfulness, and filial fear it should; but there is forgiveness with him, that he may be feared; to whomsoever God stands in the relation of a Covenant-God and Father, to them he manifests himself as a God pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin: unless the word *father* here is not to be taken for such a special relation of grace, but only as expressive of him as the God of nature and providence, who has made; and takes care of all his creatures; in which sense he is the father of all: as it is said, *have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?* Mal. ii. 10. and so *our heavenly father, or our father which is in heaven*, may be so called only from the place where he dwells; and not from the grace he bestows on men, making them partakers of his heavenly gifts and calling, and blessing them in heavenly places, or things in Christ Jesus: in the former view of him it will not necessarily follow, that he does forgive sin, whereas under the latter consideration of him it will; for forgiveness is one of the heavenly gifts and things which he blesses his children with; see the note on Matt. vi. 15.

Ver. 27. *And they come again to Jerusalem, &c.*] The Persic and Ethiopic versions read, *he came*, which must be understood with his disciples; for they never parted from him till he was apprehended in the garden. Luke says, ch. xx. 1. that it was *on one of those days*; and the Persic version here reads, *on another day*: it was the day after the cursing of the fig-tree, and two days after his public entrance into Jerusalem: *and as he was walking in the temple*; not alone, but his disciples with him, and a multitude of people, whom he was teaching and preaching the Gospel to, as he walked to and fro; and whilst he was there employed, *there come to him the chief priests, and the Scribes, and the elders*; the Jewish sanhedrim; for of these that great council of the nation consisted; see the note on Matt. xxi. 23.

Ver. 28. *And say unto him, by what authority dost thou do these things? &c.*] Enter into the temple, as if he was Lord of it; and correct in such a magisterial way every thing he thought an abuse in it; do the miracles he did, as healing the lame, and blind; and take upon him to instruct the people, a work he was now engaged in: *and who gave thee this authority to do these things?* see the note on Matt. xxi. 23.

Ver. 29. *And Jesus answered and said unto them, &c.*] Being not in the least intimidated by such a body of men: *I will also ask of you one question; or one word, or one thing*; *λογος*, here answers to the Hebrew word *דבר*, which signifies both *word* and *thing*: *and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things*; see the note on Matt. xxi. 24.

Ver. 30. *The baptism of John, &c.*] The doctrine of which he was the first preacher, and the ordinance of which he was the first administrator: *was it from heaven, or of men?* was it of divine or of human institution? *answer me*; directly and plainly, without any shuffling, or evasion: 'tis a fair question, and may be answered; and the answer to it our Lord suggests would naturally lead to a proper one to their question; see the note on Matt. xxi. 25.

Ver. 31. *And they reasoned with themselves, saying, &c.*] Privately; perhaps, they withdrew at a little distance for a short time, and consulted among themselves what answer to return; and the amount of their reasonings were this; *if we shall say from heaven, he will say, why then did ye not believe him?* that is, should they say that John had a divine commission for what he said and did, they were aware that Christ would reply, why did not ye give credit to him? and had you done so, seeing he testified of me, you would have had no occasion to have put the above question; see the note on Matt. xxi. 25.

Ver. 32. *But if we shall say, of men, &c.*] That John's baptism was an human invention, and he had no authority from God to preach and administer it, *they feared the people*; lest being enraged thereby they should, at once, rise up, and destroy them: *for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed*; a real prophet, one truly sent from God, and had his commission and credentials from him: this was the general sentiment of the people; see the note on Matt. xxi. 26.

Ver. 33. *And they answered and said unto Jesus, &c.*] Being reduced by this dilemma to the greatest straight and difficulty; *we cannot tell*: they could, if they would, but they did not care to tell; they knew if they did, they should expose themselves one way or another: *and Jesus answering, saith unto them, neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things*; see the note on Matt. xxi. 27.

## CH A P. XII.

Ver. 1. *AND he began to speak unto them by parables, &c.*] As of the two sons the father bid go to work in the vineyard; and of the planting of a vineyard, and letting it out to husbandmen, as here; though the latter is only related by this evangelist, yet both are by Matthew. This was not the first time of his speaking by parables to the people, though it might be the first time he spake in this way to the chief priests and elders, and who are particularly designed in them. *A certain man planted a vineyard*. The Persic version adds, *with many trees*: that is, with vines, though sometimes other trees, as fig-trees, were

planted in vineyards; see Luke xiii. 6. This man is, by the Evangelist Matthew, called an *householder*: by whom is meant God the father, as distinguished from his son, he is afterward said to send: and by the *vineyard*, planted by him, is meant the vineyard of the Lord of hosts, the men of Israel, Isa. v. 1, 7. *and set an hedge about it, or wall*, as the Persic version renders it; meaning either the law, not the Jews oral law, or the traditions of the elders, which were not of God's setting, but the ceremonial and moral law; or the wall of protection by divine power, which was set around the Jewish nation, especially when



they went up to their solemn feasts. *And digged a place for the wine-fat.* The Syriac and Arabic versions add, *in it*; and the Persic version, *in the vineyard*; for this was made in the vineyard, where they trod and squeezed the grapes when gathered; and may design the altar in the house of the Lord, where the libations, or drink-offerings, were poured out; *and built a tower.* The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions add, *in it*; for this also was built in the vineyard, and may intend either the city of Jerusalem; or the temple in it, the watch-house where the priests watched, and did their service, day and night. *And let it out to husbandmen; or workmen,* as the Arabic version renders it, who wrought in it, and took care of the vines. The Ethiopic version renders it, *and set over it a worker and keeper of the vineyard*; by whom are meant the priests and Levites, to whom were committed the care of the people, with respect to religious things: *and went into a far country*; left the people of the Jews to these husbandmen, or rulers, whether civil or ecclesiastical, but chiefly the latter, to be instructed and directed by them, according to the laws and rules given them by the Lord; see the note on Matt. xxi. 33.

Ver. 2. *And at the season he sent unto the husbandman a servant, &c.*] The Evangelist Matthew says, *when the time of the fruit drew near*; and so the Persic version here reads. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, *in its own time, or season,* which was the fourth year from the planting of it; and then it was holy to the Lord; and might not be eaten until the fifth year, Lev. xix. 23, 24, 25. According to the Jewish canons<sup>1</sup>, a vineyard of the fourth year was marked with clods of earth, to shew it was not to be eaten of; and the fruit of it was brought up to Jerusalem, from every place that was but a day's journey from thence, there to be eaten, or redeemed. Nor by the *servant* are intended the prophets of the Old Testament, who were sent to the Jews to call upon them to bring forth fruits of righteousness; for not a single person, but a set of men, are here designed; and the Evangelist Matthew expresses it in the plural number, *servants: that he might receive from the husbandmen the fruit of the vineyard*: by the hands of his servants; for in Matthew it is, *that they might receive, &c.* such as righteousness and judgment, truth and holiness, so as to give an account of them, which might have been expected from a people under such advantages, Isa. v. 7. see the note on Matt. xxi. 34.

Ver. 3. *And they caught him, &c.*] This clause is left out in the Syriac and Persic versions, though it seems proper to be retained; and denotes the rudeness and violence with which the prophets of the Lord were used by the Jewish nation: *and beat him*: either with their fists, or with rods, and scourges, till the skin was flayed off: *and sent him away empty*; without any fruit to carry with him, or give an account of, to the owner of the vineyard.

Ver. 4. *And again he sent unto them another servant, &c.*] Another set of good men, to instruct, advise, and counsel them, and exhort them to their duty; such as were Isaiah, Zechariah, and others: *and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head*; for some of these were stoned, as well as sawn asunder,

and slain with the sword; though it seems, that this servant, or this set of men, were not stoned to death, because he was afterwards said to be sent away: nor could the stoning be what was done by the order of the sanhedrim, which was done by letting an heavy stone fall upon the heart<sup>2</sup>; but this was done by all the people, by the outrageous zealots, in the manner Stephen was stoned. Dr. Lightfoot thinks, the usual sense of the Greek word may be retained; which signifies to *reduce, or gather into a certain sum*: and so as this servant was sent to reckon with these husbandmen, and take an account from them of the fruit of the vineyard, *one cast a stone at him, saying, there's fruit for you*; and a second cast another stone, saying the same thing; and so they went on one after another, till at last they said, in a deriding way, now the sum is made up with you: *and sent him away shamefully handled*; with great ignominy and reproach.

Ver. 5. *And again he sent another, &c.*] That is, another servant, or set of men, it may be in the times of the Maccabees, who were used in a very inhuman manner; see Heb. xi. 37, 38. *and him they killed*; either with the sword, or by inflicting some capital punishment, as stoning, strangling, &c. *and many others*; that is, either the owner of the vineyard sent many other servants, or the husbandmen ill-used many others that were sent to them: *beating some*; with their hands, or with scourges; *and killing some*; in one or other of the above ways.

Ver. 6. *Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved, &c.*] The Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the one, and only son of God his father, his only-begotten son, for he has no other son in the same way of filiation; and who is his dear son, the son of his love, who was loved by him before the foundation of the world; and whom he declared to be his beloved son, both at his baptism, and at his transfiguration upon the mount, by a voice from heaven: this son he having with him, in his bosom, as one brought up with him, and rejoicing before him, *he sent him also last unto them*; after all the prophets had been with them, when the last days were come, the end of the Jewish state, civil and ecclesiastical; see Heb. i. 1. *saying, they will reverence my son.* The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read, *perhaps they will reverence my son,* as in Luke xx. 13. see the note on Matt. xxi. 37.

Ver. 7. *But those husbandmen said among themselves, &c.*] This, in the Persic version, is introduced thus, *when the vine-dressers saw the son of the lord of the vineyard*: agreeably to Matt. xxi. 38. The Ethiopic version renders it, *and the servants said*; not the servants that had been sent, but the workmen in the vineyard: *this is the heir*; that is, *of the vineyard*, as the Persic version expresses it: they knew him by the prophecies of the Old Testament which had described him, and by the miracles which were wrought by him; and they could not deny but that the vineyard of the house of Judah belonged to him, and he was right heir to the throne of Israel; though they refused to embrace him, confess him, and declare for him: but, on the other hand, said, *come let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours*; that is, *the vineyard*, and the Persic version

<sup>1</sup> Misa, Maaser Sheni, c. 5. sect. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Misa. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 4.

again read. The priests, Scribes, and elders of the people consulted together to take away his life, with this view: that they might continue in the quiet possession of their nation, temple, and worship, in the office they bore, and in the privileges they partook of; and that the Romans might not come, and take away their place and nation, John xi. 47, 48. see the note on Matt. xxi. 38.

Ver. 8. *And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.*] They sent their officers and servants, and apprehended him in the garden; they delivered him to the Gentiles, who were without the vineyard, and by whom, at their instigation, he was put to death, even to the death of the cross. The Ethiopic version reads it in the same order as in Matthew; they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him; see the note on Matt. xxi. 39.

Ver. 9. *What shall therefore the Lord of the vineyard do? &c.*] The Arabic and Ethiopic versions add, to them; that is, to the husbandmen, as is expressed in Matt. xxi. 40. see the note there: *he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.* As the former clause contains a question put by Christ upon his having finished the parable, this is an answer to it, given by the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, in whose presence, and for whose sake it was delivered; see the note on Matt. xxi. 41.

Ver. 10. *And have ye not read this Scripture? &c.*] In Psal. cxviii. 22, 23. these are the words of Christ, directed to the above persons, who were, many of them, teachers of the people, and therefore ought to have read the scriptures, and have taken notice of, and considered more especially such as respected the Messiah, as this passage did, and was very apposite to the case in the parable Christ had respect unto: *the stone which the builders rejected, is become the head of the corner:* by the stone is meant the same with the son and heir in the parable, even himself, the true Messiah; and by the builders, the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, the same with the husbandmen, whose rejection of the stone, or of the Messiah, is signified by their seizing him, casting him out of the vineyard, and killing him; and yet notwithstanding all this, according to this Scripture, he was to be, and now is become, the head of the corner, exalted above angels and men, at the right hand of God; see the note on Matt. xxi. 42.

Ver. 11. *This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.*] That is, the exaltation of the Messiah, after he had been so ill-treated, and at last put to death by the Jews. These words are a continuation of the passage cited out of the cxviii Psalm.

Ver. 12. *They sought to lay hold on him, &c.*] That is, the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, after they had heard the parables he spake to them, were greatly irritated, and provoked, and had a good will to have seized him, and carried him away, and have had him before their court, and condemn him: *but feared the people;* lest they should rise up in his defence, and fall on them; for many of them liked, and were attached to his ministry; and others had received favours of one kind or another from him through his miracles: *for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them:* and that they were the husbandmen designed,

who had not brought the fruit of the vineyard to their lord, but had ill-treated his servants, and would his son. *And they left him;* in the temple, not daring to do any thing to him: *and went their way;* to their council-chamber, perhaps to consult what measures to take, and how to destroy him.

Ver. 13. *And they send unto him, &c.*] That is, the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, who had been with Jesus in the temple, and were silenced by his reasonings, and provoked by his parables; and therefore left him, and went together to consult what methods they should take to get him into their hands, and be revenged on him; the result of which was, they send to him *certain of the Pharisees,* The Syriac and Persic versions read *Scribes,* who were the more skilful and learned part of that body of men, and scrupled paying tribute to Cæsar, he being an Heathen prince, and they the Lord's free people: *and of the Herodians;* who were, as the Syriac and Persic versions read, *of the household of Herod;* his servants and courtiers, and consequently in the interest of Cæsar, under whom Herod held his government, and must be for paying tribute to him: these two parties of such different sentiments, they sent to him, *to catch him in his words;* or *in word,* or discourse; either with their word, the question they should put to him, or with his word, the answer he should return: and so the Ethiopic version supplies it, reading it, *with his own word:* they thought they should unavoidably catch him, one way or other; just as a prey is hunted, and taken in a net or snare, as the word used signifies: for if he declared against giving tribute to Cæsar, the Herodians would have whereof to accuse him, and the Pharisees would be witnesses against him; and if he should be for it, the latter would expose him among the people, as an enemy to their civil liberties, and one that was for subjecting them to the Roman yoke, and consequently could not be the Messiah and deliverer they expected; see the note on Matt. xxii. 16.

Ver. 14. *And when they were come, &c.*] Unto Jesus in the temple: *they said unto him, master;* they saluted him in like manner, as they did their doctors and Rabbins, calling him *Rabbi,* though they were not his disciples; but one part of them were the disciples of the Pharisees, and the other had Herod for their master; *we know that thou art true:* an honest, sincere, and upright man, *and carest for no man, for thou regardest not the person of men;* no, not Cæsar himself; *but teachest the way of God in truth;* instructest men in the word, will, and worship of God, with all integrity and faithfulness; answer therefore this question, *is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not?* The Syriac and Persic versions read, *head-money;* and so it is read in Beza's most ancient copy; a tax that was levied on the heads of families; or on every particular head in a family; see the notes on Matt. xxii. 16, 17.

Ver. 15. *Shall we give, or not give? &c.*] They not only ask whether it was lawful, but whether also it was advisable to do it, that they might not only accuse him of his principles, but charge him with persuading, or dissuading in this case. These words are left out in the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions: *but he knowing their hypocrisy;* ex-

pressed in their flattering titles and characters of him; and which lay hid in their secret designs against him; which being thoroughly known to him, *said unto them, why tempt ye me: bring me a penny, that I may see it; what it is, that is required for tribute; see the notes on Matt. xxii. 18, 19.*

Ver. 16. *And they brought it, &c.*] The penny, which was a Roman one, and worth seven-pence halfpenny of our money: *and he saith unto them, whose is this image, and superscription; for it had the head of an emperor upon it, very likely the image of the then reigning emperor Tiberius, and a superscription on it, expressing his name, and perhaps a motto along with it: and they said unto him, Cæsar's; one of the Roman emperors, Augustus, or Tiberius; most probably the latter; see the notes on Matt. xxii. 20, 21.*

Ver. 17. *And Jesus answering said unto them, &c.*] Very wisely and pertinently, *render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's: or to the king, which are the king's*, as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it: *and to God the things that are God's*; see the note on Matt. xxii. 21. *and they marvelled at him; at his wisdom and prudence in returning such an answer, which cut off all occasion against him.*

Ver. 18. *Then came unto him the Sadducees, &c.*] The same day, immediately after he had silenced the Pharisees and Herodians: these were a set of men distinct from the former, in some of their sentiments, especially in their religious ones, and particularly in the following: *which say there is no resurrection: of the dead, in a literal sense, either general or particular; see the note on Matt. xxii. 23. and they asked him, saying; as in the next verse.*

Ver. 19. *Master, Moses wrote unto us, &c.*] Has left in writing for us the following precept to observe; for they acknowledged the writings of Moses, and indeed all the Scriptures of the Old Testament; adhering to the literal sense of them, and rejecting the traditional interpretation of them by the Rabbins: *if a man's brother die, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother; which is the sense of the law in Deut. xxv. 5. see the note on Matt. xxii. 24.*

Ver. 20. *Now there were seven brethren, &c.*] In a certain family, at a certain place; perhaps at Jerusalem, who were brethren by the father's side; for such only were reckoned so, and such only did this law oblige: *and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed: no child: hence 'tis clear that the ancient Jews used the word seed, of a single person, as these Sadducees did; though modern ones deny such an use of it in our present controversies with them about the sense of Gen. iii. 15. and xxii. 18. see the note on Matt. xxii. 25.*

Ver. 21. *The second took her, &c.*] To wife, married her, as the next eldest brother, by the above law was obliged to: and so the Jewish canon upon it runs thus; "the command is, *בְּרִיל*, for the eldest to marry his brother's wife: if he will not, they go to all the brethren; if they will not, they return to the eldest," and say, the command is upon thee, either pluck "off the shoe, or marry." Maimonides relates it in this manner; "if a man dies, and leaves many brethren,

"the command is upon the eldest to marry, or pull off the shoe; as it is said, Deut. xxv. 6. *and it shall be the first-born which she beareth.* From tradition, 'tis learned, that it does not speak but of the first-born among the brethren; and it is all one as if it was said, the eldest of the brethren shall succeed in the name of his brother that is dead; and this is what is said, *which she beareth*: the sense is, which the mother has borne, and not which the brother's wife beareth; if the eldest will not marry her, they go round to all the brethren; and if they will not, they return to the eldest, and say, upon thee is the command, either pluck off the shoe, or marry; and they don't compel him to marry, but they compel him to pluck off the shoe;" *i. e.* in case he will not marry. *And died, neither left he any seed, and the third likewise; married her, and died without issue, as the second did. The Persic version adds, and the fourth, and fifth; for so they all did to the seventh.*

Ver. 22. *And the seventh had her, and left no seed, &c.*] All the seven brethren married her, one after another, and neither of them had any children by her: *and last of all the woman died also; after all the seven brethren, to whom she had been married.*

Ver. 23. *In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, &c.*] This last clause, *when they shall rise*, is omitted in two copies of Beza's, and in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, because, perhaps, it might be thought superfluous; but this is agreeably to the way of speaking and writing with the Jews: so in the Targum on Zech. iii. 7. *בְּחַיִּיתָ אֲדֹנָי כִּי־תִיָּאֵר אֲדֹנָי, in the quickening of the dead I will quicken thee; or, in the resurrection of the dead I will raise thee.* The question put on supposition of a resurrection, and that these seven brethren, and the wife they all had should rise, then is, *whose wife shall she be of them?* of the seven brethren; *for the seven had her to wife.* She was, according to law, the lawful wife of all seven; what particular and special claim could one have to her above the rest? see the note on Matt. xxii. 28.

Ver. 24. *And Jesus answering said unto them, &c.*] Which they thought he was not able to do, but would have been silenced at once by them, as many of their antagonists had been: *do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God?* what is expressed in Matthew affirmatively, is here put by way of interrogation, which, with the Jews, was a more vehement way of affirming; see the note on Matt. xxii. 29.

Ver. 25. *For when they shall rise from the dead, &c.*] These seven brethren, and the woman; and so any, and every other: *they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; there will be no such natural relation subsisting, nor any need of any: but are as the angels which are in heaven; see the note on Matt. xxii. 30.*

Ver. 26. *And as touching the dead, that they rise, &c.*] For the proof of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, *have ye not read in the book of Moses; that is, in the law of Moses; for though it was divided into five parts, it was but one book; just as the Psalms are called the Book of Psalms, Acts i. 20. and the Prophets, the*

<sup>1</sup> Misn. Yebamot, c. 4. sect. 5. & T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 39. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Hilch. Yebum Uchalitza, c. 2. sect. 6, 7. Vid. Jarchium in Deut. xxv. 6.

Book of the Prophets, Acts vii. 42. The book of Exodus is particularly intended; for the passage referred to is in Exod. iii. 6. *how in the bush God spake unto him, or out of the bush, as the Syriac and Persic versions read; saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?* see the notes on Matt. xxii. 31, 32.

Ver. 27. *He is not the God of the dead, &c.*] This is our Lord's reasoning upon the passage; shewing from hence, that since God is the God of these persons, they must be now alive in their souls, for God is not the God of the dead; and that their bodies must rise again, or he will not be the God of their whole persons; *but the God of the living*: the word *God*, in this clause, is omitted in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, but retained in the Persic and Ethiopic versions; see the note on Matt. xxii. 32. *ye therefore do greatly err*; signifying, that it was not a slight mistake, an error of small importance, but a very great one; inasmuch as it was contrary to the Scriptures, and derogated from the power of God, and destroyed that covenant-interest, which God has in his people, and particularly in the principal men of their nation, who were the fathers and founders of them.

Ver. 28. *And one of the Scribes came, &c.*] Matthew calls him a lawyer, an interpreter of the law, as a Scribe was: *and having heard them reasoning together*; being present at the dispute between Christ and the Sadducees, which he diligently attended to: *and perceiving that he had answered them well*; in a most beautiful manner. The Jews have adopted the very Greek word here used, and make use of it in the same sense as אָמַר לֵית קָאֵלוֹם, *he answered him well*; or, as the gloss upon it, *praise-worthy*; in a manner deserving praise; and is the same with קָאֵמַרִת, *thou hast said well*, or beautifully; and so the answer here was with great solidity, and judgment, and strength of argument, to their utter confusion and silence; whereby he understood he had considerable knowledge in the law, and yet was willing to try if he could not puzzle him with a question relating to it: *asked him, which is the first commandment of all?* of all the commandments in the law, moral and ceremonial.

Ver. 29. *Jesus answered him, the first of all the commandments is, &c.*] Christ replied at once, without taking any time to consider of it, that the chief and principal of all the commands of the law, and what is of the greatest importance is, *hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord*. The Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions read, *one God*; but the Syriac, and Ethiopic render it, *one Lord*; and that rightly, agreeably to the Greek text, and to Deut. vi. 4. from whence this is taken. This passage of Scripture, to the end of the ninth verse, is the first of the sections which were put into their phylacteries; see the note on Matt. xxiii. 5. and was repeated twice every day, morning and evening; which is by the Jews called from the first word קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע, *the reading of the Shema*: concerning the exact time of the reciting of this, morning and evening, and of the posture in which they do it, reclining in the

evening, and standing in the morning, and of the prayers before and after it, various rules are given in their Misna<sup>r</sup>, or oral law; it is a precept of great esteem and veneration with them, and attended to with much solemnity. The account Maimonides<sup>q</sup> gives of it is this: "twice every day they read Keriath Shema; (i. e. *hear, O Israel, &c.*) in the evening and in the morning, as it is said, Deut. vi. 7. *When thou liest down, and when thou risest up*; in the hour it is the custom of men to lie down, and this is night; and in the hour it is the custom of men to stand, and this is day: and what does he read? three sections; and they are these, *hear, &c.*] Deut. vi. 4. *and it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken, &c.* Deut. xi. 13. *and Moses said, &c.* Exod. xiii. 3. and they read the section, *hear, O Israel*, first, because there is in it the unity of God, and the love of him and his doctrine; for it is, *הַקְּוֹר דְּגִדּוּל*, *the great root, or foundation*, on which all hangs or depends." And it is observable, that the last letter of the word *hear*, and the last of the word *one*, are both written in very large characters in the Hebrew Bible, to denote the greatness of the command, and to cause attention to it. The Jews seek for mysteries in these letters, and think the unusual size of them, points at some very great things: they observe, that the first of these letters is numerically *seventy*, and directs to the seventy names of the law, and the seventy ways in which it may be interpreted, and the seventy nations of the world, from whom the Israelites are distinguished, by their belief of the one God<sup>r</sup>; and that the latter stands for the number *four*, and shews that the Lord is the one God, in heaven and in earth, in all the world, and in the four parts of it; and that both these letters put together, make a word, which signifies a *witness*; shewing that this passage is a glorious testimony of the unity of God, and that the Israelites are witnesses of it, by believing and professing it; and that should they depart from the faith of it, God would be a witness against them: and now, though there is no solid foundation for such interpretations, yet this shews what an opinion they had of the greatness of this command; to which may be added, they ask<sup>s</sup>, "why does, *hear, O Israel, &c.* go before that passage in Deut. xi. 13. *And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments, &c.* but because a man must take upon him, first the yoke of the kingdom of heaven, and after that he must take upon him the yoke of the commandments." The sense is, that he must first make a confession of his faith in God, which is contained in Deut. vi. 4. and then he must obey his commands; so that they plainly considered this, as the first and greatest of all. These words are frequent in the mouths of the modern Jews, in proof of the unity of God, and against a plurality in the Deity; but the ancient ones, not only consider them as a good and sufficient proof, that there is but one God, but as expressive of a Trinity in the Godhead: with a view to this text they observe<sup>t</sup>, that "Jehovah, our God, Jehovah; these are, תְּלַת דְּרָגוֹן, *three degrees (or persons) with respect to this sublime*

<sup>r</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 109. 1.

<sup>q</sup> Zohar in Lev. fol. 2. 3. & 15. 1.

<sup>s</sup> Beracot, c. 1. sect. 1, 9, 9, 4.

<sup>t</sup> Hilch. Keriat Shema, c. 1. sect. 1, 9.

<sup>r</sup> Baal Hatturim, in Deut. vi. 4.

<sup>s</sup> Misn. Beracot, c. 2. sect. 2.

<sup>t</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 1. 3.

"mystery, in the beginning, God, or Elohim, created, &c." And again<sup>u</sup>, "there is an unity which is called Jehovah the first, our God, Jehovah; behold! they are all one, and therefore called one: lo! these three names are as one; and although we call them one, and they are one; but by the revelation of the Holy Ghost it is made known, and they are by the sight of the eye to be known, that *these three are one*, (see 1 John v. 7.) and this is the mystery of the voice that is heard; the voice is one; and there are three things, fire, and wind, and water, and they are all one, in the mystery of the voice, and they are not but one: so here, Jehovah, our God, Jehovah, these, תלתא גוונין, *three modes, forms, or things*, are one." Once more they<sup>v</sup> say, "there are two, and one is joined to them, and they are three; and when they are three, they are one: these are the two names of *hear, O Israel*, which are Jehovah, Jehovah, and Elohenu, or our God, is joined unto them; and it is the seal of the ring of truth." To which I shall subjoin one passage more, where R. Eliezer is asking his father R. Simeon ben Jochai, why Jehovah is sometimes called Elohim, he replies<sup>w</sup>, among other things; "come see, there are three דרגות, *three degrees*, (or persons,) and every degree is by itself; although they are all one, and bound together in one, and one is not separated from another." To believe this, is the first and chief commandment in the law, and is the principal article of the Christian faith; namely, to believe that there is one God, and that there are three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, in the Godhead.

Ver. 30. *And thou shalt love the Lord thy God, &c.* Which is to be understood of the one God, Father, Son, and Spirit; for all the three divine persons are to be equally loved, being possessed of the same perfections and excellencies, and having done the same works, and having bestowed like benefits and favours upon men: and though there is now no principle of love to God in men; but, on the contrary, men are enemies to God in their minds, which appears by their wicked works; yet this commandment is still in force, and the obligation to it is the same; the fall of man, the corruption of nature, and the impotency, and even aversion in man to observe this command, do not make it null and void: and in regeneration, when God puts his laws into the heart, and writes them in the mind; love is produced in such persons, to God the Father, who has begotten them again, according to his abundant mercy; and to Christ, who has saved them from their sins; and to the blessed Spirit, who has quickened and comforted them: and this love is in some measure exercised as it should be, and as here directed to, *with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind*; that is, with all the powers and faculties of the soul; or with the affections, as under the influence and guidance of the more noble faculties of the soul, the mind, the understanding, judgment, and will: it is added here, which is not in Matthew, and *with all thy strength*; which answers to the phrase in Deut. vi. 5. *with all thy might*; that is, with the greatest vehemency of affection, in the strongest expressions of it, and with all the strength of grace a man has. This passage follows the former in

<sup>u</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 18. 3. 4.

<sup>v</sup> Ib. in Num. fol. 67. 3.

Deut. vi. 5. and is what is only cited in Matt. xxii. 37. see the note there.

Ver. 31. *And the second is like, &c.* Unto it, as in Matt. xxii. 39. and so it is read here in two ancient copies of Beza's, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; namely *this, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. This commandment stands in Lev. xix. 18. and respects not an Israelite only, or one of the same religion with a man's self, or his intimate friend and acquaintance, or one that lives in the same neighbourhood; but any man whatever, to whom affection should be shewn, and good should be done to him, and for him, as a man would have done to and for himself; as much as lies in his power, both in things temporal and spiritual; see the note on Matt. xxii. 39. *There is none other commandment greater than these*; in the whole law, moral or ceremonial; not the sabbath, nor circumcision, nor the phylacteries, nor the fringes on the borders of the garments, nor any other.

Ver. 32. *And the Scribe said unto him, &c.* This reply of the Scribe, is not related by Matthew: *well, Master, thou hast said the truth*: what thou hast said is truth, and thou hast expressed it in a most beautiful manner: the Scribe was charmed with his answer, and could not forbear speaking in commendation of it, and even before the multitude, and those of his own sect: this was a rare and uncommon instance; it was not usual with the Scribes and Pharisees, whatever convictions they were laid under, either by the miracles or discourses of Christ, to own any thing, or make any concessions in his favour, or speak in his praise: but this man not only commends him, but gives reasons for it, and confirms the doctrine he taught in his own words; *for there is one God, and there is none other but he*. The Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, leave out the word *God*; but it is in the Greek copies, and rightly retained in other versions: for the sense is, that there is one God, and but one; and which is perfectly agreeable to the Christian doctrine, of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead; for though the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, yet there are not three Gods, but one God. Nor are we to imagine, that this man said or thought any thing to the contrary, or had it in his mind to oppose the doctrine of the Trinity; which, though more clearly revealed in the New Testament, was not unknown to the ancient Jews, and might be learned from the writings of the Old Testament: but this he said, in opposition to the many idols, and fictitious deities of the Gentiles; and if he spake in the Hebrew language, as it is probable he did, there must be a beautiful *paranomasia* in his words; *for there is, אחד, Achad, one God: and there is none, אחר, Achar, other but he*: and it is observed by a Jewish writer<sup>y</sup>, that the reason why the last letter of, אחד, *one*, is greater than the rest, as before observed, in ver. 29. is, that there might be no mistake of ד for ר, which are much alike; and if mistook, the word would signify *another*, and not *one*: but this is done, lest a man should mistake, and worship *another*, and not the *one* God.

Ver. 33. *And to love him with all the heart, &c.*

<sup>y</sup> Zohar in Lev. fol. 27. 2.

<sup>z</sup> Baal Hatturim, ib.

That is, the one God, with a sincere hearty love and affection; and with all the understanding; of his being, perfections, and works, which will serve to draw the affections to him: this clause answers to that, with all thy mind, in ver. 30, and with all the soul; with all the powers and faculties of it; and with all the strength; a man has, or is given him; with all the vehemency and fervency of soul he is master of: and to love his neighbour as himself; which are the two great commandments of the law: is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices; that is, more excellent in their nature, more acceptable to God, and more useful among men, than all the rituals of the ceremonial law, than any sacrifice whatever: for the two words here used, burnt-offerings and sacrifices, include all offerings; as those which were wholly consumed upon the altar, and those of which part was given to the priests; and all sin-offerings, meat-offerings, and peace-offerings, and whatever else. This man had now at least a different sense of things, from the rest of his brethren; who placed religion chiefly in the observance of the rituals of the law, and the traditions of the elders; and neglected the duties of the moral law, respecting God and their neighbour: things which are to be preferred and attended to, before any ceremonial institutions, and especially the inventions of men. This entirely agrees with the sense of the passage in Hos. vi. 6. For I desired mercy and not sacrifice; that is, willed and required, that men should shew mercy to one another; or that every one should love his neighbour as himself, and attend to this, rather than to the offering of any ceremonial sacrifice: this being more delightful and well-pleasing to God, than that: and the knowledge of God; of his unity, perfections, and glory: more than burnt-offerings; which were entirely devoted to him: and it also agrees with the ancient sentiments of the people of God; so Samuel says to Saul, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? behold, to obey is better than sacrifices, and to hearken, than the fat of rams, 1 Sam. xv. 22. And yet it may be observed, that there is some likeness between these things, burnt-offerings and sacrifices, and the love of God and love to our neighbour; though the latter are greatly preferable to the former; true love to God being no other than the offering up of the soul, as a whole burnt-offering to God, in the flames of love to him; and love to the neighbour, or doing good and communicating to him, is a sacrifice well-pleasing to God.

Ver. 34. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, &c.] Wisely and prudently, as a man of sense and understanding; by taking in the several parts of our Lord's answer very distinctly, and reasoning upon them, and confirming them: he said unto him, thou art not far from the kingdom of God; not meaning from heaven, and eternal happiness; for right and distinct notions of the above commandments, and even the performance of them by a sinful and imperfect creature, can neither give a man a title to, or bring him near, or introduce him into the heavenly glory, which is a pure gift of God's grace; but our Lord's sense is, that he was not far off from the Gospel dispensation, and was in a fair way of entering

into it; his sentiments were very near to such, who became followers of Christ, and embraced the doctrines, and submitted to the ordinances of the Gospel state: since he preferred those things, which related to the knowledge of the being and perfections of God, to the love and worship of God, and to the good of his neighbour; before the ceremonies of the law; which were quickly to be abolished, and make way for the setting up of the kingdom of God, or of the Messiah, in a more glorious and visible manner. Indeed there are some persons, who seem not far off from the kingdom of God, in the other sense of the phrase, as it may respect eternal glory and happiness, who will never enter into it: there are some that seem very devout and religious; hear the word, attend on all ordinances, join themselves with a church, submit to baptism, and sit down at the Lord's table, and live a moral life and conversation, and yet are destitute of the grace of God: yea, there are some who have clear notions of the Gospel, and make a bright profession of it, and yet have no experience of the power of it upon their hearts, and have not the oil of grace there: and even hold this profession to the end, and yet come short of the kingdom and glory of our Lord Jesus: such are almost Christians, but not altogether; virgins, but foolish ones; have lamps, but no oil; come as far as the door, but that is shut upon them. And no man after that durst ask him any question; in any captious matter, in order to ensnare him; finding they could get no advantage, or occasion against him that way; he having silenced the Herodians, Sadducees, Scribes, and Pharisees.

Ver. 35. And Jesus answered and said, &c.] To the Pharisees that were gathered together about him; see the note on Matt. xxii. 41. While he taught in the temple; whilst he was in the temple, and as he was teaching the people there; among other things in his doctrine, he put this question, how say the Scribes, that Christ is the son of David? Not that Christ meant to deny or invalidate the truth of this; for the Messiah was certainly to be the son of David, and was; but he wanted to know, inasmuch as they commonly said, and instructed the people to believe, and it was in general believed by them, that he was David's son, how they could reconcile this to his being the Lord of David: or how they could give out, that he was only and merely the son of David, when he was David's Lord. Matthew relates the matter thus; that Christ first put these questions to them, what they thought of the Messiah, and whose son he was; and that they immediately replied, he was the son of David: wherefore this question seems to be put upon that, with another along with it, how then doth David in spirit call him Lord? see the notes on Matt. xxii. 42, 43.

Ver. 36. For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, &c.] In Psal. cx. 1. being inspired by the spirit of God: the Lord said to my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. This is a proof, that David did call Christ his Lord; and that he called him so in spirit; since these words were delivered by him under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: that the psalm was wrote by David, the title shews; and that he spake it as he was influenced by the Holy Ghost, our Lord

declares: the passage relates to what God the Father said to Christ, when being risen from the dead, he ascended on high, and entered into the most holy place; he bid him sit down at his right hand, as having done the work of man's salvation, he was sent about, to full satisfaction; and as a mark of affection to him, and honour conferred upon him in the human nature; where he should continue, till all his enemies, Jews, Pagans, Papists, and Mahometans, as well as Satan, and all his principalities and powers, were so subdued under him, as to be as a footstool to his throne: and when David prophetically speaks of this, he calls the Messiah his Lord; saying, the Lord said to my Lord; on which account the prophecy is cited; who was so, as he is God, and his Creator and Redeemer. That this prophecy is a prophecy of the Messiah, and is applicable to no other but he; and is therefore pertinently cited, and applied to him here, see the note on Matt. xxii. 44.

Ver. 37. *David therefore himself calleth him Lord, &c.*] David, whose son you say the Messiah is, speaks of him as one superior to himself; as Lord, and as his Lord: *whence is he then his son?* from what passage of Scripture does it appear, that he is his son? and how can these two different characters of him, be made to agree in him? Our Lord meant by this, to observe to them, that the Messiah was God, as well as man; that he was not merely the son of David, as was commonly received, or a mere man, but that he had a superior nature, in which he was David's Lord, and even Lord of all. This is a Talmudic way of speaking, frequently used when a proof from Scripture, or reason, is demanded to support any opinion or article of faith; as, *מניין הוא סברה*, from whence is this opinion? what proof is there of it? And again it is said *מניין לתחיית*, from whence is the proof of the resurrection of the dead out of the law? It is said, Exod. vi. 4. and I have also established, &c. Sometimes it is expressed thus *מנה דיען*, from whence do we know that it is so? And sometimes the word is doubled; says R. Simeon ben Lekish, there is an intimation out of the law, concerning that which is torn, *מניין מניין*, from whence? from whence? Exod. xxii. 31. *Neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn, &c.* But the Scribes produced neither Scripture nor reason to support their assertion, though it was true; because they could not reconcile it with the passage cited by Christ. *And the common people; or the whole multitude*, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it; or a great multitude, as the Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions; or all the people, as the Ethiopic; all but the Scribes and Pharisees, the populace in general, *heard him gladly*: with great pleasure and satisfaction, observing that his doctrine was superior to that of any of the sects among them; particularly his reasoning about the Messiah, was listened to with great attention, and who, no doubt, could gladly have heard how these things could be reconciled; but we read not that any answer was returned to our Lord's queries, either by himself or any other.

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 54. 2.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 90. 2.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Nazir, fol. 5. 1.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 42. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Misn. Shekalim, c. 6. sect. 5. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. &

Ver. 38. *And he said unto them in his doctrine, &c.*] As he was preaching, not to the Scribes and Pharisees, but to the multitude, and to his disciples particularly; and to them in the audience of the people, as appears from Matt. xxiii. 1. and Luke xx. 45. *Beware of the Scribes*; for though he had just spoken favourably of one of them, this was but a single man, and a singular instance; the body of that set of men, were very bad in their principles and practices, and therefore to be avoided, and that for the reasons following: *which love to go in long clothing*; the Persic version renders it, *who affect to walk in coats and garments conspicuous, and in long robes*; such as were very particular, and different from others, and out of the common way of apparel; and so were observable and taken notice of by others: very likely it may have reference to the uncommon length of their fringes on the borders of their outward garment, which they enlarged beyond others; see the note on Matt. xxiii. 5. *and love salutations in the market-places; or streets*, as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, in any public places, where there was a resort of men, and they were taken notice of, with respect, in a public manner. The Syriac and Persic supply the word *love*, as we do from Matt. xxiii. 6, 7. see the note there.

Ver. 39. *And the chief seats in the synagogues, &c.*] Where the rulers of the synagogue, and the elders of the people sat; see the note on Matt. xxiii. 6. *And the uppermost rooms at feasts*; or the first and chief places where they sat, or rather lay along at public entertainments; see the note as before.

Ver. 40. *Which devour widows' houses, &c.*] See the note on Matt. xxiii. 14.

Ver. 41. *And Jesus sat over-against the treasury, &c.*] The Arabic version reads, *at the door of the treasury*; the place where the chests stood, into which money was put for various uses: there were thirteen chests in the temple; six of them were, *לנדבה*, for voluntary oblations, or free-will offerings; for what remained of the sin-offering, and of the trespass-offering, and of the turtles; for those that had fluxes, and for lying-in women; and of the sacrifices of the Nazarite, and of the trespass-offering for the leper; and the last was for a free-will offering in general; and into one of these chests, or all them, was the money cast, afterwards spoken of. The Ethiopic version renders it, *over-against the alms-chest*; but this contribution in the temple, was not for the maintenance of the poor, but for the supply of sacrifices, and other things, as now mentioned. Jesus having done preaching, and the Scribes and Pharisees having left him, and the multitude being dismissed, he sat down, being weary, and rested himself in this place: *and beheld*; with pleasure, *how the people*, of all sorts, rich and poor, *cast money into the treasury*; into one or other of the above chests: the word rendered *money*, signifies *brass*, which the Jews call, *מנעת*; for they had shekels of brass, as well as silver; and brazen pence, as well as silver pence; and also *prutas*, or mites of brass; and such,

Moses Kotsensis, Mitzvot Torā, pr. affirm. 44. & Maimon. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 2. sect. 2, 3.

<sup>f</sup> Misn. Mansev Sheni, c. 2. sect. 8, 9. & Fdiot, c. 1. sect. 9, 10.

<sup>g</sup> Vid. Hottinger. de Nummis Heb. p. 118.

the poor woman cast in: *and many that were rich cast in much*: they gave very liberally and largely, as they were possessed with much worldly substance; for though religion was at a low ebb with them, yet they took care to support the external and ritual part of it.

Ver. 42. *And there came a certain poor widow, &c.*] Among the many that came to offer their gifts freely, there came one that was particularly taken notice of by Christ; and she was a *widow*, had no husband to provide for her, and was a *poor* one; had no substance left her by her husband to support her with; very likely she was an inhabitant of Jerusalem: *and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing; a quadrant, which was the fourth part of the Roman assis, or farthing; which seems to be much the same with the τριτακτονισμος of the Greeks, which is said<sup>6</sup> to be, "the fourth part of an obolus (the least Athenian coin), "that is, two brass pieces."* These mites seem to be the same with the *prutas*, the Jews often speak of; who say<sup>7</sup>, that a *pruta* is the eighth part of an Italian farthing; though some make it to be the sixth: hence the Syriac version here renders it, *two menin, that is, eighths*; and the Jerusalem Talmud expressly says<sup>8</sup>, that, שני פרוטות קרדינטס, *two prutas make a quadrant*, the very word here used: and that the Jews took the free-will offerings of the poor as well as the rich, though ever so little, is clear from this canon of theirs<sup>9</sup>; "a poor man that gives a *pruta*, or mite, into "the alms-dish, or a *pruta* into the poor's chest, they "take it of him; but if he does not give, they don't "oblige him to give." Nor were they obliged to cast into the treasury; but if they did, they received it, be it less or more: and indeed, the rich might throw in as little as they pleased: as for instance; into the chest for gold, they might throw in as little as the weight of a barley-corn of gold; and into the chest for frankincense, as little as the weight of a barley-corn

of frankincense<sup>1</sup>. The Persic version here, differ. ut from all others, instead of *two mites*, renders it, *two bottoms of thread, or yarn*.

Ver. 43. *And he called unto him his disciples, &c.*] Who were at some little distance from him, he having finished his discourses: *and saith unto them, verily I say unto you*; a way of speaking he often used, when he was about to deliver something of importance, and not so easy of belief, and which required attention, and what he solemnly affirmed: *that this poor widow, pointing to her, hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury*: not that she had cast in more, or so much as any one of them as to value and substance, much less more than them all put together; but that she had cast in more in proportion to what she had, than they had in proportion to their substance; and that her's, though very small in itself, and might be contemptible to others, yet it was more in the account of God and Christ, and more highly valued and esteemed of by them, than all that the rich men put in: since what she gave, she gave in faith, and from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God; when theirs was given only in hypocrisy, to make an outward shew, and to be seen of men.

Ver. 44. *For all they did cast in of their abundance, &c.*] Or *superabundance*, as the Arabic version renders it; or *superfluity*, as the Ethiopic: they abounded in the things of the world, of which they gave only a part; and though they might give much, yet they could easily spare it, and had enough remaining: *but she, of her want; or penury*, as in Luke xxi. 4. see 2 Cor. viii. 2. *did cast in all that she had, even all her living*; her whole substance, all that she had in the world; what was to have bought her food, for that day; she left herself nothing, but gave away all, and trusted to providence for immediate supply.

### C H A P. XIII.

Ver. 1. *AND as he went out of the temple, &c.*] The Ethiopic version reads, *as they went out*: Christ and his disciples: for when Christ went out of the temple, the disciples went out with him; or at least very quickly followed him, and came to him, as appears from what follows; though the true reading is, *as he went out*: and the Syriac and Persic versions are more express, and read, *as Jesus went out*: for having done all he intended to do there, he left it, never more to return to it: *one of his disciples*; it may be Peter, who was generally pretty forward, and commonly the mouth of the rest, as this disciple was, whoever he was: the Persic version reads, *the disciples*; and Matthew and Luke represent them in general, as observing to Christ, the beauty and grandeur of the temple, as this disciple did: who saith unto him, Mas-

ter, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here. The temple, as repaired by Herod, was a very beautiful building, according to the account the Jews give of it, and its stones were of a very great magnitude; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 1.

Ver. 2. *And Jesus answering said unto him, &c.*] The Persic version reads, *unto them*; and so Beza's most ancient copy; but as that question is put by one, the reply is made to him: *seest thou these great buildings?* how beautiful and strong they are. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, add the word *all*; and the sense is, dost thou take a survey of all these buildings, and of the whole of this stately edifice? and dost thou not admire the strength and grandeur of them? and dost thou not think they will be of long duration, and that the demolition of them is scarcely possible? *There*

<sup>6</sup> Harporcrstian. Lexic. p. 281.

<sup>7</sup> Misn. Kiddushin, c. 1. sect. 1. T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 58. 4. T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 12. 1. Bava Metzia, fol. 44. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 3.

<sup>1</sup> Kiddushin, fol. 58. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Mattanot Anayim, c. 9. sect. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Shekalim, c. 6. sect. 6.



shall not be left one stone upon another. The Syriac and Arabic versions add, *here*: as in Matt. xxiv. 2. and so it is read in four of Beza's copies, and in others: *that shall not be thrown down*; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 2.

Ver. 3. *And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, &c.*] On the east of Jerusalem: *over-against the temple*: where he could have a full view of it; the eastern wall of the temple being lower than the rest; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 3. *Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, asked him privately*: apart from the rest of the disciples, they being, especially the first three, his favourites, and very familiar with him.

Ver. 4. *Tell us when shall these things be? &c.*] When the temple will be destroyed, and these fine buildings shall be demolished, and not one of these large stones shall be left upon another: *and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?* And what is the sign of his coming, and of the end of the world, as Matthew relates; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 3.

Ver. 5. *And Jesus answering them, &c.*] His four disciples, Peter, John, James, and Andrew: *began to say*; or *said*, a way of speaking frequent with this evangelist: *take heed lest any man deceive you*; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 4.

Ver. 6. *For many shall come in my name, &c.*] Taking upon them the name of the Messiah: *saying, I am Christ*: the word *Christ*, is rightly supplied from Matt. xxiv. 5. otherwise in the original it is only, *I am*; which the Persic version doubles, reading it, *I am indeed, I am*: he that was promised and expected, the true Messiah; he that was to come: *and shall deceive many*; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 5.

Ver. 7. *And when ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars, &c.*] Among the Jews themselves, and with the Romans: *be not troubled*; keep your place, abide by your work, go on preaching the Gospel, without distressing yourselves about the event of things: *for such things must needs be*: being decreed by God, foretold by Christ, and made necessary by the sins of the people: *but the end shall not be yet*: of the temple, of Jerusalem, and of the Jewish state and nation; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 6.

Ver. 8. *For nation shall rise against nation, &c.*] The nations of the world one against another, and the Romans against the Jews, and the Jews against them: *and kingdom against kingdom*; which is a synonymous phrase with the former, and what the Jews call, מלכות, שונות, different words, expressing the same thing, often used in their commentaries: *and there shall be earthquakes in divers places*: of the world: *and there shall be famines*: especially in Judea, as in the times of Claudius Cæsar, and at the siege of Jerusalem: *and troubles*: public ones of various sorts, as tumults, seditions, murders, &c. This word is omitted in the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions. *These are the beginnings of sorrows*: as of a woman with-child, as the word signifies; whose pains before, though they are the beginnings and pledges of what shall come after, are not to be compared with those that immediately precede, and attend the birth of the child: and so all those troubles, which should be some time before the destruction of Jerusalem, would be but

small, but light afflictions, the beginning of sorrows, in comparison of what should immediately go before, and attend that desolation; see the notes on Matt. xxiv. 7, 8.

Ver. 9. *But take heed to yourselves, &c.*] This does not so much regard their doctrine and conversation, they were to take heed to; in which sense this phrase is sometimes used; but the security of their persons and lives; and the advice is, to take care of themselves, as much as in them lay, how they came into the hands of the persecuting Jews, and exposed themselves to danger, when at any time it could be avoided: *for they shall deliver you up to councils*; their greater and lesser sanhedrim; the one consisting of seventy-one persons, the other of twenty-three, and the least of three only; and before the greater of these, Peter and John were brought, quickly after the ascension of Christ: *and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten*; with forty stripes, save one, as the Apostle Paul was, five times: *and ye shall be brought before rulers*; governors of Roman provinces, as the same apostle was, before Gallio, Festus, and Felix: *and kings for my sake*; for the sake of professing Christ, and preaching his Gospel; as some of the apostles were, before Herod, Agrippa, Nero, Domitian, and others: *for a testimony against them*: both against the rulers and kings before whom they should be brought, and bear a testimony for Christ, and against the Jews, who should bring them thither; see the notes on Matt. x. 17, 18.

Ver. 10. *And the Gospel must first be published among all nations, &c.*] The Syriac version reads, *my Gospel*; the Gospel which Christ was the author, subject, and preacher of; *this must be published*. There was a necessity of the promulgation of it by the will of God, the command and commission of Christ; and for the gathering in of the Jews, that were the elect of God, *among all nations* of the world, especially in the Roman empire; and that *first*, or before the destruction of Jerusalem; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 14.

Ver. 11. *But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, &c.*] Lead to councils and courts of judicature, and deliver up to kings and rulers, to the civil magistrate, to be punished by the secular arm: *take no thought before-hand*; he not previously anxious, and carefully solicitous, in a distressing way: *what ye shall speak*: to kings and rulers, by way of apology for yourselves, and your own innocence, and in defence of the Gospel: *neither do ye premeditate*; or meditate, as the generality of copies read: Beza says in one copy it is read, *premeditate*; and so in one of Stephens's, as we render it: this clause is omitted in the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions: *but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour*; whatever shall be immediately suggested to your thoughts, be put into your minds, and laid upon your hearts: *that speak ye*; freely and boldly, without the fear of men: *for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost*: not but that they did speak, but they were not the principal authors, either of the matter they spoke, or of the words and language in which they spoke; they were only the instruments of the Holy Ghost; they spoke as they were moved by him: hence their wisdom and eloquence in their self-defence, were amazing, and their

arguments strong and unanswerable; see the notes on Matt. x. 19, 20.

Ver. 12. *Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, &c.*] Signifying, that such should be the rage of men, particularly the Jews, against Christ and his Gospel, that those that were in the nearest relation, were of the same flesh and blood, children of the same parents, should betray and deliver up each other into the hands of the civil magistrate, in order to be put to death: *and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death;* things unnatural and shocking; see the note on Matt. x. 21.

Ver. 13. *And ye shall be hated of all men, &c.*] Not only of your friends and relations, of your countrymen the Jews; but of all men, the generality of men, in all nations of the world, wherever they came: *for my name's sake;* for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, they professed and preached: *but he that shall endure;* reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, patiently; or persevere in the faith of Christ, in the profession of his name, and in preaching his Gospel: *to the end;* of such troubles, and of life: *the same shall be saved;* if not with a temporal, yet with an everlasting salvation; see the notes on Matt. x. 22. and xxiv. 13.

Ver. 14. *But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, &c.*] The Roman army encompassing Jerusalem, which was an abomination to the Jews, and an *impure sign* of their destruction, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it; and a desolating one to their nation, city, and temple: *spoken of by Daniel the prophet,* in Dan. ix. 27. This clause is omitted in the Vulgate Latin, and was not found by Beza, in two of his copies, and is thought to be transcribed from Matthew: *standing where it ought not;* round about the city, in the midst of it, and even in the temple: in one of Beza's exemplars 'tis added, *in the holy place,* as in Matthew; and so 'tis read in the Ethiopic version: *let him that readeth understand;* either the passage in Daniel, or the citation of it by the evangelist, when he shall see this come to pass: this seems to be rather the words of the evangelist, than of Christ; since this was not written (and so not to be read), but spoken by Christ; and since his usual phrase was, *he that hath ears, let him hear:* though indeed the same exhortation is in Matthew, and may be understood of Christ, as it may refer to the written prophecy in Daniel, and indeed to the Gospel, which might be read before this event came to pass: see the note on Matt. xxiv. 15. *Then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains;* they that are in Jerusalem, or in any of the cities and towns of Judea, let them make their escape, as soon as possible, to the mountainous parts of the country; where they may be more safe from the devastations of the Roman army; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 16.

Ver. 15. *And let him that is on the house-top, &c.*] On the battlements of the house, either for diversion or devotion: *not go down into the house;* in the inner way by the stairs, or ladder within doors: *neither enter therein;* being come down from the top of the house, by stairs, or a ladder without, which was usual: *to take any thing out of his house;* to take care of his goods, or take any thing along with him, that might

be useful in his flight, and journey, and stay abroad; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 17.

Ver. 16. *And let him that is in the field, &c.*] At work, in any sort of business there, *not turn back again:* either to his own house, or rather to that part of the field where he laid down his clothes: *for to take up his garment;* but let him flee without it, or otherwise he would be in great danger; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 18.

Ver. 17. *But woe to them that are with-child, &c.*] Who because of their burdens, would be very unfit for, and very incapable of fleeing with any haste; and therefore very liable to fall into the hands of the enemy, and become their prey: *and to them that give suck in those days;* who could not bear to leave their children behind, and yet would not be able to carry them with them; at least not without great trouble, and which would much retard their flight, and endanger their being taken by the enemy; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 19.

Ver. 18. *And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.*] When days are short, roads bad, the weather inclement; and when to lodge in mountains, is very incommodious, and uncomfortable. The Persic version adds, *neither on the sabbath-day;* as in Matt. xxiv. 20. see the note there.

Ver. 19. *For in those days shall be affliction, &c.*] What with the close siege of the Romans; the fury of the zealots, and seditious; the rage of different parties among the Jews themselves; the ravage of the sword, both within and without, together with dreadful plagues and famines: *such as was not from the beginning of the creation, which God created, unto this time, neither shall be;* of which there never was the like in any age, and cannot be paralleled in any history, since the beginning of time, or the world was made, or any thing in it, down to that period; nor ever will the like befall any one particular nation under the heavens, to the end of the world; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 21.

Ver. 20. *And except that the Lord had shortened those days, &c.*] Had determined that those days of affliction should be but few, and not last long; that the siege should not be longer continued, and the devastations within and without be prolonged: *no flesh should be saved;* there would not have been a Jew left; that nation and race of men must have been utterly destroyed from off the face of the earth: *but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen;* in Christ, unto eternal salvation; who were either then upon the spot, called or uncalled, or that were to spring from them in succeeding times: *he hath shortened the days;* he hath determined they shall be but few, that a remnant might be saved, and among them his elect; or from whom should descend, such as he had chosen, and who should be saved with an everlasting salvation: for though the people in general have been given up to blindness and unbelief, yet they are preserved as a distinct people in the world; and in the latter day will be called and converted, and all Israel shall be saved: and therefore it was the will of God to shorten those days of affliction, that they might not be entirely cut off, but that a number might be left, as a stock for future ages; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 22.

Ver. 21. *And then if any man shall say to you, &c.*]

During those days of tribulation and affliction, or when shortened and at an end: *lo! here is Christ, or lo! he is there*; the Messiah has appeared in such or in such a place, to deliver you from your national distresses and calamities, and from the Roman yoke and bondage: *believe him not*: give no credit to such a report, for the reason following; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 23.

Ver. 22. *For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, &c.*] As there did, both before and after the destruction of Jerusalem: *and shall shew signs and wonders*; as they pretended to do, and did, at least to the appearance of people: *to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect*; who were chosen in Christ, unto eternal life; in consequence of which they truly believed in him, and were constant followers of him; but this was not possible: though such was the force of their deception, that there was apparent danger of it, were it not for the power and grace of God; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 24.

Ver. 23. *But take ye heed, &c.*] The Persic version adds, *of them*; of the false Christs, and false prophets: for though the purposes of God, concerning the salvation of his elect, are infrustrable; his promises are yea and amen; his grace is efficacious and irresistible, and his power uncontrollable; and the salvation of his chosen ones certain; yet it becomes them to be on their guard against every deception, and temptation, and to make use of all means for their perseverance: *behold, I have foretold you all things*; relating to the destruction of the temple, city, and nation of the Jews; the signs that would go before it, as the disciples had desired; the miseries and calamities that would attend it, and the danger they would be exposed to through false Christs, and false prophets; and therefore would be inexcusable, if they did not observe the caution he now gave them: and moreover, when all these should be accomplished, they would remember that he had told them of them before-hand; which would be a proof of his omniscience, and so an establishment of them in the truth of him, as the Messiah; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 25.

Ver. 24. *But in those days, after that tribulation, &c.*] That is, after the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, and the miseries and calamities attending it, in the times immediately following it; see Matt. xxiv. 29. *the sun shall be darkened*: so the Shekinah, or glory of the divine majesty was withdrawn, and all the symbols of the divine presence were gone, when the temple was destroyed: *and the moon shall not give her light*; the ceremonial law, which though abolished by the death of Christ, was observed by the Jews as long as the temple stood; but now ceased, particularly that principal branch of it, the daily sacrifice; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 29.

Ver. 25. *And the stars of heaven shall fall, &c.*] The Jewish Rabbins and doctors, who fell off from the written word, and compiled their *Misna*, or oral law, their book of traditions, and set it up above the Bible, the foundation of which was laid immediately upon their dispersion. *And the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken*; the ordinances of the legal dispensation, which were shaken before, but now so shaken

as to be removed; compare Hagg. ii. 6. with Heb. xii. 26, 27. see the note on Matt. xxiv. 29.

Ver. 26. *And then shall they see the son of man, &c.*] Not in person, but in the power of his wrath and vengeance; of which the Jews then had a convincing evidence, and full proof; and even of his being come in the flesh, as if they had seen him in person: this shews, that the sign of the son of man, in Matt. xxiv. 30. is the same with the son of man: *coming in the clouds with great power and glory*; not to judgment, but having taken vengeance on the Jewish nation, to set up his kingdom and glory in the Gentile world; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 30.

Ver. 27. *And then he shall send his angels, &c.*] The ministers of the Gospel to preach it, and plant more churches among the Gentiles, since that at Jerusalem was entirely broken up: *and shall gather together his elect*; that is, he the son of man, or Christ, shall gather them by the ministry of his servants; or *they shall gather them*, as the Ethiopic version reads; and as Beza says it is read in a certain copy: these ministers shall be the means of gathering such whom God has chosen from all eternity, to obtain salvation by Christ, out of the world, and unto Christ, and into a Gospel church-state: *even from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of the heaven*; be they where they will, on earth, and under the whole heavens; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 31.

Ver. 28. *Now learn a parable of the fig-tree, &c.*] Our Lord was now upon the Mount of Olives, in one part of which fig-trees grew in great plenty, and one, or more, might be near, and in view; and it was the time of year, the passover being at hand, for its putting forth: *when her branch is yet tender*; and soft and opening, through the sap now in motion: *and putteth forth leaves*; from the branches: *ye know that summer is near*; from such an appearance on the fig-tree; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 32.

Ver. 29. *So ye, in like manner, &c.*] This is an accommodation of the parable to the present case: *when ye shall see these things come to pass*; the signs preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, and especially the abomination of desolation, or the Roman army surrounding it: *know that it, or he, is nigh, even at the doors*; either that the destruction of Jerusalem is near; or that the son of man is just ready to come to take vengeance on it; or as Luke says, ch. xxi. 31. the kingdom of God is nigh at hand; or a more glorious display of the kingly power of Christ, in the destruction of his enemies, and a greater spread of his Gospel in the Gentile world; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 33.

Ver. 30. *Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, &c.*] Not the generation of men in general, or Jews in particular, nor of Christians; but that present generation of men, they should not all go off the stage of life, *till all these things be done*; which were now predicted by Christ, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, the signs of it, and what should immediately follow upon it; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 34.

Ver. 31. *Heaven and earth shall pass away, &c.*] Which may be understood either affirmatively, as what will be at the second coming of Christ; or

comparatively, rather than any thing said by Christ should; and so shews the certainty and irreversibility of his predictions, as it follows: *but my words shall not pass away*; which is true of all the words of Christ he ever spake, and here particularly relates to those he had just delivered, concerning the calamities that should come upon the Jewish nation; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 35.

Ver. 32. *But of that day, and of that hour, &c.*] Of Jerusalem's destruction; for of nothing else had Christ been speaking; and, 'tis plain, the words are anaphorical, and relate to what goes before: *knoweth no man*; nay, they that lived to see it, and have spoken of it, are not agreed about the particular day, when it was; much less did they know it before-hand, or could speak of it, and make it known to others: *no, not the angels which are in heaven*; who are acquainted with many of the divine secrets, and have been employed in the imparting them to others, and in the executing divine purposes: *neither the Son*; Christ, as the son of man; though he did know it as the son of God, who knows all things, and so this; but as the son of man, and from his human nature he had no knowledge of any thing future: what knowledge he had of future things in his humanity, he had from his deity; nor, as man, had he any commission to make known, nor did he make known the day of God's vengeance on the Jews: *but the Father*; who has the times and seasons in his own power, for the executing of any particular judgment on a nation, or the general one; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 36.

Ver. 33. *Take ye heed, watch and pray, &c.*] This seems to be the principal reason why the day and hour of Jerusalem's destruction, though known by the father, were not made known to any man, neither to the angels, nor by them; nor to the son of man in the days of his flesh, nor by him when on earth; that his people might be upon their guard, against false Christs, and prophets, and their deception; and watch unto prayer, and in it, lest they fell into temptation, and that day should come upon them unawares: *for ye know not when the time is*: the exact and precise time: for though the people of God had notice of it, and were sensible it was at hand, and did make their escape out of Jerusalem; yet they knew not the exact time, but that it might be sooner or later; and the unbelieving Jews were blinded, and in the dark about it to the very last; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 42.

Ver. 34. For the son of man is *as a man taking a far journey, &c.*] Or this case of the son of man's coming to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, is like a man that takes a journey into a far country. This puts me in mind of a question asked<sup>m</sup> by the Jews: "what" is *רדך רחוקה*, a far journey? from Modium, and "without." Now Modium, according to the Gemara<sup>n</sup>, and commentators<sup>o</sup> on this passage, was a place fifteen miles from Jerusalem; so that, according to them,

fifteen miles were reckoned a far journey<sup>p</sup>. *Who left his house*; and his goods in it, to the care and management of others during his absence: *and gave authority to his servants*; to govern his house, and exercise power one over another, according to their different stations; *and to every man his work*; which he was to do, while he was gone, and to give him an account of when he returned: *and commanded the porter to watch*; his house, and take care that it was not broke open by thieves, and plundered of the substance that was in it. So Christ, when he ascended on high, went to heaven, the land afar off; left his house, his church, particularly in Judea, and at Jerusalem, to the care of his apostles, and gave authority to govern it, according to the laws, rules, and directions prescribed by him; and assigned every man his particular work, for which he gave him proper gifts and abilities; and ordered the porter to be on his watch, not Peter only, but all the apostles and ministers, whose business it is to watch over themselves, and the souls of men committed to their care.

Ver. 35. *Watch ye therefore, &c.*] Against false Christs, and false prophets, over yourselves, and the whole church; for the words are particularly addressed to the disciples of Christ: *for ye know not when the master of the house cometh*; when Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven, and in earth, is named, who is a son in his own house, is an high-priest over the house of God, and Lord of his church and people, whom he has bought with his blood, and provides for with his grace, and by his spirit, when he will come to break up housekeeping with the Jews, and bring his wrath upon them to the uttermost: whether *at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning*. This is agreeably to the division of the night among the Jews, who speak of the first watch, the middle of the night, the cock-crowing, and morning, as distinct from each other. The three first of these we have in one passage<sup>q</sup>: "every day they remove the ashes from the altar, בקריאת הנובר, at cock-crowing, or near it, either before, or after it; and on the day of atonement, בקריאת, at midnight; and on the feast-days, at the first watch." the same with the evening here: and elsewhere the morning and cock-crowing are distinguished; "for a fast of the congregation, how long may a man eat and drink? until the pillar of the morning ascends, (or until it is morning,) the words of R. Eliezer ben Jacob; R. Simeon says, until cock-crowing." And so the phrase, from cock-crowing till morning, is used by them<sup>r</sup>. The Romans also divided the night in like manner, into evening, the dead of the night, or midnight, cock-crowing, and the morning<sup>s</sup>. The allusion seems to be to the time of the president of the temple's coming into it, who had the management of the affairs of it, and of appointing to each priest his work: 'tis said<sup>t</sup>, "whoever would remove the ashes from the altar, rose up early, and washed himself before the

<sup>m</sup> Misn. Pesachim, c. 9. sect. 2.

<sup>n</sup> T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 93. 2.

<sup>o</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. ib.

<sup>p</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Korban Pesach. c. 5. sect. 9.

<sup>q</sup> Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 8. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 90. 2. & Zebachim, xl. 26. 2.

<sup>r</sup> T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 2. 2. & Taanith, fol. 12. 1.

<sup>s</sup> T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 30. 2.

<sup>t</sup> Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 20.

<sup>u</sup> Misn. Tauid. c. 1. sect. 2.

“ president came; but in what hour does the president come? not at all times alike: sometimes he comes, מקריאת דגבר, at cock-crowing, or near it, before it, or after it; and the president comes and knocks for them, and they open to him; and he says unto them, whosoever has washed himself, let him come and cast lots: they cast lots, and he is worthy whom he counts worthy.” Such who understand these words of Christ’s coming by death, or at judgment, apply these seasons to the several ages of men, as childhood, youth, manhood, and old age.

Ver. 36. *Lest coming suddenly, &c.*] Unthought of, and unexpected, at an unawares: *he find you sleeping*; inactive in the exercise of grace, and negligent in the performance of duty; unprepared for his coming, and unfit for service.

Ver. 37. *And what I say unto you, &c.*] The four disciples, Peter, James, John, and Andrew, who came privately to him, and put to him the questions, which occasioned this long discourse; see ver. 3, 4. *I say unto all.* The Syriac and Persic versions read, *you all*; meaning all the rest of his apostles, and all his disciples and followers in Jerusalem, and in all Judea; who were all concerned in these things, and whom it became to watch, and be upon their guard, and cast off all sloth and negligence; since they knew not how soon the son of man would come, and all these evil things would be brought upon the Jewish nation, city, and temple: and the same exhortation is suitable to saints in all ages, times, and places, on account of the various snares, temptations, and evils, that they are liable to, the suddenness of death, and the uncertainty of the second coming of Christ.

## C H A P. XIV.

Ver. 1. *AFTER two days was the feast of the passover, &c.*] That is, two days after Christ had delivered the foregoing discourse concerning the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, was the feast of the passover; which was kept in commemoration of God’s passing over the houses of the Israelites, when he destroyed the first-born of Egypt, and made way for the deliverance of the children of Israel from thence: and which was kept by eating the passover-lamb; and which, properly speaking, is the feast of the passover: *and of unleavened bread*; which was the same feast with the other, called so from the unleavened bread which was then eaten; though with this difference, the passover-lamb was only eaten on the first night, but unleavened bread was eaten for seven days together. The Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions render it, *the passover of unleavened bread*, leaving out the copulative *and*. *And the chief priests and Scribes sought how they might take him by craft*; that is, Jesus, and put him to death: for which purpose they assembled together in Caiaphas the high-priest’s palace, and there took counsel together how to accomplish it; see Matt. xxvi. 2, 3, 4.

Ver. 2. *But they said not on the feast-day, &c.*] The feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread, which was nigh at hand, and would be two days hence, when there would be a great concourse of people from all parts to keep it: and therefore they did not choose to seize him, and put him to death at that time, lest there should be an uproar of the people; or among them, lest they should rise in his favour, and rescue him out of their hands; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 5.

Ver. 3. *And being in Bethany, &c.*] A place about two miles from Jerusalem, whither he retired after he had took his leave of the temple, and had predicted its destruction; a place he often went to, and from, the last week of his life; having some dear friends, and familiar acquaintance there, as Lazarus, and his two sisters, Martha and Mary, and the person next mentioned: *in the house of Simon the leper*; so called

because he had been one, and to distinguish him from Simon the Pharisee, and Simon Peter the apostle, and others; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 6. *as he sat at meat there came a woman*; generally thought to be Mary Magdalene, or Mary the sister of Lazarus: *having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard*; or pure nard, unmixed and genuine; or liquid nard, which was drinkable, and so easy to be poured out; or Pistic nard, called so, either from *Pista*, the name of a place from whence it was brought, or from *Pistaco*, which, with the Rabbins, signifies *maste*; of which, among other things, this ointment was made. Moreover, ointment of nard was made both of the leaves of nard, and called foliate nard, and of the spikes of it, and called, as here, spikenard. Now ointment made of nard was, as Pliny says\*, the principal among ointments. The Syriac is, by him, said to be the best; this here is said to be very precious, costly, and valuable: *and she brake the box*. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, *she opened it*; and the Persic version, *she opened the head, or top of the bottle, or vial: and poured it on his head*; on the head of Christ, as the same version expresses it; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 7.

Ver. 4. *And there were some that had indignation within themselves, &c.*] The Syriac version reads, *some of the disciples*; agreeably to Matt. xxvi. 8. particularly Judas, and others might be incensed by his means: *and said, why was this waste of the ointment made? see the note on Matt. xxvi. 8.*

Ver. 5. *For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, &c.*] Which was to the value of our money nine pounds, seven shillings, and sixpence: *and given to the poor*; which was thought to be a better way of expending it, than by pouring it on the head of Christ: *and they murmured against her*; that she should lavish so much money away in such an imprudent manner; they reproved her for it, expressed much resentment at it, and were very angry with her upon the account of it; see the notes on Matt. xxvi. 8, 9.

Ver. 6. *And Jesus said, let her alone, &c.*] Jesus knowing the secret indignation of some of his disciples,

\* Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 12.

and their private murmurings at the woman, and their continual teazings of her, because of the expense of the ointment, said to *them*, as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read; or to the *disciples*, as the Persic, let the woman alone, cease to chide and reprove her for what she has done; *why trouble ye her?* why do you grieve her, by charging her with imprudence and extravagance, as if she had been guilty of a very great crime? she is so far from it, that *she hath wrought a good work on me*; she has done me an honour; expressed faith in me, and shewn love to me, and ought to be commended, and not reprov'd; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 10.

Ver. 7. *For ye have the poor with you always, &c.*] See the note on Matt. xxvi. 11. *and whensoever ye will ye may do them good*; by feeding them when hungry, clothing them when naked, and supplying them with the necessaries of life: *but me ye have not always*; meaning, with respect to his bodily presence, which, in a short time, would be removed from them, and they would have no opportunity of shewing him any such outward respect personally; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 11.

Ver. 8. *She hath done what she could, &c.*] What she had in her heart, and in the power of her hands to do; she hath done according to her ability, and her good will; and if she had not done it now, she could not have done it at all. *She is come afore-hand to anoint my body to the burying*; or, *as if it was to bury me*, as the Syriac version renders it. Christ signifies by this, that he should shortly die, and that this woman came before-hand to anoint him, and, as it were, to perform the funeral rites before he was dead; it being revealed to her by the spirit, that Jesus would quickly die, and she should not be able to perform this good work when dead, and therefore came to do it before; or, at least, she was directed by the spirit of God, because she would be prevented doing it afterwards; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 12.

Ver. 9. *Verily I say unto you, &c.*] And you may assure yourselves of the truth of it: *wheresoever this Gospel, of the death and resurrection of Christ, shall be preached throughout the whole world*, as it shall be, *this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her*; in remembrance of her, and her work, and in commendation of her faith, love, and duty; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 13.

Ver. 10. *And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, &c.*] Apostles of Christ; who was the principal person that had indignation at the woman, and murmured against her, for the profusion of the ointment: *went unto the chief priests*; as soon as this affair was over, and Christ had defended the woman's conduct to his shame and silence: he immediately went out of the house, where they were, and set out from Bethany to Jerusalem; and understanding the chief priests were in consultation together at Caiaphas's house, how to apprehend Jesus, and put him to death, went directly to them, unsent for, and unthought of by them: *to betray him unto them*; which Satan had put into his heart, and what his avarice and revenge for the late action of the woman,

and Christ's defence of it, prompted him to; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 14.

Ver. 11. *And when they heard it, they were glad, &c.*] That such an opportunity offered, and from such a quarter, by one of his own disciples; so that it might be done more secretly and effectually, and with less blame to themselves: *and promised to give him money*; any sum he should ask; and what was agreed upon were thirty pieces, or shekels of silver; and so the Ethiopic version here, instead of *money*, reads, *thirty pieces of silver*; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 15. *And he sought how he might conveniently betray him*; after this promise, and upon this agreement: henceforward he sought the most fitting opportunity, and the best season of betraying his master into the hands of these men, when he was alone, and the multitude absent, and there was no danger of a tumult, or a rescue; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 16.

Ver. 12. *And the first day of unleavened bread, &c.*] Being come, which was the fourteenth of Nisan: *when they killed the passover*; that is, *the Jews*, as the Syriac and Persic versions supply; for any Israelite, that was not a priest, might slay it: their canon runs thus<sup>2</sup>; "an Israelite kills (the passover), and a priest receives (the blood), and gives it to his neighbour, and his neighbour to his neighbour, and he receives (the bason) full, and returns it empty; the priest that is near to the altar sprinkles it, at one sprinkling, over-against the bottom of it." Upon which the commentators observe, that the slaying of the passover by strangers; that is, such as are not priests, is lawful. And so Philo the Jew, speaking of the passover, says<sup>3</sup>; "at which time the common people do not bring their sacrifices to the altar, and the priests slay; but by the command of the law, *συνταξ το δνο*, the whole nation, does the work of a priest; every one particularly bringing the sacrifices for himself, and then slaying them with his own hands." But then it was always killed in the court of the temple, and after the middle of the day; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 17. *his disciples said unto him, where wilt thou that we go and prepare, that thou mayst eat the passover*; for it was now Thursday morning, and the passover was to be slain after the middle of the day, between the two evenings, and eaten in Jerusalem at night; and they were now at Bethany, near two miles from the city; and it was usual for servants to get ready the passover for their masters; see the note, as above.

Ver. 13. *And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, &c.*] Peter and John, as appears from Luke xxii. 8. *and saith unto them, go ye into the city*; the city of Jerusalem; for there only the passover might be eaten, Deut. xxvi. 2. *and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water*; a servant of the master of the house that was sent for water, to mix with the wine, at the passover: *follow him*; into the house to which he goes.

Ver. 14. *And wheresoever he shall go in, &c.*] Into whatsoever house he shall enter, go in after him: *and say ye to the good man of the house*; the owner, and

<sup>2</sup> Misn. Pesachim, c. 5. sect. 6.  
<sup>3</sup> Jarchi, Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>2</sup> De Vita Moisi, l. 3. p. 686.

master of it, who might be Nicodemus, or Joseph of Arimathea, or some man of note and wealth in Jerusalem, that might have some knowledge of Christ, and faith in him, though he did not openly profess him; since by only saying what follows, he would at once, as he did, direct them to a suitable and convenient room; *the master saith*. The Syriac and Persic versions read, *our master saith*: he that is yours, and ours, our master Jesus; though that is not expressed, yet it was understood by the master of the family; which confirms the above conjecture, that he was a secret disciple of Christ. *Where is the guest-chamber*; the chamber provided for guests that might be expected at the passover: *where I shall eat the passover with my disciples*? where it might be done conveniently, and in a proper and comfortable manner; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 18.

Ver. 15. *And he will shew you a large upper room, &c.*] A room in the highest part of the house, large enough for such a company, for thirteen persons, which was the number of Christ and his disciples: *furnished and prepared*; with a table, and a sufficient number of couches to sit, or lie upon, and with all proper vessels necessary on such an occasion: *there make ready for us*; the passover.

Ver. 16. *And his disciples went forth, &c.*] *The two disciples*, as the Arabic version has it, Peter and John, set out from Bethany to Jerusalem directly: *and came into the city*; the city of Jerusalem: *and found as he had said unto them*; a man bearing a pitcher of water, whom they followed to the house he went into, and addressed the master of the house, as Jesus had bid them; when he shewed them an upper room, very commodious and fit for the purpose, as Christ had said; and which is a considerable proof of the presence of Christ: *and they made ready the passover*; they bought a lamb; they had it killed in the temple, according to rule; and they brought it to the house, where they were to sup, and got it roasted; and provided unleavened bread, and wine, and bitter herbs, and every thing that was proper for the feast; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 19.

Ver. 17. *And in the evening he cometh with the twelve, &c.*] In the afternoon, as it is very reasonable to suppose, Christ set out from Bethany with the rest of the twelve, with the other nine, and came to Jerusalem; where they were joined by Judas, who had covenanted with the chief priests to betray him, and by Peter and John, who had been sent before to prepare the passover; and when it was night, when the second evening had took place, he went with all twelve of them to the house, where the provision to eat the passover together was made for them; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 20.

Ver. 18. *And as they sat and did eat, &c.*] Or *as they lay along*; for such was their posture at the eating of the passover; see the note as before: *Jesus said, verily I say unto you, one of you which eateth with me shall betray me*; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 21.

Ver. 19. *And they began to be sorrowful, &c.*] And were so, all but Judas, at this saying of Christ's: *and to say unto him, one by one*; even till it came to Judas himself, *is it I?* that shall betray thee; *and another said, is it I?* This clause is wanting in the Vulgate

Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and in two of Beza's copies; and indeed seems to be redundant, since the disciples are said before to express themselves in this manner, one by one; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 22.

Ver. 20. *And he answered and said unto them, &c.*] In order to relieve their minds, and point out the particular person: *it is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish*; just at that very instant; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 23.

Ver. 21. *The son of man indeed goeth, &c.*] Out of this world by death, *as it is written*; both in the book of God's decrees, and in the Scriptures of the Old Testament; *but woe to that man by whom the son of man is betrayed!* whose sin will not be excused, nor lessened by fulfilling the decrees of God, and by accomplishing the prophecies of the Bible: *good were it for that man if he had never been born*; so aggravating will be his crime, so dreadful his punishment; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 24.

Ver. 22. *And as they did eat, &c.*] The paschal lamb, and the unleavened bread, just at the conclusion of that feast: *Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it*; beginning and instituting a new feast, to be kept in after-times, in commemoration of his sufferings and death, now near at hand; *and gave to them*, the disciples, *and said, take, eat*: the word *eat* is not in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and is wanting in some copies: *this is my body*; a figure and representation of it; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 26.

Ver. 23. *And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, &c.*] Over it, and for it, by blessing it, and appropriating it to the present use and service: *he gave it to them*; his disciples, *and they all drank of it*; Judas, as well as the rest, as he bid them do; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 27.

Ver. 24. *And he said unto them, &c.*] Not after they had drank of it, but before, and as he gave it to them: *this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many*; in Matthew 'tis added, *for the remission of sins*; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 28.

Ver. 25. *Verily I say unto you, &c.*] This seems to have been said after the eating of the passover, according to Luke xxii. 18. but was, in reality, not till after the Lord's supper was ended, and the last cup was drank, which was wont to be drank at the passover: *I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine*; that is, wine, *until that day that I drink it new*; in a figurative and mystical sense; by which are meant the joys of heaven: *in the kingdom of God*; Father, Son, and Spirit, upon the general resurrection of the dead, when the kingdom of the Mediator will be delivered up, and there will be no distinction of government; but God, Father, Son, and Spirit, will be all in all, and shall reign in the saints, and they with them, to all eternity; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 29.

Ver. 26. *And when they had sung an hymn, &c.*] The Hallel, used at the passover: *they went out into the Mount of Olives*; Christ, and eleven of his disciples; for Judas now separated from them, and went to the chief priests to acquaint them how things were, where Jesus was going, and where they might apprehend him; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 30.

Ver. 27. *And Jesus saith unto them, &c.*] As they were going to the Mount of Olives. The Persic version reads, *in this place*; meaning the Mount of Olives, having got thither: *all ye shall be offended because of me this night*; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 31. *for it is written in Zech. xiii. 7. I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered*: Christ is meant by the shepherd, and the apostles by the sheep. The Syriac version reads, *his sheep*.

Ver. 28. *But after that I am risen, &c.*] From the dead, which, for their comfort, he assures them of; though they would be offended and discouraged at the seizing, and condemning, and crucifixion of him: *I will go before you into Galilee*; the place of their nativity, and where he had often conversed with them; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 32.

Ver. 29. *But Peter said unto him, &c.*] Being greatly moved at what Christ had said, that all of them would be offended with him that night, and run away from him, and be scattered from him, and one another: *although all shall be offended, yet will not I*; though all the rest of the disciples, the other ten, should do as Judas had done, should fall off from Christ, and either betray him, or deny him, or, at least, turn their backs on him, yet he would do neither; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 33.

Ver. 30. *And Jesus saith unto him, verily I say unto thee, &c.*] As confident as thou art of standing by me, and abiding with me; *that this day*, which was then begun; for the Jews reckoned their days from evening, as in Gen. i. 5. *even in this night*; this night to be observed, this night of the passover, before it is past: *before the cock crow twice*; for there was a first and second cock-crowing, the one at midnight, and the other near break of day, and which last is properly the cock-crowing: the word twice is left out in the Ethiopic version: *thou shalt deny me thrice*; as he did; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 34.

Ver. 31. *But he spake the more vehemently, &c.*] With a louder voice; with more spirit and eagerness; in a more peremptory and self-confident way. *If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise*. The Syriac version adds, *O my Lord*; my dear Lord, I will never deny thee upon any consideration whatever; and the Persic version, *O Lord: likewise also said they all*; as he said, so said *all the disciples*, as the Syriac version reads it; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 35.

Ver. 32. *And they came to a place which is named Gethsemane, &c.*] At the foot of the Mount of Olives, where the olives, which grew in great plenty on the mount, were pressed: and where our Lord began to be bruised for our sins: *and he saith to his disciples: to eight of them: sit ye here while I shall pray*; at some distance from hence; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 36.

Ver. 33. *And he taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, &c.*] Who were witnesses of his transfiguration on the mount, and now of his sorrows in the garden: *and began to be sore amazed*: to be in great consternation and astonishment, at the sight of all the sins of his people coming upon him; at the black storm of wrath, that was gathering thick over him;

at the sword of justice which was brandished against him; and at the curses of the righteous law, which, like so many thunderbolts of vengeance, were directed at him: no wonder it should be added, *and to be very heavy*; both with sin and sorrow; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 37.

Ver. 34. *And saith unto them, &c.*] The above three disciples; *my soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death*: he was surrounded with sorrow, and it pressed him so hard, and close, on every side, that he was just ready to die with it: *tarry ye here, and watch*: in Matthew 'tis added, *with me*: see the note on Matt. xxvi. 38.

Ver. 35. *And he went forward a little, &c.*] About a stone's cast, Luke xxii. 41. *and fell on the ground, and prayed*; he fell on his face to the ground, which was a praying posture. One of the Jewish canons concerning it, is this<sup>a</sup>: "worshipping, how is it done? after a man has lifted up his head, he bows it five times, he sits upon the ground, and falls upon his face, אֲרִצָה, to the ground, and supplicates with whatsoever supplication he pleases: worshipping, or bowing, is the stretching out of hands and feet, until a man is found cast upon his face to the ground." See the note on Matt. xxvi. 39. The supplication Christ made in this posture was, *that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him*: the time fixed and agreed upon for his sufferings and death; that is, that it might pass without his enduring them, if there was any possibility of excusing him, and of his people's being saved without them; see the note, as before.

Ver. 36. *And he said, Abba, Father, &c.*] In the original text, the former of these is a Syriac word, and the latter a Greek one, explanative of the former, as in Rom. viii. 15. and Gal. iv. 6. or the repetition is made, to express the vehemency of his affection, and his strong confidence in God, as his father, amidst all his distress, as the Syriac version renders it, אָבִי אָבִי; *Abba, my Father*: or *my Father, my Father*; and so the Ethiopic version: *all things are possible unto thee*; so Philo the Jew<sup>b</sup>, taking notice of Isaac's question about the burnt-offering, and Abraham's answer to it, represents the latter as adding, in confirmation of it, "all things are possible to God, and which are both difficult and impossible to be done by men;" suggesting, that God could easily provide a lamb for a sacrifice; and Christ here intimates, that every thing consistent with his perfections, counsels, and covenant, were possible to be done by him; and how far what he prays for, was agreeable to these, he submits to him, and to his sovereign will: *take away this cup from me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt*; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 39.

Ver. 37. *And he cometh and findeth them sleeping, &c.*] His three disciples, Peter, James, and John: *and saith unto Peter*; particularly, he having so lately asserted, with so much confidence, his love to Christ; and close attachment to him: *Simon, sleepest thou? Christ calls him by the name he first went by, and not by that which he had given him, Cephas, or Peter*; he not now having that firmness and constancy, though he boasted of it, which answers to that name:

<sup>a</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 5. sect. 13.

<sup>b</sup> De Abrahamo, p. 374.



*couldst thou not watch one hour?* The Arabic and Persian versions add, *with me*; and so does the Complutensian edition; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 40.

Ver. 38. *Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation, &c.*] Of denying Christ, and falling off from him, which would quickly offer to them, when they should see him apprehended, bound, and led away. *The spirit truly is ready.* The Persian version renders it, *my mind*; as if the spirit or soul of Christ was meant; whereas it is either to be understood of the evil spirit, Satan, who was disposed to attack them, and especially Peter, whom he desired to have, and sift as wheat; or else the spirit of the disciples, their renewed spirit, which was ready and disposed for watching and praying, and willing to abide by Christ: *but the flesh is weak*; they were but flesh and blood, and so not a match of themselves for so powerful an adversary as Satan, and therefore had need to watch and pray; or their *body*, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persian versions render it, was weak, and subject to drowsiness and sleep; and especially they were weak and feeble, and very unequal of themselves for spiritual exercises, as they had flesh, or a corrupt nature in them; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 41.

Ver. 39. *And again he went away, &c.*] To the same place, or at much such a distance from them, as before: *and prayed and spake the same words*; or *word*, that is, the same matter; for *λογος* here, answers to *דבר*, which signifies a thing, or matter, as well as word: Christ prayed to the same effect, for matter and substance the same as before, though not in the same express words, as is clear from Matt. xxvi. 39, 42.

Ver. 40. *And when he returned, he found them asleep again, &c.*] Notwithstanding the exhortation he had used with them, the exhortation he had given them, and the danger he had suggested to them: *for their eyes were heavy*: with sleep and sorrow: *neither wist they what to answer him*; partly through confusion and shame, not knowing how to excuse themselves; and partly, through their being stupefied with sleep and grief.

Ver. 41. *And he cometh the third time, &c.*] After he had prayed a third time, to the same purport as before: *and saith unto them, sleep on now, and take your rest*; which words are spoken ironically: *it is enough*; or *the end is come*; as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, of watching and praying: *the hour is come, behold the son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners*; both Jews and Gentiles, by one of his own disciples; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 45.

Ver. 42. *Rise up, let us go, &c.*] To meet the enemy and the danger; for there is no escaping; *lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand*; Judas, that he had hinted at supper should betray him, was now about doing it; and was just now coming upon him, in order to deliver him into the hands of the Jews, and the Roman band of soldiers; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 46.

Ver. 43. *And immediately, while he yet spake, &c.*] The above words: *cometh Judas one of the twelve*: apostles of Christ, and which was an aggravation of

his wickedness; the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persian, and Ethiopic versions add, *Iscariot*; and so it is read in one of Beza's copies. The Ethiopic version reads, *one of the ten*, very wrongly: *and with him a great multitude*; a band of men and officers, with many of the chief priests and captains of the temple, and elders of the people, that mixed themselves with the crowd, to see how things would issue: *with swords and staves*; which they intended to make use of, should any resistance be made in apprehending him, or any attempt to rescue him: *from the chief priests, and the Scribes, and the elders*: from the Jewish sanhedrim, which consisted of these; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 47.

Ver. 44. *And he that betrayed him had given them a token, &c.*] A common sign, in which they agreed; and so this same Greek word is used by the Jews: "said R. Phinehas in the name of R. Reuben, did you ever see one man go out of the north, and another from the south, and meet each other, except they made, טיכנה, a common sign, between them." Such an one the traitor gave his company: *saying, whomsoever I shall kiss, the same is he*: Jesus of Nazareth, who was to be delivered to them: *take him, and lead him away safely*: with care and caution, lest he should get out of their hands, and make his escape, as he had sometimes done: the word *safely*, is omitted in the Arabic, Persian, and Ethiopic versions. The Vulgate Latin renders it *cautiously*, and so does the Syriac version, which joins it to the words, *take him*; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 48.

Ver. 45. *And as soon as he was come, &c.*] To the place where Jesus was: *he goeth straightway to him*; alone; as if he had nothing to do with the company behind, and as if he was his friend, and concerned for his safety: *and saith, Master, Master*; expressing great affection for him, and respect to him, by repeating this word. The Ethiopic version has it but once, and so two exemplars of Beza's; and the Vulgate Latin reads, *hail, Master*, as in Matt. xxvi. 49. *and kissed him*; see the note there.

Ver. 46. *And they laid hands on him, and took him.*] After Christ had said to Judas, *friend, wherefore art thou come?* as in Matthew; and also, *Judas, betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss?* as in Luke; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 50.

Ver. 47. *And one of them that stood by, &c.*] One of the disciples that stood by Jesus, as Judas was betraying him, and the soldiers were laying hold on him, Peter by name: *drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high-priest, and cut off his ear*; his right ear; the servant's name was Malchus; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 51.

Ver. 48. *And Jesus answered and said unto them, &c.*] To the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, that came with the band and officers, as appears from Luke xxii. 52. The Persian version reads, *to the multitude*: *are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and with staves, to take me?* see the note on Matt. xxvi. 55.

Ver. 49. *I was daily with you in the temple, &c.*] That is, for several days past; ever since he made his

<sup>c</sup> Midras Samuel, sect. 9. apud Buxtorf. Lex. Rab. p. 1519.

public entry into Jerusalem: *teaching*; the people, in a public manner: *and ye took me not*; did not attempt to lay hands on him, seize him, and carry him away; which he signifies might have been easily done; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 55. *But the Scriptures must be fulfilled*: which spoke of the betraying him by Judas; and of their taking him in this private and secret manner; and of the flight of the disciples from him, next mentioned; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 56.

Ver. 50. *And they all forsook him, and fled.*] That is, his *disciples*, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persian, and Ethiopic versions read; and who seem to have transcribed it from Matthew, and lest it should be thought, that the multitude whom Christ addressed, were intended.

Ver. 51. *And there followed him a certain young man, &c.*] Some think this was John, the beloved disciple, and the youngest of the disciples; others, that it was James, the brother of our Lord; but he does not seem to be any of the disciples of Christ, since he is manifestly distinguished from them, who all forsook him and fled: some have thought, that he was a young man of the house, where Christ and his disciples ate their passover; who had followed him to the garden, and still followed him, to see what would be the issue of things: but it seems most likely, that he was one that lived in an house in Gethsemane, or in or near the garden; who being awaked out of sleep with the noise of a band of soldiers, and others with them, leaped out of bed, and ran out in his shirt, and followed after them, to know what was the matter: *having a linen cloth cast about his naked body*; which was either his shirt in which he lay, or one of the sheets, which he took and wrapped himself in, not staying to put on his clothes: though the word *Sindon*, is used both by the Targumists<sup>d</sup> and Talmudists<sup>e</sup>, for a linen garment; and sometimes even for the outer garment, to which the fringes were fastened<sup>f</sup>; and he might take up this in haste, and slip it on, without putting on any inner garment: the word *body*, is not in the text, and the phrase *על גופו*, may be rendered, *upon his nakedness*; and answers to *ערוּת*, in Gen. ix. 23. and Lev. xx. 11, 17, 19, 20, 21. and the meaning be, he had only a piece of linen wrapped about his middle, to cover his nakedness; and in this garb ran out, to see what was doing: *and the young men laid hold on him*. The Roman soldiers, who were commonly so called: so David's soldiers are called *young men*, that were with him, 1 Sam. xxi. 4, 5. these attempted to lay hold on this young man, taking him to be a disciple of Christ, or one at least affected to him, and did take hold of his linen cloth. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Persian versions, leave out the words, *the young men*. The design of Mark in relating this incident, is to shew the rage and fury of these men; who were for sparing none that appeared to be, or were thought to be the followers of Christ; so that the preservation of the disciples was entirely owing to the wonderful power of Christ.

Ver. 52. *And he left the linen cloth, &c.*] *In their hands*, so the Persian version renders it; just as Joseph left his garment in the hands of his mistress, Gen. xxxix. 12. *and fled from them naked*; to the house from whence he came. The Syriac, Arabic, Persian, and Ethiopic versions, leave out the words *from them*.

Ver. 53. *And they led Jesus away to the high-priest, &c.*] Caiaphas, as is added in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persian versions. This was done, after they had taken Jesus and bound him, and after they had had him to Annas, who sent him bound to Caiaphas; see John xviii. 12, 13, 24. *and with him*, the high-priest Caiaphas, *were assembled all the chief priests, and the elders, and the Scribes*; even the whole sanhedrim, who met at Caiaphas's house, and were waiting there for Jesus; whom Judas with his band of soldiers and others, were gone to secure, and bring before them; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 57.

Ver. 54. *And Peter followed him afar off, &c.*] And so did another disciple, perhaps John; John xviii. 15. who having somewhat recovered themselves from their fright, turned back, and followed Jesus, and the company that led him away; keeping at some distance, that they might not be observed, and exposed to danger; and proceeded till they came to Jerusalem, and to the place where the sanhedrim were convened; and the other disciple went in along with Jesus; and Peter afterwards, by his means, got in: *even into the palace of the high-priest*; being let in by her that kept the door, at the motion of the other disciple; *and he sat with the servants*; as if he was one of them, and had no concern with Jesus: *and warmed himself at the fire*; or *light*, as the Greek word signifies, and answers to the Hebrew word *אור*, by which both light and fire are expressed; of which, take an instance or two, in the room of many: "a murderer that strikes his neighbour with a stone, or with iron, and plunges him into water, or into *הואר*, fire, so that he can't get out, and dies, is guilty." Again<sup>h</sup>, a book which *הואר*, fire, takes hold upon on one side, "he puts water on the other; and if it is quenched, it is quenched; if the fire takes hold on both sides, he opens it, and reads in it; and if it is quenched, it is quenched: a cloak which fire takes hold upon on one side, he puts water on the other side; and if it is quenched, it is quenched; if the fire takes hold on it on both sides, he takes it and wraps himself in it, and if it is quenched, it is quenched." So we read<sup>i</sup> of *אור של גיהנום*, the fire of hell; and *Ur* of the Chaldees has its name from the fire, that was worshipped there, as a symbol of the sun: and fire was the *אור*, or *light*, created on the first day, Gen. i. 3. see the note on Matt. xxvi. 58.

Ver. 55. *And the chief priests and all the council, &c.*] Especially the former, who were of all most busy and active in this matter: *sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death*; on which they were determined, right or wrong; in this they went contrary to one of their own canons, which runs thus<sup>k</sup>:

<sup>d</sup> Targum in Psal. civ. 2. & Lam. ii. 20.

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 43. 1.

<sup>f</sup> Ib. fol. 40. 1.

<sup>h</sup> Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 9. sect. 1.

<sup>h</sup> T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 15. 4. & T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 120. 1. Vid. Misn. Avoda Zara, c. 5. sect. 12.

<sup>i</sup> T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 27. 1.

<sup>k</sup> Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 4. sect. 1.

“in pecuniary causes, they begin either for absolution, or condemnation; but in capital causes, they begin for absolution, and do not begin for condemnation.” That is, they begun with such evidences as tended to acquit a man, and not with such as served to condemn him; whereas this court was only seeking for such evidence to begin with, that they might condemn Jesus to death: *and found none*: that would answer their purpose; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 59.

Ver. 56. *For many bare false witness against him, &c.*] The word *false*, is not expressed in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions: which only signify, that they bore witness against him, accused him of, and laid many things to his charge: *but their witness agreed not together*: which shewed it to be false, and so not to be admitted; for witnesses were to be as one in their testimony, or not to be received: the rules concerning them with the Jews, are these: “the tradition is, for ever let not their testimony be joined together, unless they both see, כִּאֲדָר, as *one*: says R. Joshua ben Korcha, even one after another; and their testimony is not ratified in the council, until they both witness as *one*.” Though this is not much the sense of the passage here; it was not the falsehood of their testimony, which this council was unconcerned about, or the contradiction that was in it, which does not appear; but their testimonies were not, שוּא, *equal*, or answerable to the wishes of the council; they were not sufficient to prove a capital crime upon him, in order to put him to death, which was what they wanted: they only respected some light and trivial matters, and did not amount to a charge of blasphemy, or sedition.

Ver. 57. *And there arose certain, &c.*] Two false witnesses, as in Matt. xxvi. 60. who stood up in court; for witnesses were obliged to stand, whilst they gave in their testimony: “says R. Bo, in the name of R. Hona, witnesses ought לעמוד, *to stand*, whilst they bear witness; as it is said, Deut. xix. 17. *Both the men shall stand*,” &c.” *And bare false witness against him, saying*: as follows.

Ver. 58. *We heard him say, &c.*] In a discourse of his, recorded in John ii. 19. *I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands*; which was a very false testimony; for Christ did not say he would destroy any temple at all, only put the Jews on doing it; much less did he point at, or design the temple of Jerusalem, but his own body; nor did he use the distinction of a temple, made-with and without hands; nor did he affirm that he would build another; only said, he would raise up in three days, that which they should destroy. By this testimony these witnesses would suggest, that Christ had a design upon their temple to demolish it, and that he must be a sorcerer, or a magician, to pretend to build a temple without hands in three days time; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 61.

Ver. 59. *But neither so did their witness agree together.*] Their witness did agree together, for they both witnessed the same thing; but not so as to found

upon it the charge of a capital crime against him; their witness was not so, שוּא, *equal*, was not answerable to their desires, nor sufficient to convict him of a capital crime, for which they could condemn him to death, as before observed on ver. 56.

Ver. 60. *And the high-priest stood up in the midst, &c.*] Of the sanhedrim, of which he was now president: he sat at the head of them, and Ab Beth Din, or the father of the council, at his right hand; and the rest of the council sat before him, in a semicircular form, as the half of a round corn-floor, so that the president, and the father of the council, could see them; for they were all before him, he being situated in the middle, right against them; so that when he stood up, he might be said to stand in the midst of them: *and asked Jesus, saying, answerest thou nothing?* For he had made no reply to the several witnesses, that came against him: *what is it which these witness against thee?* Is it true, or false? see the note on Matt. xxvi. 62.

Ver. 61. *But he held his peace, and answered nothing, &c.*] Knowing it would be to no purpose, and signifying hereby, that the things alleged against him were unworthy of an answer: *again the high-priest asked him, and said unto him, art thou the Christ, the son of the Blessed?* The Vulgate Latin adds, *God*: in Matthew it is *God* only. This is one of the names and epithets of God, with the Jews; nothing is more common in their writings, than this abbreviation, דְּקָבָה, which is, הוּא בְּרִיךְ הוּא, *the holy blessed he*; who is blessed in himself, and the fountain of all blessedness to his creatures, and who is blessed and praised by angels and saints; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 63.

Ver. 62. *And Jesus said, I am, &c.*] That is, the son of God; in proof of which he adds, *and ye shall see the son of man sitting on the right hand of power*; that is, of God, who is all power, the Lord God Almighty: *and coming in the clouds of heaven*; either at the destruction of Jerusalem, or at the last day, referring to the prophecy in Dan. vii. 13. see the note on Matt. xxvi. 64.

Ver. 63. *Then the high-priest rent his clothes, &c.*] As was usual upon hearing blasphemy; which he now supposed the case, or at least would have it so thought: *and saith, what need we any further witnesses?* or trouble ourselves to see for any more, or to hear and take the depositions of any others; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 65.

Ver. 64. *Ye have heard the blasphemy, &c.*] The manifest blasphemy, as the Arabic version renders it; and out of his own mouth, as the Syriac version adds, agreeably to Luke xxii. 71. *what think ye?* what sentence is to be passed upon him? *And they all condemned him to be guilty of death*; excepting Joseph of Arimathea, Luke xxiii. 51. see the note on Matt. xxvi. 66.

Ver. 65. *And some began to spit on him, &c.*] The men that held him, Luke xxii. 63. fulfilling the prophecy in Isa. l. 6. *and to cover his face*; with a veil, or linen cloth, to blindfold him, as a person unworthy to behold the light: or rather, in order to make

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 30. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Eduth, c. 4. sect. 1.

<sup>2</sup> T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 3. & Yoma, fol. 43. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 21. sect. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 4. sect. 3. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, s. 2. sect. 3.

sport with him: *and to buffet him*; with their double fists; *and to say unto him, prophecy*. The Arabic version adds, *unto us, O Christ, who it is that hath buffeted thee now?* that gave thee the last blow? and to the same purpose the Ethiopic. The Persic version adds, *and deliver thyself; and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands*. The Syriac version renders it, *on his cheeks*: they gave him slaps on the face. These were the officers of the high-priest, that used him in this indecent manner. This clause is omitted in the Ethiopic version.

Ver. 66. *And as Peter was beneath in the palace, &c.*] Not at the lower and further end of the room, but in the lower part of it; that part in which Jesus and the sanhedrim were, being upon an advanced ground, with steps ascending to it: *there cometh one of the maids of the high-priest*: the same that kept the door, and let him in. The Ethiopic version renders it, *a daughter of the high-priest*.

Ver. 67. *And when she saw Peter warming himself, &c.*] At the fire which was in the midst of the hall: *she looked upon him*; very earnestly, knowing him to be the same, she had let in at the motion of one, that was known in the high-priest's family; and suspecting him, by being a stranger, and by his looks: *and said, and thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth*; that is, one of his disciples; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 69.

Ver. 68. *But he denied, &c.*] That he was with Jesus, or a disciple of his: *I know not; Jesus of Nazareth: neither understand I what thou sayest*; about him, and of being with him: the last phrase, *neither understand I*, is omitted in the Syriac and Persic versions: *and he went out into the porch*; adjoining to the palace, to consider what to do, being surprised and confounded at such a challenge: *and the cock crew*; the first time, being about midnight; and yet he took no notice of it, nor remembered what Christ had but a few hours before said to him: or if he did, he might hope he should not meet with another attack, or he should have more courage and strength than to deny a second time.

Ver. 69. *And a maid saw him again, &c.*] Either the same maid, so the Syriac and Persic versions read, *that maid*; that self-same maid, as before, or another, as in Matt. xxvi. 71. and so the Arabic version reads it here; but the Ethiopic as before, *a daughter*; that is, of the high-priest: *and began to say to them that stood by*; the fire, along with Peter, warming themselves: *this is one of them*; this man is one of the disciples and followers of Jesus of Nazareth; he is of that sect, he certainly belongs to them, and is come here only as a spy.

Ver. 70. *And he denied it again, &c.*] That he was one of the disciples of Jesus: *and a little after*; about an hour after, Luke xxii. 59. *they that stood by, said again to Peter, surely thou art one of them*; one confidently affirmed that he was with Jesus, and another challenged him with seeing him in the garden with him, Luke xxii. 59. John xviii. 26. and in general they were of opinion, that he must be one of that sect, giving this as a reason, *for thou art a Galilean*: as they supposed Jesus to be; and knowing that in Galilee he had chiefly preached, and

wrought his miracles, and had there a large number of followers: *and thy speech agreeth* thereto; he used words and phrases peculiar to the Galileans, and pronounced as they did: see the note on Matt. xxvi. 73. This clause is omitted in the Vulgate Latin, and is wanting in Beza's most ancient copy; but is in the other copies, and in all the eastern versions.

Ver. 71. *But he began to curse and to swear, &c.*] To wish the most dreadful things upon himself, and to swear by the living God; saying, *I know not this man of whom ye speak*; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 74.

Ver. 72. *And the second time the cock crew, &c.*] Immediately, as soon as he had so said and swore, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, and as it is read in one of Beza's copies; which was about three of the clock in the morning, and is what is properly called the cock-crowing: *and Peter called to mind*: upon hearing the cock crow a second time, *the word that Jesus said unto him, before the cock crew twice, thou shalt deny me thrice*: as he now had done twice, to the maid or maids, and a third time to the servants that stood by the fire along with him: *and when he thought thereon*: on the words of Christ, and on his sin in denying him, and on the aggravated circumstances of it. The Arabic version renders it, *he turned himself to weep*; he turned away from the company, he threw himself out of it, and got out of doors as fast as he could, and broke out into a violent fit of weeping. The Syriac, Persic, and Vulgate Latin versions, render it, *he began to weep*; this phrase is omitted in the Ethiopic version: some choose to render it, *he looked upon him*; that is, on Christ: as Christ looked upon him; which produced true evangelical repentance in him, so Peter looked upon his dear Lord with concern, whom he so had shamefully denied; he looked upon him and mourned, he looked upon him with an eye of faith, and sorrowed for his sin after a godly sort: but the true sense of the word is, *he covered himself*; he cast his garment over his head, he veiled himself as mourners did, who covered their heads, and their faces, and even their lips. So Maimonides<sup>o</sup>; "from whence, says he, is uncovering the head, forbidden a mourner? For, lo! it is said to Ezekiel, ch. xxiv. 17. *cover not thy lips* at all, for the rest of mourners are obliged to the covering of the head; the linen cloth, or veil, with which he covers his head, he covers with a part of it, a little over his mouth; as it is said, Lev. xiii. 45. *He shall put a covering upon his upper lip*: and Onkelos paraphrases it, כַּבְּלָא יִתְעַמֵּר, as a mourner he shall cover himself." And so it is said of Hama<sup>n</sup>, "that he went to his house, and mourned for his daughter, וְמָתַעַמַּר עַל רִישָׁהּ כַּבְּלָא, and put a covering on his head as a mourner; for his daughter, and for his reproach." And this, it seems, was the custom of the Ishmaelites: hence that saying<sup>q</sup>, "all veiling (in mourning) which is not as the veiling of the Ishmaelites (who cover all the face), is no veiling." And thus Peter, through shame, and as a token of sorrow and mourning for his sin, threw his garment over him: and *he wept*; as Matthew says, *bitterly*; being fully convinced of his sin, and heartily sorry for it; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 75.

<sup>o</sup> Hilch. Ebel, c. 5. sect. 19.

<sup>q</sup> Targum in Esther vi. 12. Vid. Targum in Mic. iii. 7.

<sup>q</sup> T. Bab. Moed. Katon, fol. 24. 1.

## C H A P. XV.

Ver. 1. *AND straightway in the morning, &c.*] As soon as it was break of day, or day-light appeared: *the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and Scribes*; who were the principal men in the sanhedrim: *and the whole council*; which, on this extraordinary occasion, was convened; the result of which was, to bind Jesus, and deliver him up to the Roman governor, to be put to death by him, as a seditious person, and an enemy to Cæsar, and accordingly they did so: *and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.* The Syriac and Persic versions add, *the governor*; see the notes on Matt. xxvii. 1, 2.

Ver. 2. *And Pilate asked him, art thou the king of the Jews? &c.*] Which either he had heard before that it was said by him, and his followers; or was what the Jews now suggested to him as his crime, for which they desired sentence of death might pass upon him: *and he answering, said unto him, thou sayest it*; which is all one as if he had said, I am; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 25. for so he was in a sense, in which he explained himself to Pilate's satisfaction, John xviii. 36, 37. see the note on Matt. xxvii. 11.

Ver. 3. *And the chief priests accused him of many things, &c.*] As that he was a magician, and a blasphemer, and gave out that he was the son of God; and that he made himself a king, and even forbade the people to give tribute to Cæsar, and moved discord, sedition, and rebellion throughout the land; *but he answered nothing.* This clause is wanting in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions; but is in the Greek text of the Complutensian edition, and in the Ethiopic version, and agrees with Matt. xxvii. 12. see the note there.

Ver. 4. *And Pilate asked him again, &c.*] In the presence of the chief priests, who laid so many things to his charge; for the former question was put, when Jesus and he were alone in the judgment-hall, whither the Jews would not enter for fear of being defiled; see John xviii. 28, 33. *saying, answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee!* The charges were many, and very heinous, and which Pilate thought called for self-defence; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 13.

Ver. 5. *But Jesus yet answered nothing, &c.*] He still continued silent, and made no defence for himself, which the governor was willing to give him an opportunity to make, and, as his friend, urged him to it: *so that Pilate marvelled*; what should be the meaning of his silence, when he was so capable of defending himself, and was so innocent, as Pilate himself was ready to believe; and yet the things he was charged with were of the highest nature, and by persons of the greatest figure in the nation; so that his silence exposed him to a great deal of danger, which Pilate thought might easily be avoided by answering for himself; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 14.

Ver. 6. *Now at that feast, &c.*] The feast of the

passover, which was at that instant; see John xviii. 39. The Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, *at every feast*; as if the following custom was used at every feast in the year, at the feasts of pentecost and tabernacles, as well as at the passover; whereas it was only at the latter: *he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired*; of this custom see the note on Matt. xxvii. 15.

Ver. 7. *And there was one named Barabbas, &c.*] A prisoner of that name at Jerusalem; *which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him*: he had been at the head of a seditious mob, and he and his accomplices were taken and put in prison: *who had committed murder in the insurrection*; which may be connected either with Barabbas, and read in the singular number, as it is in the Vulgate Latin version, *he had committed*; or with the seditious persons he lay bound with, and be read in the plural number, *they had committed murder*, as it is in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions; and so in the ancient copies; and the Ethiopic renders it, *he was bound with seditious persons and murderers*; though, no doubt, he was guilty of murder as well as they; and so Peter calls him a murderer, Acts iii. 14. About this time murders were very frequently committed: the Jews say, that "from the time that murderers increased, the slaying of the red heifer ceased; (the reason the commentators give, is, because they were known who were accustomed to commit murder;) and that was from the time that Eleazar ben Dinai came, and Techinah ben Perishah he was called; and they called him again the son of a murderer;" see the note on Matt. xxvii. 16.

Ver. 8. *And the multitude crying aloud, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, and when the *multitude*, or *people went up*, to the place called the pavement, where the judgment-seat was; and so it is read in Beza's most ancient copy; but the former reading is to be preferred: *began to desire him to do as he had ever done to them*; that is, release a prisoner to them, as he had done at every passover, since he had been a governor over them.

Ver. 9. *But Pilate answered them; saying, &c.*] Being satisfied of the innocence of Jesus, and being willing to dismiss him: *will ye that I release unto you the king of the Jews?* he who is called so; and which he either said by way of derision both of Christ, and them; or else in order to prevail upon them to ask his release, it being scandalous and reproachful to put their king to death.

Ver. 10. *For he knew that the chief priests, &c.*] The Persic version reads in the singular, *the chief of the priests*, or the high-priest, Caiaphas, *had delivered him for envy*; at his popularity through his doctrine and miracles, and not from any principle of equity and justice, or from any regard to Cæsar; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 18.

† Missa. Sota, c. 9. sect. 9. Maimon. Hilch. Rotzeach. c. 9. sect. 12.

‡ Jarchi & Berteuora in ib.

Ver. 11. *But the chief priests moved the people, &c.]* Greatly solicited and persuaded them, both in person, and by their officers they employed, and dispersed among them, to make use of arguments with them to prevail upon them: *that he should rather release Barabbas unto them;* than Jesus of Nazareth; choosing rather to have a murderer granted unto them, than the holy and just one. The Persic version, as before, reads, *the chief of the priests;* but they were all concerned, and were the most active men in bringing about the death of Christ; though Caiaphas was behind none of them in envy, rage, and malice; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 20.

Ver. 12. *And Pilate answered and said again unto them, &c.]* Being astonished that they should ask the release of such an infamous person; and being very desirous of saving Jesus: *what will ye then that I shall do unto him, whom ye call the king of the Jews?* at least many of you; would you have me put him to death? surely this can never be desired; or would you have me inflict some slight punishment on him, as scourging him, and so dismiss him? see the note on Matt. xxvii. 22.

Ver. 13. *And they cried out again, crucify him.]* For they had cried so once before, though Matthew and Mark relate it not, yet Luke does, ch. xxiii. 22.

Ver. 14. *Then Pilate said unto them, &c.]* The third time, Luke xxiii. 22. *why, what evil hath he done?* worthy of death. They had charged him with many things, but proved nothing against him. Pilate could find no fault in him, and judged him an innocent person, and therefore was loth to condemn him: *and they cried out the more exceedingly;* with louder voices, and greater vehemency, the more they found he was inclined to save him: *crucify him;* nothing short of death would satisfy them, and no other death but that of the cross; see the notes on Matt. xxvii. 22, 23.

Ver. 15. *And so Pilate, willing to content the people, &c.]* To satisfy and make them easy, who were become very noisy and tumultuous, and fearing the consequences of their resentment, should he not comply, of which he had formerly had experience; therefore to humour them, and keep in their favour, after he had washed his hands, to testify his innocence in the matter, *he released Barabbas unto them;* the seditious person, robber, and murderer, as they desired: *and delivered Jesus when he had scourged him;* or *having scourged him;* for this he had done before, hoping the Jews would have been satisfied with that, and not have insisted on any further punishment. The Arabic version very wrongly renders the words, *and delivered unto them Jesus, that he might be scourged;* as if this was afterwards to be done by the Jews, or Roman soldiers; whereas he had scourged him before, and now delivered him *to be crucified,* as they desired; in which he acted contrary to law and justice, to the violation of his own conscience, and merely to gratify the humour of the people; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 26.

Ver. 16. *And the soldiers led him away into the hall, &c.]* From the place called the pavement, where was the judge's bench, from which he passed sen-

tence on Christ, to a large room, called the *prætorium*, or judgment-hall; being the hall, or room, where the prætor, or Roman magistrate, kept his court of judicature; and is the same place the Jews would not go into, lest they should be defiled, and become unmeet to eat the *Chagigah* that day; and into which Pilate had Jesus more than once alone, John xviii. 28, 33. and xix. 9. but now he had a large company with him: *and they call together the whole band;* very likely the soldiers, into whose custody Jesus was put, and who led him away, were the four soldiers that attended his crucifixion, and parted his garments; but for greater diversion they got together the whole band to which they belonged; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 27.

Ver. 17. *And they clothed him with purple, &c.]* Matthew calls it a *scarlet* robe; and the Persic version here renders it a *red garment:* it was of a colour resembling purple; it was pretty near it, and therefore so called; which is what kings were used to wear; and so in derision of him, as a king, clothed him with this mock purple robe; and which was very likely one of the soldiers' old coats: *and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head;* for a crown, and also a reed in his hand, instead of a sceptre, as Matthew relates; see the notes on Matt. xxvi. 28, 29.

Ver. 18. *And began to salute him, hail, king of the Jews!]* In a mock way, wishing him long life and prosperity, as if he was a king just come to his throne, and this was his coronation-day.

Ver. 19. *And they smote him on the head with a reed, &c.]* Or *cane*, a walking-stick which they had put into his hands for a sceptre: this they took out again, and struck him on the head with it, which drove the sharp-pointed thorns into his temples: *and did spit upon him;* upon his face, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read: *and bowing their knees,* as to a sovereign prince, *worshipped him;* saying the above words, *hail, king of the Jews!* see the notes on Matt. xxvii. 29, 30.

Ver. 20. *And when they had mocked him, &c.]* To their satisfaction, and had had enough of this sort of diversion: *they took off the purple from him;* and so, in their way, unkinged him; *and put his own clothes on him:* both that he might be known to be the same person; and that the four soldiers, who had the charge of him, might have the perquisites of his clothes at his execution: *and led him out to crucify him:* they led him out of the *prætorium*, or judgment-hall, and through the city, without the gates of it, to the usual place of crucifixion; he bearing his own cross, when first led out.

Ver. 21. *And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, &c.]* See the note on Matt. xxvii. 32. *who passed by;* as they were leading Jesus to be crucified: *coming out of the country;* from some country village hard by, according to the Syriac, and Vulgate Latin versions; or *out of the field,* as the Persic and Ethiopic: he might have been in the field, about some rural business; or, as Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, to fetch wood from thence, which was lawful to be done on a feast-day, with some provisos, according to the Jewish canon, which runs thus: "they may bring wood

“out of the field, (*i. e.* on a feast-day, as this was,) “of that which is gathered together, and out of a place that is fenced about, and even of that which is scattered abroad: what is a fenced place? what ever is near to a city, the words of R. Judah. R. Jose says, whatever they go into by a door, and even within the border of the sabbath.” And according to the commentators, it must be wood that is gathered together, and that lies not in an open field, but in a fenced place, and this near the city; at least within two thousand cubits, a sabbath-day’s journey. *The father of Alexander and Rufus*: who were men well known when Mark wrote his Gospel, and very likely men of eminence among Christians: mention is made of Alexander in Acts xix. 33. and of Rufus, in Rom. xvi. 13. which some have thought the same as here; but whether they are or no, is not certain: however, they obliged *Simon to bear his cross*: the cross of Christ, after him; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 32.

Ver. 22. *And they bring him unto the place, Golgotha, &c.*] A famous, or rather an infamous one, well known, and much noted for the many executions there: *which is, being interpreted, the place of a skull*; because the skulls of men that had been executed and buried there, being dug up again, lay scattered about; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 33.

Ver. 23. *And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh, &c.*] Wine mingled with frankincense was what was usually given by the Jews to persons going to die\*: “he that goes to be executed they mix for him, יין לבנון בכוס של יין, *a grain of frankincense in a cup of wine*, that his mind may be disturbed, or not sensible; as it is said, Prov. xxxi. 6. *give strong drink to him that is ready to perish, and wine to the bitter in soul*: and the tradition is, that the honourable women in Jerusalem gave this freely, and brought it them; and if they did not, it was provided by the congregation,” at the public expense; the design of it was to intoxicate, that they might not feel their pain and misery: but neither the rich women in general, nor were the public so disposed towards Christ, as to provide such a potion for him: it is most likely therefore that this was prepared by his friends, as Mary Magdalene, Martha, and others, in order to cheer and refresh his spirits; and was different from what the soldiers gave him, which was *vinegar mixed with gall*, though the Persic version so reads here: *but he received it not*; nor would he so much as taste of it, as he did of the other, to shew that he needed no such outward means to support his spirits, nor desired any allay of his sorrows, and was not afraid to meet death in all its terrors; and besides, he had said he would drink no more of the fruit of the vine till he drank it new in his father’s kingdom, Matt. xxvi. 29. see the note on Matt. xxvii. 34.

Ver. 24. *And when they had crucified him, &c.*] Had fastened him to the cross, and reared it up, and he was hanging upon it: *they parted his garments,*

*casting lots upon them, what every man should take.* This last clause, *what every man should take*, is left out in the Arabic version. His garments they divided into four parts; and each soldier, as there were four of them, took a part; and upon his vesture, or seamless coat, because they would not rend it, they cast lots who should have it, and so fulfilled a prophecy in Psal. xxii. 18. see the note on Matt. xxvii. 35.

Ver. 25. *And it was the third hour, and they crucified him, &c.*] The time of the daily sacrifice of the morning, at which the priests ought to have been; and the time when the sanhedrim usually began to sit<sup>2</sup>; for “the grand sanhedrim sat from the daily sacrifice of the morning, to the daily sacrifice of the evening:” but this being an extraordinary case, and they in a hurry to put Jesus to death, had been sitting up all night; and early in the morning had procured the sentence of death on him, which they were going to execute by the time they used to sit: this was about nine o’clock in the morning, and takes in the time between that and twelve at noon. The Ethiopic version reads, *and it was the sixth hour*, to make it agree with John xix. 14. and for the reconciling of these two places, see the note there.

Ver. 26. *And the superscription of his accusation, &c.*] Or the *cause of his death*, as the Syriac and Persic versions read; the crime for which he suffered: *was written*; over his head, upon the cross, to which it was fastened; the sum of which was, *the king of the Jews*; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 37.

Ver. 27. *And with him they crucified two thieves, &c.*] For his greater reproach; *the one on his right hand, and the other on his left*: as if he had been one of them, and a principal among them; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 38.

Ver. 28. *And the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, &c.*] In Isa. liiii. 12. *and he was numbered with the transgressors*: he was no transgressor of the law of God himself, but was perfectly conformable to it in his holy nature, harmless conversation, and complete obedience: he knew no sin, nor committed any in thought, word, or deed, nor could any be found in him by men or devils; and yet he was traduced as a sinner, and charged with many foul things, none of which could be proved upon him: but inasmuch as he stood in the room, and stead of sinners, and had all the sins of his people imputed to him, and laid upon him, with his own consent, he was treated by the justice of God as if he had been a transgressor, and was reckoned as such; of which his being placed between two thieves, was a symbol and representation: hence he was stricken, and wounded, and died, for the sins of those in whose place he stood. The *fifty-third* chapter of Isaiah, where this passage stands, is a manifest prophecy of the Messiah, as several of the Jewish writers themselves, both ancient and modern, acknowledge; though some would apply it to some other persons<sup>7</sup>.

Ver. 29. *And they that passed by, &c.*] In the road, and went by the cross. The Arabic version adds,

<sup>2</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Yom Tob, c. 2. sect. 14.

<sup>7</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 10. fol. 195. 4. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 13. sect. 2, 3. Moses Kotsensis Mitzot Torā, pr. affirm. 98.

<sup>2</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 3, sect. 1.

<sup>7</sup> See my Book of the Prophecies of the Old Testament, &c. p. 160, 161, &c.

before him, Christ, as he hung on the cross: *railed on him, wagging their heads*; gave him opprobrious language, and used indecent gestures; and saying, *ah! thou that destroyest the temple*; the Vulgate Latin version adds, *of God: and buildest it in three days*; thou poor vain miserable creature, that boasted of thy power, where art thou now? and what dost thou think of thyself?

Ver. 30. *Save thyself, and come down from the cross.*] Suggesting that if he was what he had pretended to be, and could do what he gave out he could, he might easily free himself from the cross, and make his escape; see the notes on Matt. xxvii. 39, 40.

Ver. 31. *Likewise also the chief priests mocking, &c.*] Or *laughed at one another*, as the Syriac version renders it, having gained their point, and satiated their revenge on him: *said among themselves with the Scribes*; who were likewise his implacable enemies; *he saved others, himself he cannot save*; see the notes on Matt. xxvii. 41, 42.

Ver. 32. *Let Christ the king of Israel, &c.*] Who sets up for the Messiah, and whose followers call him the king of Israel, whom the nation expected: and if he is so, let him descend now from the cross, that we may see; see him come down, and be eye-witnesses of his power: *and believe*; that he is the Messiah that was prophesied of, and has been waiting for: *and they that were crucified with him reviled him*; that is, the thieves, at least one of them; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 44.

Ver. 33. *And when the sixth hour was come, &c.*] Or twelve o'clock at noon, having hung upon the cross from about the third hour, or nine in the morning: *there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour*; or three o'clock in the afternoon. The Ethiopic version renders the whole thus, *and when it was noon, the sun was darkened, and the whole world was darkened until the ninth hour*; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 45.

Ver. 34. *And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, &c.*] See the note on Matt. xxvii. 46. saying, *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?* in Matthew 'tis, *Eli, Eli*. Both *Eli* and *Eloi*, are Hebrew words, and signify the same; and are both used in Psal. xxii. 1, 2. from whence the whole is taken: *which is, being interpreted, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* see the note on Matt. xxvii. 46.

Ver. 35. *And some of them that stood by, &c.*] The cross: *when they heard it*; the loud voice of Jesus, and the words he uttered: *said, behold he calleth Elias*; whom they ignorantly, or wilfully took for Eloi; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 47.

Ver. 36. *And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, &c.*] Christ at the same time saying, I thirst; see John xix. 28. *and put it on a reed*; an hyssop-stalk, John xix. 29. *and gave him to drink*; and so fulfilled a prophecy in Psal. lxxix. 21. saying, *or they said*, as the Syriac version reads it; not he that fetched the sponge, but the others that were with him, and which agrees with Matt. xxvii. 27. 49. *let alone*; as forbidding him to go near him, and offer him any thing to drink: *let us see whether Elias will come and*

*take him down*; from the cross; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 49.

Ver. 37. *And Jesus cried with a loud voice, &c.*] A second time, and said the words which are in Luke xxiii. 46. and in John xix. 30. *and gave up the ghost*. The Syriac version renders it, *and finished*: his life, his days, his race, his ministry, and the work which was given him to do; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 50.

Ver. 38. *And the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom.*] At which time also there was an earthquake, and the rocks were rent, and graves were opened, as Matthew relates, ch. xxvii. 51, 52. see the notes there.

Ver. 39. *And when the centurion, which stood over-against him, &c.*] To watch him, that nobody released him, and that he did not come down from the cross himself; *saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost*; that he cried with so loud and strong a voice, and the next moment expired: *he said, truly this man was the son of God*; and so said the rest of the soldiers that were with them, as appears from Matt. xxvii. 54. see the note there.

Ver. 40. *There were also women looking on afar off, &c.*] At some distance from the cross, observing what was said and done; *among whom was Mary Magdalene*; who had received great favours from Christ: *and Mary the mother of James the less*; or *little*, so called to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee, and because he might be little of stature: nor was it unusual with the Jews to distinguish persons after this manner: so we read<sup>a</sup> of R. Jesa, יעריא, *the little*, and of Samuel, דקטקו, *the little*<sup>b</sup>, which some have thought to be the Apostle Paul, so called from the littleness of his stature: *and of Joses*; or *Joseph*, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read; *and Salome*; the mother of Zebedee's children, James and John; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 56. This was a common name among the Jews; Herod had a sister and a daughter of this name; and the daughter of Herodias, who demanded the head of John the Baptist, was of this name; and it is the same with Shalom: we read<sup>b</sup> of one Imme Shalom, or mother Shalom, wife of R. Eliezer, and sister to Rabban Gamaliel. Salome, with the Ethiopians<sup>c</sup>, is said to be Mary's midwife, and to accompany Christ, with Mary, and Joseph, when they fled into Egypt.

Ver. 41. *Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, &c.*] Wherever he went in Galilee, and from thence to Jerusalem: *and ministered unto him*; of their worldly substance, Luke vii. 3. *and many other women which came up with him into Jerusalem*; from the same parts; see Matt. xxvii. 55.

Ver. 42. *And now when the even was come, &c.*] *Of the preparation*, as the Syriac version reads; or *the night of the sixth day*, as the Persic version renders it, *Friday night: because it was the preparation*; of the passover, and of the sabbath, when they prepared their food, and got it ready for the ensuing sabbath, on which it was not lawful to dress any; *that is, the day before the sabbath*; that is, Friday; on which day, 'tis clear, Christ suffered, died, and was buried.

<sup>a</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 62. 2. & passim.  
<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Erucaot, fol. 28. 2. & 29. 1.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 116. 1.  
<sup>c</sup> Ludolph. Lex. Ethiop. p. 525. & Castell. Lex. Polyglot col. 9767



Ver. 43. *Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, &c.*] A man of a good aspect, well dressed, and that behaved well and honourably in his office, as a counsellor: he seems to have been a priest, and one of the bench of priests that sat in the high-priest's chamber, which is called, *לשכת בלמשי*, the chamber of the counsellors<sup>4</sup>; with whom he advised there, in matters of moment: which also waited for the kingdom of God; for the coming and kingdom of the Messiah, for the Gospel dispensation, the world to come, the Jews were so much in expectation of. *Came and went in boldly unto Pilate*; not now ashamed of Christ, or afraid openly to appear in his cause, and declare himself a lover of him, a believer in him, and a disciple of his, though he formerly was: and craved the body of Jesus; desired leave to take it down from the cross, and bury it; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 58.

Ver. 44. *And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead, &c.*] For death, by crucifixion, was a slow lingering death; persons that were in their full strength hung a great while before they expired; and the two thieves, which were crucified with Christ, were not dead when he was: and calling unto him the centurion; who was set to watch him: he asked him, whether he had been any while dead; he inquired of him, whether he was dead, and how long he had been dead.

Ver. 45. *And when he knew it of the centurion, &c.*] Who might inform him of his giving up the ghost after he had cried with a loud voice, which so much affected him; and how he was found to be really

dead when they came to break the legs of the malefactors; and how that one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, from whence flowed blood and water; so that there was no room to doubt of his being really dead; with which Pilate being satisfied, he gave the body to Joseph; ordered it to be given to him; gave him leave to take it down from the cross, and inter it.

Ver. 46. *And he bought fine linen, &c.*] That is, Joseph, as is expressed in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions; which, when he had done, as is highly probable, in the city of Jerusalem, he went to Mount Calvary, and took him down; took the body of Christ down from the cross; though, no doubt, with the assistance of others, or by others, and not he himself, at least not alone: and wrapped him in the linen; wound him up in it, as was the manner of the Jews; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 59. and laid him in a sepulchre, which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 60.

Ver. 47. *And Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joses, &c.*] Or Joseph, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read: beheld where he was laid: very likely they saw Joseph, and his men, take him down from the cross, and they followed him, and observed where he laid him; or, as the Ethiopic version reads, where they buried him; placing themselves, as Matthew suggests, right over-against the sepulchre; so that they were witnesses of his death, and of his burial, as they afterwards were of his resurrection from the dead.

## C H A P. XVI.

Ver. 1. *AND when the sabbath was past, &c.*] In the end of it, as Matthew says; not when it was the sabbath, as the Arabic version reads; for it was not lawful to buy spices, and anoint with on the sabbath-day; see the note on Matt. xxviii. 1. *Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of James, and Salome*: who was the wife of Zebedee, and the mother of the other James and John: had bought sweet spices; or brought, as the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions read; for though the women might have bought some on the preparation-day, the day before the sabbath, the same evening that Christ was buried, Luke xxiii. 56. yet they might buy more for the same purpose, after the sabbath was over: for this there was a particular market at Jerusalem; for we are<sup>4</sup> told, that "there were there three markets, one by another; in the first of which were sold, all kinds of precious things, silks, and embroidered work; in the second, various kinds of fruits and herbs; and in the third, all kinds of spices." That they might come and anoint him; with those sweet spices, as was the manner of the Jews: hence we read<sup>5</sup> of, *הבשמים של מתים*, the spices of the dead; which were used to expel an ungrateful savour:

this they did, out of affection to Christ, but seemed to have no faith in his resurrection, though he had told them of it, which they had forgot. The Vulgate Latin reads, that they might anoint Jesus; the Ethiopic version, anoint his body: but the Arabic thus, anoint the sepulchre; his body being anointed before, and wound up by Joseph and Nicodemus; and therefore they came to strew the sepulchre with spices and ointments, and give it a sweet perfume. Though it seems most likely, that they came to anoint his body; for this was one of the things which was customary in Israel to do to dead men, as Maimonides<sup>f</sup> observes, *סכין אחרו במיני בשמים*, they anoint him with various sorts of spices.

Ver. 2. *And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, &c.*] See the note on Matt. xxviii. 1. They came to the sepulchre at the rising of the sun; of the sun of righteousness, as Mr. Mede observes; or rather, of the natural sun: for though it was dark when they set out, and when it dawned towards the first day, yet by that time that they all got to the sepulchre, the sun was rising; the Jews say<sup>g</sup>, that "from the ascending of the morning, or break of day, until the sun rises, is an hour and a half." And so much time may

<sup>4</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 3. 2. & Hieros. Yoma, fol. 38. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Jechus Haabot, p. 24. Ed. Hottinger.

<sup>6</sup> Misa. Beracot, c. 8. sect. 6. & Bartenora in ib. T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 12. 2.

<sup>f</sup> Hiltcot Ebel, c. 4. sect. 1.

<sup>g</sup> Piske Tosaphot in Pesach. art. 44.

very well be allowed the women, from their setting out, to their coming to the sepulchre. Moreover, they say<sup>b</sup>, that “from the hind of the morning, to the time the east is enlightened, a man may walk four miles, and from the time that the east is enlightened, עַד שֶׁתִּשְׁבֹּץ הַדְּרוֹמָה, until the sun rises, four miles.” But women must not be thought to walk so fast: let it be observed, that Christ, who is called the hind of the morning, Psal. xxii. title, and the morning star, Rev. xxii. 16. rose at this time.

Ver. 3. *And they said among themselves, &c.*] Either before they set out, or as they were going along: *who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?* Which they saw was placed there by Joseph, or his orders: this was the only difficulty they had, that they were aware of; for they seem to know nothing of the sealing of the stone, and of the watch that was set to guard the sepulchre: things which were done on the sabbath-day, on which they rested: for had they, in all likelihood they would never have attempted to have gone to it; the guard of soldiers would have been a sufficient discouragement: but all their concern was, how, and by whom, the stone should be rolled away, that lay at the door of the sepulchre; and perhaps their concern might be, not only on account of the largeness of the stone, as being too much for them to remove, but because such a stone defiled by touching it, according to the Jewish traditions<sup>c</sup>.

Ver. 4. *And when they looked, &c.*] Towards the sepulchre, as they came near it: *they saw that the stone was rolled away*; they perceived it lay at some distance from the door of the sepulchre, which doubtless was very grateful, and matter of rejoicing to them: *for it was very great*; these words are to be read, in connection with the preceding verse; for they are not a reason, why when they looked towards the sepulchre, they saw the stone rolled, because it was a very large one, and so easily to be seen at a distance; but a reason why they were so thoughtful and concerned, who should roll it away for them, it being so big, that they could not think that they were able to do it themselves.

Ver. 5. *And entering into the sepulchre, &c.*] For the sepulchres of the Jews were made so large, that persons might go into them: the rule for making them is this<sup>d</sup>: “he that sells ground to his neighbour to make a burying-place, or that receives of his neighbour to make a burying-place, must make the inside of the cave four cubits by six, and open in it eight graves; three here, and three there, and two over-against them; and the graves must be four cubits long, and seven high, and six broad. R. Simeon says, he must take the inside of the cave six cubits by eight, and open within thirteen graves: four here, and four there, and three over-against them; and one on the right hand of the door, and one on the left; and he must make, כְּוֵזָר, a court, at the mouth of the cave, six by six, according to the bier, and those that bury; and he must open in the midst of it two caves, one here and another there. R. Simeon says, four

“at the four sides; R. Simeon ben Gamaliel says, all “is according to the nature of the rock.” Now it was in the court that the women entered, where the bier was to be put down by the bearers; and where they could look into the sepulchre, and the several caves and graves in it, and what were in them. So Maimonides says<sup>e</sup>, “they dig caves in the earth, and make a grave on the side of the cave, and bury in it.” And there being a door into one of these caves, persons might enter in, and see where the graves were, and the bodies lay. *They saw a young man*; an angel; as angels used to appear in the form of men: nor is this any contradiction to John’s account, who says there were two angels, one at the head, and another at the feet; since Mark does not say there was no more than one; besides, John relates what Mary Magdalene saw when alone, and Mark what all the women saw: *sitting on the right side*: from whence we learn, on what side of the door of the sepulchre Christ was laid, according to the above description of one: *clothed in a long white garment*: see the note on Matt. xxviii. 3. which was as white as snow: *and they were affrighted*; at the sight of him; not expecting such a vision, but to have seen the body of their Lord.

Ver. 6. *And he saith unto them, be not affrighted, &c.*] see the notes on Matt. xxviii. 5, 6. where the same things, and almost in the same words, are said as here.

Ver. 7. *But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter, &c.*] Peter is particularly mentioned, not as distinct from the apostles, or as if he was not one of them, having sinned in the manner he had done; much less because he was the chief of them; but to comfort him in his great sorrow, on account of his fall; and to encourage him to meet Christ with the rest of his disciples, who might be both afraid and ashamed, because he had so basely denied him: this is a kind intimation in favour of Peter; none of the other evangelists observe it; but this Gospel being published, as is thought by some, under the direction and examination of Peter himself, he was careful to relate every thing, that either aggravated his own crime, or illustrated the grace of God, and love of Christ towards him. The Persic version puts Peter first, rendering it, *say to Cephas and the rest of the disciples*; all copies, and other versions, put him last: *that he goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him*; see the note on Matt. xxviii. 7. as he said unto you, as in ch. xiv. 28.

Ver. 8. *And they went out quickly, &c.*] Out of the sepulchre, into which they had been, to see where Christ lay, as invited by the angel, ver. 6. The word *quickly*, is not read in the Vulgate, Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions: *which when they heard*; that is, when they heard the angel’s orders and instructions, immediately they went out: *and fled from the sepulchre*; as surprised and affrighted: *for they trembled and were amazed*; at what they saw and heard, and yet this dread and fear were mixed with joy at the news of Christ’s resurrection, as Matthew relates, ch. xxviii. 8. *Neither said they any thing to any man*; they met with by the way, till they came to the disciples; to whom they told all, other-

<sup>b</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 2. 3. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 50. fol. 45. 2.  
<sup>c</sup> Misn. Oholot, c. 2. sect. 4.

<sup>k</sup> Misn. Bava Bathra, c. 6. sect. 8.

<sup>l</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Ebel, c. 4. sect. 4.

wise they would not have acted according to the angel's orders; for they were afraid; not only affrighted with what they had seen and heard, but they were afraid to tell any but the disciples of these things, for fear of the Jews; lest they should be thought to have stolen the body of Christ, and so be taken up on that account, and punished.

Ver. 9. *Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, &c.*] Though the word Jesus is not in the text, it is rightly supplied; for of the rising of no other, can the words be understood; and so the Persic version supplies *Messiah, or Christ*; that Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week, agrees with the accounts of all the evangelists, and is here expressly affirmed; the phrase, *the first day of the week*, is so indeed placed, as that it may be thought to be connected with the following words; as it is by some; fancying there would otherwise be a disagreement with Matt. xxviii. 1. whereas there is none; see the note there: though it is true also, that he did appear on that day to Mary Magdalene, it being the same day he rose from the dead. But the true reading and pointing are as here placed; and the phrase belongs to, and points out the day of Christ's rising from the dead; and which ambiguity is removed in the Syriac version, which renders it, *now early on the first day of the week he rose*; and so the Persic version, *the Messiah, or Christ, therefore on the morning of the first day, rose from the dead*: and that he rose early on that day, is clear from the women, who set out at the end of the sabbath, when that was past and over; and got to the sepulchre by the time the day dawned; and one of them, while it was dark, and all of them by break of day, at least by sun-rising, and he was then risen: *he appeared first to Mary Magdalene*: in the habit of a gardener, for whom she took him at first; and this was at the sepulchre, where she staid after the disciples were gone. That she was the very first person that Christ shewed himself to, after his resurrection, may be concluded from hence, and from the account the Evangelist John has given, ch. xx. 14. nor is there any reason to think, that before this, he appeared to his mother, of which the evangelists are entirely silent. This was a very great favour, and an high honour that was bestowed upon her; and who had received large favours from him before: *out of whom he had cast seven devils*, see Luke viii. 2. And if she had been a very wicked person, as she is commonly thought to be, and very likely she had been, since Satan had such a power over her, as to lodge seven devils in her, it is an instance of abounding grace, that Christ should heap up favours on such an one; and she should be the first that he should appear to and converse with after his resurrection.

Ver. 10. *And she went and told them that had been with him, &c.*] Not with her, as the Persic version reads, but with him; that is, with Christ: she went, as she was bid by Christ, and told his disciples, what she had heard and seen; even those who had been with him from the beginning, and had heard his doctrines, and seen his miracles, and had had communion with him, and truly believed in him, and were his

constant followers, and real disciples; not only Peter, James, and John, who were with him, particularly at the raising of Jairus's daughter, and at his transfiguration on the mount, and when in his sorrows, in the garden; but the rest of the eleven, and not only them, but others that were with them; see Luke xxiv. 9. *As they mourned and wept*, being inconsolable for the death of their Lord, and the loss of his presence; and also for their carriage towards him, that one among them should betray him; another deny him, and all forsake him: thus were they like doves of the valley, mourning for their absent Lord, and for their own iniquities; and in this condition were they, when Mary brought them the joyful news of Christ's resurrection from the dead.

Ver. 11. *And they, when they had heard that he was alive, &c.*] That is, the apostles, and those that were with them; when they heard the report of Mary Magdalene, that Christ was raised from the dead, and was certainly alive; or of all the women, for the Syriac version reads, *when they heard them saying that he was alive*, not only Mary Magdalene, but Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women; for these all related this to the apostles, and the rest; see Luke xxiv. 9, 10. *And had been seen of her*; of Mary Magdalene, or of them; as the Syriac version reads, and as it is read in one of Beza's copies: *they believed not*; the words of Mary, and the other women, for they seemed aside tales to them, Luke xxiv. 11. imagining they were deceived with the sight of a spectre, or apparition; and fearing the news were too good and great to be true; forgetting the words of their Lord, that he should rise again the third day, and which had been so often repeated to them; and all this through stupidity of mind, occasioned by the trouble and consternation they were in.

Ver. 12. *After that, &c.*] A little time, or some few hours after, on the self-same day; see Luke xxiv. 13. *he appeared in another form*: it seems to have been the form, or habit of a gardener that he appeared in to Mary; since she thought him to be one, and to be the gardener that belonged to the garden, in which the sepulchre was: but now it was in another form, or habit, that he appeared; very likely in the habit of a Scribe, or doctor; since he took upon him to expound the Scriptures to the persons he appeared to; as also took bread, and blessed it, when at supper with them, Luke xxiv. 27, 30. According to the Jewish canons <sup>m</sup>, "if two persons eat together, and one of them is a Scribe, and the other an unlearned man, סופר מברך, *the Scribe blesses, and the unlearned man is excused.*" This is not to be understood of any change in the shape of his body, or the features of his face; for as soon as their eyes were opened, which had been before held, they knew him perfectly well: whereas, if there had been such an alteration made in him, that he could not have been known for the same, there would have been no need of holding their eyes, that they should not know him, Luke xxiv. 16, 31. This appearance was unto two of them; one of them was Cleophas, or Alpheus, which is the same, Luke xxiv. 18: the other is by some <sup>n</sup> thought to be Simon Peter, from what is said

<sup>m</sup> T. Bab. Beraot, fol. 45. 2.

<sup>n</sup> Lightfoot, Hor. in. v. 12. & in Luk. xxiv. 19.

in Luke xxiv. 34. though others ° think it was Nathanael, and others ° Luke the evangelist, who conceals his own name, when he mentions the other; and some †, that his name was Ammaon, which perhaps may be through mistake of the place, Emmaus, where they were going, for the name of one of them, and the appearance to them was, as they walked, and went into the country; to a country village called Emmaus, about sixty furlongs, or seven miles and a half from Jerusalem; see Luke xxiv. 13.

Ver. 13. *And they went and told it unto the residue, &c.*] Upon their return to Jerusalem, which was on the same night, they went to the eleven apostles, and the other disciples that were with them, and related the whole affair to them; how that Jesus had joined them by the way, and discoursed much with them about himself, and expounded the Scriptures on the road; and when they came to the end of their journey, sat down at meat with them, when he was very plainly discerned, and known by them, and then disappeared; see Luke xxiv. 33, 35. *neither believed they them.* These two, as the Arabic version reads; though they were men, and fellow-disciples; and this was a repeated testimony, and a second set of witnesses of Christ's resurrection to them; all which aggravates their unbelief: upon sight of them they said, *the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon*; the reason of which Dr. Lightfoot thinks was this, that Peter hearing that Christ was risen, and went before them into Galilee, was eager to see him, and therefore took this journey along with Cleophas, which the rest of the disciples knew; and he returning so soon, they concluded he had seen him: but when he, and Cleophas, told the whole affair, they were as unbelieving as ever.

Ver. 14. *Afterward he appeared unto the eleven, &c.*] Apostles; for this was now the number of them, Judas being gone from them, and dead; and they were so called, though Thomas was not now with them, because their whole company consisted of this number: this appearance of Christ to them was on the same first day of the week, at evening, John xx. 19. though it must be very late at night; for it was after the two above disciples were returned from Emmaus, where Christ and they had supped together; see Luke xxiv. 29, 30, 33, 36. *as they sat at meat; or sat together*: being assembled together, and the doors shut fast for fear of the Jews, John xx. 19. and so the Arabic renders it, *while they were gathered together*; and the Persic version, *who being gathered together were sitting*: nor does the word necessarily signify sitting at meat; nor is it very likely that they should be eating so late at night; though it is probable they had been eating, as seems from Luke xxiv. 41, 42, 43. *and upbraided them with their unbelief, and hardness of heart*: not but that their hearts were very contrite for their sinful carriage to Christ; and very much humbled they were under the present dispensation: their hearts were much affected, and they were filled with sorrow and trouble for the loss of Christ; but in this point their unbelief

increased by their fears, and so much prevailed, that all that were said by one, and another, made no impression on them: and a great aggravation of their incredulity, and a reason of Christ's upbraiding them in this manner were, *because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen*; as Mary Magdalene, and the other women, and Cleophas, and the other disciple that was with him, who were eye-witnesses that he was risen from the dead; and such as might have been depended on.

Ver. 15. *And he said unto them, &c.*] Not at the same time, and place, as before; not on the first day of the week, on which he rose from the dead, but forty days after, just upon his ascension to heaven; see ver. 19. nor at Jerusalem, but in Galilee, where he appointed to meet his disciples, and did, when he gave them the following commission; see Matt. xxviii. 16, 18, 19. *go ye into all the world*: not only into Judea, and through all the cities of it, where they had been before confined; nor only into the Roman empire, which is sometimes so called, because great part of the world was under that government; but into every known and habitable part of the whole universe, to all the nations of the world under heaven: and it is to be observed, that this command is not enjoined on every apostle separately, as if each of them was to go into all the world, and travel over every part; but that one was to go one way, and another another way; every one had his line, or that part of the world marked out for him, whither he was to steer his course, and where he was to fulfil and finish his ministry: and besides, this commission not only included the Apostles, but reaches to all the ministers of the Gospel in succeeding ages, to the end of the world; and since this, one part of the world, which was not known, is now discovered; and the order includes that, as well as the then known parts of the world, and the Gospel accordingly has been sent into it. *And preach the Gospel to every creature*; not to inanimate and irrational creatures, as stocks and stones, the beasts of the field, &c. nor to all rational creatures, as angels, good or bad; the former need not the preaching of the Gospel, and the latter are denied the blessing; but men, the offspring of fallen Adam, the objects of God's good will: these are styled *the creatures*, because the chief of God's creation on earth; and are often in the Jewish writings so called; take an instance or two: "R. Chanina ben Dousa" used to say, all in whom, *הבריית, the creatures (i. e. men)* have delight, God has delight; and in whomsoever *the creatures (or men)* have no delight, God has no delight." One of the seven qualifications of a member of the sanhedrim is, *אהובת הבריות, love of the creatures*, or love of men: so it is said †, that "the holy blessed God, sits in the height of the world, and gives a portion of food, *לכל בריה, to every creature*," that is, to every man; and particularly the Gentiles, as distinguished from the Jews, are often intended by this phrase: thus "says" R. Judah, "perhaps, *הבריית, the creatures, (i. e. the Gentiles),*

° Epiphanius contra Hæres. l. 1. Hæres. 23.

† Vid. Theophylact. in Luc. xxiv. 13.

‡ Ambrosius in Luc. 12. 49. & 24.

§ Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 10.

• Maimon. Hilch. Sandedrin, c. 2. sect. 7.

† T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 118. 1. Vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 86. 1.

‡ Zohar in Exod. fol. 2, 3.

“knew the love with which the holy blessed God loved Israel, and roared like lions to pursue after them.” It is elsewhere <sup>▼</sup> said, “all the prayers, של בריית, of the creatures (the Heathens) are only concerning the earth; Lord, let the earth bring forth! Lord, let the earth be fruitful! All the prayers of the Israelites, are only for the house of the Lord; Lord, let the house of the sanctuary be built, &c.” And in this sense is the phrase used, in Rom. viii. 22, 23. Col. i. 23. 1 Pet. ii. 14. Now to these, Christ would have the Gospel preached, as well as to the Jews; even to all, without any distinction of people, Jews and Gentiles, Barbarians, Scythians, bond and free, male and female, rich and poor, greater or lesser sinners, even to all mankind; than which, nothing was more provoking to the Jews; who would, if they could, have revoked and made null this commission of Christ; see 1 Thess. ii. 16. It was the Gospel he would have preached to them, the word of peace and reconciliation, by his atoning sacrifice; the doctrine of free and full pardon by his blood; and of justification by his righteousness; and of complete salvation by him: even every doctrine relating to his person, as God and man; to every office of his, as prophet, priest, and king; to his incarnation, sufferings, and death, his resurrection, ascension, session at the right hand of God, and intercession for his people, and second coming to judgment; with every doctrine relating to the grace of God, of the father in election, and the covenant of peace, of the son in redemption, and of the spirit in regeneration and sanctification: all which he would have published and declared in the most free, plain, and open manner, with all boldness, faithfulness, and constancy. A compendium and summary of which, is given in the next words.

Ver. 16. *He that believeth, &c.*] Not notionally only, or that gives a bare assent to the truth of the Gospel; but spiritually, who sees Christ, his need of him, and the worth and excellency, suitableness and fulness of him; who comes to him as a poor perishing sinner, and ventures on him, and commits himself to him, and lives upon him; believing alone in him, and expecting life and salvation alone by him: *and is baptized*. Faith must precede baptism, as these words of Christ, and Scripture examples shew; and such as have it, ought to make a profession of it, and be baptized; and in which way it is that faith discovers itself, and works by love to Christ; namely, in observing his commands, and this among the rest: *shall be saved*. such receive the remission of their sins, a justifying righteousness, the privilege of adoption, a right and meetness for heaven now, and shall be saved in Christ, with an everlasting salvation; not that either faith or baptism, are the procuring causes of salvation: not faith, for Christ is the author of salvation; and faith is the grace that looks to him for it, receives the assurance of it now, and that will be the end of it hereafter: faith and eternal life are so connected together, that he that has the one, shall have the other; and it is descriptive of the person that shall enjoy it: and baptism, though it is said to save by the resurrection of Christ, as it is a means of leading faith to Christ's resurrection for justi-

fication, yet has no casual influence upon salvation; it is not essential to it; the thief on the cross, went to heaven without it, and Simon Magus to hell with it; but it is the duty of every one that believes, and he that truly believes, ought to be baptized, and prove the truth of his faith, by his obedience to Christ, and such shall be saved: *but he that believeth not shall be damned*; such are here chiefly designed, who are favoured with the Gospel revelation; but either deny it, reject and despise it, or neglect it, and are disobedient to it; whose guilt is the greater, and whose punishment and damnation will be the more intolerable; even more so, than that of Sodom and Gomorrah, Tyre and Sidon, or any of the Gentiles that perish without the law, and the knowledge of the Gospel; and also such are meant, who are finally unbelievers, who live and die in a state of impenitence and unbelief; otherwise, one that believes not to-day, may believe to-morrow, and be saved.

Ver. 17. *And these signs shall follow them that believe, &c.*] Not all of them, but some; and not always, only for a time; and which were necessary for the confirmation of the Gospel, and the establishment of Christianity in the world; and not only believing hearers, but believing ministers of the word, are chiefly designed; and this is said, for the encouragement both of those that preach the Gospel, and of them that hear, believe and obey. The Persic version, contrary to all others, reads, *ye shall shew signs and wonders to them that believe not*; see 1 Cor. xiv. 22. *In my name shall they cast out devils*; so the Apostle Paul dispossessed the damsel, that had a spirit of divination; commanding the spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her, and it did; and evil spirits also went out of others, through his means, by the power of Christ, Acts xvi. 18. and xix. 12. and this power continued for a considerable time among the saints: the phrase *in my name*, is in the Arabic version, joined to the word *believe*, in the preceding clause; and is omitted in the Persic version, but is rightly retained by all others in this place; for by the power and authority of Christ, and not their own, and by calling upon, and making use of his name, such miraculous operations were wrought by the apostles: *they shall speak with new tongues*; or languages, not such as were new-made, and had never been heard and known before; but foreign languages, such as they had never learned, or were able to speak, or understood before; and this not only did the apostles on the day of pentecost, but even common believers at other times, Acts ii. 4, 6, 11. and x. 45, 46. 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28, 30. and xiv. 13, 14, 26, 27.

Ver. 18. *They shall take up serpents, &c.*] The Arabic version adds, *in their own hands*; and in an ancient manuscript of Beza's it is read, *in the hands*; so the Apostle Paul had a viper, which fastened and hung on his hand, which he shook off, without receiving any harm from it, Acts xxviii. 3, 4, 5, 6. *And if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them*; not that they were hereby warranted to drink poison, to shew what power they had; but should they accidentally drink it, or rather should they be forced to it by their

enemies, in order to destroy them, they should find no hurt by it: and Papias<sup>2</sup> reports of Barsabas, surnamed Justus, who was put up with Matthias for the apostleship, Acts i. 23. that he drank a poisonous draught, and by the grace of the Lord, received no hurt: and the Jews themselves report<sup>7</sup>, that "a son of R. Joshua ben Levi, swallowed something hurtful; and one came and whispered to him in the name of Jesus, the son of Pandira (so they call our Lord), and he did well." It follows, *and they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover*; as the Apostle Paul did on the father of Publius, who was thereby healed of a fever, and a bloody flux, and also others, Acts xxviii. 8, 9. nay, some were healed by the shadow of Peter, Acts v. 15, 16. and others, by handkerchiefs and aprons taken from the body of Paul, Acts xix. 12. The Persic version adds, without any authority, *whatsoever ye ask in my name, shall be given unto you.*

Ver. 19. *So then, after the Lord, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions add, *Jesus*; and the Ethiopic version reads, *our Lord, the Lord Jesus*; and both Syriac and Persic read, *our Lord*; which is common in these versions, where the word *Lord* is used: *had spoken unto them*; the disciples, the above words, which commissioned them where to go, what to do, and what to say; and what should follow them, for the confirmation of their mission and doctrine: *he was received up into heaven*; in a cloud, angels attending him, and devils led captive by him, and with a welcome into his father's presence: *and sat on the right hand of God*; the

Ethiopic version adds, *his own father*, and which is an evidence of his having done his work, and that to full satisfaction; and is an honour never conferred on angels, or any mere creature; and is a peculiar dignity conferred on the human nature of Christ, in union with his divine person; and here he will remain, till his second coming.

Ver. 20. *And they went forth, &c.*] After this the apostles went forth, from Galilee to Jerusalem; and on the day of pentecost, they appeared publicly, and preached the Gospel in divers languages; and after the death of Stephen, and the persecution raised upon that, they went forth from Jerusalem; see Isa. ii. 3. *And preached every where*; not only in Judea, and in the neighbouring countries, but all over the world, in process of time: *the Lord working with them*; making their ministry useful, for the conviction and conversion of large multitudes, and for the forming and settling abundance of Gospel churches, and for the comfort and edification of the saints; all which was done, by the power and grace of Christ, without whom they could do nothing; see 1 Cor. iii. 9. *And confirming the word with signs following*; the Arabic version adds *them*; or *which they did*, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it; not by their own power, but, as the latter of these versions adds, *by the help of our Lord*; see Heb. ii. 4. to all which, the evangelist puts his *Amen*; so let it be, or so it shall be, and so it was.

---

## THE GOSPEL, ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE.

---

THE writer of this Gospel, Luke, has been, by some, thought, as Origen<sup>a</sup> relates, to be the same with Lucius, mentioned in Rom. xvi. 21. but he seems rather to be, and without doubt is, Luke the beloved physician, who was a companion of the Apostle Paul in great part of his travels in the Gentile world: he came with him to Jerusalem, and from thence accompanied him to Rome, and continued with him when in prison, and was with him to the last; see Acts xvi. 10, 11, &c. Col. iv. 14. 2 Tim. iv. 11. Philem. v. 24. Jerom<sup>b</sup>, and others, say, he was a *physician* of Antioch in Syria; where it may be the Apostle Paul met with him, and might be the happy instrument of his conversion; so that he seems to be, by nation, a Syrian, as

Jerom<sup>c</sup> calls him. Grotius thinks his name is Roman, and that it is the contraction of Lucilius. It is not an Hebrew name, but might be in common use in Syria; for though the Jews reckon לוקא, *Lukus*, among foreign names, yet say<sup>d</sup> it was a very illustrious one, and well known to them, as it may well be thought to be if Syriac, the language being spoke by them: and many Jews lived in Syria, and particularly in Antioch. Some say that this Gospel was written by the advice, and assistance, and under the direction of the Apostle Paul, as the Gospel according to Mark was by that of Peter; though the following preface does not seem so well to accord with this. Eusebius says<sup>e</sup>, that it was the sense of the ancients, that whenever the Apostle Paul makes

<sup>a</sup> Apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 39.

<sup>b</sup> T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 14. 4. & Avoda Zara, fol. 40. 4. & Midrash Kohelet, fol. 81. 1.

<sup>c</sup> In Rom. xvi. 21.

<sup>d</sup> Catalog. Script. Eccles. sect. 17. fol. 91. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 4.

<sup>e</sup> Prefat in Luc.

<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 11. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

<sup>g</sup> Ubi supra.

mention of his Gospel, he intends this according to Luke. The time of the writing of it is not certain; some say it was written in the *fifteenth* year after the ascension of our Lord; others in the *twenty-second*; and others in the *twenty-seventh*. It is commonly thought to have been written after the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, according to the order in which it stands; but this is rejected by some learned men, who rather think that Luke wrote first of all: and indeed, there are some things in his preface which look as if there had not, as yet, been any authentic account published, at least which was come to the knowledge of this evangelist. The place where he wrote it is also uncertain. Jerom says, he wrote it in the parts of

Achaia, perhaps at Corinth: according to the titles prefixed to the Syriac and Persic versions, he wrote it in Alexandria: the former of these runs thus; "the Gospel of Luke, the Evangelist, which he spake and published in Greek in Alexandria the great." And the latter thus; "the Gospel of Luke, which he wrote in the Greek tongue in Alexandria of Egypt." However, 'tis agreed on all hands, that it is genuine, and of divine inspiration. Eusebius<sup>1</sup> relates, that it was affirmed by some, that this Gospel, together with those of Matthew and Mark, were brought to the Apostle John, who approved of them, and bore witness to the truth in them.

## C H A P. I.

Ver. 1. *FORASMUCH as many have taken in hand,* &c.] From hence, to the end of ver. 4. is a preface of the evangelist to his Gospel, setting forth the reasons of his writing it; and which he wrote and sent to the excellent Theophilus, for the further confirmation of him in the faith of Christ. It seems that many had took in hand, or attempted to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us; that is, they undertook to write and publish a very particular and exact narrative of the birth, life, actions, doctrines, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ; things which Luke, and other Christians, had the fullest and strongest evidence, and were confidently assured of, and most firmly believed, even with a full assurance of faith. By these many, he cannot mean the authentic historians of evangelical facts, as Matthew and Mark; for they two can't, with any propriety, be called many; and besides, it is not so very clear and certain a point, that they had, as yet, wrote their Gospels; nor would this evangelist suggest any deficiency, weakness, and inaccuracy in them, as he seems to do: nor does he intend such spurious writers as the authors of the Gospels according to the Nazarenes, Hebrews, and Egyptians; of Nicodemus, Thomas, Matthias, and of the twelve apostles; and still less, the Gospels of Cerinthus, Basilides, and other heretics; since these would not have passed without a censure from him, for the falsehood, fabulous, and trifling stuff in them, as well as for the wicked and heretical opinions propagated by them; and besides, these pieces were not extant when this Gospel was written: but he seems to design some honest and well-meaning Christians, who undertook to write, and did write an account of the above things, which were firmly believed by all; and which they took from the apostles, and first ministers of the Gospel, from their sermons and discourses, and from conversation with them; and which they committed to writing, partly to help their own memories, and partly for the benefit of others; in which, no doubt, they acted an upright part, though attended with weakness: wherefore, the evangelist does not censure them as false, wicked, and

heretical, nor approve of them as divine and perfect; for though they honestly meant, and designed well, yet there might be many things collected by them, which were impertinent, and not proper to be transmitted to posterity; and what might be wrote with great inaccuracy and deficiency, and in a style the Holy Ghost thought improper things of this kind should be delivered in: and therefore the evangelist, moved and inspired by the spirit of God, set about the following work, and under the same influence completed it. The phrase, *αὐταξοῦσαι δηγοῦναι*, to set forth in order a declaration, is, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, out of the Talmud<sup>2</sup>, agreeably to the Jewish way of speaking. "R. Chasdaï said to one of the Rabbins, who was *בוסרר אנרתא*, setting in order a declaration before him, &c. or relating in order a story before him."

Ver. 2. *Even as they delivered them unto us,* &c.] By whom the evangelist means, as appears from the after-description of them, the twelve apostles, and seventy disciples; who handed down to others the accounts of the birth, life, and death of Christ; and according to which the above Christians proposed to write: which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word; either of the Gospel, or rather of Christ himself, the eternal Word of God; for from the beginning of Christ's preaching the Gospel, or as soon as he entered upon his public ministry, he called his apostles, as Simon, Andrew, James, John, &c. and afterwards seventy disciples; who were eye-witnesses of him, of the truth of his incarnation, and of his ministry and miracles; saw, and conversed with him after his resurrection from the dead, and beheld his ascension to heaven; and were ministers that were called, qualified, and sent out by him, and waited on him, and served him. This shews, as is by some rightly observed, that Luke was not one of the seventy disciples, as some<sup>3</sup> have thought, and as the title of this Gospel, to the Arabic version of it, expresses; for then he would have been an eye-witness himself: nor did he take his account from the Apostle Paul; for he was not a minister of the word from the beginning, but was as one born out of due time.

<sup>1</sup> Præfat in Luc.

<sup>2</sup> Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 24.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Succa, fol. 53. 1.

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>1</sup> Epiphan. contra Hæres. l. 2. Hæres. 51. Theophylact. in Argument. in Luc.

Ver. 3. *It seemed good to me also, &c.*] Being moved to it by the Holy Ghost; for he did not undertake this work of himself, merely by the motion of his own will, but was influenced, and directed to it by the spirit of God, as well as by him assisted in it: *having had perfect understanding of all things*; relating to the subject of this Gospel, concerning the conception, birth, ministry, baptism, and death of John the Baptist; concerning the conception, birth, private and public life of Christ, together with his sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension. The Syriac and Persic versions refer the word *all* to persons, to the eye-witnesses and ministers of the word; rendering the clause thus, *who have been studiously near to them all*: and both senses may be taken in, and the meaning be, that Luke had diligently sought after, and had attained unto a perfect knowledge of all the affairs of Christ; having studiously got into the company of, and intimately conversed with all, or as many as he could, who had seen Christ in the flesh; and were, from the very first of his ministry, attendants on him, that he might have the most certain and exquisite account of things, that could be come at: *from the very first*; and to the last; from the conception of John, the forerunner of the Messiah, which is higher than any other evangelist goes, to the ascension of Christ; though some choose to render the word here used, *from above*, as it may be, and sometimes is; and may signify, that the evangelist had his perfect knowledge of things by a revelation from above, by divine inspiration; and this moved him to write, and which he mentions, that Theophilus, to whom he writes, and every other reader, may depend, with certainty, on what is said in it. This clause is omitted in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, but is in all copies, and by all means to be retained: this being the case, these reasons prevailed upon him, as he says, *to write unto thee, in order, most excellent Theophilus*: which regards not so much the order of time, which he does not always strictly observe, as the particulars of things, related in order, and with great exactness: who this Theophilus was, to whom he writes his Gospel, cannot be said; by his title, which is such as was given to governors of provinces, as to Felix and Festus, Acts xxiii. 26. and xxvi. 25. he seems to be, or to have been, a civil magistrate in some high office; for though not many rich, and mighty, yet some have been, and are, called by grace. Theophylact<sup>a</sup> says, he was of the order of the senators, and perhaps a nobleman, or prince: however, this name was not a general name, for every *lover of God*, as the word signifies, as Salvian<sup>1</sup> thought; but the name of a particular man, who believed in Christ, and was an acquaintance of Luke's; though Epiphanius<sup>m</sup> makes a doubt of it which it should be.

Ver. 4. *That thou mightest know the certainty, &c.*] The end the evangelist had in writing this Gospel, and sending it to Theophilus, was, that he might be more strongly assured of, and more firmly established in the truths of the Gospel. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it, *that thou mightest know the*

*truth*; that is, the certain truth of things: the truth he did in some measure know before, but Luke's view was, that he might have a more certain knowledge of it; both truth, and the certainty of it may be intended: so the Hebrew word, אִמּוּנָה, signifies both truth and firmness; and the word here used signifies such a certain evidence of things, as may be safely depended on; even of things, *wherein thou hast been instructed*; or catechised, signifying, that he had been hitherto taught, as a catechumen, the rudiments, and first principles of the Christian religion, by word of mouth; and he had taken them in upon the evidence they came with, and the authority of those that instructed him in them; and now he sent him in writing this account, to increase his knowledge, strengthen his faith, and to give him such a sure proof of things, as might preserve him safe in the belief of them, from all doubting and defection. Having finished his preface, he proceeds to the narrative itself, which begins as follows.

Ver. 5. *There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, &c.*] This was Herod, the son of Antipater, sometimes called Herod the Great, and is rightly here said to be the king of Judea; for, by deputation from the Roman emperor, he had the government of all Judea, which upon his death was divided among his sons. The phrase, *in the days of*, is an eastern way of speaking; see Gen. xiv. 1. Ruth i. 1. 1 Sam. xvii. 12. and intends the time of his reign; in which there was a *certain priest named Zacharias*: a name famous among the Jews, for an high-priest, who was slain by them in the court of the temple, 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21. and for one of the later prophets, Zech. i. 1. who were of this name. This man, the father of John the Baptist, was not an high-priest, as this character of him, and the work afterwards ascribed to him, shew; though he has been thought to be so by some; and John himself is so called by the Jews<sup>n</sup>: he was of the *course of Abia*. The Ethiopic version reads, *in the days of Abia*: and it has been the opinion of some, that Zacharias and Abia were two priests, who performed their ministry in succession, one after another; one ministered one time, and another at another time; but such betray their ignorance both of Scripture, and of Jewish affairs. In David's time, there was a division of the sons of Aaron into *twenty-four* orders, or courses; and this of Abia was one, and the *eighth* of them; see 1 Chron. xxiv. 1, 4, 10. The account the Jews<sup>o</sup> give of this matter, and in which they are not agreed, is this; "says Rab Chama bar Guria, says Rab, Moses ordered for the Israelites eight courses, four from Eleazar, and four from Ithamar; Samuel came and made them *sixteen*; David came and made them *twenty-four*." 'Tis a tradition, that Moses ordered for the Israelites sixteen courses, eight from Eleazar, and eight from Ithamar; and when the children of Eleazar increased above the children of Ithamar, they divided them, and appointed them *twenty-four*." The account, as given by Maimonides<sup>p</sup>, is as follows: "Moses, our master, divided the priests into eight courses, four from Eleazar, and four from Ithamar, and so they were

<sup>a</sup> Ut supra.

<sup>1</sup> Salonio Epijs. p. 337.

<sup>m</sup> Ut supra.

<sup>n</sup> Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 2.

<sup>o</sup> T Bab. Taanith, fol. 27. 1.

<sup>p</sup> Hilch. Cele Hamikdash, c. 4. sect. 3.



“until Samuel the prophet; and in the days of Samuel, he and David, the king, divided them into twenty-four courses; and over every course one head was appointed, and they went up to Jerusalem to the service of the course every week; and from sabbath to sabbath they changed; one course went out, and another came in, till they finished, and returned again.” Now of these there were but four courses returned from the Babylonish captivity, as appears from Ezra ii. 36—39. and with this the Jewish accounts agree. “The Rabbins teach, that four courses came up from the captivity, Jedaiah, Harim, Pashur, and Immer; the prophets that were among them stood up, and divided them, and appointed four-and-twenty lots, and put them into a box: Jedaiah came and took his lot, and the lot of his companions, six; Harim came and took his lot, and the lot of his companions, six; and so Pashur and Immer: and so the prophets that were among them taught, that if Jehoiarib, the first course, came up from captivity, he should not drive away Jedaiah out of his place; but Jedaiah should be the principal, and Jehoiarib an appendix to him.” Now, though the course of Abia did not return from captivity, yet its order and name were retained as the rest of the courses, being divided between these four by whom they were supplied; and therefore Zacharias is not said to be of the posterity of Abia, but of his course. To these courses there were added as many stations; and what they were, and their use, may be learnt from what follows. “The former prophets ordered four-and-twenty courses; and to every course there was a station at Jerusalem; consisting of priests, Levites, and Israelites: and when the time came for the course to go up, the priests and Levites went up to Jerusalem, but the Israelites, which were in that course, gathered themselves to their cities, and read in the history of the creation; and the men of the station fasted four days in the week, from the second day, to the fifth.” The sense of which, according to their commentators, is, that these stations were substituted in the room of, and represented all Israel; and their business was to give themselves up to divine worship, prayer, and sacrifices; and such of them as were near Jerusalem, when the time of their course came, assisted at the sacrifices; and such as were afar off, betook themselves to the synagogues in their cities, and there fasted, prayed, and read. And so another of their authors says, “there were twenty and four courses of the priests, and so twenty and four courses of the Levites; and every week the course of the priests and Levites goes to Jerusalem; and the twenty and four stationary men, half of them go thither, and half are left in their houses, and pray over the offerings:” for they had their stationary cities, where these men dwelt. Jericho was one: they say, “Jericho was able to produce a complete station itself; but because of dividing the glory to Jerusalem, it furnished out but half an one:” hence you need not wonder to hear of

a priest and Levite on the road to Jericho from Jerusalem, as in Luke x. 31, 32, for they say, in the same place; that twenty-four thousand, a station consisted of at Jerusalem, and there was half a station at Jericho: as for the heads of the courses of the houses of their fathers, “there were in a course five, six, seven, eight, nine of them; a course which had five (heads) in it, three offered three days, and two offered four days; a course in which were six, five offered five days, and one offered two days: a course in which were seven, every one offered on his day; a course in which were eight, six offered six days, and two offered one day; a course in which were nine, five offered five days, and four offered two days: and there were some that fixed themselves for ever; and a course that was (or began) on a sabbath-day, was always on a sabbath; and that which was at the going out of the sabbath, was always at the going out of the sabbath; and there were some of them that offered at every course: and there were some that cast lots at every course.” But to say no more of these courses and stations, I conclude with what Maimonides says of them: “it is not possible, that a man’s offering should be offered up, and he not stand by it; but the offerings of the congregation are the offerings of all Israel; and it is not possible that all Israel should stand in the court at the time of sacrifice: wherefore the former prophets ordered, that they should chose out of Israel men that were fit, and feared to sin, that they may be the messengers of all Israel to stand by the offerings, and these are called the men of the station; and they divided them into twenty and four stations, according to the number of the courses of the priests and Levites; and at every station one of them was appointed over them all, and he is called the head of the station; and every week the men of the station of that week gather together; and such of them as are in Jerusalem, or near to it, go into the temple, with the course of the priests and Levites of that week; and they who are in that station, that are at a distance, when their station comes, they gather together to the synagogue, which is in their place.” Then he goes on to give an account, as before, how often they fast in that week, how many prayers they say, and what they read. *And his wife was of the daughters of Aaron.* It is a saying of R. Jochanan; “he that would be rich, let him join himself to the seed of Aaron; for so it is, that the law and the priesthood make rich.—R. Idi bar Abin married a priestess, and from him proceeded that were made doctors, R. Shesheth, the son of R. Idi, and R. Joshua, the son of R. Idi.” This is not so much said in commendation of Zacharias, that he took a wife of the same tribe, and of the priestly line: for it was lawful for the tribe of Levi to take a wife of any other, because it did not make any alteration in the inheritances of tribes; and it is a rule with the Jews\*, that priests, Levites, and

\* T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 27. 1, 2. Eracin, fol. 12. 2. & 13. 1. T. Hieros. Taanith, fol. 68. 1.

\* Misn. Taanith, c. 4. sect. 2. 3.

\* Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

\* Piske Toseph. Moed Katon, art. 69.

\* Misn. Bicerorin, c. 2. sect. 2. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

\* T. Hieros. Taanith, fol. 67. 4.

\* Ib. fol. 68. 1.

\* Hilch. Ccle Hamikdash, c. 6. sect. 1, 2.

\* T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 49. 1.

\* Misn. Kiddushin, c. 4. sect. 1.

Israelites, might marry with one another; as Mary, who was of the tribe of Judah, was akin to Elizabeth: but to point the original of John, and shew of what extraction he was, his father and mother being both of the family of Aaron. *And her name was Elizabeth*; the same name with אלישבע, *Elisheba*, the wife of Aaron, Exod. vi. 23. and whom the Septuagint interpreters there call, as here, Elizabeth: and this being the name of Aaron's wife, it is very probable it might be a common name among the daughters of Aaron, in succeeding generations.

Ver. 6. *And they were both righteous before God, &c.*] Not as the Pharisees, only righteous before men, but in the sight of God, who sees the heart, and whose judgment is according to truth; and therefore were not justified by the deeds of the law; for by them no man can be justified in the sight of God; but were made righteous through the righteousness of Christ, by which the saints were made righteous before the coming of Christ, as those after it: see Acts xv. 11. Rev. xiii. 8. God beheld them in his son, as clothed with that righteousness he engaged to bring in, and as cleansed from all sin in that blood of his which was to be shed: and they appeared to him, and in the eye of his justice, and according to his law, righteous persons: though this character may also regard the internal holiness of their hearts, and the truth and sincerity of grace in them: which God, who trieth the hearts and reins of the children of men, knew, took notice of, and bore testimony to: as likewise their holy, upright walk and conversation before men, and which was observed by God, and acceptable to him, though imperfect, as arising from a principle of grace, being performed in the faith and fear of him, and with a view to his glory, and for the sake, and through the righteousness of his son. *Walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord*: this was not the matter of their righteousness before God, but the evidence of it before men: by the *commandments* are meant, all those that are of a moral nature, which regarded their duty to God and man, and which are comprehended in love to both; and by the *ordinances of the Lord*, are intended the injunctions and institutions of the ceremonial law, which is called the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, which, though now abolished, were then in force: and it was right and commendable in them to observe them, who, by their *walking* in them, shewed they loved them, both one and the other; esteemed them, concerning all things to be right; and had respect to them all, and observed them, and took pleasure in walking in them, which, by the grace of God, they continued to do; for walking not only shews that these commands and ordinances were a way marked out for them, but in which they took pleasure, and made progress: and were *blameless*; not that they were without sin, as none are; and it appears from this chapter that Zacharias was not, see ver. 20. but they were so in the sight of God; as they were justified by the righteousness of Christ, so they were without fault before the throne, and unreprouvable before

God; and as to their moral and religious character and conduct before men, they did not indulge themselves in any known sin, but lived in all good conscience among men: nor were they remiss and negligent in the discharge of duty: they were not guilty of any notorious breach of the law of God, or of any remarkable negligence in the business of religious observances: and though they might observe enough in them to charge themselves with, and to humble themselves before God and men; yet so strict were they in their lives and conversations, that those who were the most intimately acquainted with them, had nothing very material to blame them for.

Ver. 7. *And they had no child, &c.*] Son or daughter: and which was accounted a great infelicity: but this was not owing to the judgment of God upon them for any sins they had been guilty of, as the above character of them shews: and it had been the case of some righteous pairs before them for a great while, as Abraham and Sarah, Manoh, and his wife, Elkanah and Hannah: *because that Elizabeth was barren*; so that it was peculiarly her case, and not Zacharias's: and though God had promised the people of Israel that there should be no male nor female barren among them, Deut. vii. 14. yet there were instances and exceptions to this general rule, as before mentioned, when it was the pleasure of God to make himself known, and magnify his power in the extraordinary conception and birth of any person; and therefore, though barrenness was reckoned a reproach to a person, there was, in this case, a particular hand of God, to answer a special purpose: the signs of sterility are, according to the Jews<sup>b</sup>, when a woman had not breasts as other women have, her voice gross, so that it could not be discerned, whether it was a man's or a woman's, &c. *and they both were now well stricken in years*; which made the conception and birth of John the more extraordinary, and even miraculous, and so the belief of it the more difficult; see Gen. xvii. 17. It may be literally rendered, *they had proceeded*, or had far advanced *in their days*: it is an *Hebraism*, and answers to, נִאִים בְּיָמַי, in Gen. xviii. 11. Josh. xiii. 1. and xxiii. 1, 2, and 1 Kings i. 1. where the Septuagint render it by the same phrase as here. The Mahometan writers Beidavi and Jallallo'din say<sup>c</sup>, that Zacharias was *ninety-nine* years of age, and his wife *eighty-nine*.

Ver. 8. *And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office, &c.*] To which he was called and ordained, even to offer gifts and sacrifices for men; whilst he was in the way of his duty, when oftentimes God appears to, and in favour of his people; whilst he was performing it, *before God*; in the temple, where was the symbol of the divine presence, before the altar of the Lord; and as having the fear of God before his eyes; considering himself as in the sight of God, and doing his work faithfully and sincerely: *in the order of his course*; taking his turn in the order of the course of Abia, to which he belonged; see the note on ver. 5.

Ver. 9. *According to the custom of the priest's office,*

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 80. 2. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Yebamot, c. 1 sect. 1. & Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, c. 2. sect. 6.

<sup>c</sup> In Koran, c. 3.

&c.] In which, every man took his part in the execution of it by lot; and which was not an original settled law of God; but a custom, which, in process of time, through the number of the priests, took place, and prevailed: the occasion of it was this; "at first, whoever would, might sweep the altar, or cleanse it"—it happened that two alike ran, and came up to the ascent of the altar, and one thrust down the other, and he fell, and his leg was broke; and when the sanhedrim saw that they came into danger, they ordered that they should not cleanse the altar, but by lot<sup>d</sup>. And so likewise all other sorts of service were settled by lot: his lot was to burn incense, when he went into the temple of the Lord; where was the altar of incense, and which was burnt upon it morning and evening; see Exod. xxx. 1, 7, 8. and was typical of the continual intercession of Jesus Christ; and this part of service was assigned him by lot. The priests used to cast lots, what part they should take in the service of the temple, in the order of the course, to which they belonged<sup>e</sup>. "There were four lots there, and this was the first lot (*i. e.* to cleanse the altar); the second lot was, who should slay (the sacrifice,) who should sprinkle (the blood), who should remove the ashes from the innermost altar, who should cleanse the candlestick, who should bring the members (or parts of the sacrifice) to the ascent of the altar—the third lot was, ye new ones, to the incense come, וְהִפִּיטוּ, and cast lots; and the fourth, ye new ones, with the old ones, who shall bring up the parts from the ascent of the altar to the altar." And this was not only the case on the day of atonement, to which these rules belong; but every day in the daily service and sacrifice, when the same rules were observed, as appears from the rubrick of the daily sacrifice<sup>f</sup>: "the president said unto them (the priests), come and cast lots who shall slay, who shall sprinkle, who shall remove the ashes from the innermost altar, who shall remove the ashes from the candlestick, who shall bring up the parts to the ascent of the altar, &c." Again<sup>g</sup>, "he says to them, O ye new ones, to the incense come, and cast lots; and they cast lots, and he is worthy, whom he accounts worthy—and he that is accounted worthy of the incense, takes a vessel, and the vessel is like to a large golden bushel, that holds three kabs, and a bowl in the middle of it, full and heaped up with incense, with a cover, and a sort of a linen cloth put over it." And it is afterwards said<sup>h</sup>, "he that is worthy of the incense, takes the bowl out of the vessel, and gives it to his friend, or he that is near to him; and if it is scattered from it, in the midst of it, he puts it into his fist; and they teach him, saying, take care that thou dost not begin before thy face, that thou art not burnt: when he begins, he spreads it and goes out; and he that burns incense, may not do it, until the president says, burn incense." The account Maimonides gives<sup>i</sup> of this matter, is as follows; "all the services that they do every day,

"they do, סִפִּיטוּ, by lot; and how do they do it? All the priests of the houses of the fathers, of the day, go into the paved chamber, after the pillar of the morning has ascended, and clothe themselves with the priestly garments; and the president who is over the lots is with them, and they stand in a circle; and the president takes a mitre from off the head of one of them, and goes round with it, and the man from whom he begins to number, and they cast lots, as has been explained—how do they cast lots? they stand in a circle, and agree upon a number, eighty, a hundred, or a thousand, or whatsoever number they may agree upon; and the president says to them, put out your fingers, and they put out their fingers, one, or two; and if one puts out three, they number him three; and they don't put out the thumb in the sanctuary, because of deceivers; for the thumb is short, and easy to be put out, and to bend; and he that puts out the thumb, they don't number for him: and the president begins to number from the man that is known, whose mitre he took off first, and he numbers by their fingers, and returns in the round, until he has perfected the number they agreed upon; and the man that completes the number with his finger, he is he that goes out by the first lot to service: and why does he number the number they agree upon, by their fingers that they put out, and does not number them by the men themselves? because it is forbidden to number Israel, but by means of another thing; as it is said, 1 Sam. xv. 4. *And numbered them in Telaim.* There were four lots they cast every day in the morning; the first lot was, who should cleanse the altar: they cast lots, and he was worthy that was accounted worthy to cleanse it; and he sets the row in order, and brings up the two pieces of wood to the altar, and he brings in the censer full of fire, from the outer altar, to the golden altar, to burn incense upon it: and the second lot, thirteen were worthy of it, according to the order of their standing; how? the president says to them, put out your fingers, and he numbers in the way that has been explained; and he that goes out by the first lot, is he that slays the daily sacrifice of the morning; and the second that stands by his side, is he that receives the blood of the daily sacrifice, and sprinkles it; and the third that is next to the second, receives the ashes from the innermost altar, which is the altar of incense; and the fourth, that is by his side, cleanses the candlestick, and trims the lamps; and the fifth brings up the head of the daily sacrifice, and its leg to the ascent of the altar: and the sixth brings up the two shoulders; and the seventh brings up the extreme part of the back-bone, and the other leg; and the eighth brings up the breast and the gullet; and the ninth brings up the two sides; and the tenth brings up the inwards; and the eleventh brings up the fine flour, and the drink-offerings; and the twelfth brings up the things that were fried; and the thirteenth brings up the wine

<sup>d</sup> Misa. Yoma, c. 2. sect. 1, 2.

<sup>e</sup> Ib. c. 2, 3, 4.

<sup>f</sup> Misa. Tamid, c. 3. sect. 1.

<sup>g</sup> Ib. c. 5. sect. 2, 4.

<sup>h</sup> Misa. Tamid, c. 6. sect. 3.

<sup>i</sup> Hiehot Tamidin, c. 4. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 25. 1. & Gloss in fol. 22. 1. & Maimon. & Bartenora in Misg. Yoma, c. 2. sect. 1.

“ of the drink-offerings: the third lot, the president says to them, *even* to all the men of the house of the father of that day, whoever has never burnt incense, let him come and *cast lots*; and they gather together to the president, and cast lots; and he that goes out by the lot first, he is he that is worthy to burn incense; the fourth lot, they all gather together, and cast lots to know who shall bring up the parts from the ascent of the altar, to the altar; they cast lots, and he is worthy who is accounted worthy: the daily evening sacrifice, they don't cast another lot for it; but every priest that is worthy of any service of the services of the morning, is worthy of the evening, except that of the incense; for they cast another lot for that in the evening; and every one may come, who has never burnt incense of the men of that house of the fathers, and cast lots for it; but if they have all of them burnt incense already, they all of them cast lots, in the morning, at the third lot; and he that is worthy of it in the morning, burns incense in the evening.” Hence it appears, that the burning of incense, as other parts of the priest's service, was by lot; and that they were new priests, or such who had never burnt incense, that cast lots for it: for it is a tradition<sup>k</sup>, that no man ever burnt incense twice; the reason assigned for it is, because it makes a man rich; and therefore that every one might partake of the blessing in their turns, new ones were called unto it: whether Zacharias had ever burnt incense before, and whether he now did it in the morning or evening, is not certain.

Ver. 10. *And the whole multitude of the people were praying without, &c.*] In the court of the Israelites, whilst Zacharias was in the holy place; though not in the holy of holies, where only the high-priest entered: it looks, as Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, as if this was on a sabbath-day, since there was such a multitude of people together; for on the week-day, there were only the priests and Levites of the course, and the stationary men, which represented the Israelites, and some of the more devout sort of the people; but here was the whole multitude of the people; or as the Ethiopic version renders it, *all the people were in a full congregation praying*: prayer, was wont to be made at the time of incense; hence it is compared to it, Psal. cxli. 2. And hence it is, that Christ is said to offer up the prayers of all saints, with his much incense, Rev. viii. 3, 4. *in the time of incense*: whether it was morning or evening, the people were obliged to be at a distance, whilst that was burning; the Jewish canons confirm this<sup>l</sup>: “ in the time they burn the incense in the temple every day, פורשין כל העם, *they separate all the people, from the temple, and from between the porch and the altar; there is not a man there, till he comes out that burns the incense.*”

Ver. 11. *And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord, &c.*] Gabriel, as seems manifest from ver. 19, 26, 36. the same angel that had appeared to Daniel, about the time of the evening oblation, near five hundred years before, and gave him an account of the

time of the Messiah's coming, Dan. ix. 21. The Jews sometimes speak of divine and wonderful appearances to their priests, at such times, and in such places: “ it is a tradition that R. Ishmael ben Elishah should say, one time I went in, לרוקמי קשרת, *to burn incense*: and I saw Actariel (one of the names of God with them) the Lord, the Lord of hosts, who was sitting on a throne, high and lifted up.” And so they say of Simeon the just, that there was always an appearance when he went into the holy of holies; 'tis related thus: “ Simeon the just, ministered unto Israel in the high-priesthood, forty years; and in the last year, he said to them, I shall die this year: they said to him, from whence dost thou know it? He replied to them, every year that I have entered into the holy of holies, there was, וקן אדר, *one old man*, clothed in white, and veiled in white, that went in with me, and came out with me; and this year he went in with me, but did not come out with me.” And according to Josephus<sup>o</sup>, the high-priest Hyrcanus received an oracle, or answer from God, as he was offering incense; so that the Jews ought not to discredit such an appearance to Zacharias: *standing on the right side of the altar of incense*: of which, see Exod. xxx. 1—10. and xxxv. 25—28. the situation of it, according to the Jews, was this<sup>p</sup>: “ the table (of shew-bread) was in the north, two cubits and a half distant from the wall; and the candlestick was in the south, two cubits and a half distant from the wall; and the altar (of incense) was in the middle, and stood between them.” And to this agrees the account of Maimonides<sup>q</sup>, who says, “ the candlestick was on the south, on the left hand, as you go in; and the table of shew-bread on the right hand, and both of them on the side of the holy of holies without; and the altar of incense was between them both without.” So that it was on the north side that the angel stood.

Ver. 12. *And when Zacharias saw him, &c.*] The angel; he was troubled, and fear fell upon him; for such appearances of angels were not now so common as formerly: and when they were more usual, generally had such effects on the minds, even of good men; see Judges vi. 22. Dan. viii. 17.

Ver. 13. *But the angel said unto him, fear not, Zacharias, &c.*] He calls him by his name; for holy men are known to angels in person, and by name; to whom they are ministering spirits, and for whose good they are concerned; and bid him not be afraid, as the angel also said to the women at Christ's sepulchre, Matt. xxviii. 5. for he saw by his countenance and gestures, that he was greatly surprised and terrified at the sight of him: *for thy prayer is heard*; which he had many years ago put up for a son; for it cannot be thought that he had been now praying for one, being in such an advanced age, and having for years past given up all hopes of one, and was even unbelieving, when he was told by the angel he should have one: prayer is sometimes immediately heard, and answered; and sometimes an answer is deferred a

<sup>k</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 56. 1.

<sup>l</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Tamidin, c. 3. sect. 3. 9. & Yom. haecipurim, c. 4. sect. 9. Vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 44. 1.

<sup>m</sup> T. Bab. Beraot, fol. 7. 1.

<sup>n</sup> T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 42. 3.

<sup>o</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 13. c. 18.

<sup>p</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 33. 2.

<sup>q</sup> Hilch. Beth Habbechira, c. 7. sect. 7.

long time, to try the faith and patience of the saints, and to discover the more the wisdom, power, and goodness of God: or this may have regard to his present prayer, one branch of which might concern the coming of the Messiah, which was now expecting, and therefore is told, that his prayer was heard; since the angel that appeared to him, brought him the news of the conception and birth of his forerunner: *and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son; who had been always barren, and was called so, ver. 7, 36. And thou shalt call his name John; in Hebrew, Jochanan, and signifies gracious; a fit name for one that was filled with the gifts and graces of the spirit; and was the harbinger of the Messiah, who is full of grace and truth; and the usherer-in of the Messiah's kingdom, which is a dispensation of grace.*

Ver. 14. *And thou shalt have joy and gladness, &c.]* Not only because of his having a son; but because this his son would be the prophet of the Highest; would go before the Lord, and prepare his ways; give knowledge of salvation to many, and light to them that were in darkness, and guide their feet in the way of peace: all which, and more, he afterwards expresses in his song, whereby this part of the angel's prediction had its accomplishment: *and many shall rejoice at his birth: as the neighbours and cousins of his parents did; see ver. 58. and not only they, but all others, who afterwards had knowledge of him as a prophet, and as the forerunner of the Messiah.*

Ver. 15. *For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, &c.]* Of Jehovah, the Father; with whom, what is highly esteemed among men, is oftentimes an abomination; and of the Lord Jesus Christ, before whom he was to go, and who pronounced him a prophet, and more than a prophet, and even greater than any born of women, Matt. xi. 9, 11. and of the Lord, the spirit, with whom he was filled from his mother's womb: he was great, not in birth and blood, in worldly riches and grandeur, but in gifts and grace, in his work, office, and usefulness, and in the esteem of God, and even of men too: *and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink: which were forbidden the Nazarites, Numb. vi. 3. where the Jews, by wine, understand new wine; and by strong drink, old wine: so all the three Targums, of Onkelos, Jonathan ben Uzziel, and the Jerusalem, paraphrase the words there, from wine new and old, he shall separate himself; and they allow strong drink to a Nazarite, that has no wine in it: their canon runs thus, "three things are forbidden a Nazarite, defilement, and shaving, and whatever proceeds from the vine, whether fruit, or the refuse of fruit; but strong drink made of dates, or dried figs, and such like, is free for a Nazarite; and the strong drink which is forbidden him in the law, is strong drink made of mixture of wine." But the Hebrew word, שכר, and which is here retained by the evangelist, signifies any sort of liquor, which is inebriating, whether it is made of fruits, or honey, or what not. The Jews had no such strong drink as ours, which we call beer or ale; but they speak of the strong drink of the Medes, which they say was an inebriating liquor,*

made of barley: *and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb; or whilst in his mother's womb, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, render it: like Jeremy, he was sanctified, set apart, and ordained to be the prophet of the Highest, before he came out of his mother's womb; and was then under such an influence of the spirit of God, as to leap in it for joy, at the salutation of the mother of Christ to his, ver. 41, 44. and very early appeared to have the extraordinary gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, qualifying him for his work.*

Ver. 16. *And many of the children of Israel, &c.]* To whom only, or at least chiefly, he was sent, and came preaching, and administering the ordinance of baptism; and great multitudes of them flocked unto him, attended on his ministry, believed in his doctrine, and submitted to his baptism, but not all; for some slighted his preaching, and rejected his baptism: however, some there were, and many too, that were converted under his ministry, confessed their sins, and were baptized by him; which verified this prediction: *shall he turn to the Lord their God; not Jehovah, the father; for though he was the Lord God of the Jews in general, and of those that were turned by John's ministry in a special manner; yet John cannot be said to go before him, as he is in the next verse; but the Messiah is here meant, who is the Lord Jehovah, and is often so called in the Old Testament; particularly in a prophecy afterwards respected, Isa. xl. 3. a name peculiar to God alone: and who also is called God, as he is frequently with additional epithets; as the mighty God, God over all, the great God, the true God, and eternal life; and our, your, and their God, the God of his covenant people, whether Jews or Gentiles; see Isa. xxv. 9. and xxxv. 4. Conversion, which is meant by turning to God, is not man's work, but God's; and is effected by his mighty power, which is only equal to it; but John was to be, and was, an instrument of the conversion of many among the Jews, by preaching the doctrine of repentance towards God, and faith in the Messiah, that was just ready to come: he was the means in the hand of God, of turning many from sin, of bringing them to a true sense of it, and to an hearty and ingenuous confession and acknowledgment of it; and from trusting to, and depending upon, their birth-privileges, legal duties, and self-righteousness; and from their gross notions of a temporal Messiah; and of leading them to believe in Christ as a spiritual Saviour, as the Lamb of God, that should take away the sin of the world.*

Ver. 17. *And he shall go before him, &c.]* The Lord his God, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose forerunner he was; the messenger of him, that according to the prophecies in Isa. xl. 3. Mal. iii. 1. was to go before him, and prepare his ways; as he did by his wonderful conception and birth, which made way for the more easy belief of the conception and birth of the Messiah, by a virgin; and by his preaching the doctrine of repentance, and administering the ordinance of baptism; which were done to awaken the people's expectation of the Messiah, and that he might be made

<sup>1</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Nezirut, c. 5. sect. 1.

<sup>2</sup> R. David Kimchi in Sepher Shorashim, rad. שכר.

<sup>3</sup> Misn. Pesach. c. 3. sect. 1. & Jarchi, Maimon. & Baftnora in ib.

manifest in Israel, and by pointing him out to them in his preaching: *in the spirit and power of Elias*: or Elijah, the Syriac and Persic versions add, *the prophet*: John the Baptist, and Elijah, were men much of the same spirit and disposition, and of like power, life, and zeal in religion; and therefore the one goes by the name of the other: they both much conversed in the wilderness; agreed in the austerity of their lives; their habit and dress were much alike; they were both restorers of religion, when very low, and much decayed; were famous for their faithfulness in reproving the vices of kings, and for their warm zeal for true religion, and for the persecution they endured for the sake of it: *to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children*; in Mal. iv. 6. which is the prophecy referred to, 'tis added, *and the heart of the children to their fathers*; which some understand, of his turning the degenerate offspring of the Jews, to the sentiments of their forefathers, and causing them to agree with them in their notions of the Messiah: others, of the turning of the Jews to Christ, and his apostles; and others, of his being a means, through his ministry and baptism, of reconciling Jews and Gentiles together, which is the great business of the Gospel dispensation, ushered in by John; and who preached that all men should believe in Christ, and baptized publicans and Roman soldiers, as well as Jews; and which sense pretty much agrees with the interpretation the Jews put upon the prophecy, as referring to Elijah the Tishbite, whom they expect in person, before the coming of the Messiah: say "they, "Elijah comes to defile and to cleanse (*i. e.* to "pronounce what things are clean or unclean), and to "remove afar off, and to bring near (*i. e.* to determine "what families are legitimate or illegitimate). R. Simeon says, *to compose differences*; and the wise men say, neither to remove, nor to bring near, but "לעשות שלום, *to make peace* in the world; as it is "said, *behold, I send unto you Elijah the prophet, &c.* "and he shall turn the heart of the fathers," &c. But the true meaning is, that John the Baptist, who is meant by Elias, should be an instrument of turning fathers with their children, and children with their fathers, to the Lord; that he should be a means of converting both fathers and children, one as well as another; and to gather persons of every age and station; for the particle ל, which we render *to*, is the same as ע, *with*, as Kimchi on the text observes: *and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just*. By the *disobedient* are meant, either Jews or Gentiles; some understand it of the Gentiles, who were children of disobedience, before the light of the Gospel came among them: but rather the former are meant, who were a disobedient, rebellious, and gainsaying people; who were gone off from the wisdom, knowledge, and religion, of the just, or righteous ones, their forefathers; who prophesied of Christ, rejoiced to see his day, longed for him, and believed in him: now John was to be an instrument of turning some of the unbelieving Jews, to the true knowledge of salvation by Christ; which their righteous progenitors waited for, had a right knowledge of, and an interest in: and of leading them either into the Gospel of Christ, that

wisdom of God in a mystery; the manifold wisdom of God, in which he has abounded in all wisdom and prudence: and which the righteous men among the Jews, searched diligently into, attained some knowledge of, and which even the holy angels desire to look into; so the patriarchs were called just, or righteous; as righteous Abel, just Noah, &c. and so the Jewish fathers: hence in the Targum on Jer. xii. 5. 6. and xxxi. 16, 21. mention is made of thy fathers, צדיקים, *the just*, who were of old: or to Christ himself, who is the wisdom of God, and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, to know him, and believe in him; who in the same Targum on Jer. xxxiii. 5. is called כשיור צדיקים, *the Messiah of the just*. *To make ready a people prepared for the Lord*. The Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, a *perfect people*: and the Persic version, *all the people*: not all the people of the Jews, but God's elect among them; who from all eternity were *prepared*, as a people in a covenant relation, as the portion of Christ, and as his spouse and bride, and as such, given to him; they were in electing grace, vessels of mercy, afore prepared for glory; and heaven, as a kingdom, was prepared for them from the foundation of the world: they were provided with all spiritual blessings, which were prepared for them, and bestowed on them in heavenly places, in Christ, before the foundation of the world; even all their grace, and all their glory; yea, even their good works are such, which God has fore-ordained, or fore-prepared that they should walk in. Now, the work of John the Baptist, was *to make ready* this people, by pointing out to them, in a ministerial way, wherein their readiness lay, to meet the Lord, and be for ever with him in heaven; not in a civil, moral, or legal righteousness; or in outward humiliation for, and abstinence from sin; nor in a submission to Gospel ordinances, and in a mere profession of religion, and in an observance of a round of duties; but in justification by the righteousness of Christ, and in regeneration and sanctification, by his spirit and grace; the one giving a right to, the other a meetness for the heavenly inheritance: and John, and so any other Gospel minister, may be said to make ready a people, in this sense; when they are the instruments of the regeneration and conversion of sinners, and of leading them to the righteousness of Christ, for their justification before God, and acceptance with him.

Ver. 18. *And Zacharias said unto the angel, whereby shall I know this? &c.*] Notwithstanding such an appearance of an angel to him, which in those times was not so usual, and this in the holy place; and the things themselves which were told him, and these as the return of prayer; yet he distrusted, and wanted a sign, whereby he might know the truth of them; as the Jews were generally desirous of, and as the father of them was; who expressed himself in much such language, on a certain occasion, as this his son did; see Gen. xv. 8. *For I am an old man*; at least sixty years of age; for with the Jews, sixty years were reckoned, ליקרה, *for old age*; and a man of these years, was accounted an old man: and the Jewish Rab-

<sup>2</sup> Misn. Ediot, c. 8. sect. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Misn. Abot, c. 5. sect. 21. & Maimon. in ib.

bins observe <sup>2</sup>, that the word for old age in Job xxx. 2. is by *gematry*, *sixty*; that is, the letters of the word, numerically make so much. The Mahometan writers, as before observed on ver. 7. make him to be ninety-nine years of age: he was not discharged from service; the Levites were at fifty, but not the priests; blemishes, as the Jewish writers say <sup>3</sup>, made them unfit for service, but years did not: and even the law concerning the Levites, they say <sup>4</sup>, only respected the time they carried the sanctuary from place to place, and not future generations; and that they are disqualified neither by blemishes, nor by years, only by voice, for singing of the song; but then they might be among the porters; so that they were not on that account laid aside from all service: *and my wife well stricken in years*. The Mahometan writers, as before, say, she was *eighty-nine*; a like objection Abraham made, though he afterwards got over it, and was strong in faith, giving glory to God, believing in his power and faithfulness; see Gen. xvii. 17.

Ver. 19. *And the angel answering, said unto him, I am Gabriel, &c.*] The name of an angel well known to Zacharias from Daniel's prophecies, Dan. viii. 16. and ix. 21. and is the first time we read of the name of an angel: the Jews say <sup>5</sup>, the names of angels came out of Babylon, by the means of the Israelites; and it was there that Daniel became acquainted with this name of Gabriel, and also of Michael. Frequent mention is made of Gabriel in the Jewish writings <sup>6</sup>: were there a particular angel appointed over conception, as the Jews say <sup>7</sup> there is, one would be ready to think it should be Gabriel, since he was sent to declare the conception and birth both of John the Baptist, and of our Lord Jesus Christ: the name of that angel the Jews indeed say <sup>8</sup> is Lilah; but yet the Cabalistic doctors <sup>9</sup> affirm, that that angel is under Gabriel. In what language this angel spoke to Zacharias, and afterwards to Mary, may be a needless inquiry; but since the Syriac language was generally spoken, and understood by the Jews at this time, 'tis highly reasonable that he spoke to them in that. The Jews have a notion, that none of the ministering angels understand the Syriac language, excepting Gabriel; and he, they say, understood seventy languages <sup>10</sup>. Now the angel, by making mention of his name, puts Zacharias in mind of the prophecy of Daniel concerning the coming of the Messiah, which he had from him; and whereas his name signified, *a man of God, or the power, or strength of God, or God is my strength*, he suggests unto him, that he ought not to have distrusted his words, since with God all things are possible: he adds, *that stand in the presence of God*; beholding his face, hearkening to his voice, and ministering to him, and so had this affair immediately from him: and therefore he had no reason to doubt of the accomplishment of it. Gabriel, according to the Jews, is one of the four angels that surround the throne of

God: their names are Michael, Uriel, Raphael, and Gabriel <sup>11</sup>. "Michael they place at his right hand, and "Uriel at his left hand, and Gabriel, בלפניו, *before him*, (in his presence, as he here says of himself,) "over against the kingdom of Judah, and Moses and "Aaron, who were in the east (of the camp of Israel); "and why is his name called Gabriel? of Judah it is "written, 1 Chron. v. 2. *for Judah, נבר, prevailed above his brethren*; and of Moses it is written, Lev. "i. 1. and *God called unto Moses*; and it is written, "Isa. ix. 6. and shall call his name *Wonderful, Counselor, אל נור, the mighty God, lo! Gabriel*." *And am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew unto thee these glad tidings*: wherefore, on account of his name, his office, and his mission, especially the subject of it being welcome news, good tidings, what he said ought to have obtained credit with him. Gabriel was one of the ministering spirits sent to minister to them that were heirs of salvation; his messages were messages of mercy, grace and love; he was not a minister of the wrath and vengeance of God, but of his favour. Agreeably to this the Jews say of him, that his name Gabriel is, by *gematry*, or numerically, the same with רחם, *merciful* <sup>12</sup>: he is called, in the Talmud <sup>13</sup>, רוח פסקנית, *the decisive spirit*, and is said to have three names, Piskon, Itmon, and Sigron. He is called Piskon, because he decides, or determines judgment against them that are above; and Itmon, because he stops up the sins of the Israelites; and Sigron, because when he shuts (the gates of judgment) there is none can open again. Hence also they say, that he is the angel that is appointed over water which quenches fire. The Targumist on Job xxv. 2. paraphrases the words thus: "Michael on the right hand, who is over fire; and Gabriel "on the left hand, who is over water; and the holy "creatures mingle fire and water, and by his dominion "and fear, make peace in his heaven of heavens."

Ver. 20. *And behold, thou shalt be dumb, &c.*] Or *silent*; and not able to speak, if he would. Silence is sometimes voluntary; but this was what he could not help: *until the day that these things shall be performed*; which he had said concerning the conception and birth of a son, and the imposition of a name on him; for this dumbness remained upon Zacharias, not only until his wife had conceived, and the child was born, but until the eighth day after, when he was circumcised, and his name was given him the angel directed to: *because thou believest not my words*: he was struck both deaf and dumb, as appears from his friends making signs to him, ver. 62. which they had no need to have done, could he have heard: he was struck with deafness, because he hearkened not to the angel's words; and with dumbness, because from the unbelief of his heart he objected to them. We learn from hence, what an evil unbelief is, and how much resented by God, and how much it becomes us to take heed, that it prevails not in us: and especially since it easily

<sup>2</sup> R. Sol. Urbin. Obel Moed, fol. 24. 2.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 24. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Cele Hamikdash, c. 3. sect. 8.

<sup>5</sup> T. Hieros. Rosh Hashana, fol. 56. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Targum Jon. in Exod. xxiv. 10. Targum in Eth. iv. 12. & in Psal.

cxviii. 8. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 19. 3. Shemot Rabba, fol. 91. 2.

Sithre Tora in Zohar in Gen. fol. 65. 3. & 66. 2.

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>11</sup> Targum in Job. iii. 3.

<sup>12</sup> T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 16. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Lex. Cabbal. p. 230.

<sup>14</sup> T. Bab. Sota, fol. 23. 1. & Tosephot in Sabbath, fol. 12. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 179. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Lex. Cabbal. p. 230.

<sup>17</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 44. 2.

besets us: *which shall be fulfilled in their season*; first the conception, then the birth; after that the calling him by his name, and in process of time, the doing of his work and office; so that the unbelief of Zacharias did not make the faith of God of none effect; for though sometimes the people of God are very unbelieving, yet he abides faithful to his word and promises. Mahomet, in his Alkoran<sup>2</sup>, very wrongly makes the angel to say these words to Zacharias; “thy sign shall be, that thou shalt speak unto no man for three days, otherwise than by gesture.” And elsewhere<sup>1</sup> ’tis said three nights.

Ver. 21. *And the people waited for Zacharias, &c.*] That were without, in the court of the Israelites, praying there, while he was offering incense: these were waiting for his coming out, in order to be blessed by him, according to Numb. vi. 23, 24, 25, 26: and he dismissed: *and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple*; beyond the usual time of burning incense; which might be occasioned either by a longer discourse of the angel with him than what is here related; or being struck with amazement at the sight and hearing of the angel, he might continue long musing on this unexpected appearance and relation; or he might spend some time not only in meditation upon it, but in mental prayer, confession, and thanksgiving. The high-priest, when he went in to burn incense on the day of atonement, “made a short prayer in the outward house, (in the temple,) and he did not continue long in his prayer, *שלא לרבעית, that he might not affright the Israelites*,” thinking that he was dead; for many high-priests that were unfit for, or made alteration in the service, died in the holy of holies. “It is reported<sup>o</sup> of one high-priest, that he continued long in his prayer, and his brethren, the priests, thought to have gone in after him; and they began to go in, and he came out; they say unto him, why didst thou continue long in thy prayer? he replied to them, is it hard in your eyes that I should pray for you, and for the house of the sanctuary, that it might not be destroyed? they answered him, be not used to do so; for we have learned, that a man should not continue long in prayer, that he may not affright Israel.” This high-priest, they elsewhere say<sup>p</sup>, was Simeon the just.

Ver. 22. *And when he came out, he could not speak unto them, &c.*] Or deliver the benediction they were waiting for: *and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple*; which he made them to understand, by the gestures he used: *for he beckoned unto them*; by nodding his head, or by some motions of his hands; the Ethiopic version adds, *with his hand*; or of his lips; for the signs of a dumb man are distinguished into *קפיצה* and *רמיצה*<sup>q</sup>; the one is a sign which is expressed by the head and hands; and the other is a sign expressed by the lips: hence that rule<sup>r</sup>, “a dumb man beckons, and is beckoned to; and Ben Bethira says, he moves his lips, and lips are moved

to him:” *and remained speechless*; to the time the angel fixed.

Ver. 23. *And it came to pass, that as soon as the days of his ministration, &c.*] In the order of the course, which might be three, four, five, or six days, according to the number of the heads of the house of their fathers in the course; see the note on ver. 5. *were accomplished*: for though he was deaf and dumb, he was not hereby disqualified for service. Deafness and dumbness excused persons from various duties<sup>s</sup>, but did not disqualify priests: a *Levite*, if he had lost his voice, was disqualified, but not a priest<sup>t</sup>; the reason was this, because it was one part of the work of the *Levites* to sing, and therefore could not perform it without a voice; but such was the work of the priests, that though deaf and dumb, they could discharge it; as cleansing the altar, trimming the lamps, carrying the parts to the altar, laying them upon it, and burning them, or offering any sacrifice, burning incense, &c. which was the business of Zacharias; which when he had fulfilled, he *departed to his own house*; which was not at Jerusalem, but in the hill-country, in a city of Judah there; see ver. 39, 40.

Ver. 24. *And after those days, &c.*] The days of his ministration in the temple, quickly after his return home; the Ethiopic version reads, *after two days: his wife Elisabeth conceived*; according to the angel’s prediction, and notwithstanding her barrenness, and the unbelief of her husband; *and hid herself five months*. The Arabic and Persic versions render it, *hid her bigness*; but there could be no occasion to take any methods to hide this, since, if she said nothing of it herself, and there could be no suspicion of it in one of her years, it could not be much discerned in her by such a time; but she hid herself, or lived retired, that she might be fully satisfied that she was with-child, before she said any thing about it; and that she might not discover any pride or vanity on account of it; and to avoid all discourse with others about it, which might be rumoured abroad; and chiefly to shun all ceremonial uncleanness, which one, that bred a Nazarite, was obliged to; see Judg. xiii. 14. and most of all, that she might be retired, and spend her time in meditation upon the goodness of God, and in returning thanks to him for the favour she had received; *saying*; as in the following verse.

Ver. 25. *Thus hath the Lord dealt with me, &c.*] In a very gracious and bountiful manner; in giving her strength to conceive a son in her old age, and such an one that was to be great, and so useful in his day; of which her husband had doubtless informed her by writing, though he could not speak: *in the days wherein he looked on me*; with a favourable eye, with a look of love and mercy: *he took away my reproach from among men*; as barrenness was accounted, especially among the Israelites, the seed of Abraham; to whom was promised a numerous issue, as the stars in the sky, and as the sand on the sea-shore, and particularly the Messiah; see Gen. xxx. 23. Isa. iv. 1.

<sup>2</sup> C. 3. p. 46. Ed. Sale.

<sup>1</sup> C. 10. p. 249.

<sup>3</sup> Misn. Yoma, c. 5. sect. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>5</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 53. 2.

<sup>p</sup> T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 42. 3.

<sup>q</sup> Bartenora in Misn. Gittin, c. 5. sect. 7.

<sup>r</sup> Misn. ib.

<sup>s</sup> Misn. Trumot, c. 1. sect. 1, 2. Chagiga, c. 1. sect. 1.

<sup>t</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Cholin, c. 1. sect. 6.



Ver. 26. *And in the sixth month, &c.*] After Elisabeth's conception; for so long was John the Baptist conceived before Christ, and so long he was born before him; and it seems as if there was the same distance between the public ministry of the one, and the other: John was before Christ, as man, being his forerunner; but Christ was preferred unto him as mediator, and existed before him, as the eternal son of God: *the angel Gabriel was sent from God*; the same angel, that near five hundred years before gave Daniel an exact account of the time of the Messiah's coming, and six months ago acquainted Zacharias with the conception, birth, character, and office of his forerunner: *unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth*; the whole country of Galilee was mean and contemptible with the Jews: they observe, though through mistake, that no prophet arose out of it, John vii. 52. and Nazareth particularly was exceeding despicable in their eye: hence those words of *Nathanael, can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* John i. 46. see the note on Matt. i. 23. and yet hither an angel was sent by God; and here dwelt the mother of our Lord.

Ver. 27. *To a virgin, &c.*] A pure virgin, that never knew man; see ver. 34. and yet *espoused to a man whose name was Joseph*; but they were not come together, nor had he taken her for his wife, and home to his house, nor had they cohabited: *of the house of David*; which, according to the grammatical construction of the words, may be connected either with the virgin, or with Joseph, to whom she was espoused; and is true of both; for they both were of the house and lineage of David: and this shews what a low condition David's family was in, that the persons that were the nearest allied to it were a carpenter, and a poor virgin; and both residing in so despicable a place as Nazareth in Galilee: *and the virgin's name was Mary*; a name frequent among the Jews, and the same with Miriam; of which name was the sister of Moses and Aaron.

Ver. 28. *And the angel came in unto her, &c.*] Into her house, and into the room where she was: *and said, hail*; all health, happiness, and prosperity attend thee; see Matt. xxviii. 9. *thou art highly favoured*; or graciously accepted, or hast obtained grace; not referring to electing, redeeming; justifying, pardoning, adopting, and sanctifying grace, which she had in common with other saints; but to that special and particular favour, in being chose and singled out from all other women, to be the mother of the Messiah: *the Lord is with thee*; so the angel to Gideon, Judg. vi. 12. or *be with thee*, an usual form of salutation among the Jews; see Ruth ii. 4. *thou art blessed among women*; and will be pronounced so by other women, as she was by Elisabeth, ver. 42. and by another woman, Luke xi. 27.

Ver. 29. *And when she saw him, &c.*] The Persian version renders it, *when Mary saw the angel*; which expresses the true sense of the words, The Vulgate Latin reads, *when she heard*; i. e. the salutation: *she was troubled at his saying*; at his speaking to her; she was surprised at the sight of him, and more at

what he said to her; and *cast in her mind*, or thought, and reasoned within herself, *what manner of salutation this should be*; for it was not usual with the Jews for a man to use any salutation to a woman; with them it was not lawful to be done at all in any shape or form; not by a messenger, nor even by her own husband<sup>a</sup>; so that Mary might well be thrown into a concern what should be the meaning of this; and especially, that she should be addressed in such language, and saluted as a peculiar favourite of God, and blessed among women.

Ver. 30. *And the angel said unto her, &c.*] Observing the consternation and confusion she was in; *fear not, Mary*; he calls her by her name, signifying that she was well known to him, as the saints are to the ministering angels, who are often sent unto them, encamp about them, and do them many good offices; and bids her not be afraid, he had no ill design upon her, nor brought any ill news to her: *for thou hast found favour, or grace with God*; and what that particular grace and favour was, is expressed in the following verses.

Ver. 31. *And behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, &c.*] Though a pure virgin, which never knew a man; and therefore, a *behold*, is prefixed to it, as being what was extraordinary and wonderful; as it is also, in the prophecy of it, in Isa. vii. 14. to which the angel manifestly refers, and is, by Matthew, cited, as accomplished hereby; see the note on Matt. i. 22, 23. *and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus*; which signifies a Saviour; and a Saviour Christ is of God's appointing, providing, and sending; and a very suitable one, being a spiritual Saviour, and a complete one, both able and willing to save to the uttermost all that believe in him; nor is there any other, nor salvation in any other: he is the Saviour of his people, whom the father has given him, even of all the elect, whether of Jews or Gentiles; and of them from all their sins, and from all their enemies; and whom he saves with a spiritual and eternal salvation.

Ver. 32. *He shall be great, &c.*] In his person, as God-man; this child born, and son given, being the angel of the great counsel, the mighty God, and everlasting Father; see Isa. ix. 6. which is here referred to; and in his offices, in his prophetic office, being that great and famous prophet Moses spoke of, mighty in word and deed, in his doctrine and miracles; in his priestly office, being a great high-priest, both in the oblation of himself, and in his prevalent intercession; and in his kingly office, being the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and in the whole of his office, as Mediator, being a great Saviour, the author of a great salvation for great sinners; in which is greatly displayed the glory of all the divine perfections: great also in his works, the miracles that he wrought, as proofs of his Deity and Messiahship, the work of redemption, the resurrection of himself from the dead, and of all men at the last day; and in the glory he is now possessed of in human nature, at the father's right hand, where he is highly exalted above all principality and power: *and shall be called the Son of the Highest*; that is, of God, one of whose names is מְלִיךָ, the Most

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 70. 1, 2. Maimon. Milch. Issure Biab, c. 21.

*High*; see Gen. xiv. 18, 19, 20. not by creation, as angels and men, nor by adoption, as saints, nor by office, as magistrates, are called *the children of the Most High*, Psal. lxxxiii. 6. but by nature, being the eternal son of God; of the same nature with him, and equal to him: for he was not now to begin to be the son of God, he was so before, even from all eternity; but the sense is, that he should now be known, owned, and acknowledged to be the son of God, being as such manifested in human nature, and should be proved to be so by the works he wrought, and declared to be the son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead: *and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David*. Christ, as God, is the son of God, as man, the son of David; a name often given to the Messiah, and by which he was well known among the Jews; and as Christ descended from him as man, in a literal sense, he had a right to the throne of his father David; and the Jews themselves say, that he was *קרוב למלכותו*, *nearly allied to the kingdom*: but here it intends not his throne, in a literal, but in a figurative sense; for as David was a type of the Messiah in his kingly office, hence the Messiah is called *David their king*, Hos. iii. 5. so his throne was typical of the Messiah's throne and kingdom; which is not of this world, but is in his church, and is set up in the hearts of his people, where he reigns by his spirit and grace; and this is a throne and kingdom *given* by the Lord God. The kingdom of nature and providence he has by right of nature, as the son of the Highest; the kingdom of grace, or the mediatorial kingdom, the kingdom of priests, or royal priesthood, is a delegated one; his father has set him as king over his holy hill of Zion; and he is accountable for his government to him, and will one day deliver it up complete and perfect.

Ver. 33. *And he shall reign over the house of Jacob, &c.*] Not over the Jews, the posterity of Jacob, in a literal sense; but over the whole Israel of God, consisting of Jews and Gentiles. For as his father David reigned over the Idumeans, Syrians, and others, as well as over the house of Judah and Israel, so this his son shall reign over both Jews and Gentiles: his kingdom shall be from one end of the earth to the other, even over all the elect of God; who in successive generations call themselves by the name of Jacob, and surname themselves by the name of Israel, of whatsoever nation they be; and this reign of his shall be *for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end*; referring to Isa. ix. 7. see also Dan. ii. 44. and vii. 14. he shall reign in the hearts of his people here unto the end of the world; and with his saints a thousand years in the new heavens and new earth; and with them to all eternity, in the ultimate glory.

Ver. 34. *Then said Mary to the angel, how shall this be, &c.*] This she said not as doubting the truth of what was said; for she required no sign, as Zacharias did; nor is she charged with, and blamed for unbelief, as he was; yea, it is expressly said, ver. 45. that she believed: nor was this a curious question, as whether she should have this son by a man in a married state, or in her present virgin

state; for she clearly understood the angel to mean the latter; and therefore her words express her admiration at it, and also her desire to be informed of the manner how it should be: as to the matter of fact, she did not dispute it, but wanted to be resolved by what means it would be brought about: she knew, by prophecy, that the Messiah was to be born of a virgin, and she perceived, by the angel's declaration, that she was that virgin, but could not imagine in what way this amazing thing should be effected; and therefore proposes this question for the following reason, *seeing I know not a man? A husband, as the Arabic version renders it; not Joseph, nor any other man; for though she was espoused to Joseph, yet he had not taken her to wife; nor were they, as yet, come together; and before they did, she was found with-child of the Holy Ghost, Matt. i. 18. she was a pure virgin, untouched by man. The words are an euphemism, or a modest way of expressing carnal copulation; see Gen. iv. 1.*

Ver. 35. *And the angel answered and said unto her, &c.*] The angel gave her an account of the manner in which what he had said should be effected, as well as observed some things for the strengthening of her faith. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee.* The words, *upon thee*, are left out in the Syriac and Persic versions; but are retained in others, and in all copies: the formation of Christ's human nature, though common to all the three persons, yet is particularly, and most properly ascribed to the Spirit; not to the first person, the Father, lest it should be thought that he is only the Father of him, as man; nor to the second person, the Son, since it is to him that the human nature is personally united; but to the third person, the Spirit, who is the sanctifier; and who separated, and sanctified it, the first moment of its conception, and preserved it from the taint of original sin. His *coming upon* the virgin must be understood in consistence with his omnipresence, and immensity; and cannot design any local motion, but an effectual operation in forming the human nature of her flesh and substance; and not in the ordinary manner in which he is concerned in the formation of all men, Job xxxiii. 4. but in an extraordinary way, not to be conceived of, and explained. The phrase most plainly answers to *על גבי*, in frequent use with the Jews\*, as expressive of coition. *And the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.* By *the power of the Highest* is not meant the Lord Jesus Christ, who is sometimes called the power of God; but rather the Holy Ghost, as before, who is styled the finger of God, and power from on high, Luke xi. 20. and xxiv. 49. unless it should be thought that the perfection of divine power common to all the three persons is intended; and so points out the means by which the wondrous thing should be performed, even by the power of God; and which should not only be employed in forming the human nature of Christ, but in protecting the virgin from any suspicion and charge of sin, and defending her innocence and virtue, by moving upon Joseph to take her to wife. In the word, *overshadow*, some think there is

\* T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1.

\* Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 4. & passim alibi.

an allusion to the spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters, in Gen. i. 2. when, מְרַחֵם, he brooded upon them, as the word may be rendered; and which is the sense of it, according to the Jewish writers<sup>7</sup>; as a hen, or any other bird, broods on its eggs to exclude its young: and others have thought the allusion may be to הוּפֵת הַתְּנִיּוֹת<sup>8</sup>, the nuptial covering: which was a veil, or canopy, like a tent, supported on four staves, under which the bridegroom and bride were betrothed; or, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, 'tis a modest phrase alluding to the conjugal embraces, signified by a man's spreading the skirt of his garment over the woman, which Ruth desired of Boaz, Ruth iii. 9. though the Jewish writers say<sup>9</sup>, that phrase is לִשְׁקוֹן נִשְׁתָּחֵן, expressive of the act of marriage, or taking to wife. The phrase of being בְּרוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ, overshadowed, or covered with the spirit of prophecy, as the virgin also was, is used by the Targumist, on 1 Chron. ii. 55. *therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.* The human nature of Christ is here called a thing; for it was not a person; it never subsisted of itself, but was taken at once into union with the person of the son of God, otherwise there would be two persons in Christ, whereas he is God, and man, in one person; and it is said to be holy, being free from that original pollution and sin, in which all that descend from Adam, by ordinary generation, are conceived, and brought forth; and is, moreover, said to be born of a virgin, of thee, or out of thee. Christ's flesh was formed out of the virgin's; he took flesh of her; his body did not descend from heaven, or pass through her, as water through a pipe, as some heretics of old said: nor did his human nature, either as to soul or body, pre-exist his incarnation; but in the fulness of time he was made of a woman, and took a true body of her, and a reasonable soul, into union with his divine person; and therefore should be called the Son of God: not that he was now to become the son of God; he was so before his incarnation, and even from all eternity; but he was now to be manifested as such in human nature: nor does the angel predict, that he should, for this reason, be called the son of God; for he never was, on this account, so called, either by himself, or others: nor is the particle, therefore, causal, but consequential: the angel is not giving a reason why Christ should be the son of God, but why he should be owned, and acknowledged as such by his people: who would infer, and conclude from his wonderful conception and birth, that he is the Emmanuel, God with us, the child that was to be born, and the son given, whose name should be Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, &c. Isa. vii. 14. and ix. 6. Moreover, the word, also, is not to be overlooked; and the sense is, that seeing that human nature, which should be born of the virgin, would be united to the son of God, it likewise should bear the same name, being in personal union with him, who was so from all eternity.

Ver. 36. *And behold thy cousin Elisabeth, &c.* For though Elisabeth was of the daughters of Aaron, or

of the tribe of Levi by her father's side, yet might be of the tribe of Judah by her mother's side, and so akin to Mary. The Persic version calls her  *aunt by the mother's side*: intermarriages between the two tribes of Levi and Judah were frequent; nor were they at all contrary to the intention of that law, that forbid the tribes to intermarry, which was to preserve the inheritance in each tribe, since the tribe of Levi had none at all. Though she might be called her cousin in a more general sense; it being usual with the Jews to call all of their own nation their kinsmen and kinswomen, according to the flesh: but the former sense seems more agreeable; and so Mary is directed to her own family, and to her own relations, and known friends, for a sign, by which her faith might be confirmed, in what the angel had said unto her; for if she found the one to be true, she might conclude the other was also; which is as follows: *she hath also conceived a son in her old age*: though Mary asked no sign, yet one is given her, whereby she might know the truth of what was spoken: for if it should appear that Elisabeth had received strength to conceive, as was declared by the angel; and that a son too, which he could not have known without a divine revelation; and that in her old age, which was extraordinary and supernatural, she might assure herself, that the message brought to her was from God; and that she likewise, though a virgin, might conceive, and bear a son: the angel adds, as a further testimony of the truth of things; *and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.* Elisabeth was generally known to be barren, and was, by way of reproach, usually called so, but was now six months gone with-child; so that it was a plain case, and out of question; the signs of her pregnancy were very apparent.

Ver. 37. *For with God nothing shall be impossible.* That is consistent with his nature and perfections, with his counsels, purposes, and promises: every thing that he has said, purposed, or promised, he is able to do, and will; every word that he has spoken, every thing predicted by his prophets, or declared by his angels, and particularly this of a virgin's conceiving and bearing a son: so that the angel not only answers her question, how this should be, but confirms her faith in it; partly by the instance of her cousin Elisabeth, and partly by observing the infinite omnipotence of God.

Ver. 38. *And Mary said, behold the handmaid of the Lord, &c.* In which words she expresses her obedience of faith; she owns herself to be the handmaid of the Lord, and desires to obey him, and be submissive to him as such; and tacitly acknowledges her meanness, and great unworthiness; *be it unto me, according to thy word*; she assented to what the angel said should be unto her; she earnestly desired it might be, and firmly believed it would be; she set her Amen to the angel's message: *and the angel departed from her*: to the heavenly regions from whence he came; to his great Lord and master, that sent him; having dispatched the business he came about, and which he was accountable to him for.

<sup>7</sup> R. Sol. Jarchi, R. Aben Ezra, & R. Levi ben Gerson in Gen. i. 2.

<sup>8</sup> T. Bab. Sota, fol. 49. 2. Vid. David de Pomis, Lex. Heb. p. 67. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Targum, Jarchi, & Aben Ezra in loc.

Ver. 39. *And Mary arose in those days, &c.*] The Ethiopic version renders it, *in that day*; directly, immediately, as soon as the angel was gone from her; partly to know the truth of things, and to make use of the sign which had been given her, for the further confirmation of her faith, which was very right and proper for her to do; and partly to converse with Elisabeth about the great things which God had done for each of them, and to praise his name together: *and went into the hill-country with haste*; the same which is called the country of the hills, and the hills, and the mountains, in Josh. x. 40. and xi. 2, 16. and xvi. 1. and xviii. 13. and 2 Chron. xxvi. 10. where the Septuagint use the same word as here: the land of Judea was divided into three parts, הַרְרִי, *the mountain*, or hill-country, the champaign country, and the valley<sup>b</sup>: from Bethoron to Emmaus is הַרְרִי, *the hill-country*; from Emmaus to Lud, or Lydda, is the champaign country; and from Lydda to the sea, the valley<sup>c</sup>. This place is frequently called, in the Jewish writings<sup>d</sup>, the king's mountain, or the royal mountain, and is said to be very full of cities: ten thousand cities, they say<sup>e</sup>, were in the king's mountain, and a thousand of them belonged to R. Eleazer ben Harsum: yea, they say<sup>f</sup>, that king Jannai had sixty myriads of cities in the mountain of the king. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render it, *went to the mountain*, to this mountain, and which is called the mountain, or, as we read it, the hill-country of Judah, Josh. xxi. 11. on which Hebron was situated; and seems to be the city next mentioned: *into a city of Juda*; for that was given to the children of Aaron, and so may reasonably be thought to be the city where Zacharias dwelt, and not Jerusalem, which was in the tribe of Benjamin. Hebron was a city peculiar to the priests; whereas Jerusalem was not; and it was in the hill-country of Judea; it was remarkable for the goodness of its stones. <sup>T</sup>is said<sup>g</sup>, "you have no stones in all the land of Israel harder than at Hebron; hence they buried the dead there."

Ver. 40. *And entered into the house of Zacharias, &c.*] Which was in the above city, and might be well known to her: *and saluted Elisabeth*; not Zacharias; either because he was not at home; or because he was deaf and dumb, and could neither hear her salutation, nor return it; or because it was not usual for women to salute men, nor men to salute women; see the note on ver. 29. yet one woman might salute another; and especially Mary saluted Elisabeth, because she came to pay the visit to her, and it was with her she was principally concerned.

Ver. 41. *And it came to pass that when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, &c.*] Which might be before she saw her, and at some little distance from her: *the babe leaped in her womb*; which motion was not natural, but supernatural; being made at hearing the voice of Mary, who had now conceived the Messiah, whose forerunner this babe, John the Baptist, was to be; and who, by this motion, gave the first

notice of his conception, which his mother Elisabeth took from hence; as he afterwards pointed him out by his finger, and by his baptism made him manifest to Israel: *and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost*; not with the ordinary graces of the spirit, for these she had been filled with before, but with extraordinary gifts, with a spirit of prophecy; by which she knew that the Messiah was conceived, and that Mary was the mother of her Lord; that many things had been told her; that she had believed them; and there would be a performance of them; and perhaps it was at this time that John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost also; see ver. 15.

Ver. 42. *And she spake out with a loud voice, &c.*] So as that all in the house might hear; she spake with great vehemency of soul, and strength of affection, being under a very powerful impression of the spirit of God: *and said, blessed art thou among women*; the same words that the angel had said to her before, ver. 28. *and blessed is the fruit of thy womb*: this is a reason why she is called blessed, because her child was blessed; being in union with a divine person, who is God over all, blessed for ever; and who has all spiritual blessings in him, and is that seed, in which all nations of the earth were to be blessed; and so is both blessed in himself, and the source of all blessedness to others. The Jews say<sup>h</sup>, that the six measures of barley, Boaz gave to Ruth, ch. iii. 15. signified, that six righteous men should spring from her, and among them the Messiah; who should be blessed with six blessings, and they are these; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and of might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord; see Isa. xi. 2.

Ver. 43. *And whence is this to me, &c.*] How comes it to pass, that such notice is taken of me, such an honour is done me; that besides being favoured with a child, who shall be great, *that the mother of my Lord should come to me?* Elisabeth was far from envying the superior honour conferred on her kinswoman, who was both meaner and younger than she; that she esteems it a wonderful favour, that she should be indulged with a visit from her, who had already conceived the Messiah: and in due time would be the mother of him, as man; who, in his divine nature, is Lord of all angels, and men, and every creature; and in an especial manner was her Lord, and the Lord of all the saints; by his father's gift from eternity, by his own purchase in time, and by the power of his grace on each of their souls. Thus the virgin is said to be the mother of our Lord, and so may be called the mother of God; because she was parent of that child, which was in union with him, who is truly Lord and God: just in such sense as the Lord of life and glory is said to be crucified, and God is said to purchase the church with his own blood, 1 Cor. ii. 8. Acts xx. 28.

Ver. 44. *For lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, &c.*] This she mentions, as the

<sup>b</sup> Misn. Sheviith, c. 9. sect. 2. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>c</sup> T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 38. 4

<sup>d</sup> Targum in Jud. iv. 5. T. Hieros. Avoda Zara, fol. 44. 4.

<sup>e</sup> T. Hieros. Taanioth, fol. 69. 1.

<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 57. 1.

<sup>g</sup> T. Bab. Sota, fol. 34. 2. & Cetbot, fol. 112. 1.

<sup>h</sup> Targum & R. Sol. Jarchi in loc.

signal by which she knew that she was the mother of her Lord; namely, from that unusual and extraordinary motion of the child, she felt within her: *the babe leaped in my womb for joy*; that the mother of her Lord, and his, was come thither: the Jews ought not to object to this, who affirm, that the embryos, or infants in their mother's womb, sung the song at the Red Sea, and praised God<sup>1</sup>.

Ver. 45. *And blessed is she that believed, &c.*] Meaning Mary, a woman, a very young woman, and who had had things very incredible to nature and reason told her; and yet she believed, without objecting thereto, or requiring a sign; tacitly referring to the unbelief of Zacharias, who was a man, a man in years, a priest by office; and yet had been very incredulous, in a thing that was much more possible; because there had been instances of it before, in Sarah, Hannah, and Manoah's wife; than what was related to the virgin, of which there had been none; and which to reason, and with men, was impossible: and happy indeed is every one, that has true faith in any degree; for faith is the faith of God's elect, and is both a fruit and evidence of electing grace, which is the source of all blessings; it is the gift of God, and the operation of his spirit, and can never be lost: many are the blessings such as believe are in the possession of, and openly entitled to; as the justification of their persons, the remission of their sins, their adoption into the household of God, liberty at the throne of grace, and a right to the eternal inheritance; they enjoy much solid peace, joy, and comfort in their own souls; bring much glory to God, and shall be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation: *for there shall be a performance of those things, which were told her from the Lord*: these words may be considered, either as the subject-matter of her faith, and be rendered in connexion with the former, thus, *blessed is she that believed, that there shall be a performance, &c.* being fully persuaded, that what the angel had told her, concerning the conception and birth of a son, concerning his name, and the greatness of his person, and the nature, extent, and duration of his kingdom, should be certainly and punctually fulfilled; or as a reason of her happiness, because there should be a sure accomplishment of them. Whatever God has spoken to any of his people, whether it be with respect to things temporal, spiritual, or eternal, shall be performed; as may be strongly concluded from the veracity of God, who cannot lie; and from his power, who is able to do all things; and from his faithfulness, which he will never suffer to fail; and from instances, and matters of fact; from the experience of the saints in all ages, who know, and are conscious to themselves, that not one of the good things the Lord God has spoken to them, has ever failed, but that all have come to pass; see Josh. xxiii. 14.

Ver. 46. *And Mary said, my soul doth magnify the Lord.*] Either Jehovah, the Father, or the Son; who, as he was David's Lord, according to his divine nature, though his son after the flesh, was, in the same sense, Mary's Lord, as well as her son: and by mag-

nifying him is meant, not making him great, for he cannot be made greater than he is; but ascribing greatness to him, even all the perfections of the Deity, and praising him on account of them; and also declaring and speaking well of his many and mighty works of power, goodness, grace, and mercy, and giving him the glory of them: this Mary did, not in lip and word only, but with her whole heart and soul, and with all the powers and faculties of it; being filled with the Holy Ghost, and under a more than ordinary influence of his, as her cousin Elisabeth was: and it is to be observed, that she all along speaks in the prophetic style, of things, as if they were done, which were doing, or would shortly be done.

Ver. 47. *And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.*] Which also may be understood, either of God the father, who was her Saviour, both as the God of nature and providence; so the Persic version renders it, *in God that gives me life*; and who had supported, maintained, and preserved her life; and as the God of grace, who has contrived the scheme of salvation, fixed upon, and appointed Christ to be the Saviour; and who saves by him, and therefore is sometimes said to be our Saviour, Tit. iii. 4, 6. or of Christ, the son of God, who being truly and properly God, was fit to be a Saviour; and is a very suitable, able, and willing one; and which is the great encouragement to sensible sinners, to look unto him, and be saved; and lays a solid foundation for rejoicing in him, since what he did as man, had hereby an infinite virtue and efficacy put into it, as was put into his blood, sacrifice, and righteousness; whereby the purposes designed were answered by them; and since he must be able to keep their immortal souls, which they commit unto him, and must have an interest with his father, as their advocate, and a fulness to supply all their wants: the consideration of Christ, by Mary, as God her Saviour, as having an interest in him, as a Saviour, and this her Saviour, God, gave her greater joy, than being the mother of him as man; and this her joy was not carnal, nor merely external, but inward and spiritual: it was a joy in her own spirit, and was excited there by the holy spirit of God.

Ver. 48. *For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden, &c.*] Meaning, either her outward temporal estate, which was very low and mean: David's family was now very much reduced, it had its seat not at Jerusalem, but at Nazareth, in Galilee: Mary, of that house, was a poor virgin, and Joseph, of the same, to whom she was betrothed, was a poor carpenter; and yet God passed by the rich and noble families of the Jewish people, and pitched upon this poor virgin to be the mother of the Messiah: or her estate, in a spiritual sense, which, as that of every son and daughter of Adam, was very low by the fall; for sin has run all mankind into debt, and they have nothing to pay: it has stripped them of original righteousness, and clothed them with rags; it has filled them with diseases, from the crown of the head to the sole of the feet; it has exposed them

<sup>1</sup> Targum in Psal. lxxviii. 27. Zohar in Exod. fol. 33. 3. T. Hieros. Sota, fol. 20. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 75. 2.

to a prison, into which being cast, they must lie, till they have paid the uttermost farthing; and has left them hopeless and helpless, poor and miserable, and blind and naked: but God has remembered his elect, in this their low estate, and has provided a Saviour for them, and sent him to deliver them out of it; because his mercy endures for ever; and of this Mary was sensible, and therefore rejoiced in God her Saviour: *for behold, from henceforth all generations*; not Jews only, but Gentiles also, *shall call me blessed*, both on account of her son she had now conceived, and was bearing; because she was the mother of our Lord, who had reason so to conclude, from the nature of the thing, and from the words of the angel, and of Elisabeth, ver. 28, 42. and much more than Leah had, who said something like this, at the birth of her second son, Gen. xxx. 13. and also on account of her interest in Christ, as God her Saviour: in whom she was blessed, with all spiritual blessings; so that she was truly blessed, and might well be called so.

Ver. 49. *For he that is mighty hath done to me great things, &c.*] With respect to the incarnation of Christ, a new, a great, and unheard-of thing; in causing her, though a virgin, to conceive; and also to bear such a son, who should be called Jesus, a Saviour, Immanuel, God with us; and who was no other than the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace: wherefore she describes God the author of it, by a proper periphrasis of him, *he that is mighty*; since this was a work of almighty power, and very justly adds, *and holy is his name*: seeing this was brought about without any impurity, through the overshadowing influence of the Holy Ghost; whereby the human nature was preserved from the infection of sin, was sanctified, and fit to be united to the son of God, and to be a sacrifice for the sins of his people. This may also have regard to the great things God had done for her in a spiritual sense; in the choice of her to eternal life, in the redemption of her by the Messiah, and in her regeneration and sanctification; wherein God had displayed his sovereign grace and goodness, and his almighty power, in a way consistent with his justice and holiness.

Ver. 50. *And his mercy is on them that fear him, &c.*] Not with slavish fear of hell and damnation, but with reverence and godly fear; with a filial fear, with a reverential love of God, and affection for him; with that fear which springs from the goodness of God, which has that for its object, and is encouraged by it: and though this fear is not the cause and reason of the mercy of God, yet is descriptive of the persons towards whom it is exercised in various ways, and to whom it is openly shewn; they hereby appearing to be the vessels of mercy, afore prepared to glory; and in whose redemption, mercy and truth have met together, and who, according to the abundant mercy of God the father, have been begotten again; whose unrighteousnesses he has been merciful to, and whose sins he'll remember no more: and it may have a particular regard to the incarnation of Christ, which in this chapter is said to be in remembrance of mercy; to be the mercy promised, and to come through the tender mercy of our God, ver. 54, 72, 78. And which was a mercy Mary considered, not as peculiar to her-

self, but as extended to all that fear the Lord; not in that age only, but *from generation to generation*; to the end of the world, to God's elect in all times and places, who should all be partakers of it, and sharers in it.

Ver. 51. *He hath shewed strength with his arm, &c.*] Of almighty power, in the business of the incarnation, and in working out salvation for his people; which is done by his own arm, he being mighty to save, and travelling in the greatness of his strength; see Isa. lxiii. 1, 5. *He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts*; whom he always resists, and both in providence and grace, takes such methods, as tend to humble and confound them: here particularly, it may regard the proud and haughty Jews; who imagined nothing less, than that the Messiah would be born of one of the rich and noble families in Judea; that he would appear as a temporal prince, and set up a temporal kingdom in great state and splendour, and make them a free and flourishing people: when instead of this, he was to be born of a poor virgin, of whom they disdainfully say, is not his mother called Mary? who was of Nazareth in Galilee, of which 'tis said, shall Christ come out of Galilee? or any good thing out of Nazareth? A virgin betrothed to a carpenter, and her son of that business also, with which both were flouted; and because of this meanness, the Messiah was rejected by them; and thus were they scattered and confounded in their imaginations.

Ver. 52. *He hath put down the mighty from their seats, &c.*] As mighty kings and emperors from their thrones, as he often does, in the course of his providence; setting up one, and putting down another: or the mighty angels, from their seats of bliss and happiness in heaven; who rebelling against God, opposing the incarnation of Christ, taking it ill, that the human nature should be advanced above theirs, were cast down to hell; and are reserved in chains of darkness, to the judgment of the great day: or this may have respect to the putting down the monarchies and kingdoms of this world, by the kingdom of the Messiah to be set up; which, though at first was mean and despicable, like a stone cut out of a mountain, will increase, spread, and break in pieces, and destroy all other kingdoms: *and exalted them of low degree*; as David to the throne of Israel, from the sheepfold, and following the ewes great with young; and now his house and family, which were sunk very low, by raising of his seed, of a poor virgin in his family, unto Israel, a Saviour Jesus; in whose days the poor had the Gospel preached, and received it: these were chosen and called: the great things of the Gospel were revealed to babes, and hid from the wise and prudent; and beggars were raised from the dunghill, to sit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory: a method, which God in his infinite wisdom and grace has been pleased to take, more or less, in all ages of time; for not many mighty and noble are called by grace; but usually the foolish, the weak, and the base things of the world.

Ver. 53. *He hath filled the hungry with good things, &c.*] Such as earnestly desired and longed after the coming of the Messiah, as good old Simeon, and Anna

the prophetic; and those that looked for redemption in Israel, to whom she spake: and all such persons as heartily desire salvation by Christ, and breathe after the forgiveness of their sins through his blood, and thirst after his righteousness, and long for communion with him, and a greater knowledge of him, and more conformity to him, and pant after his word and ordinances; these are filled, sooner or later, with a sense of their interest in Christ, and his salvation; with a view of the full and free forgiveness of their sins, and with his righteousness they hunger after; and with every good thing they stand in need of, with joy and peace, with food and gladness, even to satisfaction; so that they can say with Jacob, they have enough, yea, all things; seeing Christ is theirs, and all things with him: *and the rich he hath sent empty away*: not the rich in this world's goods, though such who trust in their wealth, and boast of their riches, or do not make a proper use of them, God, in his providence, sometimes strips them of all, and turns them into the world naked and empty; much less the rich in grace, who are often the poor of the world; and who, though they seem to have nothing, yet possess all things, and are full: but such who are rich in their opinion, and in their own works; and trust in their righteousness, and despise others; these, as they come full of themselves to the throne of grace, as the Pharisee, are sent empty away; without any token of the love and favour of God, or any blessing from him: and as they come to ordinances in their own strength, and trust in the performance of them, they go away empty, as they came; these are dry breasts unto them, whilst they are full breasts of consolation to the poor in spirit, and to all meek and humble souls: and what is still worst of all, notwithstanding all their good works they boast of, and trust in, they'll be sent away at the last judgment from the presence of Christ, as not known by him, and as workers of iniquity.

Ver. 54. *He hath holpen his servant Israel, &c.*] Meaning, not the natural posterity of Jacob, or Israel in general, but the elect of God among them; for all were not Israel, who were of Israel; and not them only, but also the chosen ones among the Gentiles; who, with the former, make up the whole Israel of God, in a spiritual and mystical sense: these are the Israel, God has chosen, redeemed, and calls by his grace, and are here styled *his servant*, as Israel is frequently called, Isa. xli. 8. and xli. 21. The word signifies a *child*, as well as a *servant*; and may design, either the weak and helpless condition God's elect are in by nature, which calls for, and requires divine help and assistance; or the relation they stand in to him, being his adopted children, and which is the reason of his helping them: and which signifies to take them by the hand, and lift them up, and support and uphold them; and supposes them to have been fallen down, and unable to raise themselves up; but God having laid help for them on one that is mighty, sent him to take upon him their nature; and by obeying, suffering, and dying for them, to help them out of

their state of sin and misery; and to uphold them with the right hand of his righteousness, and bring them safe to glory; and all this, *in remembrance of his mercy*; which he had in his heart towards them, and had promised in his covenant to them: the mercy of God, is the spring and source of redemption; mercy provided a Redeemer, and a ransom; and it is owing to it, that the Redeemer came; and he, in his love and pity, performed the work: and therefore salvation is to be ascribed, not to works of righteousness done by men, but to the abundant mercy of God our Saviour.

Ver. 55. *As he spake to our fathers, &c.*] To David, of whose family Mary was; and to Jacob, or Israel, of whose stock she was; and to Isaac, in whom the seed was to be called; and particularly, *to Abraham and to his seed for ever*: not his natural, but his spiritual seed; both among Jews and Gentiles, to the end of the world; to these God promised this mercy of a Saviour and Redeemer, and to these he performs it, and will to all generations.

Ver. 56. *And Mary abode with her about three months, &c.*] That is, she continued with Elisabeth, as the Syriac and Persic versions express, about the space of three months; in which time, she had full satisfaction of the truth of the sign the angel had given her; namely, of Elisabeth's conception and pregnancy, for by this time she was ready to lie-in; and she must now be fully assured, that she was with-child herself: this space of three months is a term of time fixed by the Jewish doctors, to know whether a woman is with-child or not, as in case of divorce or death: the rule runs thus<sup>\*</sup>; "every woman that is divorced, or becomes a widow, lo! she may not marry, nor be betrothed, until she waits, תשעים יום, *ninety days* (*i. e.* three months), exclusive of the day in which she is divorced, or her husband dies, and of the day in which she is betrothed; that so it may be known whether she is with-child or not, in order to distinguish between the seed of the former, and the seed of the second husband." And so in the case of marrying the wife of a brother, that died without issue<sup>†</sup>, and of new-married couples mistaking their spouses<sup>‡</sup>: *and returned to her own house*; at Nazareth, in Galilee; and now it was, that Joseph, to whom she was betrothed, perceived she was with-child; and suspecting evil, had a mind to put her away privately; but was informed by an angel of God, in a dream, of the whole matter; and was advised and encouraged to take her to wife, which he accordingly did; see Matt. i. 18, 19, 20.

Ver. 57. *Now Elisabeth's full time came, &c.*] The nine months, which is the full time of a woman's going with-child, were now complete; for in the sixth month of Elisabeth's pregnancy, or when she had been gone six months with-child, the angel acquainted Mary with it, and she had staid about three months with her; but now had left her, to shun the company which would be at the delivery of her; though some think, she staid till that time was over, which is not

<sup>\*</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Gerushin, c. 11. sect. 18. Vid. T. Bab. Beroorot, fol. 47. 1.

<sup>†</sup> Misn. Yebamot, c. 4. sect. 10. T. Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 6. 1.

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

T. Bab. ib. fol. 34. 2. & 35. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Yebum, c. 1. sect. 19. T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 47. 1.

<sup>‡</sup> Misn. Yebamot, c. 3. sect. 10.

so probable; and so her reckoning being out, and the time come, *that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son*, according to the angel's prediction both to Zacharias and Mary, ver. 13, 36.

Ver. 58. *And her neighbours, and her cousins, &c.]* That lived in Hebron, and the parts adjacent, whether of the house of Aaron, or of the tribe of Judah; to both which she was related, and who dwelt near her, the priests in the city of Hebron, and the children of Judah in the places about it: *heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; or had magnified his mercy with her*; see Gen. xix. 19. in removing her barrenness, and so taking away her reproach from among men; in giving her strength to conceive, and bring forth a son, that was to be so great, as the prophet of the Highest; and more than a prophet, and greater than any born of women: *and they rejoiced with her*: as the angel had foretold they should, ver. 14. The Persic version reads, *with him, Zacharias*: having rendered the other clause thus, though wrongly, *hearing that God had poured out his mercy on the house of Zacharias*: see Rom. xii. 15.

Ver. 59. *And it came to pass that on the eighth day, &c.]* The precise time fixed in the original institution of the ordinance of circumcision, Gen. xvii. 12. though this was not always attended to, but circumcision was sometimes deferred to another time; yet keeping the exact time was judged most commendable and praiseworthy; see the note on Phil. iii. 5. *they came to circumcise the child*; that is, the neighbours and cousins of Elisabeth, who were at the time of her delivery; eight days after they came again to be at the circumcision of the child: who was the operator is not known; nor was there any particular person appointed for this service; but any one might do it, whether ecclesiastic or laic, men or women, father or mother, or any other friend; for the rule is<sup>a</sup>, "all are fit to circumcise; even an uncircumcised person, and a woman, and a minor, may circumcise in a place where there is no man; but a Gentile may not circumcise at all." The circumcision of John seems to be performed in Zacharias's house, and by one of those that came; for Zacharias, being dumb, could not say the blessing which the circumciser was obliged to say: nor indeed could he say that, which, as the father of the child, belonged to him; concerning which, take the following account: "the circumciser blesses before he circumcises, saying, blessed is he that hath sanctified us by his precepts, and hath commanded us concerning circumcision: if he circumcises the son of his friend, or if he circumcises his own son, he blesses him with *this blessing*; and hath commanded us to circumcise a son: and the father of the son blesses with another blessing; blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who hath sanctified us by his precepts, and hath commanded us to enter him into the covenant of Abraham our father.—If his father is not there, they do not say this other blessing.—And if there are any standing there, they say, as he

"hath brought him into the covenant, so bring him to the law, and to matrimony, and to good works; and after that the father of the child, or the circumciser, or one of those that stand by, bless, saying, blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who sanctified the beloved (Isaac) from the womb, &c." How many of Elisabeth's neighbours and relations were present at this ceremony, is not related; but the Jews require ten persons as witnesses of it; for they say<sup>b</sup>, that "testimonies worthy of belief, in Israel, are ten, the witnesses of the covenant of circumcision are ten, the witnesses of a dead person ten, &c." and at this time also it was usual to give the child a name, which was not by divine appointment, but was a custom that prevailed among them; which took its rise from Abraham, having his name changed at the time when circumcision was enjoined him, Gen. xvii. 5, 10. and from the naming and circumcision of Isaac, mentioned together, Gen. xxi. 3, 4. *and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father*: as the neighbours of Naomi gave a name to the son of Boaz and Ruth, calling him Obed, Ruth iv. 17. This they took upon them to do, because that Zacharias was deaf and dumb; but why they should call him by his name, cannot well be accounted for, it not being usual to call the father, and the son, by the same name; unless they were desirous of continuing the same name in the family, which had been famous in Israel for a prophet, and a priest: to call children by Gentile names was not lawful. In the Targum on Amos vi. 1. 'tis said, "woe to them that name their children after the names of the Gentiles."

Ver. 60. *And his mother answered and said, &c.]* That is, Elisabeth: *not so, but he shall be called John*; knowing that this was the name wherewith the angel said he should be called; either by divine revelation, she being filled with the Holy Ghost, ver. 41. or by information of her husband, who, doubtless, in writing, gave her an account of all that the angel had said unto him.

Ver. 61. *And they said unto her, &c.]* Her neighbours and relations, *there is none of thy kindred that is called by this name*; from whence it appears, that it was usual to give names to children after their ancestors, relations, and friends. The Persic version renders it, *in thine Israel there is not any one of this name*: but this could not be true; for the name of Jochanan, or John, was a name very common among the Israelites, though not in Elisabeth's family, or her husband's.

Ver. 62. *And they made signs to his father, &c.]* Who was deaf, as well as dumb; otherwise there would have been no occasion to have signs made to him: and so the word used, in ver. 20. signifies both deaf and dumb. These signs were made by hands or head; for such used to be made to a dumb man. According to the canon<sup>c</sup>, a dumb man nods, and *נרמו*, and is *nodded*, or *beckoned* to: and which beckoning one of the commentators<sup>d</sup> says, is a sign

<sup>a</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Milah, c. 2. sect. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Ib. c. 3. sect. 1, 2, 3.

<sup>c</sup> Pirke Eliezer, c. 19.

<sup>d</sup> Misn. Gittin, c. 5. sect. 7.

<sup>e</sup> Bartenora in ib.



which is expressed either by the hands or head. Such a method as these took with Zacharias, about the name of his son, is directed to in case of a father's deafness, in relation to knowing who is his first-born: "a father that is dumb, they search or examine him in the way they search for divorces; if he makes signs, or writes, that this is his first-born, lo! this takes the double portion." *How he would have him called; by what name, Zacharias or John; and they were right in applying to him, to whom it most properly belonged, to give a name to his child.*

Ver. 63. *And he asked for a writing-table, &c.*] That is, he made signs for one, for as yet he could not speak. The Persic version renders it *ink*, and the Ethiopic, a book, and the Vulgate Latin, a notebook. The word signifies a *little table*, such as they used to write not only *upon*, but *in*; and was sometimes of brass<sup>1</sup>, sometimes of wood, and sometimes of wax<sup>2</sup>, on which they wrote with a style or pen; *and wrote, saying, his name is John*: not that he must be, or shall be, so called; but this is his name, and no other; being what the angel had given him before his conception, and Zacharias now confirms: *and they marvelled all*; they were astonished, not so much at the new name brought into the family, as at the agreement between Elisabeth and Zacharias in this point, when the latter was both deaf and dumb; they knowing nothing, as yet, of the angel's message to him.

Ver. 64. *And his mouth was opened immediately, &c.*] As soon as ever the child was named, and so all things accomplished which the angel had foretold; *and his tongue loosed*; the impediments of speech were removed, and the use of his tongue and lips was restored unto him: *and he spake and praised God*; for the safe delivery of his wife; for the birth of his son, the forerunner of Christ; for the conception of the Messiah; for God's gracious regards to his church and people, in these instances; and for the restoration of speech and hearing to himself, of which he had been some time deprived for his unbelief.

Ver. 65. *And fear came on all that dwelt round about them, &c.*] That is, the fear of God, an awful reverence of the divine majesty; they perceived the hand of God was in these things, and that these were effects of divine power; and which made very serious impressions upon their minds, and they thought, and spoke of them with great solemnity; see Acts ii. 43. and v. 11. *and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill-country of Judea*: the several things relating to the appearance of the angel to Zacharias in the temple; his message to him; the striking him deaf and dumb; the conception of Elisabeth, who had been barren; the birth of her son; the unusual name given him; and the more unusual manner in which it was given; and the opening of Zacharias's mouth, and the loosening of his tongue upon this, were reported, and commonly talked of by all people in that part of Judea, where the parents of John dwelt.

Ver. 66. *And all they that heard them, &c.*] The above things, *laid them up in their hearts*; treasured

them up in their memories, and often thought of them in their minds, what should be the meaning, and what would be the issue of them: *saying, what manner of child shall this be?* what will he be, or come to? and what is it that he shall do? surely he must be designed in providence to be put into some high station, and for some eminent work and service; since so many, and such great things, have gone before, and attended his birth: *and the hand of the Lord was with him*; which may intend the special care, and peculiar providence of God in preserving his life, giving him health, causing him to grow strong and robust, and in stature of body, and in endowments of mind; and also the communications of grace unto him, and the gracious presence of God with him, so soon as he was capable of enjoying them; as likewise a spirit of prophecy, which is sometimes signified by the hand of the Lord; and the extraordinary gifts of the spirit, which, in process of time, appeared in him, qualifying him for his high office and work: the hand of the Lord, with the Jews, is the Holy Ghost: thus they interpret 1 Chron. xxviii. 19. *all in writing*, this is the *Masora*; *from the hand of the Lord*, *וּן רַחֵם וְקִדְּשׁוּ*, *this is the Holy Ghost*<sup>3</sup>.

Ver. 67. *And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, &c.*] With a spirit of prophecy, as his wife Elisabeth had been before, ver. 41. *and prophesied, saying*; the following things, relating to the Messiah, his incarnation and redemption by him; to the accomplishing of the covenant, oath, promise and mercy of God to his people; and to his son, the forerunner of Christ; and to his work and office, in the various parts and branches of it, which he should perform. Whence it appears, that the following song is of divine inspiration; and that Zacharias spake it as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, as the prophets of old did.

Ver. 68. *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, &c.*] This was a form of blessing of long standing, Psal. lxxii. 18. and very likely was in use, more or less, ever since Israel was distinguished from other nations, became a body politic, and were settled in the land of Canaan, in the enjoyment of peculiar privileges, both civil and religious; see other forms before it in Gen. ix. 26. and xxiv. 27. and Exod. xviii. 10. And now, this was very near being antiquated, and out of date; for upon the birth of Christ, the son of God manifest in the flesh, the New-Testament form of blessing runs, as in 2 Cor. i. 3. Eph. i. 3. 1 Pet. 1. 3. The reason of its being now made use of might be, because the Messiah, the principal subject of this song, was peculiarly promised unto Israel, was raised up for them, and sent unto them. To bless God, is not to invoke a blessing on him; for there is none greater than he to ask one of; nor does he stand in need of any, being the Creator, who is blessed for ever in himself, and is the fountain of blessedness to his creatures: and therefore, also, cannot signify to confer a blessing on him, but to praise and glorify him, on account of the perfections of his nature, and the works of his hands; and to give thanks unto him for all mercies, spiritual and temporal; and especially for Jesus Christ, his mission, incarnation, and salvation by him, which are the things the God

<sup>1</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Nechalot, c. 9. sect. 15. & 4. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Harporocraton. Lex. p. 244.

<sup>3</sup> Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 30.

<sup>4</sup> T. Hieros. Megilla, fol. 70. 1.

of Israel is blessed for in this song: *for he hath visited, and redeemed his people*: as he did Israel of old, Exod. iii. 16, 17. when the Lord looked upon them, and delivered them out of the bondage of Egypt, and which was a type and resemblance of redemption by Christ; and to which reference here seems to be had. The *people* here said to be visited, and redeemed, design all the elect of God, not only among the Jews, but Gentiles also; all those whom God has chosen to be his people, and has in his covenant taken and declared to be such; whom he has given to Christ, as his people and portion; for whose sins he was stricken, and made reconciliation, and whom he saves from their sins. The act of *visiting* them, as previous to redemption, may include God's look of love upon them from everlasting; his choice of them in Christ unto salvation; the appointment and provision of a Saviour for them; the covenant of grace made with them in Christ, the foundation and security of their salvation; and particularly the mission of Christ in human nature, in consequence of the council, covenant, and promise of God: or it designs his incarnation, for he was now actually conceived in the womb of the virgin: so that God had visited, and looked upon his people, and remembered his love and mercy, his covenant and promise to them: and the *redemption* of them, which was now said to be made, or done, because Christ was now sent to do it, and because it was as sure, as if it was done, intends the spiritual and eternal redemption of them by the price of his blood, from the slavery of sin, the bondage of the law, and curse of it, and the captivity of Satan, and a deliverance out of the hands of every enemy; a redemption which reaches both to soul and body, and secures from all condemnation and wrath to come; and includes every blessing in it, as justification, forgiveness of sins, adoption, sanctification, and eternal life; and is a plenteous, full, complete, and everlasting one.

Ver. 69. *And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us, &c.*] Meaning the Messiah, whom God had now raised up: *in the house of his servant David*: in David's family, he being now conceived by a virgin of his house; and who, in a little time, would be born in Bethlehem, the city of David. He is called *an horn of salvation*, because he is a powerful Saviour. *Horn* denotes power; it being that to a beast, as the arm is to a man, by which it defends itself, and pushes down its enemies; and *salvation* is the work Christ came to effect, and for which he was raised up, and sent: and a Saviour he is, and a mighty one, as appears from his doing and suffering what he has; as bearing all the sins of his people, and making reconciliation for them; obeying all the precepts of the law, and undergoing the penalty of it; being made a curse, and becoming obedient to death, even the death of the cross: as also, from his delivering them from sin, Satan, and the law, which no other could have done; and from his grappling with, conquering, spoiling, and destroying all his, and our enemies. Moreover, the word *horn* signifies regal power, honour, and dignity; see Dan. vii. 24. and so may not only denote the work of Christ as a Saviour, but his office also as a King, who in the discharge of that is likewise a Saviour;

for he not only rules, and governs, but protects, defends, and preserves his people, by his power; see 1 Sam. ii. 10. Psal. cxxxii. 17.

Ver. 70. *As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, &c.*] Which shews not only the veracity and faithfulness of God in his promises, but the early intimations that were given by him concerning the Messiah: for it follows, *which have been since the world began*: or from the beginning of the world; ever since the first hint of the Messiah, as the seed of the woman, that should bruise the serpent's head, was given, he was more or less spoken of. Adam, the first prophet, seems to have respect to him, when he calls his wife Eve, which signifies life; and because she should be the mother of all living. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of him, of his second coming, which supposes his first; and Lamech may be thought to have some regard to him, when he named his son Noah, and said what he did concerning him: Christ was spoken of to Abraham, as his seed, in whom all nations of the earth should be blessed; and God spake of him by the patriarch Jacob, under the name of Shiloh, as who should spring from the tribe of Judah, before the sceptre and law-giver were departed from it. Moses foretold that there should arise a prophet from the midst of his brethren like unto him, to whom the Israelites were to hearken. David, the prophet, often speaks of him, particularly of his death, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension to heaven, and session at God's right hand; and the evangelical prophet Isaiah predicts his birth of a virgin, and testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Micah points out the very place of his birth; and Zachary describes the manner of his entrance into Jerusalem, as riding on an ass: to say nothing of what Jeremy, Ezekiel, Daniel, and others, have prophesied of him. 'Tis a common saying of the Jews\*, that "all the prophets, all of them prophesied not, אלה לימות המשיח, *but of the days of the Messiah.*" The men, by whom God spoke of the Messiah, of the mission of him, and of raising up this horn of salvation, for his people, were *prophets*; men endued with a spirit of prophecy; *holy* men, who were sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and spake, as they were moved by him; and these all spake as if it were with one *mouth*; they all agree in their accounts concerning Christ, though they lived in different periods of time, from the beginning of the world.

Ver. 71. *That we should be saved from our enemies, &c.*] This, and the two following verses, either contain and express the sum and substance of what God spake by the prophets; or point out the end or ends of his raising up an horn of salvation, or a Saviour for his people; namely, that they should be saved by him from their enemies: from sin, which wars against the soul, and threatens the destruction of it; from Satan, the avowed and implacable adversary of mankind; from the world, the seed of the serpent, which has always bore an enmity to the seed of the woman; from the law, the killing letter; and from death, the last enemy that is to be destroyed; *and from the hand of all that hate us*: which is only an illustration of the former

\* T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 34. 2. & Sabbat, fol. 68. 1. Maimon. Hilchot Teshuva, c. 8. sect. 7.

sentence, or a repetition of it in other words; and designs the same as before.

Ver. 72. *To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, &c.*] By *mercy* is meant salvation by Christ, which springs from the mercy of God; the promise of which was an instance of mercy to the Jewish fathers under the Old Testament, and also the performance of it; for they were saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus, even as we: his blood was shed for the remission of sins that were past, and for the redemption of transgressions under the first Testament: *and to remember his holy covenant*; which was made between him and his son from all eternity; and was, at various times, dispensed and manifested to the patriarchs, and eminent saints, as Adam, Noah, Abraham, &c. This is called a *holy one*; not only because it was made by, and between holy persons, and provided for the holiness of the people of God, both here, and hereafter; but because in the article of redemption and salvation by Christ, which is here more particularly regarded, care was taken to secure the glory of God's holiness and justice, as well as to display his grace and mercy. Now raising up, and sending Jesus a Saviour, shewed, that God was mindful of this covenant, and therefore sent redemption to his people.

Ver. 73. *The oath which he swore to our father Abraham.*] When he swore by himself, because he could swear by no greater, that in blessing he would bless him; that his seed should possess the gates of his enemies, and in it all the nations of the earth should be blessed: all which have been fulfilled in Jesus the Messiah; see Gen. xxii. 16, 17, 18. Heb. vi. 13, 14.

Ver. 74. *That he would grant unto us, &c.*] What is said in this and the following verse, is the substance of the promised mercy, covenant, and oath: *that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, as before, in ver. 71. might serve him without fear.* One principal end of deliverance from spiritual enemies by Christ, is the service of God; and nothing lays a greater obligation on men to serve the Lord, and glorify him, than redemption by Christ; nor is there any thing that makes men more zealous of good works: spiritual and evangelical service, in distinction from the legal service, and worship of God, is here meant; since it is said to be *without fear*, which the threatenings and curses of the law filled men with; but being delivered from it, they become free from that spirit of bondage unto fear, it genders to; as being delivered also from sin and Satan, they are without fear of hell and damnation; and from the world, they are without fear of men; and from death, they are without fear of that, through which many under the legal dispensation, were all their life-time subject to bondage. It is a saying of the Jews<sup>7</sup>, that "greater is he that serves from love, than he that serves from fear." But such sort of service is not of a man's self, or performed by his own power and strength, but is a *grant* from God, and owing to the influence of his spirit and grace.

Ver. 75. *In holiness and righteousness, &c.*] Not in mere outward rites and legal ceremonies; but as the saints serve, from principles of righteousness and true

holiness; in which the new man is created, and of which the kingdom of God, or spiritual and internal religion consists; so in acts of piety and devotion towards God, and justice among men, which is the substance of the perfect and acceptable will of God: *before him*; it is one thing to serve the Lord with an outward appearance of holiness and righteousness before men, and another thing to be righteous before God, and to walk in all his commandments and ordinances; as in his sight: *all the days of our life*; which denotes the constancy and continuance of this service; 'tis not for a day or two, or only on festivals and sabbath-days, such as were under the Jewish dispensation, but every day we live. In the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and in two copies of Beza's, and two of Stephens's, and in the Alexandrian copy, it is only read, *all our days*; but the Arabic version reads, as the generality of copies, and as we render it.

Ver. 76. *And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest, &c.*] Here Zacharias turns himself to his son John, though an infant, and incapable of knowing what was said to him; and for the sake of those that were present, describes his office and work; and says, that he should be *called*, that is, that he should *be*, and be accounted a *prophet*: for he was not only a preacher of Christ and his Gospel, but he also foretold the coming of the Messiah; and the vengeance that should fall on the Jewish nation, for their unfruitfulness, impenitence, and unbelief: and the *Prophet of the Highest*; that is, of God; as the Persic version renders it, of the most high God; and by whom is meant, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose prophet, harbinger, and forerunner John was; and so is a proof of Christ being the supreme, or most high God: *for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways*; as the angel had suggested in ver. 17. and as was prophesied of him in Isa. xl. 3. Mal. iii. 1. see the note on Matt. iii. 3.

Ver. 77. *To give knowledge of salvation, &c.*] This is still said of John, and belongs to his work and office; though the Syriac and Arabic versions read, *that he may give*; as if it was spoken of the Lord, before whose face John was to go, and whose ways he was to prepare: by *salvation* is meant, not a temporal salvation, or a deliverance from the Roman yoke, the Jews were expecting, for John gave no intimation of any such salvation; but of a spiritual and eternal salvation, and of Christ himself, the author of it; who is often called *Salvation*, because he was appointed to this business, was fitted for it, and has effected it; and there is salvation in him, and in no other: the *knowledge* of this is not merely notional and speculative, but experimental, approbative, fiducial, appropriating, sure, and certain; and is more excellent, than any other kind of knowledge whatever: and this is a *gift*; it is not what is attained unto, and acquired by application, diligence, and industry, as other sort of knowledge; but is a gift of God, though in the use of means, and through the ministry of the word: and so John is said to give it ministerially, he being an instrument in the hand of God, whereby souls came to

<sup>7</sup> T. Bab. Sota, fol. 91. 1. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Teshuva, c. 10. sect. 1, 2.

the knowledge of salvation by Christ, and believed in him : it was communicated by God through his ministry, *unto his people* : meaning not the people of John the Baptist, the Jews, though it was true of God's elect among them ; but the people of Christ, and that not all mankind, who are his by creation ; but a special people, whom the father has given him, and he has purchased by his blood ; whom he conquers by his grace, and makes a willing people, in the day of his power : to these, and only these, is the knowledge of salvation by Christ given ; for none else are appointed to it, and for no other is it wrought out. It follows, *by the remission of their sins* : the sense of which is, either that salvation is by the forgiveness of sin, and lies in it, that being a principal part of it ; see Eph. i. 7. Sins are debts ; forgiving them is a remitting these debts, a loosing them, or the obligation to payment, which is done freely and fully, for Christ's sake, and through his blood ; and herein lies the blessedness and salvation of men ; see Rom. iv. 6, 7. Or else that the knowledge of salvation was conveyed through the ministry of John, not by preaching the works of the law, but the doctrine of remission of sins, by Christ ; see Mark i. 4. John i. 29. and which is the sum and substance of the Gospel, as it was ordered to be preached by Christ, and was preached by his apostles. The Alexandrian copy reads, *our sins*.

Ver. 78. *Through the tender mercy of our God, &c.]* Or *bowels of mercy*, to which the forgiveness of sin is owing ; the source and spring of pardon, is the free grace and abundant mercy of God ; it takes its rise from thence, though it is channelled in the blood and sacrifice of Christ ; and which no way derogates from, but rather heightens the riches of God's grace and mercy : for it was mercy that moved God to enter into a covenant with his son, in which forgiveness of sin is promised ; and it was mercy to set forth his son, in his eternal purposes and decrees ; and to send him forth in the fulness of time, to shed his blood for the remission of sins ; it was the mercy of God to us, that provided a lamb for a burnt-offering, and then accepted of the sacrifice and satisfaction of his son, in our room and stead, and forgave all our sins, for his sake ; and whatever the pardon of our sins cost God and Christ, it is all free grace and mercy to us : it is owing not to the absolute mercy of God, or to the mercy of God as an absolute God, but to the mercy of *our God* ; our God in Christ, our covenant God and father, whose bowels yearned towards us, and whose pity is that of a tender parent : *whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us* : the word *αυτοτον*, here used, and is translated the *day-spring*, is the same which the Septuagint use, in Jer. xxiii. 5. Zech. iii. 8. and vi. 12. where the Messiah is spoken of, under the name of the *branch* : and undoubtedly the Messiah Jesus, is intended here, who is the man, that branch, that has grown up out of his place ; not from below, but from above ; and who is the *phosphorus*, or bringer of light, that bright and morning star, that sun of righteousness, who has light in himself, and communicates light to others ; even light natural, spiritual, and eternal ; and with his rays and beams of light, life, and love, refreshes, exhilarates, and warms, the

hearts of his people : and by the *visit* he has made in our *horizon*, is meant his assumption of human nature ; which, like a friendly visit, proceeded from pure love to the children of God ; and was a drawing near unto them, for it was a taking on him their nature, in which he represented their persons ; and was done through much difficulty and great condescension, since he was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with him ; and his stay on earth in this nature, was but for a little while ; so that on all accounts, it may be truly called a *visit* : and which, as the remission of sin is wholly owing to the tender mercy of our God, who put him upon it, called him to it, sent him forth made of a woman, and in the likeness of sinful flesh, to obtain eternal redemption, in which mercy and truth met together : the end and design of this visit, are signified in the next verse ; for the following words belong to the day-spring from on high, and not to John the Prophet of the Highest.

Ver. 79. *To give light to them that sit in darkness, &c.]* God's elect among the Jews, who were not only in a state of unregeneracy, which is a state of darkness, ignorance, and unbelief ; but in the darkness of the legal dispensation, and at this time under more than ordinary darkness and ignorance ; having lost the knowledge of the righteousness of God, and of the spirituality of his law, the true sense of the Scriptures, and right notions of the Messiah ; being led by blind guides, the Scribes and Pharisees ; and, were as it were also, *in the shadow of death* ; in a state seemingly irrecoverable, when Christ, the great light arose, and shone upon them ; and communicated spiritual light, life, and heat unto them ; see Isa. ix. 2. compared with Matt. iv. 13—16. though Christ is also a light, to lighten his chosen ones among the Gentiles, Luke ii. 32. but the Jews seem chiefly to be intended here : *to guide our feet into the way of peace* ; which we knew not : not that he came to teach us how to make our peace with God, but to make peace for us, by the blood of his cross ; and so by his spirit and word, lead us into the true way of enjoying spiritual peace here, and eternal peace hereafter.

Ver. 80. *And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, &c.]* That is, John, the son of Zacharias and Elisabeth, grew in stature of body, and increased in wisdom and knowledge, and fortitude in his soul : *and was in the deserts ; or desert*, as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read ; not in the wilderness of Judea, where he came preaching, but either of Ziph or Maon, which were near to Hebron ; see 1 Sam. xxiii. 14, 24, 25. Josh. xv. 54, 55. he was not brought up in the schools of the prophets, nor in the academies of the Jews, or at the feet of any of their Rabbins and doctors ; that it might appear he was not taught and sent of men, but of God : nor did he dwell in any of the cities, or larger towns, but in deserts ; partly that he might be fitted for that gravity and austerity of life, he was to appear in ; and that it might be clear he had no knowledge of, nor correspondence with Jesus, whose forerunner he was, and of whom he was to bear testimony, till such time he did it ; and in this solitude he remained, *till the day of his sheaving unto Israel* ; either till the time came

that he was to appear before, and be examined by the sanhedrim, that judged of persons' fitness and qualifications for the priesthood, in order to be admitted to it; which should have been when he was thirty years of age, but that he was designed for other service; or rather therefore till he appeared in his

prophetic office, and shewed himself to the people of Israel; to whom he came preaching the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins, administering the ordinance of baptism, giving notice of the near approach of the Messiah, and pointing him out unto the people.

## C H A P. II.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass in those days, &c.*] When John the Baptist was born, and Christ was conceived, and his mother pregnant with him, and the time of his birth drew on. The Ethiopic version reads, *in that day*; as if it was the same day in which John was circumcised, and Zacharias delivered the above song of praise: *that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus*: second emperor of Rome; the name Cæsar was common to all the emperors, as Pharaoh to the Egyptians, and afterwards Ptolemy. His name Augustus, was not his original surname, but Thurinus; and was given him, after he became Cæsar, to express his grandeur, majesty, and reverence; and that by the advice of Munatius Plancus, when others would have had him called Romulus, as if he was the founder of the city of Rome<sup>2</sup>: by him a decree was made and published, *that all the world should be taxed*; or registered, or enrolled; for this was not levying a tax, or imposing tribute upon them, but a taking an account of the names of persons, and of their estates; and which might be, in order to lay a tax upon them, as afterwards was: for the payment of a tax, there was no need of the appearance of women and children; and so the Arabic version renders it, *that the names of the whole habitable world might be described, or written down*: such an enrolment had been determined on by Augustus, when at Tarracon in Spain, twenty-seven years before; but he was diverted from it by some disturbances in the empire, so that it was deferred to this time, in which there was a remarkable interposition of divine providence; for had this enrolment been made then, in all likelihood it had not been done now, and Joseph and Mary would not have had occasion to have come to Bethlehem: but so it must be; and thus were things ordered by an infinite, and all-wise providence to effect it: nor did this enrolment reach to all the parts of the known world, but only to the Roman empire; which, because it was so very large as it was, and in the boasting language of the Romans was so called, as Ptolemy Evergetes<sup>3</sup> calls his kingdom, *κοσμος, the world*. Though some think only the land of Judea is meant, which is called *the earth*, in Luke xxi. 26. and *all the world*, in Acts xi. 28. but the other sense seems more agreeable; and so the Syriac version renders it, *that all the people of his empire might be enrolled*; and the Persic version, *that they should enrol all the subjects of his kingdom*; and is justified by the use of the phrase for the Roman empire, in several passages of Scripture, Rom. i. 8. and x. 18. Rev. iii. 10. and xiii. 3. Now at the time

of this enrolment, and under this august emperor, and when the whole world was in a profound peace, was the Messiah born, the King of kings, and the only potentate; the Shiloh, the peaceable and prosperous, the Prince of Peace, and Lord of life and glory; and that, in order to redeem men from that worse subjection and bondage they were in to sin, Satan, the law, and death, than they were to the Roman emperor. The Jews say<sup>4</sup>, the son of David shall not come, until the kingdom (of Edom, or Rome, as some copies read, in others it is erased) shall be extended over all Israel, nine months, according to Mic. v. 3. The gloss on it is, that is, *all the world*, in which the Israelites are scattered.

Ver. 2. *And this taxing was first made, &c.*] Or *this was the first enrolment, or taxing in the Jewish nation*; for there was another afterwards, when Judas the Galilean arose, and drew many after him, Acts v. 38. *When Cyrenius was governor of Syria*; or of *Cyrenius governor of Syria*: that is, it was the first that he was concerned in; who not now, but afterwards was governor of Syria; and because he had been so before Luke wrote this history, and this being a title of honour, and what might distinguish him from others of that name, it is given him; for as Tertullian says<sup>5</sup>, *Sentius Saturninus was now governor of Syria, when Cyrenius was sent into Judea, to make this register, or taxing; and which is manifestly distinguished from that, which was made during his being governor of Syria, when Archelaus was banished from Judea, ten or eleven years after Herod's death; which Josephus<sup>6</sup> gives an account of, and Luke refers to, in Acts v. 38. Moreover, the words will bear to be rendered thus, and this tax, or enrolment, was made before Cyrenius was governor of Syria*; *αρχητης*, being used for *αρχηγου*, as in John i. 15, 30. This Cyrenius is the same whom the Romans call Quirinius, and Quirinus; a governor of Syria had great power in Judea, to which it was annexed, when Cyrenius was governor there. It is reported of R. Gamaliel, that he went to take a licence, *בטרמיא בטרמיא, from a governor of Syria*<sup>7</sup>; *i. e.* to intercalate the year: and Syria was in many things like to the land of Judea, particularly as to tithes, and the keeping of the seventh year<sup>8</sup>.

Ver. 3. *And all went to be taxed, &c.*] Throughout Judea, Galilee, and Syria; men, women, and children; *every one into his own city*: where he was born, and had any estate, and to which he belonged.

Ver. 4. *And Joseph also went up from Galilee, &c.*] Where he now lived, and worked at the trade of a car-

<sup>2</sup> Suetonius in Vita Octav. August. sect. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Apud Fabricii Biblioth. Gr. Tom. 2. p. 606.

<sup>4</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Contr. Marcion, l. 4. c. 19.

<sup>6</sup> Antiqu. l. 18. c. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Miss. Editio, c. 7. sect. 7.

<sup>8</sup> T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 8. 1.

penyer; having for some reasons, and by one providence or another, removed hither from his native place: *out of the city of Nazareth*; which was in Galilee, where he and Mary lived; and where he had espoused her, and she had conceived of the Holy Ghost: *into Judea*; which lay higher than Galilee, and therefore he is said to go up to it: *unto the city of David*; not what was built by him, but where he was born and lived; see 1 Sam. xvii. 12. *which is called Bethlehem*: the place where, according to Mic. v. 2. the Messiah was to be born, and was born; and which signifies *the house of bread*: a very fit place for Christ, the bread which came down from heaven, and gives life to the world, to appear first in. This place was, as a Jewish chronologer says <sup>a</sup>, a *parsa* and half, or six miles from Jerusalem; though another of their writers, an historian and traveller <sup>b</sup>, says, it was two *parsas*, or eight miles; but Justin Martyr <sup>c</sup> says, it was but thirty-five furlongs distant from it, which is not five miles; hither Joseph came from Galilee, *because he was of the house and lineage of David*; he was of his family, and lineally descended from him, though he was so poor and mean; and this is the reason of his coming to Bethlehem, *David's city*.

Ver. 5. *To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, &c.*] Whom also he had married, though he had not known her in a carnal way; she came along with him to be taxed and enrolled also, because she was of the same family of David, and belonged to the same city: *being great with-child*; very near her time, and yet, though in such circumstances, was obliged by this edict, to come to Bethlehem; and the providence in it was, that she might lie-in there, and so the prophecy in Mic. v. 2. have its accomplishment: this was an instance, and an example, of obedience to civil magistrates.

Ver. 6. *And so it was, that while they were there, &c.*] At Bethlehem, waiting to be called and enrolled in their turn; *the days were accomplished that she should be delivered*; her reckoning was up, the nine months of her going with-child were ended, and her full time to bring forth was come.

Ver. 7. *And she brought forth her first-born son, &c.*] At Bethlehem, as was predicted; and the Jews themselves own, that the Messiah is already born, and born at Bethlehem. They have a tradition, that an Arabian should say to a Jew <sup>d</sup>, "Lo! the king of Messiah is born; he said to him, what is his name? Menachem: he asked him, what is his father's name? he replied to him, Hezekiah; he said unto him, from whence is he? he answered, from the palace of the king of Bethlehem." Which is elsewhere <sup>e</sup> reported, with some little variation; the Arabian said to the Jew, "the Redeemer of the Jews is born; he said unto him, what's his name? he replied, Menachem is his name: and what's his father's name? he answered, Hezekiah: he said unto him, and where do they dwell? he replied, in Birath Arba, in Bethlehem." And the Jewish chronologer affirms <sup>f</sup>, that "Jesus the Naza-

rene, was born at Bethlehem Judah, a *parsa* and "a half from Jerusalem." And even the author of the blasphemous book of the life of Christ owns <sup>g</sup>, that "Bethlehem Judah was the place of his nativity." Jesus is called Mary's first-born, because she had none before him; though she might not have any after him; for the first that opened the matrix, was called the first-born, though none followed after, and was holy to the Lord, Exod. xiii. 2. Christ, as to his human nature, was Mary's first-born; and as to his divine nature, God's first-born: *and wrapped him in swaddling-clothes*; which shews, that he was in all things made like unto us, sin only excepted. This is one of the first things done to a new-born infant, after that it is washed, and its navel cut; see Ezek. xiv. 4. and which Mary did herself, having neither midwife nor nurse with her; from whence it has been concluded, that the birth of Jesus was easy, and that she brought him forth without pain, and not in that sorrow women usually do; *and laid him in a manger*. The Persic version serves for a comment; *she put him into the middle of the manger, in the place in which they gave food to beasts; because in the place whither they came, they had no cradle*: this shews the meanness of our Lord's birth, and into what a low estate he came; and that now, as afterwards, though Lord of all, yet had not where to lay his head in a proper place; and expresses his amazing grace, in that he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor: and the reason of his being here laid was, *because there was no room for them in the inn*. It seems that Joseph had no house of his own to go into, nor any relation and friend to receive him: and it may be, both his own father and Mary's father were dead, and therefore were obliged to put up at an inn; and in this there was no room for them, because of the multitude that were come thither to be enrolled: and this shews their poverty and meanness, and the little account that was made of them; for had they been rich, and made any considerable figure, they would have been regarded, and room made for them; especially since Mary was in the circumstances she was; and it was brutish in them to turn them into a stable, when such was her case.

Ver. 8. *And there were in the same country shepherds, &c.*] For Bethlehem was a place of pasture: near to Ephrata, the same with Bethlehem, were the fields of the wood, Psal. cxxxii. 6. and the tower of Edag, or the tower of the flock, Gen. xxxv. 21. Mic. iv. 8. and here David kept his father's sheep, 1 Sam. xvii. 15. so that we need not wonder to hear of shepherds here, *abiding in the field, watching over their flock by night*: from whence it appears, that Christ was born in the night; and the <sup>h</sup> Jews say, that the future redemption shall be in the night; and Jerom says <sup>i</sup>, it is a tradition of the Jews, that Christ will come in the middle of the night, as was the passover in Egypt: it is not likely that he was born, as is commonly received, at the latter end of December, in the depth of winter; since at this time, shepherds were out in the

<sup>a</sup> Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 14. 2.

<sup>b</sup> R. Benjamin Itin. p. 47.

<sup>c</sup> Apolog. 2. p. 75.

<sup>d</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 5. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 1.

<sup>g</sup> David Ganz, ut supra.

<sup>h</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 7.

<sup>i</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 73. 3.

<sup>j</sup> In Matt. xxv. 6.

fields, where they lodged all night, watching their flocks: they were diligent men, that looked well to their flocks, and watched them by night, as well as by day, to preserve them from beasts of prey; they were, as it is in the Greek text, *keeping the watches of the night over their flock*. The night was divided into four watches, the even, midnight, cock-crowing, and morning; and these kept them, as the Arabic version adds, *alternately*, some kept the flock one watch, and some another, while the rest slept in the tent, or tower that was built in the fields for that purpose. There were two sorts of cattle with the Jews; there was one sort which they called מדרבית, *the cattle of the wilderness*, that lay in the fields; and another sort which they called ביינות, *the cattle of the house*, that were brought up at home: concerning both which, they have this rule<sup>9</sup>; "they don't water nor slay the cattle of the wilderness, but they water and slay the cattle of the house: these are the cattle of the house, that lie in the city; the cattle of the wilderness, are they that lie in the pastures." On which, one of their commentators<sup>1</sup> observes, "these lie in the pastures, which are in the villages, all the days of cold and heat, and don't go into the cities, until the rains descend." The first rain is in the month Marchesvan, which answers to the latter part of our October, and the former part of November; and of this sort, seem to be the flocks those shepherds were keeping by night, the time not being yet come, of their being brought into the city: from whence it appears, that Christ must be born before the middle of October, since the first rain was not yet come; concerning this, the Gemara<sup>2</sup> is more large; "the Rabbins teach, that these are they of the wilderness, or fields, and these are they of the house; they of the field are they that go out on the pasture, and feed in the pastures, and come in at the first rain; and these are they of the house, all that go out and feed without the border, and come and lie within the border (fixed for a sabbath-day's journey): Rabbi says, those, and those are of the house; but these are they that are of the field, all they that go out and feed in the pastures, and don't come in to remain, neither in the days of the sun, nor in the days of the rains." To the shepherds, the first notice of Christ's birth was given; not to the princes and chief priests, and learned men at Jerusalem, but to weak, mean, and illiterate men; whom God is pleased to choose and call, and reveal his secrets to; when he hides them from the wise and prudent, to their confusion, and the glory of his grace: and this was a pre-*sentation* of what the kingdom of Christ would be, and by, and to whom, the Gospel would be preached.

Ver. 9. *And lo, the angel of the Lord, &c.*] It may be Gabriel, who had brought the tidings of the conception of the Messiah to the virgin, and now the birth of him to the shepherds: *came upon them*; on a sudden, unexpectedly, at once, and stood by them, as some versions read; or rather, stood over them, over their heads, just above them; so that he was easily and perfectly seen by them; and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; or a very glorious and extraordinary

light shone with surprising lustre and brightness all around them; by which light, they could discern the illustrious form of the angel that was over them: *and they were sore afraid*; at the sight of such a personage, and at such unusual light and glory about them: they were not used to such appearances, and were awed with the majesty of God, of which these were symbols, and were conscious to themselves of their own sinfulness and frailty.

Ver. 10. *And the angel said unto them; fear not, &c.*] For he was not a messenger of bad, but of good tidings: *for behold, I bring you good tidings*; tidings, that were both wonderful and amazing, and therefore a *behold* is prefixed to them, as well as to excite to attention; and which were good news, and glad tidings, for such the birth of Christ of a virgin is: in which the good will and amazing love of God to man are displayed, and the promises and prophecies relating to him fulfilled; and the work of man's salvation, his peace, pardon, righteousness, &c. about to be accomplished, and so matter of *great joy*: not carnal, but spiritual; not feigned, but real; not temporary, but lasting; even such as cannot be taken away, nor intermeddled with; and not small, but great, even joy unspeakable, and full of glory: *which shall be to all people*; not to every individual of mankind; not to Herod and his courtiers, who were troubled at it; nor to the greater part of the Jewish nation, who when he came to them, received him not, but rejected him as the Messiah; particularly not to the chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, who when they saw him, said, this is the heir, let's kill him, and seize on the inheritance; but to all that were waiting for him, and were looking for redemption in Israel; to all sensible sinners who rejoice at his birth, and in his salvation; see Isa. ix. 3, 6. to all the chosen people of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, whom God has taken to be his covenant-people, and has given to his son, as such, to redeem and save; to these the incarnation of Christ, with all the benefits resulting from it, is the cause of great joy, when they are made a willing people in the day of Christ's power.

Ver. 11. *For unto you is born this day, &c.*] Day is here put for a natural day, consisting both of night and day; for it was night when Christ was born, and the angels brought the tidings of it to the shepherds. The particular day, and it may be, month and year, in which Christ was born, cannot be certainly known; but this we may be sure of, it was in the fulness of time, and at the exact season fixed upon between God and Christ in the council and covenant of peace; and that he was born, not unto, or for the good of angels; for the good angels stand in no need of his incarnation, sufferings, and death, having never fell; and as for the evil angels, a Saviour was never designed and provided for them; nor did Christ take on him their nature, nor suffer in their stead: wherefore the angel does not say, *unto us*, but *unto you*, unto you men; for he means not merely, and only the shepherds, or the Jews only, but the Gentiles also; all the children, all the spiritual seed of Abra-

<sup>9</sup> Mian. Betza, c. 5. sect. 7.

<sup>1</sup> Maimon. in ib.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Betza, fol. 40. 1. & Sabbat. fol. 45. 2. Vid. Maimon Hilch. Yom Tob, c. 9. sect. 2.

ham, all elect men; for their sakes, and on their account, and for their good, he assumed human nature; see Isa. ix. 6, Heb. ii. 14, 16. *in the city of David*; that is, Bethlehem, as in ver. 4. where the Messiah was to be born, as being, according to the flesh, of the seed of David, his son and offspring; as he is, according to his divine nature, his Lord and root. The characters of this new-born child follow, and which prove the tidings of his birth to be good, and matter of joy: a Saviour; whom God had provided and appointed from all eternity; and had been long promised and much expected as such in time, even from the beginning of the world; and is a great one, being God as well as man, and so able to work out a great salvation for great sinners, which he has done; and he is as willing to save as he is able, and is a complete Saviour, and an only, and an everlasting one: hence his name is called Jesus, because he saves from sin, from Satan, from the law, from the world, from death, and hell, and wrath to come, and from every enemy. *Which is Christ the Lord*; the Messiah spoken of by the prophets; the anointed of the Lord, with the Holy Ghost without measure, to be a prophet, priest, and king in his church; and who is the true Jehovah, the Lord our righteousness, the Lord of all creatures, the Lord of angels, good and bad, the Lord of all men, as Creator, the Prince of the kings of the earth, the Lord of lords, and King of kings; and who is particularly the Lord of saints by his father's gift, his own purchase, the espousal of them to himself, and by the power of his grace upon them: and the birth of such a person must needs be joyful, and is to be accounted good news, and glad tidings.

Ver. 12. *And this shall be a sign unto you, &c.]* When they should come to Bethlehem, and to the inn where Joseph and Mary were: *ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger*; for though there might be many other children in the inn, yet none else in swaddling-clothes, at least lying in a manger: this sign would distinguish the new-born Saviour from all others; had not the angel given them this direction, they would never have thought to have looked for, and found him in such a place: and moreover, it might have been a stumbling to them, and an objection with them against his being Christ, the Lord, had they not been told beforehand where he was; but by this means this objection was prevented, and this stumbling-block was removed out of the way, and they were prepared to see him, embrace, and believe in him, in this mean condition.

Ver. 13. *And suddenly there was with the angel, &c.]* That brought the tidings of Christ's birth to the shepherds: *a multitude of the heavenly host*; who being caused to fly swiftly, were at once with him, by his side, and about him; and which was a further confirmation of the truth of his message to them: these were angels who were called an *host*, or army, the militia of heaven, the ministers of God, that wait upon him, and do his pleasure; and are sent forth to minister to his people, and encamp about them, preserve, and defend them; see Gen. xxxii. 1, 2. These are styled an *heavenly host*, be-

cause they dwell in heaven; and to distinguish them from hosts and armies on earth; and said to be a *multitude*, for the angels are innumerable; there are thousands, ten thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand of them: it may be rendered the *multitude*, and may intend the whole company of angels, who were all of them together to sing the praises of God, and glorify him at the birth of the incarnate Saviour, as well as to adore him; since it is said, *when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world; he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him*, Heb. i. 6. and these were *praising God*; on account of the birth of Christ, and the redemption that was to be obtained by him, for elect men; which shews their friendly disposition to them, and how much they rejoice at their spiritual and eternal welfare; see Luke xv. 10. And thus, as at the laying of the foundation of the earth, *these morning stars sang together, and all these sons of God shouted for joy*, Job xxxviii. 7. they did the same when the foundation of man's salvation was laid in the incarnation of the son of God; and saying, as follows.

Ver. 14. *Glory to God in the highest, &c.]* Which with the following words, are not to be considered as a wish, that so it might be, but as an affirmation, that so it was; for the glory of God is great in the salvation, peace, and reconciliation of his people by Jesus Christ, even the glory of all his perfections; of his wisdom and prudence in forming such a scheme; of his love, grace, and mercy, the glory of which is his main view, and is hereby answered; and of his holiness, which is hereby honoured; and of his justice, which is fully satisfied; and of his power in the accomplishment of it; and of his truth and faithfulness in fulfilling his covenant and oath, and all the promises and prophecies relating to it. Great glory from hence arises to God, who is in the highest heavens, and is given him by angels and saints that dwell there, and that in the highest strains; and by saints on earth too in their measure, and as they are able: the ground and foundation of which is what follows: *and on earth peace*: by which is meant, not external peace, though at this time there was peace on earth all the world over; nor internal peace, as distinguished from that eternal peace which the saints enjoy in heaven; nor even peace made by Christ; for this, as yet, was not done on earth, but was to be made by the blood of his cross: rather Christ himself is here intended, who is called *the man, the peace*, Mic. v. 5. and *our peace*, Eph. ii. 14. and was now on earth, being just born, in order to make peace with God, and reconciliation for the sins of the people: and he is so called, because he is the author of peace between Jew and Gentile, which were at enmity with each other; by abrogating the ceremonial law, the cause of that enmity; by sending the Gospel to them, and converting some of each; and by granting the like privileges to them both; see Eph. ii. 14—20. and because he is the author of peace between God and elect sinners, who, through the fall, are at enmity against God, and enemies in their minds by wicked works unto him; nor can they make their peace with God; they know not the way of it; nor are they disposed to it; nor can they approach to God to treat



with him about terms of peace; nor can they do those things that will make their peace with God, as satisfying his justice, and fulfilling his law: Christ only is their peace-maker; he only is fit for it, being God and man in one person, and so a day's man that can lay his hands on both, and has a concern in each, in things pertaining to God, and to make reconciliation for the sins of the people: he only is able to do it, and he has done it by the blood of his cross; and a very excellent peace it is he has made: it is made upon the most honourable terms, to the satisfaction of justice, and the magnifying of the law of God; and is therefore a lasting one, and attended with many blessings, such as freedom of access to God, and a right to all the privileges of his house; and the news of it are glad tidings of good things: and those angels that first brought the tidings of it, may be truly called, as some of the angels are by the Jews, מלאכי שלום, *angels of peace*. Moreover, Christ may be said to be *peace*, because he is the donor of all true solid peace and real prosperity, both external, which his people have in the world, and with each other; and internal, which they have in their own breasts, through believing in him, and attending on his ordinances; and eternal, which they shall have for ever with him in the world to come. And now Christ being the peace on earth, is owing to *good will towards men*; that is, to the free favour, good will, and pleasure of God towards chosen men in Christ Jesus: that Christ was on earth as the peace-maker, or giver, was owing to God's good will; not to angels, for good angels needed him not as such; and the angels that sinned were not spared, nor was a Saviour provided for them; but to men, and not to all men; for though all men share in the providential goodness of God, yet not in his special good will, free grace, and favour: but to elect men, to whom a child was born, and a son given, even the Prince of Peace: it was from God's good will to these persons, whom he loved with an everlasting love in Christ, laid up goodness for them in him, blessed them with all spiritual blessings in him, and made a covenant with him for them; that he provided and appointed his son to be the Saviour and peace-maker; that he sent him into this world to be the propitiation for sin; and that he spared him not, but delivered him up into the hands of men, justice, and death, in order to make peace for them. The Vulgate Latin version, and some copies, as the Alexandrian, and Beza's most ancient one, read, *peace on earth to men of good will*; and which must be understood, not of men that have a good will of themselves, for there are no such men: no man has a will to that which is good, till God works in him both to will, and to do of his good pleasure; wherefore peace, reconciliation, and salvation, are not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy: but of such who are the objects of God's good will, and pleasure, whom he loves, because he will love, and has mercy and compassion on them, and is gracious to them, because he will be so; and therefore chooses, redeems, and re-

generates them of his own will, and because it seems good in his sight. The Syriac and Persio versions read, *good hope to men*; as there is a foundation laid in Christ the peace, of a good hope of reconciliation, righteousness, pardon, life, and salvation for sinful men. The Arabic version renders it, *cheerfulness in men*; as there is a great deal of reason for it, on account of the birth of the Saviour and peace-maker, the salvation that comes by him to men, and the glory brought thereby to God.

Ver. 15. *And it came to pass, as the angels, &c.*] The Persic version reads in the singular number, *the angel: were gone away from them into heaven*, from whence they came, and which was the place of their abode and residence; and therefore they are called the angels of heaven, where they always behold the face of God, hearken to the voice of his commandment, and go, and come at his orders; and these having finished their embassy, delivered their message to the shepherds, and done all the work they came about, *departed from them*: and, as the Ethiopic version adds, *and ascended up into heaven*; and as soon as they were gone, immediately, *the shepherds said one to another, let us now go even to Bethlehem*, the place where the angel said the Saviour was born, *and see this thing which hath come to pass, which the Lord hath made known to us*: from whence it appears, that it was not from diffidence of the matter, as questioning the truth of what the angel said, that they moved one another to go to Bethlehem; for they firmly believed the thing was come to pass, which the angel had told them of, and that what he said was from the Lord; nor did they act any criminal part, or indulge a vain curiosity, in going to Bethlehem to see what was done; for it seems to be the will of God that they should go, and for which they had a direction from the angel, and a sign given them by which they might know the new-born Saviour from any other infant, ver. 12. and which would also be a further confirmation of their faith, and by which they would be qualified not only as ear, but as eye-witnesses of the truth of this fact, to report it with greater certainty.

Ver. 16. *And they came with haste, &c.*] In the night, leaving their flocks, to see their incarnate Lord, as Zaccheus hastened down from the tree to receive the Saviour. The wonderfulness of the vision, the importance of the thing related, the eagerness of their spirits to see the thing that was told them, put them on making quick dispatch, and hastening to the city with all speed: *and found Mary and Joseph*; as they had been directed by the angel, in the city of Bethlehem, in an inn there, and in a stable in the inn: *and the babe lying in a manger*; where Mary had put it as soon as born, and had wrapped it in swaddling-clothes; because there was no room in the inn, and as the angel had told them they should find it, ver. 12.

Ver. 17. *And when they had seen it, &c.*] Or *him*, as the Arabic version reads, the child Jesus, or *them*, Joseph, Mary, and the child; or this whole affair, as had been related to them: *they made known abroad*; not only in the inn, and among all the people there,

<sup>1</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. s. 1. & 98. 4.

but throughout the city of Bethlehem, *the saying which was told them concerning this child*: both what the angel had told them concerning his birth, and what he was, and where he lay; and what Mary had told them concerning the notice she had from an angel of the conception of him, and the manner of it, and of what he should be; and likewise what Joseph had told them, how an angel had appeared to him, and had acquainted him, after the conception of him, that it was of the Holy Ghost; and was bid to call his name Jesus: as Mary also was, because he was to be the Saviour of his people from their sins: for, no doubt, but they had a conversation with Joseph and Mary about him; and as they could not fail of relating to them, what they had seen and heard that night in the fields, it is reasonable to suppose, that Joseph and Mary would give them some account of the above things; which all make up the saying, or report, they spread abroad: the Persic version reads, *what they had heard of the angel*; but there is no reason to confine it to that.

Ver. 18. *And all they that heard it, &c.*] What the shepherds related of what they had heard from the angel, and from Joseph and Mary, and what they had seen themselves; *wondered at those things that were told them by the shepherds*: for though they expected the Messiah, and that he would be born at Bethlehem, yet they did not imagine that he would be born of such mean parents, and appear in such mean circumstances, and in so contemptible a place; and that shepherds, and not the princes of Israel, should have the first notice of it; and yet the account which these shepherds, who were plain-hearted men, and could never be thought to invent such a story, and spread it, and impose on men, without any interest in it, was very surprising; so that they knew not what to say to it, neither to deny, nor believe it; accordingly, the Persic version renders the whole thus, *and whoever heard, wondering, stuck at it*; hesitated about it, and yet astonished at the particulars of it; just as Christ's hearers were in Luke iv. 22. who wondered at his ministry, and the manner of it, and yet objected the meanness of his parentage and education.

Ver. 19. *But Mary kept all these things, &c.*] Which the shepherds had related to her: *and pondered them in her heart*; or compared them in her mind, with what had been said to herself by the angel, and also by her husband, as well as what was said by Elisabeth at the time she made her a visit; but she said nothing of them to others, lest she should be thought an enthusiast, or a vain boaster; and therefore left things, till time should make a discovery of them in a proper way, and in the best season.

Ver. 20. *And the shepherds returned, &c.*] From Bethlehem, to the fields, and to their flock there; *glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard*; from Joseph and Mary: *and seen*; as the babe lying in the manger: *as it was told unto them*; by the angel: they glorified God on account of the birth of the Messiah; and praised him, wondering at his grace, and the high honour put upon them, that they should

be acquainted with it; and that there was such an exact agreement between the things they had seen, and the angel's account of them.

Ver. 21. *And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, &c.*] According to the original institution of circumcision, Gen. xvii. 12. and which was strictly observed by religious persons, as by the parents of our Lord here, and by those of John the Baptist, ch. i. 59. Hence the Apostle Paul reckons this among his privileges, that he could have boasted of as well as other Jews, Phil. iii. 5. see the note there. But it may be asked, why was Christ circumcised, since he had no impurity of nature, which circumcision supposed; nor needed any circumcision of the heart, which that was a symbol of? To which it may be replied, though he needed it not himself, it was the duty of his parents to do it, since all the male seed of Abraham were obliged to it, and that law, or ordinance, was now in force; and besides, it was necessary that he might appear in the likeness of sinful flesh, who was to bear, and atone for the sins of his people; as also, that it might be manifest that he assumed true and real flesh, and was a partaker of the same flesh and blood with us; and that he was a son of Abraham, and of his seed, as it was promised he should; and that he was made under the law, and came to fulfil it, and was obliged to it, as every one that is circumcised is; as well as to shew a regard to all divine, positive institutions that are in being, and to set an example, that we should tread in his steps; and likewise to cut off all excuse from the Jews, that they might not have this to say, that he was an uncircumcised person, and so not a son of Abraham, nor the Messiah. *His name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb*, Luke i. 31. It appears from hence, and from the instance of John the Baptist, ch. i. 57. that at circumcision it was usual to give names to children; see the note there. The Jews observe, that "six persons were called by their names before they were born: and these are Isaac, Ishmael, Moses, Solomon, Josiah, and the King Messiah:" the latter they prove from Psal. lxxii. 17. which they render, *before the sun his name was Yinnon*, or the son, that is, the son of God.

Ver. 22. *And when the days of purification, &c.*] Of the Virgin Mary, the mother of our Lord; though most copies read, *of their purification*; and so read the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, including both Mary and Jesus: and now, though Mary was not polluted by the conception, bearing, and bringing forth of Jesus, that holy thing born of her; yet inasmuch as she was in the account of the law unclean; and though Jesus had no impurity in his nature, yet seeing he was made sin for his people, both came under this law of purification, which was for the sake of the son or daughter, as well as for the mother; though our reading, and which is according to the Complutensian edition, best agrees with the Hebrew phrase, *ימי טהרה*, *the days of her purifying*, or *purification*, in Lev. xii. 4, 6. *according to the law of Moses*, in Lev. xii. *were accomplished*; which for a son

were forty days: the seven first days of her lying-in she was unclean; and then she continued three-and-thirty days in the blood of her purifying, which made forty; see Lev. xii, 2, 4, but though the time of her purifying was upon the fortieth day, yet it was not till the day following that she came to the temple with her offering: for so runs the Jewish canon\*; “a lying-in woman does not bring her offering on the fortieth day for a male, nor on the eightieth day for a female, but after her sun is set: and she brings her offering on the morrow, which is the forty-first for a male, and the eighty-first for a female: and this is the day of which it is said, Lev. xii. 6. and “when the days of her purifying are fulfilled for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring, &c.” And this was the time when they, Joseph and Mary, brought him, the child Jesus, to Jerusalem, and to the temple there, to present him to the Lord, to the priest his representative; and which was done in the eastern gate, called the gate of Nicanor: for here, “they made women, suspected of adultery, to drink, and purified lying-in women, and cleansed the lepers.” And here Mary appeared with her first-born son, the true Messiah; and this was the first time of his coming into his temple, as was foretold, Mal. iii. 1.

Ver. 23. *As it is written in the law of the Lord, &c.]* In Exod. xiii. 2. Numb. iii. 13. every male that openeth the womb, shall be called holy to the Lord; that is, devoted and consecrated to him, and so to be redeemed. The reason of this law was this, when God smote all the first-born of Egypt, he saved the first-born of Israel; and therefore claimed a right to them, and obliged their parents, excepting the Levites, to redeem them at the price of five shekels, which were about twelve shillings and sixpence of our money, and which was given to the Levites: see Exod. xiii. 12, 13, 14, 15. Numb. iii. 12, 13, 46, 47. and xviii. 15, 16. And this law our Lord came under as Mary’s first-born, and as one holy to the Lord; and such a sum of money was now paid for his redemption, who was the great Redeemer of his people: he being made under the law, and in all things subject to it, that he might redeem them from the bondage, curse, and condemnation of it. Now as the tribe of Levi was excepted from this law, it is a clear case, that Mary, though allied to Elisabeth, was not of the tribe of Levi, otherwise her first-born would not have been subject to it. “An Israelite that comes from a priestess, or from a she Levite, is free, (i. e. from the redemption of the first-born;) for the thing does not depend on the father, but on the mother, as it is said, that openeth the womb in Israel.”

Ver. 24. *And to offer a sacrifice, &c.]* That is, when the time of purification came, the parents of our Lord brought him from Bethlehem to Jerusalem, to present him in the temple to the Lord as his, and to redeem him; and not only so, but to offer the sacrifice required of child-bed women: according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, Lev. xii. 8. a pair

of turtle doves, or two young pigeons: if the person was able, she was to bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering; and a young pigeon, or a turtle dove, for a sin-offering; but in case of poverty, then the above sufficed, and one of them was for a burnt-offering, and the other for a sin-offering; which shews not only that the virgin offered for herself a sin-offering, being ceremonially unclean, but also her mean estate and poverty, in that she offered the offering of the poorer sort; see Lev. xii. 6, 8.

Ver. 25. *And behold there was a man in Jerusalem, &c.]* Not in Nazareth, or Bethlehem, but in Jerusalem, the metropolis of the nation: one that lived there, was an inhabitant of that city, and a person of fame and note. So Joseph ben Jochanan is called אִישׁ יְרוּשָׁלַם, a man of Jerusalem, an inhabitant of that place: whose name was Simeon; not Simeon, הַצַּדִּיק, the just, the last of the men of the great synagogue, of whom the Jews often maké mention; though this Simeon bears the same character, yet could not be he; because he was not only an high-priest, which, if this man had been, would doubtless have been mentioned; but also lived some years before this time. Many have thought, that this was Rabban Simeon, the son of Hillell, who was president of the sanhedrim forty years; and in which office this his son succeeded him; and which Simeon was the father of Gamaliel, the master of the Apostle Paul, of whom the Jewish chronologer thus writes<sup>b</sup>: “Rabban Simeon, the son of Hillell the old, received from his father, and was appointed president after his father; but the time of the beginning of his presidentship I do not find in any authors:” and a little after, “Rabban Simeon, the son of Hillell, is the first that is called by the name of Rabban.” There are some things which seem to agree with, and favour this thought; for certain it is, that Christ was born in his time, whilst he was living: so the above writer says<sup>c</sup>, after he had observed, that “Jesus of Nazareth was born at Bethlehem-Judah, a parsa and a half from Jerusalem, in the year 3761 of the creation, and in the 42d year of Cæsar Augustus; that, according to this computation, his birth was in the days of Rabban Simeon, the son of Hillell.” And it is worthy of notice also, what another genealogical writer of theirs says<sup>d</sup>, that “Rabban Simeon, the son of old Hillell, the prince, or president of Israel, as his father was, as it is in Sabbat, c. 1. is not mentioned in the Misna.” Which looks as if he was not a favourer of the traditions of the elders, nor in great esteem with the Jews, that they ascribe none of them to him; yea, it may be observed, that he is entirely left out in the account of the succession of the fathers of tradition, in the tract called Pirke Abot; which is somewhat extraordinary, when he was the son of one, and the father of another of so much note among them. One would be tempted to think, that such a neglect of him, should spring from ill will to him, on account of his professing Jesus of Nazareth. to be the Messiah.

\* Maimon, Hilch Mechose Cappara, c. 1. sect. 5.

x Mian. Sota, c. 1. sect. 5.

y Maimon. Hilch. Biecurim, c. 11. sect. 10.

z Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 4. 5.

<sup>a</sup> Pirke Abot, sect. 2. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 69. 1. T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 42. 3. & 43. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Ib. par. 2. fol. 14. 2.

<sup>d</sup> Juchasin, fol. 66. 2.

But there are other things which don't so well accord, as that this Simeon lived some years after the birth of Christ; whereas our Simeon seems to be in the decline of life, and just ready to depart: as also, that he was prince of Israel, or president of the sanhedrim, after this; which it is not likely he should, after such a confession of Jesus being the Messiah: likewise, seeing that his son Gamaliel was brought up a Pharisee: to which last Dr. Lightfoot replies, that holy fathers have some times wicked children; and that it was thirty years from Simeon's acknowledging Christ, to Gamaliel's education of Paul, or little less; and so much time might wear out the notice of his father's action, if he had taken any notice of it, especially his father dying shortly after he had made so glorious a confession; but his last observation is an objection to him. Upon the whole, it must be left uncertain and undetermined who he was: *and the same man was just and devout*; he was a holy good man in his life and conversation; he was one that feared God, and avoided evil; he was righteous before men, and devout towards God, and exercised a conscience void of offence to both: *waiting for the consolation of Israel*; that is, the Messiah; for this was one of his names with the Jews, who sometimes style him, מנחם, *the comforter*: for so they report\*, that "there are some" that say his name is Menachem the comforter; as it "is said, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me, Lam. i. 16." And again†, it is observed, that "the name of the Messiah is Menachem, the comforter; and Menachem, by gematry, or numerically, is the same with Tzemach, the branch, Zech. iii. 8." And so they often call him by the name of the *consolation*: ארמיה ברחמה, which Dr. Lightfoot renders, *so let me see the consolation*, but should be rendered, *may I never see the consolation*, was a common form of swearing among them; and used much by R. Simeon ben Shetach, who lived before the times of Christ, of which there are several instances‡: "says R. Juda ben Tabai, ארמיה ברחמה, *may I never see the consolation*, if I have not slain a false witness." — Says R. Simeon ben Shetach, to him, *may I never see the consolation*, if thou hast not shed innocent blood." The gloss<sup>b</sup> on it is, "it is a light word, (the form) of an oath, in short language; as if it was said, may I never see the consolations of Zion, if he has not done this." Again<sup>c</sup>, "says R. Simeon Ben Shetach, ארמיה ברחמה, *may I never see the consolation*, if I did not see one run after his companion, into a desolate place, &c." Now they might easily collect this name of the Messiah, from several passages of Scripture, which speak of God's comforting his people, at the time of redemption by the Messiah; and particularly, from its being part of his work and office, to comfort them that mourn, for which he was anointed by the spirit of the Lord, Isa. lxi. 1, 2, 3. And when he is called here, *the consolation of Israel*, it is not to be understood of the whole Jewish nation; for he was so far from being a comfort to them,

as such, that through their corruption and wickedness, he came not to send peace, but a sword; and to set at variance the nearest relations and friends among themselves; and through their unbelief and rejection of him, wrath came upon them to the uttermost: but of the true and spiritual Israel of God, whom he has chosen, redeemed, and calls, whether of Jews or Gentiles; his own special and peculiar people, the heirs of promise; and who are often mourners in Zion, and being frequently disconsolate on account of sin, the temptations of Satan, and the hidings of God's face, stand in need of consolation from him: and in him there is what is always matter and ground of consolation; as in his person, he being the mighty God, and so able to save to the uttermost; in his blood, which speaks peace and pardon, and cleanses from all sin; in his righteousness, which is pure and perfect, and justifies from all iniquity; in his sacrifice, which expiates all the transgressions of his people; in his fulness, which is sufficient to supply all their wants; and in his power, by which he is able to keep them from falling, and to present them faultless before God. And he does often comfort them by his spirit, by his word, and ordinances, by the promises of his Gospel, by the discoveries of pardoning grace, through his blood, and by his gracious presence: nor are his consolations small, but large and abundant, strong, solid, and everlasting. Now for the Messiah under this character, Simeon was waiting, hoping in a little time to see him; since he knew, both by the prophecies of the Old Testament, particularly by Daniel's weeks, and by divine revelation, that the time was just at hand for his coming; *and the Holy Ghost was upon him*; not in a common and ordinary way, as he is upon all that are called by grace, as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification; and as he was upon many others, who at this time were waiting and looking for the Messiah, as well as he; but in an extraordinary way, as a spirit of prophecy: for though prophecy had ceased among the Jews, from the times of Malachi, yet upon the conception and birth of Christ, it now returned; as to Zacharias, Elisabeth, and the virgin Mary, and here to Simeon, as is clear from what follows.

Ver. 26. *And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, &c.*] Not in a dream, as the wise men were warned, nor by an angel, as Joseph, nor by a voice from heaven, which the Jews call *Bath Kol*, but by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, enlightening his understanding, and impressing on his mind: *that he should not see death*: an Hebraism, see it in Psal. lxxxix. 48. the same with the phrase, to *taste death*, elsewhere used; and the sense is, as the Ethiopic version renders it, *that he should not die*; or as the Persic version, *that his death should not be*; as yet: he should live some time longer; nor should that messenger be sent to remove him, though a man in years, out of time into eternity, before he had seen the *Lord's Christ*; with his bodily eyes: for he had seen him with an eye of faith already, and in the promise, as Abraham had; and in

\* T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2. Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 1. T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 5. 1.

† Kimchi in Zech. iii. 8.

‡ T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 16. 2. & Maccot, fol. 5. 2.

<sup>b</sup> Tosaphot in Chagiga ib.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 37. 2. & Shebuot, fol. 34. 1. Vid. & Cetubot, fol. 67. 1. & Echa Rabbati, fol. 49. 2.

the types and sacrifices of the law, as the rest of believers under the Old Testament. The Messiah is called the Lord's Christ, referring to Psal. ii. 2. because he was anointed by Jehovah, the father, and with Jehovah, the spirit; with the Holy Ghost, the oil of gladness, to be prophet, priest, and king, in the Lord's house. So the Messiah is by the Targumist called, the Messiah of Jehovah, or Jehovah's Messiah; that is as here, the Lord's Christ: thus in the Targum on Isa. iv. 2. 'tis said, "in that time, כְּשִׁיחַ מֶלֶךְ, *Jehovah's Messiah*, shall be for joy and for glory." And on Isa. xxviii. 5. the paraphrase is, "at that time, כְּשִׁיחַ מֶלֶךְ, *the Messiah of the Lord of hosts*, shall be for a crown of joy, and for a diadem of praise to the rest of his people." Compare these paraphrases with what is said of Christ, in ver. 32. *The glory of thy people Israel*; Simeon's language exactly agrees with the Targumist. The Persic version adds, *and with this hope he passed his time, or age, and became very old and decrepit.*

Ver. 27. *And he came by the spirit into the temple, &c.*] By the same spirit of God, that revealed the above to him. The Æthiopic version renders it, *the spirit brought him into the temple*; but Simeon was not brought thither, as this version seems to suggest, in such manner as Ezekiel was brought by the spirit to Jerusalem, Ezek. viii. 3. or as Christ was brought by Satan to the holy city, and set upon the pinnacle of the temple; but the spirit of God, who knows and searches all things, even the deep things of God, and could testify before-hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, knew the exact time when Jesus would be brought into the temple; and suggested to Simeon, and moved upon him, and influenced and directed him, to go thither at that very time. The Persic version renders the whole verse thus, *when he heard that they brought Christ into the temple, that they might fulfil the law, Simeon went in*; which version spoils the glory of the text, making Simeon's coming into the temple, to be upon a report heard, and not the motion of the Holy Ghost. *And when the parents brought in the child Jesus*; when Joseph and Mary brought Christ into the temple. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, *his parents*. Mary was his real parent, Joseph is called so, as he is his father, in ver. 48. because he was supposed, and generally thought to be so, Luke iii. 23. *To do for him after the custom of the law*; as was used to be done in such a case, according to the appointment of the law: or as the Syriac version renders it, *as is commanded in the law*; namely, to present him to the Lord, and to pay the redemption money for him.

Ver. 28. *Then took he him up in his arms, &c.*] That same spirit that had revealed unto him that he should not die, till he saw the Messiah with his bodily eyes; and who by a secret impulse had moved him to go to the temple just at this time, made known unto him, that that child which Joseph and Mary then brought into the temple, to present to the Lord, was the Messiah; wherefore, in a rapture of joy, he took him out of their arms into his own, embracing him with all affection and respect imaginable: though some think he was a priest, and it being his office to present the first-born to the Lord, he took him in his arms, and

did it; but the former account seems more agreeable: *and blessed God*; praised him, and gave glory to him, for his great goodness, in sending the promised Messiah, and long wished-for Saviour; for his grace and favour, in indulging him with a sight of him; and for his truth and faithfulness, in making good his promise to him: *and said*; as follows.

Ver. 29. *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant, &c.*] He acknowledges him as his Lord, and to have a despotic power over him, with respect to life and death; and himself as his servant, which he was, both by creation and grace: and though it expresses humiliation, and a sense of distance and unworthiness, yet to be a servant of the most high God, is a very high and honourable character: what he requests of the Lord is, that he might *depart in peace*; signifying his hearty desire to die, and with what cheerfulness he should meet death, having obtained all that he could wish for and desire, in seeing and embracing the Saviour: he expresses his death, by a departure out of the world, as in John xiii. 1. Phil. i. 21. agreeably to the way of speaking of it among the Jews, see the notes there; and by a word, which signifies a loosing of bonds; death being a dissolving the bond of union, between soul and body, and a deliverance, as from prison and bondage; the body being, as it were, a prison to the soul, in the present state of things: and he also intimates, that whereas, though he had the strongest assurances of the Messiah's coming, and of his coming before his death, by the revelation of the Holy Ghost, and so most firmly believed it, without fluctuation, and hesitation of mind; yet as hope deferred makes the heart sick, he was anxious and restless in his desire, till it was accomplished; but now being come, he could take his leave of the world, and his dismissal into eternity, with the greatest calmness and tranquillity of mind, having nothing to disturb him, nor more to desire: he adds, *according to thy word*; for he seems to have understood by the revelation made to him, that as he should not die before he saw the Messiah, so when he had seen him, that he should immediately, or in a very short time after, be removed by death; and which he greatly desired, and in which he sinned not, because his request was according to the word of God: whereas often, desires of death are not only without the word of God, and due resignation to his will, and any regard to his glory, but to be rid of some trouble, or gratify some lust, as pride, revenge, &c.

Ver. 30. *For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, &c.*] The Messiah, who is often so called; see Gen. xlix. 18. Isa. xlix. 6. and lii. 10. He goes by the name of *salvation*, because the salvation of God's elect is put into his hands, and he has undertook it; and because he is the author of it, he has fulfilled his engagements, and has accomplished what he promised to do; and because salvation is in him, it is to be had in him; and in him, the true Israel of God are saved, with an everlasting salvation: and he is called *God's salvation*, because he is a Saviour of his choosing, calling, and constituting; whom he promised under the Old-Testament dispensation, and in the fulness of time sent; and who now appeared in human nature, and whom good old Simeon now saw, with his bodily eyes; a sight, which many kings and prophets had desired, but were not

favoured with; and also with the eyes of his understanding, with the spiritual eye of faith, as his Saviour and Redeemer; for without this, the former would not have been sufficient to have given such peace and tranquillity of mind, in a departure out of this world: for many saw him in the days of his flesh, who never saw his glory, as the son of God, and Saviour of sinners; but such a sight those have, who have their understandings enlightened, and Christ, as God's salvation, set before them: they see him in the glory of his person, the fulness of his grace, the suitableness and excellency of his righteousness, the efficacy of his blood, and the perfection of his sacrifice; and as an able, willing, complete, and only Saviour: and such a sight of him, puts them out of conceit with themselves, and their own works of righteousness, as saviours; makes the creature, and all it has and does, look mean and empty; fills the soul with love to Christ, and a high esteem of him, and with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; it transforms a soul, and makes it like to Christ; gives it inexpressible pleasure and satisfaction; and makes it desirous, as it did this good man, to depart and be with Christ, which is far better than to live in this (in some sense) state of absence from him.

Ver. 31. *Which thou hast prepared, &c.*] In his eternal purposes and decrees, having chosen and fore-ordained Christ, and appointed him to be his salvation, to the ends of the earth; in his counsel and covenant of grace, wherein it was agreed, determined, and concluded on, that he should be the Saviour of his people; and in the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament, and in all the types, shadows, and sacrifices, of that dispensation; in which he was exhibited, and held forth as the Saviour to the saints and believers of those times; and now had sent him in human nature, to work out that salvation he had chosen and called him to, and he had undertook: *before the face of all people*; meaning not the congregation of Israel, that looked for redemption in Jerusalem, and who were now together with Simeon and Anna, when the child Jesus was presented in the temple; nor the body of the Jewish nation only, to whom he was made manifest, had they not wilfully shut their eyes, by John's ministry and baptism; and more so, by the miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did by Christ, in the midst of them; but both Jews and Gentiles: for as he was provided and sent as a Saviour, and a great one, he was to be lifted up on the cross, as the serpent was lifted up by Moses, in the wilderness, to draw all his elect to him, of every nation; and to be set up as an ensign to the people, in the public ministry of the word; to be the object of faith and hope, to look unto, for life and salvation.

Ver. 32. *A light to lighten the Gentiles, &c.*] Or *for the revelation of the Gentiles*; to reveal the love, grace, and mercy of God, an everlasting righteousness, and the way of life and salvation to them. Reference seems to be had to Isa. xlii. 6. and xlix. 6. *Light*, is one of the names of the Messiah in the Old Testament, as in Psal. xliii. 3. Dan. ii. 22. which passages are by the Jews<sup>k</sup> themselves interpreted

of Christ; and is a name often used of him, in the New Testament: it is true of him as God, he is light itself, and in him is no darkness at all; and as the Creator of mankind, he is that light which lightens every man with the light of nature and reason; and as the Messiah, he is come a light into the world: the light of the Gospel, in the clear shine of it, is from him; the light of grace in his people, who were in darkness itself, he is the author and donor of; as he is also of the light of glory and happiness, in the world to come: and particularly, the Gentiles enjoy this benefit of light by him; who were, and as this supposes they were, in darkness, as they had been some hundreds of years before the Messiah's coming: they were in the dark about the being and perfections of God, about the unity of God, and the Trinity of persons in the Godhead, and about God in Christ; about his worship, the rule and nature of it; and the manner of atonement, and reconciliation for sin; the person, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; the spirit of God, and his operations on the souls of men; the Scriptures of truth, and both law and Gospel; the resurrection of the dead, and a future state: now, though Christ, in his personal ministry, was sent only to the Jews, yet after his resurrection, he gave his disciples a commission to go into all the world, to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, in order to turn them from darkness to light; and hereby multitudes were called out of darkness into marvellous light: and this Simeon had knowledge of, and a few more besides him; otherwise, the generality of the Jewish nation were of opinion, that when the Messiah came, the nations of the world would receive no benefit by him, no light, nor comfort, nor peace, or prosperity: but all the reverse would befall them, as darkness, calamity, and misery: and so they express themselves in a certain place<sup>l</sup>; "the Israelites look, or wait for redemption; for the day of the Lord shall be *light to them*; but the nations, why do they wait for him? "for he shall be *to them darkness, and not light.*" But the contrary, Simeon, under divine inspiration, declares, and, blessed be God, it has proved true: he adds, *and the glory of thy people Israel*; which is true of Israel in a literal sense, inasmuch as the Messiah was born of the Jews, and among them; and was first sent and came to them, and lived and dwelled with them; taught in their streets, and wrought his miracles in the midst of them; though this was an aggravation of their ingratitude and unbelief, in rejecting him: the Gospel was first preached to them, even after the commission was enlarged to carry it among the Gentiles; and many of them were converted, and the first Gospel church was planted among them; and an additional glory was made to them, by the calling of the Gentiles, and joining them to them, through the ministry of the apostles, who were all Jews; who went forth from Zion, and carried the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, to the several parts of the world: and this also is more especially true, of the mystical, or spiritual Israel of God, whose glory Christ is; being made of God unto them, wisdom, righteousness, sancti-

<sup>k</sup> Jarchi in Psal. xliii. 3. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 1. 3. Echa Rabati, fol. 50. 2.

<sup>l</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2.

fiction, and redemption; they having such an head, husband, Saviour, and Redeemer, as he; and they being clothed with his righteousness, and washed in his blood, sanctified by his grace, and made meet for eternal glory; to which they have a right and claim, through the grace of God, and merits of Christ; and therefore glory not in themselves, but in Christ, who is their all in all.

Ver. 33. *And Joseph and his mother, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin reads, *and his father and mother*. The Ethiopic version retains both his name and his relation, and reads, *and Joseph his father, and his mother*; but all the ancient copies read only *Joseph*, without the addition, *his father*; and so the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions: they *marvelled at those things which were spoken of him*; the child Jesus: not that those things which Simeon said, were new and strange to them; for they not only knew that the same things were predicted of the Messiah, but they had heard and known, and believed the same concerning this child; but they wondered, that a stranger to them and the child, coming into the temple at this instant, should have such a revelation made to him, and be able to say the things he did. Moreover, there is no need to confine this passage to what were said by Simeon, but it may reach to, and include every thing; that as yet had been spoken concerning Jesus; either before, or since his birth; as by the angel to them both, to the one before his conception, to the other after; and by Zachairas and Elisabeth, and by the angel to the shepherds, who had reported the same to Joseph and Mary, and now by Simeon; and they were astonished, at the exact agreement there was between them.

Ver. 34. *And Simeon blessed them, &c.*] Pronounced them blessed persons, on account of their relation to Christ as man; and more especially, because of their interest in him, as the Saviour and Redeemer of them; and wished them all happiness and prosperity inward and outward, temporal, spiritual, and eternal; and so the Arabic version renders it, confining it to Joseph and Mary; *and Simeon blessed them both*; though this blessing of his may take in also the young child Jesus; whom he might pronounce blessed, as Elizabeth before had done, ch. i. 42. since he was the promised seed, in whom all nations of the earth should be blessed; and to whom, and to whose undertakings, interest, and kingdom, he might wish all prosperous success. The Persic version reads, *old Simeon: and said unto Mary his mother*: he directed his discourse to her, because she was the only real parent of this child he had in his arms, and had said so much of, and was about to say more; and because part of what follows, personally concerned her: *behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel*. The word *child*, is not in the original text; where 'tis only, *this is set, &c.* Simeon seeming to be, as it were, at a loss, what name to call this great and illustrious person by, and therefore 'tis left to be supplied. The Persic version supplies it thus, *behold, this holy one is set, &c.* The sense is, that this child, who is the stone of Israel, is set, or put, or lies, both as a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence,

for many of the Jews to stumble at, and fall and perish; and as a precious corner and foundation-stone, for the erection and elevation of others of them, to the highest honour and dignity, that shall believe on him: for these words are not to be understood of the same, but of different persons among the Jews; though it may be true, that some, who first stumbled at him, might be raised up again, and brought to believe in him; and that many, who for his sake, and the Gospel, fell under great disgrace and reproach, and into great afflictions and persecutions, were raised up to the enjoyment of great comfort and honour: but they are not the same persons that Christ is set for the fall of, that he is set for the rising of; nor the same he is set for the rising of, he is set for the fall of; the one designs the elect of God among the Jews, who became true believers in Christ; and the other, the reprobate, who died in impenitence and unbelief: the words, so far as they concern Christ, being *set for the fall of many of the Jews*; have a manifest reference to Isa. viii. 14, 15. where the Messiah is spoken of as a stone, and as a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence; at which, many of the Jews should stumble, and fall, and be broken. And so the text is applied in the Talmud<sup>a</sup>, where it is said, that "the son of David will not come, until both houses of the fathers, fall out of Israel; and they are these, the head of the captivity in Babylon, and the prince in the land of Israel; as it is said, Isa. viii. 14. *And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel.*" Accordingly the Jews did stumble at his birth, parentage, and education; at the meanness of his person, and the obscurity of his kingdom; at the company he kept, and the audience that attended him; at his doctrine and miracles, and at his sufferings and death: they fell, through their unbelief and rejection of him, as the Messiah; and not only from their outward privileges, civil, and religious; the Gospel was taken away from them, the national covenant between God and them was broken, and they ceased to be his people, their temple and city were destroyed, and wrath came upon their nation to the uttermost; but they also fell into everlasting perdition, dying in their sins, through their disbelief of Jesus as the Messiah: this indeed was not the case of all of them; there was a seed, a remnant, according to the election of grace; but it was the case of many, and of the far greater part; but then this same stone that was laid in Zion, was also set for the rising again of many of them; meaning not for their resurrection in a literal sense, though this is a truth: for as all God's elect, whether Jews or Gentiles, rose in him representatively, when he rose from the dead; so many of them rose personally after his resurrection, and all of them, at the last day, will rise again, in consequence of their union to him: and indeed, all the wicked will be raised again, by virtue of his power; but not this, but their resurrection in a spiritual sense, is here meant; and it supposes the persons raised to have been in a low estate, as all God's elect by nature are: they are in a hopeless and helpless condition in themselves: they are in a state

of thralldom and bondage, to sin, Satan, and the law; they are filled with diseases, nauseous, mortal, and incurable; they are clothed in rags, and are beggars on the dunghill; they are deep in debt, and have nothing to pay; and are dead in trespasses and sins. Christ is now provided and appointed, for the raising them up out of their low estate, and he does do it; he is the resurrection and the life unto them; he raises from the death of sin, to a life of grace and holiness from him, to a life of faith on him, and communion with him here, and to eternal life hereafter: he pays all their debts, clothes them with his righteousness, heals all their diseases, redeems them from the slavery of sin, the captivity of Satan, and the bondage and curse of the law; brings them into a hopeful and comfortable condition; raises them to the possession of a large estate, an eternal inheritance; and gives them both a right unto it, and meetness for it; sets them among princes, makes them kings, places them on a throne of glory, yea, on his own throne, and sets a crown of righteousness, life, and glory, on their heads; and will cause them to reign with him, first on earth, for a thousand years, and then in heaven to all eternity: and this was to be the case of many in Israel, though not of all; for all did not obey the Gospel, some did, three thousand under one sermon; and more will in the latter day, when all Israel shall be saved. This privilege of rising again, in this sense, by Christ, though it is here spoken of with respect to many of the Jews, yet not to the exclusion of the Gentiles; for this honour have all the saints, be they of what nation they will. Now when Christ is said to be *set* for these different things, the meaning is, that he was fore-appointed, pre-ordained, and set forth in God's counsel, purposes, and decrees, as a stone at which some should stumble, through their own wickedness and unbelief, and fall and perish, and be eternally lost; and as a foundation-stone for others, to build their faith and hope upon, which should be given them, and so rise up to everlasting life; and that he was set forth in the prophecies of the Old Testament, as in that here referred to, for the same ends; and that he was now exhibited in human nature with the same views, and should be held forth in the everlasting Gospel, for the like purposes; and which eventually is the savour of life unto life to some, and the savour of death unto death to others: to all this, a *behold* is prefixed, as expressing what is wonderful and surprising, and not to be accounted for, but to be resolved into the secret and sovereign will of God: 'tis added, that he is also set for a sign which shall be spoken against: referring to Isa. viii. 18. Christ is the sign of God's everlasting love to his people, the great proof, evidence, and demonstration of it; and in this respect, is spoken against by many: and he is set up in the Gospel, as an ensign of the people to look at, and gather to, for comfort, peace, righteousness, salvation, and eternal life; but is by many contradicted, opposed, and treated with contempt and abhorrence; so that he appears rather to be set as a mark and butt to shoot at: he was spoken against by the Scribes and Pharisees, and the greater

part of the people of the Jews, and contradicted, as the Messiah, because of his mean appearance among them; his proper deity was denied, his divine sonship was gainsayed; he was contemned in all his offices, kingly, priestly, and prophetic; his works of mercy, both to the bodies and souls of men, his miracles, and the whole series of his life and actions, were traduced as sinful and criminal: this was the contradiction of sinners against himself, which he endured, Heb. xii. 3. and for which he was set and appointed; and still the contradiction continues, and will, as long as the Gospel is preached.

Ver. 35. *Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also, &c.*] Meaning either the sword, or spear of scandal, as the Arabic version renders it; so the calumny, and reproach of the tongues of men, is compared to a sharp sword, Psal. lvii. 4. and such the virgin might meet with on account of her conception in an unmarried state, which might greatly wound her soul; or else the sorrows she met with on account of her son: as he was a man of sorrows, so was she a woman of sorrows, from his cradle to his cross; and his sorrows, like so many darts, or javelins, rebounded from him to her, and pierced her soul through; as when Herod sought his life, Matt. ii. 13, 14. when she had lost him for a whole day, Luke ii. 48. and when he was frequently exposed to danger among the spiteful and malicious Jews; but never more than when she stood at his cross, and saw him in his agonies, extended on the tree, bleeding, gasping, and dying, John. xix. 25. Some think this refers to martyrdom, which she was to suffer by the sword, of which the Scripture is silent. Epiphanius, an ancient writer, seems to hint at it<sup>a</sup>. *That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed*; that is, all this offence was to be taken at Christ, and he to be spoken against; and all these afflictions, reproaches, and persecutions, he and his were to endure for this end; that the secret thoughts of men might be discovered, and they be known to be what they were, whether hypocrites, or good men, foes or friends of Christ: so on the one hand, what were the Scribes and Pharisees, who talked of a Messiah, and pretended to righteousness and holiness, and yet when the Messiah came, rejected him; and so all such who followed Christ with worldly views, and expected a temporal kingdom, but left him when they found it otherwise, and Judas, one of his disciples; and, on the other hand, who were sincere and hearty, as the rest of his disciples, Joseph of Arimathea, and others, who abode by him, notwithstanding the cross; and the same use have all persecutions, errors, and heresies, the opposition and contradiction of men in every shape now, and the same end is answered; wicked men, and hypocrites, are known to be what they are; and good men are made manifest; and what each think of Christ and his Gospel, is discovered hereby; see 1 Cor. xi. 19.

Ver. 36. *And there was one Anna, &c.*] The name is the same with Hannah: so Hannah, the mother of Samuel, is by the Septuagint called Anna, in 1 Sam. i. 2, 5, 8, 9, 15, 19, 22, 25. and it signifies *grace*; or *gracious*: and as was her name, so was she, a gracious

<sup>a</sup> Contr. Hæres. hæres. 78.



woman; one that had the grace of God herself, and was a publisher of the glad tidings of grace and redemption by Christ, to others; and she was a *prophetess*: for though prophecy had ceased among the Jews for some hundreds of years, it now revived upon the coming of the Messiah; and though instances of women-prophets were rare, yet some there were, both before, and after the coming of Christ; as Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth, and Huldah, the wife of Shallum; and this Anna, at the time of Christ's birth, and afterwards four daughters of Philip the Evangelist, who were virgins. This woman was the *daughter of Phanuel*; 'tis the same name with Penuel; and which, by the Septuagint, in 1 Chron. iv. 4. and viii. 25. is called Phanuel, as here. This man might be a person of some note, or he may be mentioned for the sake of his name, which signifies the face of God, and is the name Jacob gave to a certain place where he had seen God face to face, Gen. xxxii. 30, 31. And now Phanuel's daughter both saw and gave the light of the knowledge of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, and now beheld his face in the flesh, who is God over all, blessed for ever. *Of the tribe of Aser*; the same with Asher; for so Asher is called, as here, by the Septuagint, in Gen. xxx. 13. and xlix. 20. and elsewhere; and though this tribe was carried captive with the rest of the ten tribes; yet there were some of the ten tribes that returned along with Judah and Benjamin, and were dispersed among them. This tribe had its seat in Galilee; so that though the Jews denied that any prophet came from thence, yet it seems a prophetess did. *She was of a great age*: the phrase is the same with that in ch. i. 7. there rendered, *stricken in years*; see the note there. Her age will appear to be great, if it be observed, that she was seven years a married woman, and fourscore and four years a widow, which make ninety-one; and if she was married at twelve years and a half, at which time the Jews reckoned females marriageable, she must be an hundred and three years old; and perhaps her age might be eight or ten years more: *and had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity*: this is mentioned to observe her chastity, that she was in her virginity, or a chaste virgin, when she became a wife; such an one as the high-priest was obliged to have, Lev. xxi. 13. and that the tokens of her virginity were brought, which the Jewish laws obliged to, Deut. xxii. 15, 17, 20. and that she lived honestly, and honourably, with her husband, during the term of her marriage-state.

Ver. 37. *And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, &c.*] Which is not the date of her whole age, as some have thought, but of her widowhood-state, as distinct from her marriage-state, and the time of her virginity. And this sense all the versions favour. *Which departed not from the temple*: that is, she was constant in her devotion there, at the time of divine service, whether by night or day; not that she was in it, for she had been out of it now; otherwise it could not with propriety be said of her, that *she coming in that instant*, as in the next verse; but that she always was there when there was any worship per-

formed, in which women might be concerned, and which is pointed out in the next clause: *but served God with fastings and prayers, night and day*: she attended to the usual fasts of twice a week, and to such as were enjoined the whole congregation, and to the several set times of prayer, and to every act of devotion, private or public, by night or day. In Exod. xxxviii. 8. we read of women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: both the Targums of Onkelos and Ben Uzziel render it, *who came to pray*; and the Septuagint version, *that fasted*: Anna did both.

Ver. 38. *And she coming in that instant, &c.*] That the parents of Christ brought him into the temple; just as Simeon was embracing him in his arms, and blessing God for him, and saying the things concerning him he had done; and who also came at that juncture, as he did, under the impulse, and by the direction of the spirit of God; *gave thanks likewise unto the Lord*: praised him, as he had done, that he had sent the promised, and long looked-for Messiah and Saviour; and that she had lived to see his blessed face, and this happy day; and that she should be directed to come in at this instant, and be favoured with this singular mercy of seeing the new-born Saviour, and his honoured parents: *and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem*; this she either did at this time; they in Jerusalem that looked, and diligently waited for, and earnestly desired the Messiah, and spiritual redemption and salvation by him, being now assembled together in the temple; or afterwards, as she had opportunity of conversing with them, when she acquainted them with what she had heard and seen. By the *redemption* they were looking for, is meant, the Redeemer; as by *salvation*, the Saviour, in ver. 30. Some versions, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic read, *the redemption of Jerusalem*; not literally, but spiritually understood, even the redemption of the church of Christ, which is often so called: and others, as the Persic version, *the redemption of Israel*; that is, of spiritual Israel: some read *in Israel*; so one copy of Stephens's.

Ver. 39. *And when they had performed all things, &c.*] Relating to the purification of Mary, and the presentation and redemption of her first-born, and the sacrifices and ceremonies belonging thereunto: *according to the law of the Lord*; which that directed to, and enjoined: *they returned into Galilee*; not that they came from thence to Jerusalem, but from Bethlehem, where Mary lay-in, and her time for purification was now just expired: nor did they go now directly to Galilee; or, if they did, they soon came back again to Bethlehem, since here the wise men found them two years after; when by a divine warning, they went into Egypt, where they remained till Herod's death, and after came into the land of Israel, into the parts of Galilee, and dwelt at Nazareth; for which reason it is here called their own city; *to their own city Nazareth*: Bethlehem was their native city, the place of their birth, at least of their family; and Nazareth was the city of their habitation.

Ver. 40. *And the child grew, &c.*] In body, in

strength, and in stature; which shews that it was a true body Christ assumed, and like ours, which did not come to its maturity at once, but by degrees: *and waxed strong in spirit, or in his soul*; for as he had a true body, he had also a reasonable soul; the faculties of which were far from being weak, they were exceeding strong, and appeared stronger and stronger every day; his understanding was clear, his judgment solid, and his memory strong and retentive, his will, and the desires of it, were to that which is good, and his affections cleaved unto it. The Persic and Ethiopic versions read, *was strengthened in, or by the Holy Spirit*; with the grace and gifts of it; but the former sense is best. *Filled with wisdom*; and knowledge as man; for this is to be understood, not of his essential wisdom as God, nor of those treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which were hid in him as mediator, to be dispensed to his church; but of his created and natural wisdom, as man; in which he increased gradually, as his body grew, and the faculties of his soul opened under the influences of his deity, and the power of his spirit; *and the grace of God was upon him*; which designs not the fulness of grace that was in him, as mediator, for the supply of his people: but either that internal grace which was bestowed on his human nature, even the various graces of the spirit of God, and which flowed from the grace of union of the two natures in him; or rather the love and favour of God, which in various instances was in a very singular manner manifested to him.

Ver. 41. *Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year, &c.]* Joseph was obliged to go three times a year, as were all the males in Israel, at the feasts of the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles, Deut. xvi. 16. The first of these is expressed here, *at the feast of the passover*; but the women were not obliged to go up: for so it is said by the Jews, *כסחן של נשים רשות, the passover of women is voluntary, or in their own power*; they might go up to the feast, or not, as they pleased. 'Tis indeed said of Hillel, who was now alive, that he obliged the women to the first, but not to a second passover: to which the Karaites object; the account they give is as follows: "truly the women were obliged, by the school of Hillel, to the offering of the passover; but if they were hindered from the first passover, the second was in their power; that is, the thing depended upon their will and pleasure, whether they would offer or no, which may be justly wondered at; for why should they be obliged to the first, and not the second? for behold, as to the obligation of the passover, there is no difference between the first passover, and the second. The sum of the matter is, our wise men, on whom be peace, have determined, and say, that there is no obligation but to males, who are arrived to maturity." So that this was a voluntary thing in Mary; which discovers her piety and religion, and her great regard to the ordinances and appointments of God.

Ver. 42. *And when he was twelve years old, &c.]* Not that he was now, *בר מצוה, a son of the commandment*, to use the Jewish phrase; or now came under the yoke of the law; or was obliged to the duties of

adult church-membership, as is asserted by some; nor particularly to go to Jerusalem to make his appearance at the feast of the passover, or any other feast: for, according to the maxims of the Jews, persons were not obliged to the duties of the law, or subject to the penalties of it in case of non-performance, until they were, a female, at the age of twelve years, and one day, and a male, at the age of thirteen years, and one day; but then they used to train up their children, and inure them to religious exercises before: as for instance, though they were not obliged to fast on the day of atonement, until they were at the age before-mentioned; yet they used them to it two or three years before, as they were able to endure it: a son of nine, or ten years old, they train him up by hours; they make him fast so many hours; and one of eleven, or twelve years old, they make him fast a whole day: but then this was not law, but custom; and which they observed, that they might be used to the commandments, and be expert in them, and ready to perform them when required. 'Tis said; that "there was a good custom in Jerusalem to make their little sons and daughters fast on a fast-day; the son of a year, till the very day he is twelve years old, when he fasts the whole day; and after that they carry him, and bring him before every ancient man, that he may bless him, and confirm him, and pray over him, that he may be worthy in the law, and in good works; and every one that is greater than he in the city, he stands up from his place, and goes before him, and bows to him, to pray for him; and this is to learn him, that they are beautiful, and their works beautiful and acceptable to God; and they did not use to leave their little children behind them, but brought them to the synagogues, *כרי לרום במצות, that they might be ready in the commandments.*" That they might be inured to them, and expert in them, when they were under obligation to them; for they were not properly under the law, until they were arrived to the age above mentioned; nor were they reckoned adult church-members till then, nor then neither, unless worthy persons: for so it is said, "he that is worthy, at thirteen years of age, is called *בן לוי, a son of the congregation of Israel*;" that is, a member of the church. When therefore Joseph and Mary took Jesus along with them, at this age, when they went up to Jerusalem, after the custom of the feast of the passover, it shews their religious regard to him; and may be an instruction to parents, to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, after their example.

Ver. 43. *And when they had fulfilled the days, &c.]* The seven days of the feast of unleavened bread, for so many days that feast was observed; and though it was not absolutely necessary, and obligatory upon them to stay all that time at Jerusalem, yet Mary and Joseph seem so to have done, as did the more religious and devout persons: as they returned; at the time when they were going from Jerusalem home again: *the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem*; being desirous of hearing the discourses of the doctors about the sense of the Scriptures, the meaning of the

<sup>2</sup> T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 61. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Eliahu Adereet, p. 39. apud Trigland. de Sect. Karæorum, p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> Aben Ezra in Gen. xvii. 14.

<sup>1</sup> Mian. Yoma, c. 8. sect. 4. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 62. 1. Maimon. Hileh. Shebitat Aaur, c. 2. sect. 10, 11.

<sup>2</sup> Massechet Sopherim, c. 18. sect. 5. <sup>3</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 39. 4.

laws, and the traditions of the elders, and of conversing with them: *and Joseph, and his mother, knew not of it*; of his intention to tarry longer, nor of his design in so doing: he did not ask leave of them, since his stay was about an affair of his heavenly father's; and therefore this action of Christ is not to be drawn into an example, or precedent for children, to act without consulting, or asking leave of their parents. They had no notion at all of his staying behind them, nor any suspicion of it; nor did they miss him for a considerable time; which might be owing to the large numbers that went in company together, so that they could not tell but that he was in the crowd, though they did not see him; or to the men and women travelling in separate companies, as is thought; so that Joseph might think he was with Mary, and Mary might conclude he was with Joseph, till they came to the end of their first day's journey, when they came together, and then missed him.

Ver. 44. *But they supposing him to have been in the company, &c.*] That travelled together into the same parts, having been, as they, at Jerusalem to keep the feast: *went a day's journey*: either before they missed him; or if they missed him sooner, yet they went on inquiring for him in the company, until they were come a day's journey before they thought, or, at least, determined on going back to Jerusalem. The bounds of a day's journey from Jerusalem are said to be Elath on the south, and Akrabba on the north; elsewhere<sup>a</sup> it is, Elath on the north, and Akrabba on the south, Lud, or Lydda, on the west, and Jordan on the east; wherefore, as Galilee lay north of Jerusalem, the bound of this day's journey must be, according to the Misna, Akrabba, and, according to the Talmud, Elath. Nazareth was three days journey from Jerusalem<sup>b</sup>: according to the Jewish writers<sup>c</sup>, a day's journey was ten *parsas*, or large miles, which were forty lesser miles; and which, they say, is a middling man's walk, on a middling day, as in the months of Tisri, or Nisan, when days and nights were alike: and it was in the latter of those months, on the twenty-second day of it, that Joseph and Mary set out on their journey; see Exod. xii. 18. but it can't be thought that women and children should be able to travel so many miles a day, and therefore this day's journey, very likely, was shorter: *and they sought him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance*; when they came to the end of their day's journey, where they took up their lodging for that night: and as the company was large, they doubtless lay at different houses; wherefore they inquired in every house, where their relations and acquaintance lay, after their child Jesus, where they might most reasonably expect he would be: and so, in a spiritual sense, when souls have lost sight of Christ, of whom should they inquire concerning him? and where should they expect to hear of him, but among their spiritual kindred and friends, and who also are related to Christ? see Cant. v. 9.

Ver. 45. *And when they found him not, &c.*] In

the company that came from Jerusalem with them, nor among any of their relations and friends, with whom they supposed he was: *they turned back again to Jerusalem*. that is, the next morning, for it can hardly be thought they would set out that night, after they had travelled all day, without taking some repose: *seeking him*; at Jerusalem, in the streets and broad places of it; a figure of the church and ordinances, where souls look for, and inquire after their beloved, when they have lost him, Cant. iii. 1, 2, 3.

Ver. 46. *And it came to pass, that after three days, &c.*] From their first setting out from Jerusalem, when Jesus tarried behind; or on the third day, which may be reckoned thus; the first day was spent in journeying, and the second in coming back the same journey, and the third day they sought all Jerusalem for him, when *they found him in the temple*; his father's house, the house of God, a figure of a Gospel church, where the word and ordinances are duly administered, and where Christ is to be found. What part of the temple Christ was in, is not easy to say; it was not in the holy of holies, for none but the high-priest went into that, and that only on the day of atonement; nor in the court of the priests, for he was not among them, but the doctors; nor in the court of the Israelites, where the common people worshipped: it may be best judged of, by observing where their several consistories, or courts of judicature were<sup>d</sup>; the grand sanhedrim sat in the sanctuary, in the room Gazith; the lesser sanhedrim, which consisted of twenty-three persons, and the bench of three; the one sat in the gate of the court (of the Israelites); and the other in the gate of the mountain of the house (or court of the Gentiles); it seems most likely, that he was in the room Gazith, where the grand sanhedrim sat; for here was the largest number of doctors; and it was the more amazing to his parents, to find him here; unless it should be rather thought, that he was in the synagogue in the temple, for such an one there<sup>e</sup> was there; where, after service was over, he might be admitted to a conversation with the learned doctors that belonged to it: it follows, *sitting in the midst of the doctors*: the principal doctors in being at this time, were Hillel and Shammai, the one the president, and the other vice-president of the council; and Rabban Simeon, the son of Hillel, who succeeded him in his office; and R. Judah, and R. Joshua, the sons of Bethira; Jonathan ben Uzziel, the author of the Chaldee paraphrase; and R. Jochanan ben Zaccai. The sanhedrim sat in a semicircular form, like the half of a round corn-floor; so that they could see one another, and the prince, and the father of the court, could see them all; and before them sat three rows of the disciples of the wise men, or scholars; and in each row there were three-and-twenty men: the first row was next to the sanhedrim, and the second row below that, and the third row below that; and in every row they sat according to their superiority in wisdom<sup>f</sup>: on a seat, in one of these rows, I think, Christ sat among

<sup>a</sup> Misn. Maaser Shenl, c. 3. §. 2.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Betza, fol. 5. 1.

<sup>c</sup> David de Pomis Lex. Heb. p. 141.

<sup>d</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 2. 3. T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 93. 3. & 94.

<sup>e</sup> 1. & Tossapha in ib. fol. 11. 2. Seder Tephillot, fol. 144. 1. Ed. Basil.

<sup>a</sup> Misn. Sanhedrim, c. 10. sect. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrim, c. 1. sect. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Jarchi in Misn. Yoma, c. 7. sect. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Misn. sanhedrim, c. 4. sect. 3, 4. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrim, c. 1. sect. 7.

the scholars; and this may be called sitting among the doctors, because these seats were just before them, and were in a semicircular form; at least he might be here at first; when upon the questions he put, and the answers he made, he was taken particular notice of by the doctors, who might call him up, and place him between them; for this, in some cases, was done to scholars. Thus, 'tis said, "if one of the disciples, or scholars; say, I have something to say in favour of him, (one that is on his trial,) they bring him up, and cause him to sit in the midst of them; and he does not go down from thence all the whole day." Both hearing them: their debates and decisions about points in the law of Moses: and asking them questions; upon those points. Had this been a *Midrash*, or school, there would be no difficulty of producing instances of putting questions to the doctors there; but there was no such place in the temple, or synagogue, where teachers were interrogated by their hearers; for which reason I think the passages, produced by Dr. Lightfoot, are not so pertinent, since they refer to such a place: it is very likely, since there were such a number of scholars admitted to sit before the sanhedrim to hear their controversies, and determinations, and were allowed, in some cases, to speak; so they might be suffered to put questions, in order to gain knowledge.

Ver. 47. *And all that heard him were astonished, &c.*] All in the sanhedrim, both the doctors, and their disciples, were amazed, at his understanding; in the knowledge of the law, and of the Scriptures: and his answers; which he returned to the questions the doctors put to him, which were made with so much wisdom and judgment, that it was surprising in one of his years.

Ver. 48. *And when they saw him they were amazed, &c.*] That is, when Joseph and Mary saw him amidst the doctors, they were astonished that he was admitted among them, and had in such esteem by them: and his mother said unto him; she being his own, and only parent, and not Joseph; and therefore he said nothing, but left it to her; who upon sight of him, at least as soon as she had a proper opportunity after he had left the doctors, began to chide, or rather to expostulate with him after this manner: *son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?* which was said with great tenderness of affection, and in much mildness; and may be a pattern to parents, who should not provoke their children to anger, but deal gently and tenderly with them: *behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing;* with great grief, anxiety, and solicitude, fearing lest some evil had befallen him. Mary calls Joseph his father, though she knew he was not, in a proper sense; but because he was supposed to be so, and was his father by the law of marriage; and especially, she might call him so because of his paternal care of him in his education, and bringing him up: for it is a maxim with the Jews, that "not he that begets, but he that brings up, is the father."

Ver. 49. *And he said unto them, how is it that ye sought me? &c.*] That is, with so much uneasiness and distress of mind, not trusting in the power and providence of God, to take care of him; and in other

places, besides the temple, where they had been inquiring for him: *wist ye not that I must be about my father's business? or in my father's house,* as the Syriac and Persic versions render it; where, as soon as you missed me, you might, at once, have concluded I was, and not have put yourselves to so much trouble and pains in seeking for me. Christ seems to tax them with ignorance, or, at least, forgetfulness of his having a father in heaven, whose business he came to do on earth; and which they should have thought in their own minds he was now about, and so have made themselves easy. The business that Christ came about was to preach the Gospel, and which he afterwards performed with great clearness and fulness, with much power, majesty, and authority, with great constancy and diligence, with much concern for the souls of men, and with great awfulness; and in which he took great delight, though he went through many dangers and risks of life; as also to work miracles in proof of his deity and Messiahship, and for the good of the bodies of men, and in which he was very assiduous, going about every where doing good this way: but the main, and principal part of his business was, to work out salvation for his people, by fulfilling the law, making reconciliation and atonement for their sins, and obtaining eternal redemption: this was a business which neither angels nor men could do; was very toilsome and laborious, and yet he delighted in it; nor did he desist from it until it was accomplished: and this is called his father's business, because he contrived and assigned it to him; he called him to it, and sent him to perform it; he enjoined it him as man and mediator, and the glory of his perfections was concerned in it, and secured by it: and it was a business that Christ must be about, be concerned in, and perform, because he engaged to do it from all eternity; and because it was the will of his father, which must be done, and was necessary in order to shew himself dutiful and obedient; and because it was foretold in prophecy again and again, and promised that it should be done; and because it could not be done by another. Now our Lord's conversing with the doctors, and which was a branch of his prophetic office, and was, no doubt, with a view to the good of the souls of men, and nothing less than miraculous, was a shew, a prelude of, and a sort of an entrance upon the business he came about.

Ver. 50. *And they understood not the saying, &c.*] What he meant by his father's house, or his father's business, and the necessity of his being there, and about that: *which he spake unto them;* at that time, and as above related.

Ver. 51. *And he went down with them, &c.*] From the temple, and from Jerusalem, which were on high ground: and came to Nazareth; where he, and his parents, had lived ever since their return from Egypt: and was subject unto them; for though he thought fit to let them know, or, at least, put them in mind, that he had a father in heaven, whose business he came about, and must do, and therefore did not judge it necessary to ask their leave to stay at Jerusalem on that account; yet, as man, and willing to set an example of filial subjection to parents, he went along with them, and

<sup>2</sup> Misn. Sauehdrim, c. s. sect. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Shemot Rabba, sect. 46. fol. 143. 1.

shewed all dutiful respect unto them, yielding a ready and cheerful obedience to their commands, living with them, and working under them, and for them: and so he continued till he was about thirty years of age: *but his mother kept all these sayings, or things; for this relates not only to the words of Christ, but to the whole history of his staying behind them at Jerusalem, of his sitting among the doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions, to the astonishment of all. These things she treasured up, and preserved, in her heart; that is, in her memory; so the word is used in Jewish writings. It is reported of R. Meir<sup>f</sup>, that "he went to intercalate the year in Asia, and there "was no Megilla (the book of Esther) there, and he "wrote it, מלגלג, out of his heart, (i. e. out of his memory,) and read it."*

Ver. 52. *And Jesus increased in wisdom, &c.]* As man; for neither his divine wisdom, nor the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in him, as mediator, could

admit of any increase; but as he grew in body, the faculties of his soul opened, and received gradually large measures of wisdom and knowledge, in things natural and spiritual, through the in-dwelling of his divine nature in him, and the Holy Spirit that was, without measure, on him: *and stature*: the word signifies age also; and so the Vulgate Latin has rendered it: but that is not the meaning of it here, since it would have been entirely unnecessary to have observed, that he increased in age, which must be unavoidable: but the sense is, that as he increased in the wisdom and knowledge of his human soul, so he likewise increased in the stature of his body: *and in favour with God and man*: he appeared by the grace that was in him, and the gifts bestowed on him, to be high in the love and favour of God; and had a large share in the esteem and affections of all good men, who had the honour and happiness of knowing him, and of being acquainted with him.

## C H A P. III.

Ver. 1. *NOW* in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, &c.] Emperor of Rome, and the third of the Cæsars; Julius was the first, and Augustus the second, in whose time Christ was born, and this Tiberius the third; he was the son of Livia, the wife of Augustus, but not by him; but was adopted by him, into the empire: his name was Claudius Tiberius Nero, and for his intemperance was called, Caldius Biberius Mero; the whole of his reign was upwards of twenty-two years, for he died in the twenty-third year of his reign<sup>g</sup>; and in the fifteenth of it, John began to preach, Christ was baptized, and began to preach also; so that this year may be truly called, *the acceptable year of the Lord. Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea*; under the Emperor Tiberius, in whose reign the Jewish chronologer<sup>h</sup> places him, and the historian<sup>i</sup> also, and make mention of him as sent by him to Jerusalem: he was not the first governor of Judea for the Romans; there were before him Coponius, Marcus Ambivius, Annus Rufus, and Valerius Gratus: *and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee*; this was Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the great, and brother of Archelaus; the above chronologer<sup>h</sup> calls him also a tetrarch, and places him under Tiberius Cæsar: he is sometimes called a king, and so he is by the Ethiopic version here called *king of Galilee*; and in the Arabic version, *prince over the fourth part of Galilee*; besides Galilee, he had also Peræa, or the country beyond Jordan, as Josephus<sup>j</sup> says, and which seems here to be included in Galilee; see the note on Matt.

xiv. 1. *And his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea, and of the region of Trachonitis*: Pliny<sup>m</sup> makes mention of the nation of the Itureans, as belonging to Cœle Syria; perhaps Iturea is the same with Batanea, or Auranitis, or both; since these with Trachon, the same with Trachonitis here, are allotted to Philip by Josephus<sup>n</sup>: it seems to take its name from Jetur, one of the sons of Ishmael, Gen. xxv. 15. Trachonitis is mentioned by Pliny<sup>o</sup>, as near to Decapolis, and as a region and tetrarchy, as here: Ptolemy<sup>p</sup> speaks of the Trachonite Arabians, on the east of Batanea, or Bashan: the region of Trachona, or Trachonitis, with the Targumists<sup>q</sup>, answers to the country of Argob. This Philip, who as before by Josephus, so by Egesippus<sup>r</sup>, is said, in agreement with Luke, to be tetrarch of Trachonitis, was brother to Herod Antipas, by the father's, but not by the mother's side. Philip was born of Cleopatra, of Jerusalem, and Herod of Malthace, a Samaritan<sup>s</sup>: he died in the twentieth year of Tiberius<sup>t</sup>, five years after this: *and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene*: mention is made of Abila by Pliny<sup>u</sup>, as in Cœle Syria, from whence this tetrarchy might have its name; and by Ptolemy<sup>v</sup>, it is called Abila of Lysanias, from this, or some other governor of it, of that name; and the phrase, *from Abilene to Jerusalem*, is to be met with in the Talmud<sup>w</sup>, which doubtless designs this same place: who this Lysanias was, is not certain; he was not the son of Herod the great, as Eusebius suggests<sup>x</sup>, nor that Lysanias, the son of Ptolemy Minnaeus, whom Jose-

<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 18. 2.

<sup>g</sup> Suetou. Octav. Aug. c. 63, 63. & Tiberius Nero, c. 21, 42, 73.

<sup>h</sup> R. David Ganz, par. 2. fol. 15. 1.

<sup>i</sup> Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 9. sect. 2, 3.

<sup>j</sup> Par. 1. fol. 25. 2.

<sup>k</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 6. sect. 5.

<sup>l</sup> Nat. Hist. 1. 5. c. 23.

<sup>m</sup> Ib. ut supra.

<sup>n</sup> Nat. Hist. 1. 5. c. 18.

<sup>o</sup> Lib. 5. c. 15.

<sup>q</sup> Targum Jon. in Deut. iii. 4. 14. 1 Kings iv. 13. & T. Hieros. in Deut. iii. 14. & Numb. xxxiv. 15.

<sup>r</sup> De Excid. 1. 1. c. 46. & 3. 26.

<sup>s</sup> Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 28.

<sup>t</sup> Ib. Antiqua. l. 18. c. 6.

<sup>u</sup> Lib. 5. c. 18.

<sup>v</sup> Lib. 5. c. 15.

<sup>w</sup> T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 59. 2.

<sup>x</sup> Hist. Eccl. 1. 1. c. 9. 10.

plus \* speaks of, though very probably he might be a descendant of his: however, when Tiberius Cæsar reigned at Rome, and Pontius Pilate governed in Judea, and Herod Antipas in Galilee, and Philip his brother in Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias in Abilene, John the Baptist began to preach and baptize; to fix the æra of whose ministry and baptism, all this is said.

Ver. 2. *Annas and Caiaphas being the high-priests, &c.*] Some difficulty here arises, how these two could be both high-priests; when according to the law of God, and the usages of the Jewish nation, there was to be, and was but one high-priest at a time: many things are observed by writers, to solve this difficulty: some go this way; that though according to the divine institution, and the practice of former times, there was but one high-priest at a time; yet now, through the corruption of the present age, there were two high-priests; or at least, which officiated alternately in the same year: but of such a corruption, no instance can be given, even in those corrupt times; and as Maimonides says <sup>a</sup>, there can be but one high-priest בכל העולם, in all the world; and besides, is contrary to their canons, which were then in being, and still remain; one <sup>b</sup> of which runs thus, אין כוכבין שני, בהנים גדולים כאחת at once. Others suppose, that these two annually performed the office of high-priests by turns; that Caiaphas was high-priest one year, and Annas another: 'tis true indeed, that through the corruption of those times, this office became venal; hence 'tis said in the Talmud <sup>c</sup>, "because they gave money for the priesthood, they changed it every twelve months." And which is more largely expressed by one of their commentators <sup>d</sup>; "because the high-priests, who were under the second temple, after Simeon the just, gave money to minister in the high-priest's office, and because they were wicked, they did not fill up their years, therefore they changed every year." But though it is certain, that there were frequent, and sometimes annual changes in the priesthood, hence 'tis said of Caiaphas, John xi. 49. and xviii. 13. that he was high-priest the same year, yet it does not appear that he and Annas took it yearly by turns: for Caiaphas continued in that office some years, even till after the death of Christ: and besides, had this been the case, as one of them could be but high-priest for the year being, both in one year as here, could not with propriety be said to be high-priests. Others take another method, and suppose Caiaphas to be properly the high-priest, as he certainly was; and Annas so called, because he had been one formerly, the same with Ananus, the son of Seth; who was put into the priesthood by Quirinius, in the room of Joazar, and was deposed by Valerius Gratus, and Ishmael ben Phabi was put

into his room: but though there may be instances of persons being called high-priests, who had been in that office, after they were removed from it, yet no reason can be given, why Annas should be peculiarly called so, when there were in all probability several alive, who had been in that office as well as he; as Joazar his predecessor, and Ishmael ben Phabi, who succeeded Joazar, and after him Eleazar, the son of Annas, and then Simeon ben Camhith; nor why he should be put in the annals of the high-priests, in a year in which he was not one. It seems most likely therefore, that he was the *Sagan* of the priests, of which office mention is frequently made, in the Jewish writings <sup>e</sup>; yea, we often read of Chanina, or Chananiah, or Ananias, perhaps the same with this Annas, who is called, סגן כהנים, the *Sagan* of the priests <sup>f</sup>. This officer was not a deputy high-priest, or one that was substituted to officiate occasionally, in the room of the high-priest, when any thing hindered him, or rendered him unfit for his office; as on the day of atonement, if the high-priest contracted any pollution, they substituted another to minister <sup>g</sup>; which was not the *Sagan*, but another priest; and even such an one was called an high-priest, as appears from the following story <sup>h</sup>. "It happened to Simeon ben Camhith (a predecessor of Caiaphas), that he went out to speak with the king, on the evening of the day of atonement, and the spittle was scattered from his mouth, upon his garments, and he was unclean; and his brother Judah went in, and ministered in his stead in the high-priesthood; and their mother saw her two sons, בני כהנים גדולים ביום אחד, high-priests in one day." But the *Sagan* was not an officer *pro tempore*, or so much under the high-priest, and one in his stead, as a ruler and governor over other priests. Maimonides says of him thus <sup>i</sup>; "they appoint one priest, who is to the high-priest as a second to the king, and he is called *Sagan*"; and he is called a ruler: and he stands at the right hand of the high-priest continually; and this is an honour to him, and all the priests are under the hand of the *Sagan*." The account given of him in the Talmud <sup>k</sup>, is this; "in five things the *Sagan* ministers; the *Sagan* says to him, my lord, high-priest, lift up thy right hand (*i. e.* when he took the lots out of the vessel for the goats, on the day of atonement <sup>l</sup>, which should be slain); the *Sagan* is on his right hand, and the father of the sanhedrim on his left (*i. e.* when he went to the east of the court and the north of the altar <sup>m</sup>, where were the two goats, and the vessel in which were the lots); the *Sagan* waved with the veils, or linen clothes; the *Sagan* held him by his right hand, and caused him to ascend (by the steps to the altar); and no man was appointed an high-priest, before he was a *Sagan*." Now these might be as Seraiah and Zephaniah, the

<sup>a</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 13. sect. 1.

<sup>b</sup> In Mian. Menachot, c. 13. sect. 10.

<sup>c</sup> T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Cele Hamikdash, c. 4. sect. 15.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 8. 2.

<sup>e</sup> Bartenora in Mian. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 1.

<sup>f</sup> Targum in 2 Kings xxiii. 4. & xxv. 18. & in Jer. xx. 1. & xxix. 26, & lii. 24.

<sup>g</sup> Mian. Shekalim, c. 6. sect. 1. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 8. 1. Juchasin, fol. 57. 1.

<sup>h</sup> Mian. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 1.

<sup>i</sup> T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 38. 4. Megilla, fol. 72. 1. Horayot, fol. 47. 4. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 47. 1. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 180. 3.

<sup>j</sup> Hilch. Cele Hamikdash, c. 4. sect. 16.

<sup>k</sup> T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 41. 1.

<sup>l</sup> Mian. Yoma, c. 4. sect. 1.

<sup>m</sup> Ib. c. 3. sect. 9.

one chief priest, and the other second priest, Jer. lii. 24. where the Targum and Jarchi interpret the text, the *Sagan* of the priests. And this being an office of such dignity and authority, supposing Annas in it, though he was not the high-priest, yet being the head of all the other priests, he might be called one, and be joined with Caiaphas, and set before him; not only because he had been an high-priest, but because he was his father-in-law: *the word of God came to John the son of Zachariah: a priest of the order of Abia; and of Elisabeth, a daughter of Aaron, and cousin of Mary, the mother of Jesus; as it had come formerly to the prophets, and particularly to Jeremy, who was sanctified from the womb, as the Baptist was: he was blessed with a prophetic spirit, and with the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, and with a wonderful revelation of the Messiah, and of the Gospel dispensation; and was abundantly qualified for the work he was called to, and sent to perform: and this befell him in the wilderness; that is, of Judea; where he had been brought up and lived, and from whence and where he came, preaching: he had lived a solitary life, and had not learnt his doctrine from men, but had his mission, ministry, and baptism, from heaven.*

Ver. 3. *And he came into all the country about Jordan, &c.]* He came out of the wilderness of Judea, where he first began his ministry, to some parts of the country that bordered on Jordan, and was near unto it, on either side the river; sometimes he was at Bethabara, and sometimes at Enon, near Salim; for he did not take a tour round about all the country that encompassed Jordan, but being at it, or in places adjacent to it, all the country round about came to him; see Matt. iii. 5. *Preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins: this was the work and office of John, as signified by Elias, in Mal. iv. 5, 6. the Jews say, "the Israelites will not repent, till Elias comes; " as it is said, Mal. iv. 5, 6. in the land of Israel repentance delights."* John came into this land, preaching this doctrine; see the note on Mark i. 4.

Ver. 4. *As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, &c.]* Ch. xl. 3. *saying, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight; see the note on Matt. iii. 3.*

Ver. 5. *Every valley shall be filled, &c.]* Luke cites more out of the same prophecy, as relating to the times of John the Baptist, and the Messiah, than the other Evangelists Matthew and Mark do: in the prophet it is, *every valley shall be exalted; which is done, by filling it up; the metaphor is persisted in, of preparing and clearing the way, for the coming of the Messiah, done by the ministry of John; under which, such souls as were lowly and humble, and depressed with the sense of sin, should be raised and directed to believe in Christ, and be filled with divine consolation from him. These words are owned by the Jews, to belong to the world to come; that is, the times of the Messiah; though they understand them, of making way for the return of the Israelites from captivity, by*

the Messiah: just as they suppose such things were done by the miraculous cloud, for the children of Israel, as they passed through the wilderness; of which they say<sup>p</sup>, "that it went before them, smote the serpents " and scorpions, and fiery serpents, and the rock; and " if there was any low place, it raised it up; or high " place, it made it low, and caused them to be plain; " as it is said, Isa. xl. 3. *And every valley shall be exalted, &c.*" But what they say of this cloud literally, as preparing the way for the Israelites, is in a spiritual sense true, of the ministry of John; whereby many of the children of Israel, had the way prepared for them, for the reception of the Messiah; when as every humble soul had its expectation raised, and its faith encouraged, and its heart filled with spiritual joy; so such as were proud and haughty, were humbled: *and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; all such as are elated with their own abilities, and boast of their righteousness, trust in themselves, and look with disdain and contempt on others, their loftiness shall be bowed down, and their haughtiness made low; and the Messiah alone, in his person, grace, and righteousness, be exalted: and the crooked shall be made straight; such as are of a crooked spirit, and walk in crooked ways, with the workers of iniquity, shall have new spirits given them, and be directed to right ways, and be led in the paths of righteousness and truth: and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and men of rough tempers, comparable to lions and bears, shall become quiet and peaceable, smooth and easy; and moreover, whatever difficulties were in the minds of men concerning the Messiah, the end of his coming, and the nature of his kingdom; and whatever impediments were in the way of embracing him when come, should now be removed at least from many persons. R. David Kimchi, a very noted Jewish commentator<sup>q</sup>, acknowledges that the whole of this passage is to be understood, ךך ךך, by way of parable, in a mystical and figurative sense.*

Ver. 6. *And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.]* By the *salvation of God* is meant, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of God's appointing and sending; and who is the author of that salvation which God resolved on, contrived, and approved of; and is his ordinance for salvation, unto the ends of the earth, for all his elect; see ch. ii. 30. whom a great number among the Jews should, and did see, with their bodily eyes; and whom not only God's elect among them, but also all of them among the Gentiles, should behold with an eye of faith, for themselves, as their Saviour and Redeemer. It is matter of question, what passage is here referred to; whether Isa. xl. 5. or Isa. lii. 10. the latter comes nearest to the words, and the former stands closely connected with the expressions before cited; though it is usual with the New-Testament writers, to join together passages, which stand in different places of the same prophet, and even which are in different books; see Rom. ix. 33. compared with Isa. viii. 14. and xxviii. 16. and Matt. xxi. 5. compared with Isa. lxii. 11. and Zech. ix. 9. and that agreeably to the method used by Jewish writers<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>p</sup> Pirke Eliczer, c. 44.

<sup>q</sup> T. Hieros. Erubin, fol. 25. 2.

<sup>r</sup> Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 177. 1, 2. Vid. Targ. in Cant. ii. 6. & Jarchi in Cant. iii. 6.

<sup>q</sup> In Isa. xl. 4.

<sup>r</sup> Vid. Surenhus. Biblos Katalages, de modis Allegandi, &c. Thea. 7. p. 45, 46, 319.

Ver. 7. *Then said he to the multitude, &c.*] That is, John, as the Ethiopic version reads; and the multitude to whom he spake the following words, were many of the Pharisees and Sadducees, as appears from Matt. iii. 7. *That came forth to be baptized of him*; who came out of their houses, towns, and cities, round about, to the place where John was; and hearing and seeing what he was about, desired to be admitted to his baptism: not that they were baptized of him; as the Arabic version renders it; but they came with a view of being baptized, were it thought fit and proper they should: but John refused them, saying to them, *O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* see the note on Matt. iii. 7.

Ver. 8. *Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, &c.*] Or meet for it, such as will shew it to be true and genuine: and begin not to say within yourselves: in one of Beza's copies, and in another of Stephens's, it was read, *think not*, as in Matt. iii. 9. the sense is the same. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, leave out the phrase, *within yourselves*: what they are forbid to say follows, *we have Abraham to our father, for I say unto you, God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham*; which need not be thought strange, when the creation of Adam out of the earth, and the production of such a numerous offspring, as the Israelites were, from Abraham and Sarah, when past all hope of children, and are signified by the rock and pit in Isa. li. 1, 2. are considered; see the note on Matt. iii. 9.

Ver. 9. *And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees, &c.*] Not only to Jesse's family, which was as a root in a dry ground, and to Jerusalem, the metropolis of the nation; but to the root of the vain boasting of every Jew; their descent from Abraham, the covenant made with him, their ecclesiastical state and civil polity, all which would quickly be at an end: the Romans were now among them, the axe in God's hand; by means of whom, utter ruin and destruction would be brought upon their nation, city, and temple: *every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire*; see the note on Matt. iii. 10.

Ver. 10. *And the people asked him, &c.*] Not the same as in ver. 7. the Sadducees and Pharisees, for they seemed not to be at all affected with, and wrought upon, by the ministry of John; but rather were displeased with him, and turned their backs on him, and rejected him and his baptism; but the common people, that stood by; who hearing John speak of wrath to come, and of repentance, and fruits worthy of it, were filled with concern about these things, and inquire, *saying, what shall we do?* either to escape the wrath and vengeance coming on the nation, and also eternal ruin and destruction; and Beza says, that in two of his copies, and one of them his most ancient one, 'tis added, *to be saved*, and so in two of Stephens's; which confirms the above sense, and makes their inquiry to be the same with the jailor's, Acts xvi. 30. or else their meaning is, what are the things we are to do, or the fruits we are to bring forth, the duties we are to perform, in order to testify the truth and genuineness of our repentance? which latter seems most agreeable.

Ver. 11. *He answereth and saith unto them, &c.*] By telling them what they should do; and he does not put them upon ceremonial observances, nor severe exercises of religion, nor even the duties of the first table of the law, and others of the second, though necessary to be done; but upon acts of beneficence and kindness, to fellow-creatures in distress; and are what may be called love of our neighbour, and which involves the love of God, and so the whole law; for the one cannot be rightly exercised without the other: *he that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none*; not both of them, but one of them: a man is not obliged to go naked himself, in order to clothe another; and so the Persic and Ethiopic versions read, *let him give one to him that has not*; that has not a garment to wear. This is not to be understood strictly and literally, that a man is obliged to give one of his coats, if he has more than one, to a person in want of clothing; it will be sufficient to answer the intent of this exhortation, if he supplies his want another way, by furnishing him with money to buy one: the meaning is, that persons according to their abilities, and of what they can spare, should communicate to those that are in distress: much less is it to be concluded from hence, that it is not lawful for a man to have more coats than one: *and he that hath meat, or meats, let him do likewise*; that is, he that has a sufficiency of food, and more than enough for himself and family, let him give it freely and cheerfully to the poor and needy, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased: and when such acts of kindness are done in faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God, they are the fruits of grace, and such as are meet for repentance, and shew it to be genuine. John instances in these two articles, food and raiment, as containing the necessaries of human life, and including every thing, by which one may be serviceable to another.

Ver. 12. *Then came also publicans to be baptized, &c.*] Being convinced under John's ministry of the evils of their past life, and desirous of being admitted to baptism, to which they understood repentance, and fruits meet for the same, were pre-requisite: these came nearer to John, and said unto him, *master, what shall we do?* we have been very wicked persons, what shall we do to escape divine vengeance? or what are the particular duties we are to perform? or the fruits meet for repentance, we are to bring forth; that so we may be admitted to the ordinance of baptism, which requires, as previous to it, a true and hearty repentance? of these men, see the note on Matt. vi. 46. and ix. 9, 10, 11.

Ver. 13. *And he said unto them, &c.*] Not by advising them to quit their employments, as if it was a thing unlawful to impose, pay, and collect taxes, but by directing them to perform their office aright: *exact no more than that which is appointed you*; by the government: there were two sorts of publicans; there were some that exacted more than what they were ordered, and settled the tax at their own pleasure, and collected what they would themselves; and these were very odious to the people, and were reckoned with the worst of sinners, as thieves and robbers; but there were others, who behaved according to the orders of the government, and these were submitted to, as appears from



the Jewish canons: "says Samuel, the judgment of a kingdom, is judgment (*i. e.* the orders of a government ought to be regarded); R. Chanina bar Cahana says, that Samuel says it of a publican, שֹׂמֵן לִי קִצְבָה, *who has nothing appointed for him*: the house of R. Jannai say, of a publican that stands of himself." The gloss is, "*the judgment of a kingdom is judgment*: this is he that receives from a king, a tax (to gather) in a thing, קִצְבָה, *that is fixed*, so and so for the year, and he is no robber: *who has nothing appointed for him*, but takes according to his whole will and "pleasure." Maimonides expresses this in plainer language, "in what things it is said that a publican is as thieves? when a Gentile publican, or a Gentile that stands of himself, or a publican that stands for the king, and hath nothing fixed for him, but he takes what he pleases, and leaves what he pleases: but a publican with whom the king agrees, and orders that he should take a third or a fourth, or, דָּבָר קִצְבָה, *any thing that is appointed*; and he constitutes an Israelitish publican to collect that part for the king, and it is known that the man is faithful, and does not add any thing to what the king has decreed; he is not in the class of robbers, for the judgment of a king is judgment.—And so a king that lays a tax upon citizens, or upon every man and man, a thing fixed; or decrees, that whoever transgresses this thing, they shall take all his goods into the king's house; or that whatever shall be found in the field in the time of the barn (*i. e.* when it should be there) should pay tribute for it, whether he is the owner of the field or not: and so with respect to any thing else of this kind, it is not a robbery; and an Israelite that collects them for the king, is not in the number of robbers; for lo! he is right, and he does not add nor alter, nor take any thing to himself."—Now such publicans as these, were received and submitted to, but others were rejected; so Moses Kotsensis says, that "publicans that take, יוֹרֵי כֶדֶבֶר, *more than what is appointed for them*, are rejected." From all which we may learn what publicans these were that came to John's baptism, and put the above question to him; that they were Jewish publicans, and not Gentiles; and therefore John says nothing to them, but what concerned their employment, which he doubtless would have done, if they had been ignorant Gentiles: and also we see the reason of his expressing himself in this manner, since publicans were very apt to go beyond their orders, and require more than was fixed for them to collect; and likewise that John, in this advice, spoke the sense of the Jews themselves; who did not refuse to pay tribute, excepting some few, provided no more was exacted, than the government appointed; and as temptations to such evils were very great, and it lay in the power of these men to impose on the people, and extort from them, to abstain from such practices was an argument of the fear of God, of the truth of grace, and of the sincerity of repentance.

Ver. 14. *And the soldiers likewise demanded of him,*

&c.] Or *asked him*: why our translators have rendered it, *demanded of him*, I know not, unless they thought that such language best suited persons of a military character. Some think these were Gentile soldiers, since it does not look so likely that the Romans would employ Jews as soldiers in their own country; though it is more probable that they were Jews, in the pay of the Romans, who belonged to Herod, tetrarch of Galilee, or to Philip of Iturea, whose dominions lay near the place where John was: since it is certain, that there were many of the Jews that betook themselves to a military life; and seeing John instructed them in no part of natural or revealed religion, but what was suitable to their character and employment: for upon these men *saying, what shall we do?* to avoid the threatened ruin, and to prove the truth of our repentance, that so we may be admitted to the holy ordinance of baptism; John replied, *do violence to no man*; or *shake him*, or put him into 'bodily fear, by threatening, hectoring, and bullying him, and drawing the sword upon him, which is usual, upon the least offence, for such persons to do; *neither accuse any falsely, or play the sycophant*: who, in order to flatter some, bring malicious accusations against others; and which was a vice that too much prevailed among the Jewish soldiery; who either to curry favour with the Roman officers and governors, would wrongfully accuse their fellow-soldiers, or countrymen, to them; or in order to extort sums of money from them, that they might live in a more luxurious manner than their common pay would admit of: wherefore, it follows, *and be content with your wages*; allowed by the government, and don't seek to increase them by any unlawful methods, as by mutiny and sedition, by rebelling against your officers, or by ill-usage of the people. The Jewish Rabbins have adopted this word, מִדְּבַר, into their language in the Misnic and Talmudic writings: and their gloss explains it by the money, for the soldiers, and the hire of soldiers, as here; and it includes every thing which by the Romans were given to their soldiers for pay, and which was food as well as money.

Ver. 15. *And as the people were in expectation, &c.]* Of the coming of the Messiah; Daniel's seventy weeks being now accomplished, the sceptre being departed from Judah, and the Romans having the government in their hands, from whom they hoped for a deliverance by Christ; *and all men mused in their hearts of John*: whether he were the Christ, or no: about which they had many reasonings and debates: some doubting of it, others ready to believe it, from his extraordinary birth, the singular holiness of his life, the power and efficacy of his doctrine, the new ordinance he administered, the restoration of religion by him, the freedom he took in reproving the vices of men, and the apt answers he gave to the questions now put to him. And that the Messiah was born, though he was not, as yet, made manifest, they might conclude, not only from the fulfilment of several prophecies, but from the song of Zacharias, the declaration of Simeon

\* T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 115. 1.

† Hilch. Gezala, c. 5. sect. 11, 12.

‡ Mitsvot Torah, pr. neg. 214. Vid. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 25. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

¶ Misn. Sanhedrin, c. a. sect. 4. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 16. 2. & 21. 2.

and Anna in the temple, and of the wise men that came from the east; and John appearing in such an unusual manner, they were ready to hope that he was the person; though they did not consider that he was of the tribe of Levi, and not of Judah; from which latter the Messiah was to spring; but this might be unattended to by them, and Satan might have an hand in it to hide the true Messiah from them.

Ver. 16. *John answered, saying unto them all, &c.]* For some of them might not only so think in their hearts, but express with their mouths the apprehension they had of him; and might put the question to him, as the priests and Levites from Jerusalem afterwards did; or he might know the secret thoughts of their hearts by divine revelation; or be apprized by his disciples of the private sentiments of the people concerning him: and therefore, to put them out of doubt, and that he might not have an honour conferred on him, which did not belong to him, he addressed himself, in a very public manner, to the whole multitude, in the hearing of them all: though the word *all* is left out in the Syriac and Persic versions, but rightly retained in others, being in all copies, and having a considerable emphasis on it: and said the following words. *I indeed baptize you with water; Matthew adds unto repentance; upon the profession of repentance: but one mightier than I cometh; that is, after me; as Matthew records it: the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; neither to bear his shoes after him, as Matthew says, nor to untie his shoe-string, or unbuckle his shoe, both which were menial actions with the Jews: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire; as he did some of their nation, his own disciples, on the day of pentecost; see the note on Matt. iii. 11.*

Ver. 17. *Whose fan is in his hand, &c.]* See the note on Matt. iii. 12.

Ver. 18. *And many other things, &c.]* Relating to the person and office of the Messiah, to the nature of his kingdom, the Gospel dispensation, and to faith in him; for he pointed him out to the people, and exhorted them to believe in him, and expressed much joy and pleasure on the hearing of his success and increase; and these, with others beside, in his *exhortation*, or whilst he was *exhorting*, or *comforting*, *preached he unto the people*; publishing the Gospel, the good news, and glad tidings of the Messiah's being come, and of life, righteousness, and salvation by him.

Ver. 19. *But Herod the tetrarch being reproved by him, &c.]* By John, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions add: *for Herodias his brother Philip's wife; for taking her to wife, whilst his brother Philip was living.* The account, which the Jewish chronologer \* gives, of this Herod, and of this fact of his, and John's reproving him for it, and the consequence of it, perfectly agrees with this of the evangelist. "Herod \* Antipater, and there are some that call him, שִׁמְרֵי, "the tetrarch, was a son of Herod the first, and brother of Archelaus; and he was the third king of the family of Herod; and he was very wicked, and a destroying man: many of the wise men of Israel he slew with the sword; and he took the wife of his

"brother Philip, whilst he was alive, to himself for wife; and John, the high-priest, because הוֹכִיחוֹ, *he reproved him* for this, he slew him with the sword, "with many of the wise men of Israel." And John reproved him not only for this sin, but others: *and for all the evils which Herod had done: his revellings, debaucheries, murders, &c. all which John, in great faithfulness, and with much freedom, told him of, and rebuked him for: for Herod had had a particular respect for him, and often had him with him, and heard him gladly, when John had an opportunity of speaking personally to him.*

Ver. 20. *Added yet this above all, &c.]* This sin to all other sins, and which was of a more flagitious nature, and attended with more aggravating circumstances, especially in the issue of it: *that he shut up John in prison: in the castle of Machærus, by the instigation of Herodias; see Matt. xiv. 3.*

Ver. 21. *Now when all the people were baptized, &c.]* That came from several parts to John for this purpose, even as many as he judged to be proper subjects of that ordinance, as many of the common people, publicans, soldiers, &c. *it came to pass that Jesus also being baptized; of John in Jordan, he coming from Galilee thither on that account: and praying; after he was baptized, for the coming down of the spirit upon him, as man, to anoint, and qualify him for his office he was now about to enter on publicly: and for success in it, and for a testimony from heaven, that he was the son of God, and true Messiah: the heaven was opened; see the note on Matt. iii. 16.*

Ver. 22. *And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, &c.]* In a corporeal form, in a visible manner, and was seen with bodily eyes, at least by John the administrator; to whom this was a signal of his being the Messiah, and a fresh confirmation of it: *like a dove upon him; either in the form of a dove, or this corporeal form, whatever it was, descended and hovered on him as a dove does: and a voice came from heaven; at the same time the Holy Ghost came down upon him; which said, thou art my beloved son, in thee I am well pleased: and was the voice of the Father; and the whole of this was an answer of Christ's prayer; see the note on Matt. iii. 16, 17, and Mark i. 11.*

Ver. 23. *And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, &c.]* Or Jesus, when he was baptized and began his public ministry, was about thirty years of age: an age at which the priests, under the law, who were typical of Christ, entered on their work, Numb. iv. 23. 1 Chron. xxiii. 3. The word, *began*, is left out in the Syriac and Persic versions: and is often indeed redundant, as in ver. 8. and frequently in Mark's Gospel. The Arabic version renders it, *Jesus began to enter into the thirtieth year*, which carries the sense the same with our translation: *being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph; who had espoused Mary before she was with-child of the Holy Ghost, and afterwards took her to wife, and brought up her son; so that it was not known but that he was the son of Joseph. Whether or no the Jewish notion of the Messiah, the son of Joseph, may not take its rise from hence, may be considered: however, Joseph might very rightly be*

\* Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 95. 2.

† T. Bah. Succa, fol. 52. 1. Jarchi & Aben Ezra in Zech. xii. 10. & xiii. 7.

called, as he was supposed to be, the father of Jesus, by a rule which obtains with the Jews <sup>2</sup>, "that he that brings up, and not he that begets, is called the "father," or parent; of which they give various instances<sup>3</sup> in Joseph, in Michal, and in Pharaoh's daughter. *Which was the son of Eli*; meaning, not that Joseph was the son of Eli; for he was the son of Jacob, according to Matt. i. 16. but Jesus was the son of Eli; and which must be understood, and carried through the whole genealogy, as thus; Jesus the son of Matthat, Jesus the son of Levi, Jesus the son of Melchi, &c. till you come to Jesus the son of Adam, and Jesus the son of God; though it is true indeed that Joseph was the son of Eli, having married his daughter; for Mary was the daughter of Eli: and so the Jews speak of one Mary, the daughter of Eli, by whom they seem to design the mother of our Lord: for they tell<sup>4</sup> us of one, "that saw, מרים בת עלי, *Mary the daughter of Eli* " in the shades, hanging by the fibres of her breasts; "and there are that say, the gate, or, as elsewhere<sup>5</sup>, "the bar of the gate of hell is fixed to her ear." By the horrible malice, in the words, you may know who is meant: however, this we gain by it, that by their own confession, Mary is the daughter of Eli; which accords with this genealogy of the evangelist, who traces it from Mary, under her husband Joseph; though she is not mentioned, because of a rule with the Jews<sup>6</sup>, that "the family of the mother is not called a family."

Ver. 24. *Which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi, &c.*] These two, Grotius says, are omitted in the ancient exemplars; and he thinks they ought to be left out; and for which he mentions the authorities of Irenæus, Africanus, Eusebius, Nazianzen, Jerom, and Augustin: but not only the Vulgate Latin, but all the Oriental versions, retain them: *which was the son of Melchi*; and who, he thinks, was the immediate father of Eli: *which was the son of Janna*: frequent mention is made, in the Jewish writings<sup>7</sup>, of ינאי מלכה, *king Jannai*, who is said to be the same with king Jochanan, or John, the son of Simeon, the son of Mattathiah, that was called Hyrcanus; and his son Alexander, that reigned after him, was also called Jannai<sup>8</sup>; but whether either of these is the same with this Janna, is not certain: but this may be observed, that they were both before the times of Herod, and the birth of Jesus, some years. And Jannai is called, in the chronicle of Jedidiah of Alexandria, or Philo the Jew<sup>9</sup>, Hyrcanus the second, who reigned sixteen years: *which was the son of Joseph*. This Joseph, according to the same chronicle, is called Joseph the second, and surnamed Arsis, and was greatly honoured by Ptolemy, and governed sixty years; and accordingly we shall meet with another Joseph anon.

Ver. 25. *Which was the son of Mattathias, &c.*] Surnamed Siloah, by the same Philo, who governed ten years: *which was the son of Amos*; whose surname, according to the same author, was Sirag; or, as some, Syrach, or Shyrach, who governed fourteen years:

*which was the son of Naum*; who was called Mesalut, or Maslot, who governed seven years: *which was the son of Esli*; or Eli, surnamed Haggai, who governed eight years; *which was the son of Nagge*: with Philo he is called Nagid Artasat, or Artaxat, and said to govern ten years.

Ver. 26. *Which was the son of Maath, &c.*] Surnamed Aser, who governed nine years: *which was the son of Mattathias*; called Eli Matathias, who governed twelve years: *which was the son of Semei*; and named Abner Semei, who governed eleven years: *which was the son of Joseph*; called Joseph the first, who governed seven years: *which was the son of Juda*; who, according to the same writer, must be Judas, surnamed Hyrcanus the first, who governed fourteen years.

Ver. 27. *Which was the son of Joanna, &c.*] Johannes, or John, the son of Rhesa Mesullam, who governed fifty-three years: *which was the son of Rhesa*; called, by the above writer, Rhesa Mesullam; see 1 Chron. iii. 19. and said, by him, to govern sixty-six years: *which was the son of Zorobabel*; who governed fifty-eight years: *which was the son of Salathiel*; the same with Shealthiel; see the note on Matt. i. 12. *which was the son of Neri*; the same with Jechonias, according to the Alexandrian chronicle; see the note on Matt. i. 12.

Ver. 28, 29, 30, 31. *Which was the son of Melchi, &c.*] This, with the following, *Addi, Cosam, Elmodam, Er, Jose, Eliezer, Jorim, Matthat, Levi, Simeon, Juda, Joseph, Jonan, Eliakim, Melea, Menan, and Mattatha*, all lived before the captivity, and were of the house of David, in the line of Nathan; for it follows, *which was the son of Nathan*; of which persons no mention is made in the Old Testament, nor even of Mattatha, the son of Nathan: his sons that are mentioned are Azariah, Zabud, and Abishar, 1 Kings iv. 5, 6. which last is thought to be the same with Mattatha: that Nathan was the son of David, as the order of things here directs, *which was the son of David*, is clear from 1 Sam. v. 14. 1 Chron. iii. 5. and xiv. 4!

Ver. 32, 33, 34. *Which was the son of Jesse, &c.*] The order of the persons from Jesse to Abraham, as *Obed, Booz, Salmon, Naasson, Aminadab, Aram, or Ram, Esrom*, (for Joram, which the Arabic version here inserts, is to be rejected), *Phares, Judah, Jacob, Isaac, Abraham*, perfectly agrees with the genealogy of Matthew, and the accounts of the Old Testament: *which was the son of Thara*; the same with Terah, Gen. xi. 26, 27. called by the Septuagint, Tharra: *which was the son of Nachor*; the same with Nahor, Gen. xi. 24, 25. called there, by the Septuagint, as here.

Ver. 35. *Which was the son of Saruch, &c.*] The Septuagint call him Serouch, the same with Serug, Gen. xi. 22, 23. *which was the son of Ragau*; so the Septuagint, the same with Reu, Gen. xi. 20, 21. *which was the son of Phaleg*; the same with Peleg, Gen. xi. 18, 19. the Septuagint reads as here: *which*

<sup>2</sup> Shemot Rabba, sect. 46. fol. 143. 1.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 19. 2. Vid. T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 13. 1.

<sup>4</sup> T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 25. 3.

<sup>5</sup> lb. Chagiga, fol. 77. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Juchasin, fol. 55. 2.

<sup>7</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 14. 2. & passim.

<sup>8</sup> Juchasin, fol. 15. 1. & 16. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Apud. Vorst. Not. ad. Chronol. R. David Ganz, p. 311.

was the son of *Heber*, or *Eber*, Gen. xi. 16, 17. *which* was the son of *Sala*, or *Salah*, Gen. xi. 14, 15. the Septuagint there call him *Sala*.

Ver. 36. *Which was the son of Cainan, &c.*] This *Cainan* is not mentioned by *Moses* in Gen. xi. 12. nor has he ever appeared in any Hebrew copy of the Old Testament; nor in the Samaritan version, nor in the Targum; nor is he mentioned by *Josephus*, nor in 1 Chron. i. 24. where the genealogy is repeated; nor is it in *Beza's* most ancient Greek copy of *Luke*: it indeed stands in the present copies of the Septuagint, but was not originally there; and therefore could not be taken by *Luke* from thence, but seems to be owing to some early negligent transcriber of *Luke's* Gospel, and since put into the Septuagint to give it authority: I say *early*, because it is in many Greek copies, and in the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, even in the Syriac, the oldest of them; but ought not to stand neither in the text, nor in any version: for certain it is, there never was such a *Cainan*, the son of *Arphaxad*, for *Salah* was his son; and with him the next words should be connected, *which was the son of Arphaxad*; see Gen. xi. 12, 13. *which was the son of Sem*, or *Shem*, Gen. xi. 10, 11. *which was the son of Noe*, or *Noah*, Gen. v. 32. *which was the son of Lamech*, Gen. v. 28, 29.

Ver. 37. *Which was the son of Mathusala, &c.*] The same with *Methuselah*; and so he is called by the Septuagint in Gen. v. 25, 26, 27. *which was the son of Enoch*, Gen. v. 21, 22. *which was the son of Jared*, Gen. v. 18, 19, *which was the son of Maleleel*; the same with

*Mahalaleel*; who is also so called by the seventy interpreters, in Gen. v. 15, 16. as here; *which was the son of Cainan*, Gen. v. 12, 13.

Ver. 38. *Which was the son of Enos, &c.*] Gen. v. 9, 10. *which was the son of Seth*, Gen. v. 6, 7. *which was the son of Adam*, Gen. v. 3, 4. *which was the son of God*; not begotten, as all the rest were, by their immediate parents, but created by God, in a supernatural manner, out of the dust of the earth, and quickened with the breath of God: so *Adam* is, by the Jews<sup>h</sup>, called, בן אלוהים, *the son of God*: though this may be understood of *Jesus*; the son of *Joseph*, of *Heli*, &c. and so on to this clause, *the son of God*: being so as a divine person, to whom the human nature was united, and on that account so called; see *Luke* i. 35. Thus, as *Matthew* gives us the regal line of *Christ*, shewing him to be heir to the throne of his father *David*, *Luke* gives the natural line of *Christ*; and as *Matthew* traces his genealogy down from *Abraham*, in a descending line, to *Joseph*, the husband of *Mary*, the mother of *Jesus*, *Luke* traces it upwards, in an ascending line, from *Mary* by *Joseph*, even up to *Adam*; to whom the *Messiah* was first promised, and who was a type of the second *Adam*, from whom he descended, though not by ordinary generation; nay, even to God himself: *Christ*, according to his divine nature, was the only-begotten of the father; and as to his human nature, had a body prepared by him, and in the fulness of time was God manifest in the flesh.

#### C H A P. IV.

Ver. 1. *AND Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, &c.*] The spirit of God having descended on him at his baptism, and afresh anointed, and filled his human nature with his gifts, whereby, as man, he was abundantly furnished for the great work of the public ministry, he was just about to enter upon; yet must first go through a series of temptations, and which, through the fulness of the Holy Spirit in him, he was sufficiently fortified against. Returned from *Jordan*; where he came, and had been with *John*, and was baptized by him; which, when over, he went back from the same side of *Jordan*, to which he came: and was led by the spirit; the same spirit, or Holy Ghost he was full of; see the note on *Matt.* iv. 1. into the wilderness; of *Judea*, which lay near *Jordan*, and where *John* had been preaching and baptizing, namely, in the habitable part of it: but this was that part which was uninhabited by men, and was infested with wild beasts, and where *Christ* could neither have the comfort and benefit of human society, nor any thing for the sustenance of life, and where he was exposed to the utmost danger; and so in circumstances very opportune and favourable for *Satan* to ply him with his temptations, for which purpose he was led thither.

Ver. 2. *Being forty days tempted of the devil, &c.*]

The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read the phrase, *forty days*, in connection with the latter part of the preceding verse; according to which the sense is, that *Jesus* was led by the spirit forty days in the wilderness, before he was tempted by *Satan*, and in order to it: but our reading is confirmed by *Mark*, ch. i. 13. who affirms, as here, that he was so long tempted by *Satan*; as he might be invisibly, and, by internal suggestions, before he appeared visibly, and attacked him openly, with the following temptations. The Ethiopic version adds, *and forty nights*: and such were these days in which *Christ* was in the wilderness, and fasted, and was tempted there: they were such as included nights, as well as days; see *Matt.* iv. 2. and in those days he did eat nothing: not any sort of food whatever; he tasted of no kind of eatables or drinkables, during the whole space of forty days; nor in the nights neither, in which the Jews allowed persons to eat in times of fasting; see the note on *Matt.* iv. 2. And this entire abstinence, as it shews the power of *Christ* in the supporting of his human nature, without food, for such a time, and the disadvantages under which he, as man, combated with *Satan*; so, that this fast was never designed as an example to his followers, and to be imitated by them: and when they were ended; the forty

<sup>h</sup> Sopher Coeri, orat. 2. Sig. 14. fol. 68. 1.

days, and forty nights: *he afterward hungered*: which he did not before; and which shews the truth of his human nature; and is mentioned to observe the occasion of the following temptation, and the advantage on the tempter's side.

Ver. 3. *And the devil said unto him, &c.*] Who now visibly appeared, and spoke unto him with an articulate voice: *if thou be the son of God*; as has been just now declared by a voice from heaven; or seeing thou art in such a relation to God, and so equal to him, and possessed of all divine perfections, and among the rest, of almighty power; wherefore, since thou art hungry, and in a wilderness, where no food is to be had, *command this stone that it be made bread*; say but the word, and this stone, which he held out to him, or pointed at, as lying before them, or any one of the stones, which were in sight, for Matthew speaks of them in the plural number, will immediately be converted into bread, if he was what he was said to be: this he suggests might easily be effected by him, and he had no need to continue hungry.

Ver. 4. *And Jesus answered him, saying, it is written, &c.*] In Deut. viii. 3. *that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God*; suggesting hereby, that when it is the will of God, human nature may be maintained by the influence of divine power, without the use of ordinary means; and that bread itself, without a divine blessing, would not support life; and so not this stone, or stones, if turned into it: wherefore, it became him, as man, to depend upon God, submit to his will, and wait the issue of providence, who had brought him thither, and not take any such steps to remove his hunger; and especially at his solicitations, who had no other end, but to have him, if he could, at his beck and will. *By every word of God*, is not meant all Scripture, and every part of it, which is given by inspiration of God, and may be said to proceed out of his mouth; neither the law, and the precepts of it, as the Jews interpret it, by obedience to which the Israelites lived in the land of Canaan; nor the Gospel, and the truths of it, which are the wholesome words of Christ, and the words of faith and good doctrine, with which believers are nourished, and are that to the soul, as bread, or any other wholesome food, is to the body; for of spiritual living, and the means of that, the text is not to be understood; but either of the word of God's power, by which he upholds and sustains all things in being, which he has created; and with which he could, if he would, support the bodies of men without the use of any sort of food; as the bodies of Moses and Elijah, and now the body of Christ, were for many days; and as the bodies of the saints will be after the resurrection, to all eternity; or else the blessing of God, which he commands on bread, and other food, and the virtue and strength which he puts into them, and conveys by them, are meant, without which not any sort of food is nourishing; or rather every thing which God declares and orders to be eaten, even every creature of his which is good, and not to be refused, but received, with thanksgiving, being sanctified by the word of God, and prayer, as well as bread; so manna, which is mentioned in the text in Deuteronomy; and likewise any other food, as pulse and water, he is

pleased to direct to. Some little difference there is between Matthew and Luke, in citing this passage; in the latter it is, *by every word of God*; and in the former it is nearer the Hebrew text in Deut. viii. 3. *by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*; and so some copies read here, as do also the Arabic and Ethiopic versions: but neither of them have the words exactly as in the original text, where it is added, *doth man live*; which, doubtless, were not produced by our Lord, as being unnecessary, and therefore not mentioned by any of the evangelists.

Ver. 5. *And the devil taking him up into a high mountain, &c.*] Somewhere near Jerusalem, but what mountain is not certain. The Evangelist Luke makes this to be the second temptation, which, with Matthew, is the third and last; and whose order seems to be more proper and natural than this, and to be the true and genuine one, which Luke neglects, though he does not contradict it: he relates matters of fact, without attending to the strict order of them; whereas Matthew strictly regards it, observing, that after the first temptation, *then the devil taketh him, &c.* and that being finished, says, *again the devil taketh him, &c.* and upon those words, *get thee hence*, with what follows, remarks, *that then the devil leaveth him*: all which shew, that his order is the most accurate, and to be followed. But to go on with the account; the devil having taken him from the pinnacle of the temple, and carried him to some high mountain, as Lebanon, or Pisgah, or some other near Jerusalem, *shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world*; not of the Roman empire only, though that consisted of many kingdoms, and is called the whole world, Luke ii. 1. where the same word is used, as here; but of the whole universe, every kingdom that was under the heavens; which he represented to Christ, not in a map, since the glory of them could not be described in that way: for he shewed him *all the glory of them*, as Matthew adds; and for this a mountain was no more a proper place, than any other; nor was it any real object he presented to his bodily sight, or any real prospect he gave him of the kingdoms of the world, which are not to be seen from any one place, no not one of them, not even from the highest mountain in the world, and still less to be seen together at once in a moment: but this was a mere phantasm, a deception of the sight, with which he endeavoured to impose on Christ, but could not; nor did Christ; who is the maker of the world, and the governor among the nations; need any representation of the kingdoms of the world from him; see the note on Matt. iv. 8. and this he did *in a moment of time*; in the twinkling of an eye, not by succession, and in process of time, as one kingdom after another, but all at once, and in an instant: what a moment of time is; see the note, as before.

Ver. 6. *And the devil said unto him, all this power will I give thee, &c.*] That is; all the kingdoms of the world, and all the government and jurisdiction over them: *and the glory of them*; the riches, honours, and grandeur belonging to them: *for that is delivered unto me*: so far he spoke modestly, in that he owned an original, superior governor of them, by whom he pretended they were transferred to him; but lied, in that he suggested they were put into his hands by

him, who had the supreme power over them; and that he acted by his constitution and appointment, as a deputy under him; when what power he had, as the God of the world, was by usurpation, and not by designation of God; and at most only by permission: and least of all was it true what follows; *and to whomsoever I will I give it*; or *these*, as the Vulgate Latin reads; that is, these kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; when so to do is the peculiar and sole prerogative of God: nor can Satan dispose of the goods of a single man, nor of a herd of swine, nor enter into them without leave from God.

Ver. 7. *If thou therefore wilt worship me, &c.*] Or *before me*; that is, fall down before him, and give him divine worship and homage. A wide difference there is between a good angel and a fallen angel; a good angel will not suffer himself to be worshipped by men, but directs to the worship of God only, Rev. xix. 10. and xxii. 9. but a fallen angel not only seeks to be worshipped by men, but by the son of God himself, even by him whom all the holy angels worship, Heb. i. 6. This was what Satan at first aspired after, and by which he fell: he affected deity, and sought to have divine worship given him; and in this sin he still persisted, and grew worse and worse, more daring and insolent, desiring worship of him who is God over all, blessed for ever. *All shall be thine*: he promises to give him a title to all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, on condition of homage done him, by which he should hold the tenure of them under him; these being delivered up solely to him, by the author of them; and he having them in his power, to dispose of them at pleasure. O horrid impudence, arrogance, and insolence!

Ver. 8. *Jesus answered and said unto him, &c.*] The following words, with indignation at him, and detestation of his proposals: *get thee behind me, Satan*: which are omitted in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and in three ancient copies of Beza's, and in his most ancient one; but stand in other copies, and in the Arabic version. *For it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*. This passage stands in Deut. vi. 13. where the words are, *thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and thou shalt swear by his name*: the last clause is not cited by Christ at all, swearing being only a species, or part of religious worship; and the other two clauses are somewhat different from the original text, as here cited, and may be accounted for: instead of *fear the Lord*, it is *worship the Lord*; and the one well explains the other; the fear of God being often, in Scripture, put for the whole worship of God, both internal and external: and in the next clause, the word *only* is added by Christ, as expressing the true sense of it, and agreeably to other places of Scripture, particularly 1 Sam. vii. 3. see the note on Matt. iv. 10.

Ver. 9. *And he brought him to Jerusalem, &c.*] The holy city, as Matthew calls it, from the wilderness thither; where he found him, and first attacked him, and perhaps he brought him through the air: *and set him on a pinnacle of the temple*; which was in Jerusa-

lem; see the note on Matt. iv. 5. *And said unto him, if thou be the son of God, cast thyself down from hence*; from the pinnacle of the temple, on which he was set; see the note on Matt. iv. 6.

Ver. 10, 11. *For it is written, &c.*] In Psal. xci. 11, 12. *He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone*. It is an observation made long ago by Jerom, on Psal. xci. 11, 12. that Satan, in citing this text, has left out the middle clause, *to keep thee in all thy ways*, which he knew was against him, and has only taken that which made for him; and on Matt. iv. 6. he observes, that this prophecy is not concerning Christ, but any holy man; therefore the devil wrongly interpreted Scripture; and that had he certainly known, that this is written concerning the Saviour, he ought to have cited what follows, *thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet*: and in these observations, he has been followed by many interpreters; but Surenhusius<sup>1</sup> is not satisfied with them, especially with what respects the manner of citation, leaving out some words, and not mentioning others that follow; since such a way of citing perfectly agrees with the method of the Jewish doctors; who reckon one word of a passage being cited all that follows, if it makes to the purpose, all one as if it was cited, and to be so accounted; and since, if such a method is blame worthy, Christ, the evangelists, and apostles, must be blamed also, seeing they frequently use the same, which can never be allowed of: besides, supposing the clause omitted was added, he asks of what advantage it would be? since the two verses being connected together as they are, the sense with respect to God's providence and preservation, is clear enough and complete: and I must confess, though I have pursued the above observation in the note on Matt. iv. 6. yet by comparing the evangelists together, it is not a clear case to me, what Satan did leave out, or whether any thing at all; but it seems rather, that the words are put, as the evangelists themselves thought fit to transcribe them, in which they are not exactly alike; more is left out by one, than by another; Matthew leaves out the whole clause, *to keep thee in all thy ways*; but Luke only omits these words, *in all thy ways*: but I am still of opinion, that the passage is applicable to Christ, as to any holy good man, yet it appears that Satan failed not, neither in the manner of citing it, nor in the application of it to Christ; but by wresting it to a wicked purpose, to countenance an action unwarrantable and criminal, being a tempting God; when the text only regards the preservation of good men in the way of duty, trusting in the Lord; and which is confirmed by the answer of Christ, who takes no notice of any faulty citation of the passage, or misapplication of it, as to his person; only suggests, by opposing another Scripture to him, that what he had produced, was to a wrong and wicked purpose; and to take it in his sense, would be to tempt God; see the note on Matt. iv. 6.

Ver. 12. *And Jesus answering said unto him, it is said, &c.*] In Deut. vi. 16. *Thou shalt not tempt the*

<sup>1</sup> Biblos Katalages, p. 210, 211.

*Lord thy God*: in the text in Deuteronomy the words are, *ye shall not tempt the Lord your God*. The second person plural, is here changed into the second person singular, to accommodate the words to Satan; whom Christ singly addresses, and makes answer to, and who was under this same general law as other rational creatures: and Jehovah may be called the Lord his God, as he is his creator and governor; by whom he is upheld in his being, and to whom he is subject, whether he will or no; though not his covenant God; and even if our Lord Jesus Christ is intended by the Lord God, as some think; he is God over all; over all principalities and powers, good and bad, by whom all are created, and in whom all consist; and whose power and authority over Satan and his angels, have abundantly appeared, in dispossessing devils out of men, sending them where he pleased, and in spoiling the powers of darkness, and in destroying him that had the power of death, the devil; and great insolence and wickedness it must be in a creature, to tempt the Lord his God, in any way, or form whatever; see the note on Matt. iv. 7.

Ver. 13. *And when the devil had ended all the temptation, &c.*] Or *all his temptations*, as the Syriac version reads; not only the last mentioned, but all the rest, whether inward or outward, in a visible or in an invisible manner; whether during his forty days fast, or after he was an hungered, when he had tried every way, and all sorts of temptations with him; and when he had done this, *in, or with all his power*, as the Ethiopic version reads; when he had done his utmost, and his best; and as the Persic version adds, *and profited nothing*; could not succeed, or get any advantage over him: *he departed from him for a season*: till another opportunity should offer, or till that time should come, when would be the hour and power of darkness; and by means of one of his disciples, he should bruise his heel, and bring him to an accursed death; see John xiv. 30. Luke xxii. 53.

Ver. 14. *And Jesus returned in the power of the spirit, &c.*] Of which he was full, and by which he was led into the wilderness, and had combated with Satan, and had got the victory over him; and by virtue of which, he entered on his public ministry, wrought miracles, and taught with authority. A like way of speaking is used by the Targumist, on Mic. iii. 8. I am filled, *בתקוה רוח נבואה*, with the power of the spirit of prophecy, from before the Lord. Moreover, this phrase is used, to shew that his return into Galilee, where he had been brought up, and from whence he came to John at Jordan, did not arise from a natural love to his country, and a fond desire of being there again; but was owing to the powerful impulse of the Holy Spirit, which was in him, and moved him to return thither; where he was to begin his ministry, and work his miracles, and so fulfil a prophecy of him, in Isa. ix. 1, 2. see Matt. iv. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. *And there went out a fame of him through all the region round about*: throughout all Galilee and Syria, Decapolis and Judea; see Matt. iv. 23, 24, 25. the report of his doctrines and miracles, was spread far and near; and on account of them, he became the subject of the

common talk of people every where, who highly applauded and commended him for them.

Ver. 15. *And he taught in their synagogues, &c.*] In the public places of worship used by the Galileans, where they met on sabbath-days and week-days, to read and pray, and hear the Scriptures expounded; and Christ engaging here as a public teacher, was the reason of his fame being spread around the country: *being glorified of all*; that heard him: they were astonished at his doctrine; they wondered at his gracious words; they praised him as a preacher; and glorified him, and God for him, because of the mighty works which were done by him.

Ver. 16. *And he came to Nazareth, &c.*] After some length of time, when he had gone through all Galilee, and had acquired great credit and reputation by his ministry and miracles; he came to the place, *where he had been brought up*: where he was conceived, though not born; and where he had his education, and wrought at a trade, and was well known to the inhabitants; and therefore it was proper that he should first exercise his ministry, and obtain a character in other places, which would prepare him a reception among his townsmen, who otherwise, in all likelihood, would have treated him at once with neglect and contempt: *and as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day*. This was either his custom from his youth, when he dwelt at Nazareth, while a private person, and before he was engaged in public service, whither he had used to repair as an inhabitant of the city, and a member of the congregation, to attend synagogue-worship, as he now did; or it refers to his custom, since he became a public preacher, who at Capernaum, or any other city of Galilee, where there was a synagogue, used to frequent it, whether on sabbath-days, or any other, and so he did here: *and stood up for to read*: by rising and standing up, and perhaps by some other gesture he signified his inclination to read a portion of Scripture, if liberty was given, and a book delivered him, for, as yet, he had no book to read in; nor might any read in public, unless he had an order from the congregation, or the chief of it; for so runs the Jewish canon<sup>1</sup>: “a reader may not read until the chief of the congregation bids him read; yea, even a minister of the congregation, or a ruler of the synagogue, may not read of himself, until the congregation, or the chief among them, bids him read.” This custom of reading the Scriptures publicly, was an appointment of Moses, according to the account of the Jews; who say<sup>1</sup>, “Moses our master, ordered the Israelites to read in the law publicly, on the sabbath, and on the second and fifth days of the week, in the morning; so that they might not be three days without hearing the law: and Ezra ordered, that they should read so at the evening sacrifice, every sabbath, on account of those that sit in the corners of streets; and also he ordered, that three men should read on the second and fifth days of the week, and that they should not read less than twenty verses.” It was also the custom to stand at reading the law and the prophets: with regard to the book of Esther, the

<sup>1</sup> Maimon. Hilehot Tephilla, c. 12. sect. 7.  
VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>1</sup> Maimon. Hilehot Tephilla, c. 12. sect. 1.

rule is<sup>m</sup> this; "he that reads the *Megilla*, or book of "Esther, stands or sits." That is, as their commentators explain it, if he will he may stand, and if he will he may sit, he may do as he pleases; but so he might not in reading the law: hence it is asked, "why is it not so in the law? R. Abhu replies, because the Scripture says, Deut. v. 3. *Stand thou here by me.*" Wherefore they say<sup>p</sup>, the law must be read standing, and it is even forbidden to lean on any thing. Christ conformed to these rules; he went into the synagogue to read on the sabbath-day, and stood up when he read, and waited for order, and a book to be given him to read: it may be asked, how he came to be admitted to read publicly in the synagogue, when he was not of the tribe of Levi, nor was he brought up in the schools and academies of the Jews, and was known to be a mechanic? It may be observed, that common Israelites, as well as priests and Levites, were allowed to read the Scriptures publicly; every sabbath-day, seven persons read, a priest, a Levite, and five Israelites: the order was this; the priest read first, and after him the Levite, and after him an Israelite: and it is said to be a known custom to this day, that even an unlearned priest read before the greatest wise man in Israel; and he that was greater than his companion in wisdom, read first<sup>q</sup>. Now Christ, on account of the great fame he was in for his wisdom and mighty works, was admitted to this public service, though he was no Levite, and known by the inhabitants of this place, to have been brought up to a trade.

Ver. 17. *And there was delivered unto him, &c.*] By the *Chazan*, or minister, to whom he gave it again, ver. 20. for the *Chazan* of the synagogue, was, *שש"ב*, the minister<sup>r</sup>; one part of whose business was, to deliver the book of the law to, and take it from him that read: when an high-priest read, the method taken was this<sup>s</sup>; "the *Chazan*, or minister of the synagogue, "took the book of the law, and gave it to the ruler "of the synagogue, and the ruler of the synagogue "gave it to the *Sagan*, and the *Sagan* gave it to the "high-priest, and the high-priest stood and received, "and read standing." The same method was observed, when a king read in the book of the law<sup>t</sup>; but when a common priest, or an inferior person read, so much ceremony was not used, as to hand the book from one to another: the manner in their synagogues and schools, was this<sup>u</sup>; "the *Chazan* brought out the book of the "law, and the priest read, and after him a Levite; "then the *Chazan* of the synagogue brought the "book of the law down to the head of the captivity, "and all the people stood; and he took the book of "the law into his hands, and stood and read in it; and "the heads of the schools stood with him, and the "head of the university of Sora interpreted it; and "returned the book of the law to the *Chazan*, and he

"returned it to the chest." That part of the sacred volume which was delivered unto Jesus at this time, was the book of the prophet *Isaiah*; it is very likely, that the lesson out of the prophets for that day, was to be read out of the prophecy of *Isaiah*; and it seems probable, that it was the single book of *Isaiah*, or that prophecy rolled up by itself, in one volume, that was delivered to Christ; as the law was divided into five parts, each fifth part was sometimes in a book, or volume by itself: hence a fifth part of the law, is by the Jews interpreted<sup>v</sup>, *ספר*, a book of the law, in which there is but one fifth part; so might the prophets be in separate and distinct books, and it looks as if they sometimes were, by the following account<sup>w</sup>: "a man may join together the law, the prophets, and "the holy writings, as one, the words of R. Meir. "R. Juda says, the law by itself, the prophets by "themselves, and the holy writings by themselves; "and the wise men say, each by themselves (*i. e.* each "book by itself); and says R. Judah, it happened to "Baithus ben Zunin, that he had eight prophets "joined together as one; and there are that say, that "he had not, but, *אחד אחד בפני עצמו*, every one by "itself." And when he had opened the book; or unrolled it, for books formerly were written in rolls of paper and parchment; and in this form, is the book of the law with the Jews, in their synagogues, to this day: "all books, they say<sup>x</sup>, are rolled from the beginning "to the end of them, but the book of the law is rolled "to the middle of it, and a pillar, or column, is made "for it here and there; says R. Eliezer with R. Zadok, "so the writers of books in Jerusalem made their "books: the Rabbins teach, that they do not make "the book of the law its length, more than its circum- "ference, nor its circumference more than its length." Such a roll, or volume, of the prophet *Isaiah*, Christ unrolled, till he came to the place he intended to read: it is a rule with the Jews<sup>y</sup>, that "they do not unroll "the book of the law in the congregation, because of "the glory of the congregation." It may therefore be asked, whether Christ did not break this rule, since he unrolled the book that was given him, publicly in the synagogue? To which it may be replied, that it was lawful to unroll the book of the prophets, which was what Christ did, but not the law; for so runs another of their rules<sup>z</sup>, "they skip in the prophets, "but not in the law, because, *שגוללן נביא בריב*, "that they unroll a prophet publicly, but they do not "unroll the law publicly." Christ having thus unrolled the volume of the prophet *Isaiah*, which was put into his hands by the *Chazan*, or minister, he found the place where it was written; as is expressed in the following verse, and which is to be seen in Isa. lxi. 1. and which was either the lesson of the day, or what Christ particularly sought for, and looked out; or was providentially directed to, as what was pertinent to

<sup>m</sup> Misn. *Megilla*, c. 4. 1.

<sup>n</sup> *Jarchi* & *Bartenora* in *ib.*

<sup>o</sup> *T. Bab. Megilla*, fol. 21. 1.

<sup>p</sup> *Rabbenu Asher* in *T. Megill.* c. 3. sect. 1. & *Piske Harosh* in *ib.*

<sup>q</sup> *Maimon. Hilch. Tephillah*, c. 12. sect. 16, 18.

<sup>r</sup> *Jarchi* & *Bartenora* in *Misn. Sota*, c. 7. sect. 7. & *Yoma*, c. 7. 1.

<sup>s</sup> *Misn. Yoma*, c. 7. sect. 1. *Maimon. Yom haccippurim*, c. 3.

sect. 10.

<sup>t</sup> *Misn. Sota*, c. 7. sect. 8.

<sup>v</sup> *Juchasin*, fol. 123. 1.

<sup>w</sup> *Glossa* in *T. Bab. Megilla*, fol. 27. 1.

<sup>x</sup> *T. Bab. Bava Bathra*, fol. 12. 2. & *Massechet Sopherim*, c. 3. sect. 1, 5.

<sup>y</sup> *T. Bab. Bava Bathra*, fol. 14. 1.

<sup>z</sup> *T. Bab. Yoma*, fol. 70. 1. *Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla*, c. 12. sect. 23.

<sup>aa</sup> *Massechet Sopherim*, c. 11. sect. 2.



himself, and proper to read and insist on at this time; for it was not by chance that he hit on this place, and read it, but it was according to purpose, and with design. Before the reading of the prophets, a blessing used to be said, which was in this form<sup>b</sup>; "blesséd art thou, O Lord our God, the king of the world, who hath chosen the good prophets, and art well pleased with their words, which are said in truth; blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast chosen the law, Moses his servant, and Israel his people, and the prophets of truth and righteousness." Whether this was delivered by Christ, is not certain; however, he read the following passage.

Ver. 18. *The spirit of the Lord is upon me, &c.*] By whom is meant, the third person in the Trinity; so called, to distinguish him from all other spirits; and who was given to Christ as man, without measure, whereby he was qualified for his great work: and intends the spirit of Jehovah, with all his gifts and graces, who was, and abode on Christ, as a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, of counsel and of might, of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord; he was upon him, and in him, the first moment of his conception, which was by his power; and he visibly descended on him at his baptism; and the phrase denotes the permanency and continuance of him with him: *because he hath anointed me; or that he might anoint me*: the Ethiopic version renders it, *by whom he hath anointed me*; for it was with the Holy Ghost he was anointed, as to be king and priest, so likewise to be a prophet: hence he has the name Messiah, which signifies anointed: and this unction he had, in order to *preach the Gospel to the poor*: in Isaiah it is, *to the meek*; which design the same persons, and mean such as are poor in spirit, and are sensible of their spiritual poverty; have low and humble thoughts of themselves; and of their own righteousness; and seek to Christ for durable riches and true righteousness, and frankly acknowledge that all they have and are, is owing to the grace of God: and generally speaking, these are the poor of this world, and poor in their intellectuals, who have but a small degree of natural wisdom and knowledge: to these the Gospel, or glad tidings of the love, grace, and mercy of God in Christ, of peace, pardon, righteousness, life and salvation by Christ, were preached by him; and that in so clear a manner, and with such power and authority, as never was before, or since; and for this purpose was he anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows: *he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted*; whose hearts are broken, and made contrite by the word of God, under the influence of the spirit of God, and with a sense of sin; and are wounded with it, and are humbled for it; and are in great pain and distress, and even inconsolable, and ready to faint and die; for a wounded spirit who can bear? now Christ was sent to heal such persons by his own stripes, by binding up their wounds, by the application of his blood to them, which is a sovereign balm for every wound; by the discoveries of pardoning grace to their souls, and by

opening and applying the comfortable promises of the Gospel, by his spirit, to them: *to preach deliverance to the captives*; who are captives to sin, Satan, and the law; from which, there is only deliverance by him; who saves his people from their sins, redeems them from the law, and leads captivity captive; and which liberty and deliverance are preached and published in the Gospel, and by Christ the author of them: *and recovering of sight to the blind*; which in the prophet is, *and the opening of the prison to them that are bound*; and which the Septuagint render, as here in Luke, and the Chaldee paraphrase in part agrees with it, interpreting it thus, *to the prisoners, אֲתֵרְבִי לְנִרְרָה, be ye revealed to the light*: now because persons in prison are in darkness, and see no light, therefore they are represented as blind; and both are the case of sinners, they are in the prison of sin and of the law, and are blind, ignorant, and insensible of their state; until Christ both opens the prison, and sets them free, and opens their eyes, and gives them spiritual sight; when he says *to the prisoners go forth, to them that are in darkness shew yourselves*, Isa. xlix. 9. *To set at liberty them that are bruised*: these words are not in Isa. lxi. 1. but in the Septuagint version of Isa. lviii. 6. from whence they seem to be taken, or else from Isa. xlii. 7. it being allowable for a reader in the prophets, to skip from place to place, which our Lord here did, in order to explain this passage more fully.

Ver. 19. *To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*] The time which he willed and fixed for the redemption of his people, and in which he shewed his goodwill and pleasure unto sinful men, in the gift of his son to them, and for them; and which, as the Arabic and Syriac versions render it, was a time *acceptable to the Lord*: the sufferings of Christ were according to his will; his sacrifice was of a sweet-smelling savour to him; his righteousness he was well pleased with; and the satisfaction and atonement for sin he made was a plenary and complete one: all Christ did, and suffered, were grateful to God, because hereby his perfections were glorified, his purposes, counsel, and covenant were accomplished, and his people saved. The Persic version renders it, *to preach the law acceptable to God*, neither agreeable to the original text, nor its sense; for Christ was sent to preach the Gospel, and not the law. In the Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions is added, *and the day of vengeance*, out of the prophecy in Isa. lxi. 2. but is not in any of the copies, or other versions. Our Lord did not read through all the three verses in the prophet, as it might be thought he would, and which was agreeable to the Jewish canon: "he that reads in the law may not read less than three verses, and he may not read to an interpreter more than one verse, and in a prophet three; and if those three are three sections, they read every one; they skip in a prophet, but they do not skip in the law." This last our Lord did, though he did not strictly attend to the former. Indeed, their rule, as elsewhere<sup>c</sup> given, obliged to read one and twenty verses; but this was not always ob-

<sup>b</sup> Seder Tephillet, fol. 127. 2. Ed. Basil.

<sup>c</sup> Misn. Megilla; c. 4. sect. 4. Massechet Sopherim, c. 11. sect. 1.

<sup>d</sup> Piske Harosh Megilla, c. 3. art. 6.

served; for "if on a sabbath-day there was an inter-  
preter, or a preacher, they read in a prophet three  
verses, or five, or seven, and were not solicitous  
about twenty and one."

Ver. 20. *And he closed the book, &c.*] Or rolled it up; and so the high-priest did, after he read in the book of the law, on the day of atonement, all that was necessary to be read, גולל ספר תורה, he rolled the book of the law, and put it in his bosom: and he gave it again to the minister; the Chazan<sup>g</sup>, who was the minister, or servant of the congregation, who had the affairs of it upon him, to let in, and bring out, and to order all things; and particularly to take care of the book of the law, and the chest, or ark in which it was. If the same rule was observed in giving and taking the book of any prophet, as the book of the law; then Christ gave it to the minister, and he received it with his right hand: for so it is said<sup>h</sup>, "he that gives the book of the law to his friend, may not give it but with the right hand; and he that receives it may not receive it but with the right hand; for so was the giving of it on Mount Sinai, according to Deut. xxxiii. 2. *And sat down*; as was the manner of the Jews, when they taught, or preached; see the note on Matt. v. 1. *and the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him*: they looked very wistly at him, and were very attentive to what he should say, upon such a passage of Scripture, which they knew referred to the Messiah; and the rather, as they had known him formerly, and had heard that he was said to be the Messiah.

Ver. 21. *And he began to say unto them, &c.*] To preach from those words; the explanation of which he gave, though not here recorded, and applied them to himself, to whom they belonged, saying: *this day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears*; which is as if he should say, I am the person here spoken of; and at this present time the spirit of God is upon me; I am anointed with the Holy Ghost, and now preach glad tidings to you, and all the good things here mentioned, and for the several ends proposed; and this Scripture has its full accomplishment which has been read unto you, and you have heard this day. So the Syriac version renders it, רבאדניכון, which is in your ears; that is, which you have now heard. The Jews themselves acknowledge, that these words are spoken of the Messiah. One of their writers<sup>i</sup> says, "these are the words of the prophet with respect to the Messiah; for the Messiah shall say so, because the Lord hath anointed me, &c." And so said the true Messiah Jesus. Another of them expresses himself thus<sup>k</sup>: "these are the words of the prophet with respect to the Messiah; for the Messiah shall say thus, because the Lord hath anointed me, &c. or they are the words of the prophet concerning himself." And elsewhere 'tis said by them<sup>l</sup>, "the holy, blessed God, will send his Messiah to us, and he shall be worthy of this, (i. e. the character of a

meek person) as it is said, Isa. lxi. 1. *he hath sent me to preach glad tidings to the meek.*"

Ver. 22. *And all bare him witness, &c.*] That he was right in applying the words to the Messiah; but not that he himself was the Messiah, and that he was right in applying them to himself; for they did not believe in him, as appears from what follows: and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth; not so much at the matter, the sum, and substance of them, as expressive of the love, grace, and favour of God shewn in the mission and unction of the Messiah, and in that liberty, deliverance, and salvation he was sent to effect and proclaim; as at the graceful manner in which he delivered himself, and the aptness of his words, the propriety of his diction, and the majesty, power, and authority, with which his expressions were clothed; and they were more amazed at all this, since they knew his parentage and education, and in what manner he had been brought up among them; and therefore it was astonishing to them, where he had his learning, knowledge, and wisdom: and they said, is not this Joseph's son? the carpenter, and who was brought up, by him, to his trade, and never learned letters; from whom had he this doctrine? of whom has he learned this way of address, and to speak with so much eloquence and propriety, since his education was so mean, and he has never been at the feet of any of the doctors, or has been brought up in any of the academies and schools of learning?

Ver. 23. *And he said unto them, ye will surely say unto me this proverb, &c.*] Or parable; for any pithy sentence, or proverbial expression, was, by the Jews, called a parable: *physician heal thyself*; and which was a proverb in use with the Jews; and which is sometimes expressed thus, ויל אסי נפשיך, go heal thyself<sup>m</sup>; and sometimes in this form, אסיא אסי דנרתך, physician, heal thy lameness<sup>n</sup>: the meaning of which is, that a man ought to look at home, and take care of himself, and of those that belonged to him; and Christ was aware that his townsmen would object this to him, that if he was the person he was said to be, and could do the miracles and cures which were ascribed to him, he ought to do something of this kind at home, among them, who were his townsmen, neighbours, relations, and acquaintance; that is, heal their sick, lame, blind, leprous, deaf, and dumb: and that this is the sense of it, is manifest from what follows, *whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum*: a place where Christ often was, and where he cured the centurion's servant of the palsy, and Peter's wife's mother of a fever, and another man sick of a palsy, and the woman of her bloody issue, and a man that had a withered hand, and where he raised Jairus's daughter from the dead: *do also here in thy country*; or city, as the Syriac, Arabic, Persian, and Ethiopic versions render it: hence it appears, that this was not the first of our Lord's ministry; he had preached elsewhere, and wrought miracles before

<sup>g</sup> Massechet Sopherim, c. 12. sect. 7.

<sup>h</sup> Misn. Yoma, c. 7. sect. 1.

<sup>i</sup> Bartenora in Misn. Sota, c. 7. sect. 7.

<sup>k</sup> Massechet Sopherim, c. 3. sect. 10.

<sup>l</sup> Kimchi in Sopher Shorash. rad. כנסו.

<sup>k</sup> R. Sol. Hamelec in Mictol Yophi in loc.

<sup>l</sup> Juchasin, fol. 69. 1.

<sup>m</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 31. 2.

<sup>n</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sost. 23. fol. 20. 4.

he came to Nazareth, and of which his townsmen had heard; and therefore were desirous that he would do the like among them, if he was able, for they seem to be very incredulous, and to question the reports of him, and his ability to perform such things; however, if he could, they thought they had as good a right to his favours and benefits, as any, this being his native place.

Ver. 24. *And he said, verily I say unto you, &c.*] Another proverb in use among them, the meaning of which was well known to them, and was very apposite to the present case: *no prophet is accepted in his own country*; see the note on Matt. xiii. 57.

Ver. 25. *But I tell you of a truth, &c.*] Or in truth; it answers to בְּאֵמֶת, a phrase often used by the Jewish writers<sup>o</sup>; and which they say<sup>p</sup>, wherever, and of whatsoever it is spoken, it signifies a tradition of Moses from Mount Sinai, and so that which is most true, sure, and firm, and to be depended on; and such is what our Lord hereafter delivers; yea, the word, דְּיִמְנִיטָה, truth, or of a truth, and which is the same as in truth, is used by the Jews<sup>q</sup>, as לִשְׁוֹן שְׁבוּעָה, the form of an oath: so that these words of Christ are a strong asseveration, and amount to a solemn oath with respect to what follows: *many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias*; or Elijah, the prophet; that is, there were many that were not only widows, but poor widows, and in very famishing circumstances in the land of Israel, when Elijah was the prophet of the Lord to that people: *and when the heaven was shut up three years and six months*: so that no rain descended all that time: the same is observed by James, ch. 5. 17. and though the space of time, in which there was no rain, is not so clear from the history of it in the book of Kings; yet, as this is fixed by Christ, and his apostle, and there is nothing in the history that contradicts it, it is to be received without scruple: *when great famine was throughout all the land of Israel*; and which so long a drought must needs bring.

Ver. 26. *But unto none of them was Elias sent, &c.*] That is, to none of the poor widows in the land of Israel was the prophet sent, to supply them with food, and relieve them in their famishing circumstances, as might most reasonably have been expected: *save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon*; which in 1 Kings xvii. 10. is called *Zarephath*; and by the Septuagint there, *Sarepta of Sidon*, as here. Pliny<sup>r</sup> speaks of it by the same name, and reckons it to Sidon: *unto a woman that was a widow*: she is said by the Jews<sup>s</sup>, to be the mother of Jonah the prophet. Our Lord meant to observe, by this instance, as by the following, that God bestows his favours on persons in a sovereign way, and sometimes upon the most unlikely; as in a time of famine, he overlooked the poor widows in Israel, his peculiar people, and sent his prophet to a Gentile woman in one of the cities of Sidon; and therefore they should cease to wonder if he wrought his miracles in other

places, and not in his own country; since this was agreeable to the divine procedure in other cases, especially since they were a cavilling and unbelieving people. The Jews say<sup>t</sup>, that in all that generation there was not found any one that was worthy, as this woman.

Ver. 27. *And many lepers were in Israel, &c.*] The leprosy was a disease very common among the Jews; hence those laws concerning it in Lev. xiii. and xiv. and it seems by this account, that it was very prevalent, in the time of *Elishus the prophet*; that is, the prophet Elisha; who, by the Septuagint, in 1 Kings xix. 16. and, in other places, is called *Elisaie*: and none of them was cleansed; from their leprosy, by any direction of the prophet, *saving Naaman, the Syrian*; or but Naaman, who was not an Israelite, but a Syrian: he was cleansed and cured of his leprosy, being ordered by Elisha to dip himself seven times in Jordan, which he did, and was healed, 2 Kings v. 14.

Ver. 28. *And all they in the synagogue, &c.*] The ruler and minister, and the whole multitude of the common people that were met together there for worship; and who before were amazed at his eloquence, and the gracefulness of his delivery; and could not but approve of his ministry, though they could not account for it, how he should come by his qualifications for it: *when they heard these things*; these two instances of Elijah and Elisha, the one supplying the wants of a Sidonian woman, and the other healing a Syrian leper, when no notice were taken by them of poor widows and lepers in Israel: *were filled with wrath*; for by these instances they perceived, that they were compared to the Israelites in the times of wicked Ahab and Jezebel; and that no miracles were to be wrought among them, or benefits conferred on them, though they were his townsmen; yea, that the Gentiles were preferred unto them: and indeed the calling of the Gentiles was here plainly intimated, which was always ungrateful and provoking to the Jews; and it was suggested, that the favours of God, and grace of the Messiah, are dispensed in a sovereign and discriminating way, than which nothing is more offensive to carnal minds.

Ver. 29. *And rose up, &c.*] In great wrath, and in a noisy and tumultuous manner, before the service was well over, and without being regularly dismissed: *and thrust him out of the city*: first out of the synagogue, and then out of their city, as unworthy to be in it, though an inhabitant of it; and as if he had done something deserving of death, and therefore to be punished as a malefactor without the city: *and led him unto the brow of the hill*; the edge of it, where it run out, and hung over the precipice: *whereon their city was built*; so that it was a city upon an hill, and very visible, to which Christ may allude in Matt. v. 14. *That they might cast him down headlong*; and break him to pieces: in this manner ten thousand Edomites were destroyed by the

<sup>o</sup> Misn. Sabbat, c. 1. sect. 3. Trumot, c. 2. sect. 1.

<sup>p</sup> T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 3. 2. & 12. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Trumot, c. 3. sect. 1.

<sup>q</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 55. 1. & Gloss. in ib.

<sup>r</sup> L. 5. c. 19.

<sup>s</sup> Pirke Eliezer, c. 33.

<sup>t</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 89. 9.

Jews, in the times of Amaziah, 2 Chron. xxv. 12. though this was not an usual way with the Jews of putting persons to death, as with some other nations<sup>2</sup>; their four capital punishments were stoning, strangling, burning, and killing with the sword<sup>3</sup>: nor did the inhabitants of Nazareth proceed in any *judicial* manner with Christ, but hurried him away, in order to destroy him, without any formal process, in the manner the zealots did: though to put any man to death, or to inflict any punishment on a person on the sabbath-day, as this was, was contrary to their own canon, which runs thus<sup>2</sup>: "they don't inflict punishment on the sabbath-day, even though it is the punishment of an affirmative precept; they don't beat one that is guilty, nor put to death, as it is said, Exod. xxxv. 3. *ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath-day*: this is a caution to the sanhedrim, that they do not burn on the sabbath-day he that is condemned to burning; and this is the law with respect to any one that is liable to the other punishments." But these men, without any regard to the place where they were, and the worship they were concerned in, and the day of the sabbath which then was, rise up in great wrath and fury, and without any shew of justice, and in the most brutish and barbarous manner attempt to take away the life of Christ.

Ver. 30. *But he passing through the midst of them, &c.*] Either in so strong and powerful a manner, and with so much swiftness, that being once out of their hands, they could not lay hold on him again; or else he put on another form, or made himself invisible to them; or he held their eyes that they could not see him, or know him, as in Luke xxiv. 16. however it was, he made use of, and shewed his divine power; and which he did, because his time to die was not yet come, nor was he to die such a death: and this also shews, that when he did die, he laid down his life freely and voluntarily, since he could then have exerted his power, and delivered himself out of the hands of his enemies, as now: and *went his way*: from Nazareth elsewhere; nor do we read of his returning there any more.

Ver. 31. *And came down to Capernaum, &c.*] Which was, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, sixteen miles or more from Nazareth; and Christ may be said to *come down* to it, because of the situation of Nazareth, which was upon an hill: *a city of Galilee*: of lower Galilee, near the sea of Galilee: *and taught them on the sabbath-days*; that is, he went into the synagogue at Capernaum, on the sabbath-days, whenever he was there, and taught the inhabitants, explained some passage or other in the Old Testament, as he had done at Nazareth, and instructed them in the doctrines of the Gospel.

Ver. 32. *And they were astonished at his doctrine, &c.*] At the matter of it, as well as the manner in which it was delivered, it being so different from the Scribes and Pharisees, they had been used to: *for his word was with power*; he spake with great fervency, majesty, and authority, and not with coldness and indifference, and dependence on the sense

and authority of others, as their teachers did; and besides, such power went along with the word, that it reached their hearts; and as the Persic version renders it, he *penetrated them with it*; and he also confirmed it by powerful operations, by miraculous works, such as casting out devils, and healing diseases, of which an account follows.

Ver. 33. *And in the synagogue there was a man, &c.*] That is, in the synagogue at Capernaum, as Christ was there teaching, on one of the sabbath-days before-mentioned; there was a certain man, *which had a spirit of an unclean devil*: who was possessed with the devil, who is by nature and practice unclean; and was filled with the spirit of the devil, with a spirit of divination, and was acted by him, to impose upon the people; he influenced his mind as an enthusiast, as well as possessed his body: and this was on the sabbath-day; whereas the Jews say<sup>1</sup>, that "Satan and the evil demon flee on the sabbath-day to the mountains of darkness, and don't appear all the sabbath-day, because that day is holy, and they are unclean; but in the evening of the sabbath they prepare themselves, and meet the children of men, and hurt them." *And cried out with a loud voice*; see the note on Mark i. 23.

Ver. 34. *Saying, let us alone, &c.*] Not that there were more spirits in him than one, as the whole account shows; but he includes the rest of the devils in that country; see the note on Mark i. 24.

Ver. 35. *And Jesus rebuked him, &c.*] Not the man, but the unclean spirit: or *that demon*, as the Persic version reads it: *saying, hold thy peace, or be thou muzzled*, as the word signifies, *and come out of him*; see the note on Matt. i. 25. *and when the devil had thrown him in the midst*; in the midst of them, as the Arabic version adds; that is, in the midst of the people that were in the synagogue; or, as the Ethiopic version reads, *in the midst of the synagogue*, where he threw him into convulsive fits, and left him: *he came out of him, and hurt him not*; tho' he sadly convulsed him, and put him to great pain, yet he did not wound him in any part of his body, or take away the use of any of his limbs; and much less hurt his soul, so as to destroy it; all which was desired and intended by him, but was hindered by Christ; see the note on Mark i. 26.

Ver. 36. *And they were all amazed, &c.*] The people in the synagogue; they were astonished at his doctrine before, and now at his miracles: *and spake among themselves*: as they were in the synagogue, *what a word is this?* meaning, either what sort of doctrine is this which is attended with such power and miracles; or what a word of command is this, *hold thy peace, and come out of him?* and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *what is this mandatory, or commanding word?* to which agrees the Syriac version, rendering it with the following clause thus; *what is this word, that with authority and power it commands the unclean spirits, and they come out?* see the note on Mark i. 27.

Ver. 37. *And the fame of him went out, &c.*] From hence, on account of his dispossessing this unclean spirit, which seems to be the first instance of this kind: *into every place of the country round about*; into every

<sup>2</sup> Vid. Ryequium de Capitol. Rom. c. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Misa. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 2.

<sup>1</sup> Moses Kotsensis Mitzvo' Toru, pr. neg. 67.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. pr. affirm. 99.

city, town, and village in Galilee, and even into all places round about Galilee; see Mark i. 28.

Ver. 38. *And he arose out of the synagogue, &c.*] That is, when he had dispossessed the unclean spirit, he rose up, and went out of the synagogue: *and entered into Simon's house*; the house of Simon Peter, and which was also Andrew's; and in Beza's ancient copy, and in one of Stephens's, it is added, *and of Andrew*; who, tho' they were both natives of Bethsaida, yet, it seems, had an house at Capernaum, whither Christ went of his own accord, or by an invitation given him: *and Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever*. The Vulgate Latin version reads, *with great fevers*. The fever is "a disease, or rather a class of diseases, whose characteristic is a preternatural heat felt thro' the whole body, or, at least, the principal parts thereof, attended with other symptoms.—One defines a fever, a strenuous endeavour, or effort of nature to throw off some morbid matter, that greatly incommodes the body.—Another, an augmented velocity of the blood; others, a fermentation of the blood, accompanied with a quick pulse and excessive heat.—The causes of fevers are innumerable, and the disease even often arises in the soundest bodies, where there was no previous morbid apparatus, as cachochymia, plethora, &c. but merely from a change of air, food, or other alteration in the non-naturals.—A fever, one observes, is an inseparable companion of an inflammation. The symptoms are many: every fever, arising from any internal cause, is attended with a quick pulse, and unusual heat at different times, and in different degrees. Where these are intense, the fever is acute, where remiss, slow. The disease begins almost always with a sense of chillness, and in its progress is chiefly distinguished by the velocity of the pulse: so that a too quick contraction of the heart, with an increased resistance, or impulse against the capillaries, furnishes the proper idea of a fever." The fever Peter's wife's mother lay ill of, is said to be a great one; which circumstance is the rather mentioned, to illustrate the miraculous cure of it by Christ; see the note on Matt. viii. 14. *And they besought him for her*; either his disciples Peter, Andrew, James, and John, who were all present, or the other relations and friends of the sick person, which were in the house; who having heard of his casting out the unclean spirit in the synagogue, believed that he had power to heal this disease; and therefore intreat him, for her sake, and upon her account, that he would restore her health.

Ver. 39. *And he stood over her, &c.*] *At her head*, as the Persic version reads: he inclined himself towards her, to see how she did, and to take her by the hand, and lift her up; *and rebuked the fever*. The Syriac and Persic versions read, *her fever*, that which was upon her; *and it left her*, as Mark says, *immediately*; as soon as ever he had touched her hand, and rebuked the fever, and bid it be gone: *and immediately she arose, and ministered unto them*; see the note on Matt. viii. 15.

Ver. 40. *Now when the sun was setting, &c.*] *And so the sabbath was over*; see the note on Matt. viii. 16.

*all they that had any sick, with divers diseases, brought them unto him*; that is, as many of the inhabitants of Capernaum as had sick persons in their houses, let their diseases be what they would, brought them to Christ in Simon's house; which, sabbath being over, they might do consistent with their laws, and the traditions of the elders, and without any just offence to the Scribes and Pharisees, who were tenacious of them; and they were encouraged to do so, partly thro' the dispossessing the unclean spirit in their synagogue that day, which many of them had been witnesses of; and partly thro' the cure of Peter's wife's mother, which they had heard of: *and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them*; without the use of medicine, by the mere imposition of his hands; which was accompanied with such power and virtue from him, as to remove, at once, every disease; nor did he refuse any person, how unworthy soever they might be in themselves, and how obstinate their disease might be.

Ver. 41. *And devils also came out of many, &c.*] Not willingly, nor of themselves, but at the word and command of Christ, who ordered them to depart: *crying out and saying*: as they left the bodies of men, and not with any good-will to Christ: *thou art Christ*; the true Messiah, that was of old promised and prophesied of, and has been long expected to come: *the Son of God*; the only-begotten Son of God, possessed of the same perfections with God his Father; and particularly of almighty power, of which they were convinced by his dispossessing them: *and he rebuking them, suffered them not to speak*; for he needed not their testimony, nor did he choose to be made known by them: *for they knew that he was Christ, or that they knew that he was Christ*; so the Syriac version: they certainly did know that he was the Messiah, partly by the voice from heaven at his baptism, and partly by his power over them: but Christ would not suffer them to say that he was the Messiah, or that they knew him to be so; either because the time was not come for such a declaration to be made, or they were not the proper persons to make it; and lest such a publication, by them, should be made a handle of by the Scribes and Pharisees, to say that he had society with devils, and by them cast them out.

Ver. 42. *And when it was day, &c.*] *The day after*, as the Persic version renders it; *at the dawning; or break of day*, as the Syriac. He rose a great while before it was day, as Mark says, ch. i. 35. but did not go out till it was day, or till day was coming on, when he departed from Peter's house, and from Capernaum: *and went into a desert place*; for the sake of solitude, that he might be retired from company, and have an opportunity of privately praying to God: *and the people sought, and came unto him*: they first went to Simon's house, and not finding him there, sought for him elsewhere; and when they understood where he was, they came to him, and stayed him that he should not depart from them; they laid hold on him, and held him, and did all they could to persuade him to abide with them constantly, and not think of removing from them: tho' perhaps this was not so much from love to

\* See Chambers's Cyclopaedia in the word *Fever*.

Christ's person and presence, or any regard to his ministry, and the good and welfare of their immortal souls, as on account of the miracles he wrought, and the corporal benefits he bestowed on them.

Ver. 43. *And he said unto them, &c.*] In answer to their importunate requests: *I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also*; as well as to Capernaum; and tho' they did not express their desire of his continuance with them, in order to preach the Gospel to them; yet Christ signifies, that a principal part of his work lay in preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, the Gospel-dispensation on earth, the

doctrines and ordinances of it, as well as the things which relate to the kingdom of glory; as what is the saints meetness for it, their regeneration, and their right unto it, which lies in his righteousness; and that as he had preached these things at Capernaum, there was a necessity upon him to preach them in other cities of Galilee and Judæa: *for therefore am I sent*; as he was by his heavenly Father, and had himself also undertaken and engaged to do it.

Ver 44. *And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.*] In the several synagogues that were in different cities and towns throughout all Galilee.

## C H A P. V.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, that as the people pressed upon him, &c.*] As Christ went thro' Galilee, and preached in the synagogues there, great crouds of people attended on him, and they followed him wherever he went; and so large were their numbers, and so very eager were they to see him, and hear him, that they were even troublesome to him, and bore hard upon him, and were ready to press him down, tho' they had no ill design upon him, but only to hear the word of God: the scriptures of the Old Testament explained, and the doctrines of the Gospel preached; and which were preached by him, as never were before or since, and in such a manner as were not by the Scribes and Pharisees; and both the matter and manner of his ministry drew a vast concourse of people after him: *he stood by the lake of Gennesareth*: the same with the sea of Chinnereth, Numb. xxxiv. 11. Josh. xii. 3. and xiii. 27. where the Targums of Onkelos, Jonathan, and the Jerusalem, call it יַם דִּנְיָסָר *the sea of Genusar, or Gennesareth*: and so it is elsewhere called <sup>a</sup>, and is the same which is called the sea of Galilee, and of Tiberias, John vi. 1. and xxi. 1. and is, by other writers <sup>b</sup>, as here, called the lake of Gennesareth, and said to be sixteen miles long, and six broad. Josephus says <sup>c</sup>, 'tis forty furlongs broad, and an hundred long. The Jews say <sup>d</sup>, that "the holy, blessed God created seven seas, " but chose none of them all, but the sea of Gennesareth." And indeed, it was a place chosen by Christ, and honoured, and made famous by him, by his preaching at it, his miracles upon it, and shewing himself there after his resurrection.

Ver. 2. *And saw two ships standing by the lake, &c.*] Or two fishing-boats; which were, as the Arabic version renders it, *detained by anchors at the shore of the lake*; the one belonging to Peter and Andrew, and the other to Zebedee, and his two sons, James and John: *but the fishermen were gone out of them*; that is, either the above persons, or their servants: *and were washing their nets*; on shore; they having gathered a great deal of soil and filthiness, but had caught no fish; and therefore were cleansing their nets, in order to lay them up, finding it to be in vain to make any further attempts with them at present; and which considered, makes the following miracle the more illustrious.

Ver. 3. *And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, &c.*] Simon Peter's, and Andrew his brother's, who were both together at this time, tho' the last is not here mentioned: *and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land*: as Simon was the owner of the vessel, Christ desired him; he asked the favour of him to put off a little way from shore; though the Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it, *he commanded him*, being his Lord and master: To which the Syriac and Persic versions agree; only they make the orders to be given not to Simon singly, but to others, to all in the boat; the former rendering it, *and he said*, or ordered, *that they should carry him a little way from the dry land to the waters*; and the latter thus, *and said*, *carry ye the ship from dry land a little into the sea*. And which adds, agreeable to the sense enough, though it is not in the text, *when they had executed his command*; had done as he entreated, or ordered, and put off the vessel a little way from the shore: *he sat down and taught the people out of the ship*; for the boat was not carried neither out of sight, nor beyond the hearing of the people: this method Christ took at another time, and that for conveniency, as now; see Matt. xiii. 1, 2, 3. and whereas he sat while he taught, this was according to the then custom of the times with the Jews; see the note on Matt. v. 1.

Ver. 4. *Now when he had left speaking, &c.*] Teaching the people, and preaching the word of God unto them out of the ship, as they stood on the shore before him. *He said unto Simon, launch out into the deep*; he spoke to Simon Peter, being the master of the vessel, to thrust it out, or put it off further into deep water, more convenient for fishing; *and let down your nets for a draught*; of fishes: his meaning is, that he would give orders to his servants, to put out the vessel to sea, to take their nets and cast them into the sea, in order to take and draw up a quantity of fish, which was their business.

Ver. 5. *And Simon answering said unto him, master, &c.*] Or Rabbi, as the Syriac version renders it: he knew him to be the Messiah, the king of Israel, and a teacher sent from God: *we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing*; which carries in it an objection to what Christ advised and directed to: they had

<sup>a</sup> Targum in Esek. xxxix. 11. Zohar in Gen. fol. 8. 2. & 17. 2. & in Exod. fol. 52. 4. & 61. 4.

<sup>b</sup> Plin. l. 5. c. 15. Solin, c. 49. Ptolom. l. 5. c. 15.

<sup>c</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 18.

<sup>d</sup> Pirke Eliezer, c. 18.

been fishing that *night*, which was the best time for catching fish; and they had been at it all the night, and had *laboured* hard; and were even *fatigued*, and quite wearied out, and what was most discouraging of all, their labour was in vain; they had caught *nothing*: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net; which shewed faith in Christ, and obedience to him: thus the faithful preachers of the Gospel sometimes labour and toil in the ministry of the word a great while, with little or no success; and are discouraged from going on, and would be tempted to leave off, were it not for the commission and word of command they have received from Christ, which they dare not be disobedient to; and for the word of promise he has given them, to be with them, on which they depend.

Ver. 6. *And when they had done this, &c.*] Had put the ship out further to sea, and had let down their net: they enclosed a great multitude of fish; in their net, which by the secret divine power of Christ, were gathered together just in that place, where by his order they cast the net: and their net brake: with the weight and number of the fishes, yet not so as to let the fish out; the Arabic version reads, *it was within a little that their nets were broke*: they were just upon breaking, the draught was so numerous, the struggling so great, and the weight so heavy.

Ver. 7. *And they beckoned unto their partners, &c.*] Zebedee, and his two sons, James and John; see ver. 10. who were at some distance from them, probably lay at anchor near the shore, not having put out to sea when the other vessel did, and so were not within call; but they were obliged to make signs to them, and beckon with their hands to come to them: *which were in the other ship*; mentioned in ver. 2. which lay by the shore: *that they should come and help them*; take up the net, and take the fish out of it: *and they came and filled both the ships*; with the fishes they took out of the net, as full as they could hold, and which they were not well able to carry: *so that they began to sink*; or were almost immersed, as Beza's ancient copy, and another manuscript, with the Syriac, Arabic, and Persian versions read; the vessels were so heavy laden, with the vast quantity of fish that was taken, that they were just ready to sink with their burden.

Ver. 8. *When Simon Peter saw it, &c.*] The multitude of fish that was taken, and both vessels filled with them, and the danger they were in of sinking, he fell down at Jesus' knees. The Arabic and Persian versions read, *at his feet*; he fell on his knees before him, and threw himself prostrate at his feet, as a worshipper of him, and a suppliant unto him: *saying, depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord*; this he said, not as though the presence of Christ was burdensome, or disagreeable to him; but as one amazed at the greatness of the miracle wrought, and struck with the sense of the power of Christ, put forth therein; and with the greatness of his majesty so near him; and as conscious to himself of his own vileness and unworthiness to be in his presence; and so the Persian version adds, and which may serve as a comment, *and am not worthy that thou shouldst be with me*: he had much the same sense of things as the centurion had, Matt. viii. 8. and when it is considered how gracious persons have been struck with awe and fear,

and a consciousness of sin, weakness, and unworthiness, at the appearance of an angel, as Zacharias, Luke i. 12. and the shepherds, ch. ii. 2. yea, at the presence of an holy man of God, as the widow of Sarepta at Elijah, saying much the same as Peter does here, 1 Kings xvii. 18. it need not be wondered at, that Peter should so express himself, in these circumstances.

Ver. 9. *For he was astonished, and all that were with him, &c.*] His brother Andrew, and the servants they had with them to manage the vessel, and cast the nets: *at the draught of the fishes they had taken*; being so large and numerous, as the like was never seen, nor known by them before.

Ver. 10. *And so was also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, &c.*] Who were in the other ship, and had been beckoned to them to come and help them, and did come, and were witnesses of the miracle: *which were partners with Simon*; were sharers with him in loss and gain in the fishing trade; these were equally astonished at the miracle, as Simon and his brother, and the men that were in the boat with them, where Jesus was: *and Jesus said unto Simon*; who was at his knees, and expressed his dread of his majesty, and the consternation of mind he was in particularly: *fear not*; don't be afraid of me, I shall do thee no harm, nor shall the boats sink, or any damage come to any person, or to the vessels, nor be so much amazed and affrighted, at the multitude of the fish taken: *from henceforth thou shalt catch men*; alive, as the word signifies, or *unto life*, as the Syriac and Persian versions render it; thou shalt cast the net of the Gospel; and be the happy instrument of drawing many persons out of the depths of sin and misery, in which they are plunged, into the way of life and salvation; and which was greatly verified, in the conversion of three thousand at one cast, under one sermon of his, Acts ii. 41.

Ver. 11. *And when they had brought their ships to land, &c.*] Both Simon Peter's, and the other in which his partners were, and which were laden with fish: *they forsook all*; even all their fish, which they doubtless might have made much money of, and their nets, and their ships, and their servants, and their relations, and friends: *and followed him*; Christ; and became his disciples, even all four of them, Peter, Andrew, James, and John.

Ver. 12. *And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, &c.*] Or near it, hard by it, very probably Capernaum; see Matt. viii. 1, 2, 5. *Behold a man full of leprosy*; a disease to which the Jews were very incident, and concerning which, many laws and rules are given, in Levit. xiii. and xiv. The symptoms of the ancient lepra, as laid down by Galen, Aretæus, Pontanus, Ægineta, Cardan, Varanda, Gordon, Pharræus, and others, are as follow. The patient's voice is hoarse, and comes rather through the nose than the mouth; the blood full of little white shining bodies, like grains of millet, which upon filtration, separate themselves from it; the serum is scabious, and destitute of its natural humidity, insomuch that salt applied to it, does not dissolve; it is so dry, that vinegar poured on it boils; and is so strongly bound together by little imperceptible threads, that calcined lead thrown into it swims. The face resembles a coal half extinct, unctuous, shining, and bloated, with frequent hard

knobs, green at bottom, and white at top. The hair is short, stiff, and brinded; and not to be torn off, without bringing away some of the rotten flesh, to which it adheres; if it grows again, either on the head or chin, it is always white: athwart the forehead, run large wrinkles or furrows, from one temple to the other; the eyes red and inflamed, and shine like those of a cat; the ears swollen and red, eaten with ulcers towards the bottom, and encompassed with little glands; the nose sunk, because of the rotting of the cartilage; the tongue dry and black, swollen, ulcerated, divided with furrows, and spotted with grains of white; the skin covered with ulcers, that die and revive on each other, or with white spots, or scales like a fish; it is rough and insensible, and when cut, instead of blood, yields a sanious liquor: it arrives in time to such a degree of insensibility, that the wrist, feet, or even the large tendon, may be pierced with a needle, without the patient's feeling any pain; at last the nose, fingers, toes, and even privy members, fall off entire; and by a death peculiar to each of them, anticipate that of the patient: it is added, that the body is so hot, that a fresh apple held in the hand an hour, will be dried and wrinkled, as if exposed to the sun for a week\*. Think now what a miserable deplorable object this man was, said to be full of it. Between this disease and sin, there is a very great likeness. This disease is a very filthy one, and of a defiling nature, by the ceremonial law; under which it was considered rather as an uncleanness, than as a disease; the person attended with it was pronounced unclean by the priest, and was put out of the camp, and out of the cities and walled towns, that he might not defile others; and was obliged to put a covering on his upper lip, and cry Unclean, Unclean, to acknowledge his pollution, and that others might shun him: all mankind, by reason of sin, are by the Lord pronounced filthy; and by their evil actions, not only defile themselves, but others; evil communications corrupt good manners; and when they are made sensible, freely own that their righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and they themselves as an unclean thing: it is a very nauseous and loathsome disease, as is sin; it is abominable to God, and renders men abominable in his sight; it causes the sinner himself, when convinced of it, to loath and abhor himself: David calls his sin a loathsome disease, Psal. xxxviii. 7. it is of a spreading nature: this was a sign of it, if it did not spread, it was only a scab; if it spread, it was a leprosy, Lev. xiii. 5, 6, 7, 8. Sin has spread itself over all mankind, and over all the powers and faculties of the soul, and members of the body; there's no place free of it: and as the leprosy is of a consuming nature, it eats and wastes the flesh, see Numb. xii. 12. 2 Kings v. 10. so sin eats like a canker, and brings ruin and destruction upon men, both in soul and body. This disease was incurable by medicine; persons that had it were never sent to a physician, but to a priest; and what he did was only this, he looked upon it, and if it was a clear case, he declared the person unclean; and if it was doubtful, he shut him up for seven days, and then inspected him again; and after all he could not cure him; this was

the work of God, 2 Kings v. 7. All which shews the nature and use of the law, which shuts men up, concludes them under sin, and by which they have knowledge of it, but no healing: the law heals none, it is the killing letter, the ministration of condemnation and death; Christ only, by his blood and stripes, heals the disease of sin, and cleanses from it. There is one thing in the law of the leprosy very surprising, and that is, that if there was any quick raw flesh, or any sound flesh in the place where the leprosy was, the man was pronounced unclean; but if the leprosy covered his skin, and all his flesh, then he was pronounced clean: this intimates, that he that thinks he has some good thing in him, and fancies himself sound and well, and trusts to his own works of righteousness, he is not justified in the sight of God; but if a man acknowledges that there is no soundness in his flesh, that in him, that is, in his flesh, dwells no good thing, but that his salvation is alone, by the grace and mercy of God, such a man is justified by faith in Christ Jesus: the parable of the Pharisee and publican will illustrate this, Luke xviii. 10—14. *Who seeing Jesus, fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean:* see the note on Matt. viii. 2. Christ could cure lepers, and did; and which was a proof of his Messiahship, and is given among the signs of it, to John's disciples, Matt. xi. 5. and as there is a likeness between the leprosy and sin, so between the cleansing of a leper under the law, and the healing of a sinner by Christ: for the cleansing of a leper, two birds were to be taken clean and alive, which were both typical of Christ, and pointed at the meekness of his human nature, his innocence, harmlessness, and purity, and that he had a life to lay down; one of these was to be killed, in an earthen vessel over running water, shewing that Christ must be killed, his blood must be shed for the cleansing of leprous sinners; the earthen vessel denoted his human nature, his flesh, in which he was put to death; and the running water signified the purifying nature of his blood, and the continued virtue of it, to cleanse from all sin; and the blood and the water being mixed together, may put us in mind of the blood and water which flowed from the side of Christ, when pierced with the spear; which was an emblem of our justification and sanctification being both from him, on account of which, he is said to come both by water and by blood, 1 John v. 6. The other bird, after it was dipped with the cedar wood, scarlet and hyssop in the blood of the slain bird, was let go alive; which typified the resurrection of Christ, who was put to death in the flesh, and quickened in the spirit; and who rose again, for the justification of his people from all sin: the cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop, which were used in the cleansing of the leper, may either relate to the sufferings, and death, and blood of Christ; the scarlet wool may denote the bloody sufferings of Christ, through which he was red in his apparel; the cedar wood may signify the incorruptibility and preciousness of the blood of Christ, and the hyssop the purging virtue of it; or else these three may have regard to the three principal graces of the spirit of God, which have to do with, and are in-

\* Chambers's Cyclopædia in the word *Leprosy*.



fluenced by the sin-cleansing blood of Christ: the cedar wood may signify the incorruptible and precious grace of faith; the green hyssop, the lively grace of hope; and the scarlet, the flaming grace of love, when it is in its full exercise: or else the grace of faith, by which dealing with the blood of Christ, the heart is purified, is only meant; signified by cedar wood, for its permanency; by scarlet, for its concern with the crimson blood of Christ; by which sins, though as scarlet, are made white as wool; and by hyssop, for its being an humble and lowly grace: now the cedar stick, with the scarlet wool, and bunch of hyssop bound unto it, was used to sprinkle the blood of the bird upon the leper seven times, when he was pronounced clean; and expresses the instrumentality of faith, in the application of the blood of Christ for cleansing: though after this, the leper was to shave off all his hair, and wash himself and clothes in water; suggesting to us, that holiness of life and conversation which should follow, upon cleansing through faith in the blood of Christ.

Ver. 13. *And he put forth his hand and touched him, &c.*] Having compassion on him, and commiserating his sad case: *saying, I will, be thou clean; and immediately the leprosy departed from him;* see the note on Matt. viii. 3.

Ver. 14. *And he charged him to tell no man, &c.*] Of his cure, and by whom he received it; *but go and shew thyself to the priest.* The Syriac and Persic versions read, *to the priests: and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses has commanded, for a testimony unto them;* see the note on Matt. viii. 4.

Ver. 15. *But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him, &c.*] For the more he charged the man to keep silence, the more he blazed it abroad, being elated with the cure he received, and filled with gratitude to his benefactor; see Mark i. 45. *And great multitudes came together to hear: him, or from him,* as the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions add; to hear the doctrines of the Gospel preached by him: *and to be healed by him of their infirmities;* their bodily weaknesses and disorders.

Ver. 16. *And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, &c.*] Into a desert place, that he might have rest from the fatigues of preaching and healing diseases; and being alone, and free from company, might have an opportunity for private prayer to God, for so it follows: *and prayed;* this is to be understood of Christ, as man: as God, he is the object of prayer, and petitions are often addressed unto him; and as mediator, he offers up the prayers of all saints, and presents them to his father; which are acceptable to him, through the incense of his mediation; and as man, he prayed himself: what he now prayed for, is not known; sometimes he prayed for his disciples, and for all that should believe; for their conversion, sanctification, union, perseverance, and glorification; and sometimes for himself, that the cup might pass from him, and he be saved from death; but always with submission to the will of his father.

Ver. 17. *And it came to pass on a certain day, &c.*] When he was at Capernaum, as appears from Mark. ii. 1. *As he was teaching:* in the house where such numbers were gathered together, to hear the word of God preached by him, that there was not room for them,

neither within the house, nor about the door, Mark ii. 2. *That there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by;* who were sometimes called Scribes, and sometimes lawyers, and were generally of the sect of the Pharisees: *which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem:* having heard much of his doctrine and miracles, they came from all parts to watch and observe him, and to take all opportunities and advantages against him, that they might expose him to the people: *and the power of the Lord was present to heal them;* not the Pharisees and doctors of the law, who did not come to be healed by him, either in body or mind; but the multitude, some of whom came to hear his doctrine, and others to be healed of their infirmities, ver. 15. The Persic version reads the words thus, *and from all the villages of Galilee, and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, multitudes came, and the power of God was present to heal them.*

Ver. 18. *And behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy, &c.*] Four men brought him, as Mark says, ch. ii. 3. and which the Ethiopic version expresses here: *and they sought means to bring him in:* into the house where Jesus was: *and to lay him before him;* at his feet, in hope of moving his compassion, and to obtain a cure of him: of the nature of this disease, and of the sort which this man's seems to be, see the note on Mark ii. 3.

Ver. 19. *And when they could not find by what way, &c.*] As by the door, or in at a window of the house: *they might bring him in;* to Jesus, in the house: *because of the multitude:* which was about the door, and all the fore part of the house: *they went upon the housetop;* by a ladder, or pair of stairs, which usually were on the outside of houses; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 17. the houses of the Jews being flat-roofed: *and let him down through the tiling with his couch, into the midst before Jesus;* that is, they untiled the roof, or took away the tiles which were about the trap-door, or passage, into the inside of the house; and so making it wider, let down the man upon his couch, or bed, into the middle of the room and of the people, just before Jesus, where he was sitting; see the note on Mark ii. 4.

Ver. 20. *And when he saw their faith, &c.*] That is, Jesus, as the Syriac and Persic versions express it; when he saw the faith both of the paralytic man, and of the men that brought him, which was shewn in the pains they took, and trouble they were at, in getting him to him; *he said unto him.* The Vulgate Latin only reads, *he said;* but the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, still more fully express the sense, rendering it, *he said to the paralytic man;* and the Ethiopic version, *he said to the infirm man;* as follows: *man, thy sins are forgiven thee.* The other evangelists say, *he said son;* perhaps he used both words: however, all agree that he pronounced the forgiveness of sins, which were the cause of his disease; and which being removed, the effect must cease; so that he had healing both for soul and body; see the note on Matt. ix. 2.

Ver. 21. *And the Scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, &c.*] To think and say within themselves, and it may be to one another, in a private manner: *saying, who is this which speaketh blasphemies?* what vain boaster, and blaspheming creature is this, who assumes that to himself, which is the prerogative of God? *Who*

can forgive sins but God alone? against whom they are committed, whose law is transgressed, and his will disobeyed, and his justice injured and affronted. Certain it is, that none can forgive sins but God; not any of the angels in heaven, or men on earth; not holy good men, nor ministers of the Gospel; and if Christ had been a mere man, though ever so good a man, even a sinless one, or ever so great a prophet, he could not have forgiven sin: but he is truly and properly God, as his being a discerner of the thoughts of these men, and his healing the paralytic man in the manner he did, are sufficient proofs. The Scribes and Pharisees therefore, though they rightly ascribe forgiveness of sin to God alone, yet grievously sinned, in imputing blasphemy to Christ: they had wrong notions of Christ, concluding him to be but a mere man, against the light and evidence of his works and miracles; and also of his office as a Redeemer, who came to save his people from their sins, and seem to restrain the power of forgiving sin to God the father, whereas the son of God, being equal with him, had the same power, and that even on earth, to forgive sin; see the note on Mark ii. 7.

Ver. 22. *But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, &c.*] Being God omniscient; he answering said unto them, what reason ye in your hearts? 'This he said, not as being ignorant what their reasonings were, for it is before said he perceived their thoughts, but to expose the wickedness of them; in one exemplar of Beza's 'tis added, *evil things*, as in Matt. ix. 4. see the note there.

Ver. 23. *Whether is it easier to say, &c.*] Mark adds, *to the sick of the palsy*: to whom Christ had said that his sins were forgiven him, which had given offence to the Scribes and Pharisees, imagining that he had assumed too much to himself: wherefore he proposes the following case to them, which they thought was most easy for man, or more proper and peculiar to God to say, *thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, rise up and walk?* Neither of them could be said by a mere man, with effect, so as that sins would be really remitted on so saying; or that a man sick of a palsy, by such a word speaking, would be able to stand upon his feet and walk; but both of them were equally easy to him, that is truly God; and he that could say the one effectually, could also say the other: or in other words, he that could cure a man of a palsy with a word speaking, ought not to be charged with blasphemy, for taking upon him to forgive sin: our Lord meant, by putting this question, and acting upon it, to prove himself to be God, and to remove the imputation of blasphemy from him; see the notes on Matt. ix. 5. and Mark ii. 9.

Ver. 24. *But that ye may know, that the son of man, &c.*] Whom the Scribes and Pharisees took for a mere man, in which they were mistaken; for though he was really a man, and the son of man, yet he was God as well as man; he was God manifest in the flesh: *hath power upon earth to forgive sins*; even in the days of his flesh, whilst he was in his humble form on earth; for he did not cease to be God by becoming man, nor lose any branch of his power, not this of forgiving sin, by appearing in the form of a servant; and, that it might be manifest, he said unto the sick of the palsy: these are the words of the evangelist, signifying, that Christ turned himself from the Scribes and Pharisees to

the paralytic man, and thus addressed him: *I say unto thee, arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.*

Ver. 25. *And immediately he rose up before them, &c.*] As soon as ever these words were spoken by Christ, the man, before sick of the palsy, finding himself perfectly well, got off of his couch, and stood up on his feet before the Scribes and Pharisees, and all the people: *and took up that whereon he lay*: his couch, or bed: *and departed to his own house*: with it upon his back: *and went to his business*, as the Persic version renders it: *glorifying God*: both for the healing of his body, and for the pardon of his sins; each of which he knew none but God could do. This circumstance is only mentioned by Luke, and shews the sense the man had of the great favours bestowed upon him: he glorified God, by ascribing them to his goodness and power; by offering the sacrifice of praise, or giving thanks unto him for them; by publishing them among his neighbours, to the honour of his name; and by living a holy life and conversation, to his glory, under a grateful sense of his kindness: yea, he glorified Jesus Christ as God, who he knew must be God, by forgiving his sins, and curing his disease; he proclaimed his divine power, and ascribed greatness to him; he confessed him as the Messiah, and owned him as his Saviour, and became subject to him as his Lord.

Ver. 26. *And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, &c.*] Not the Pharisees, and doctors of the law, but the common people: *and were filled with fear*: of the Divine Being, whose presence and power they were sensible must be in this case: *saying, we have seen strange things to-day*; paradoxes, things wonderful, unthought-of, unexpected, and incredible by carnal reason, and what were never seen, nor known before; as that a man, who was so enfeebled by the palsy, that he was obliged to be carried on a bed by four men, yet, on a sudden, by a word speaking, rose up, and carried his bed, on his back, home.

Ver. 27. *And after these things he went forth, &c.*] After his discourse with the Scribes and Pharisees, and his healing of the man sick with the palsy, he went forth from the city of Capernaum, to the sea-side; not only for retirement and recreation, after the work of the day hitherto, but in order to meet with, and call one that was to be a disciple of his: *and saw a publican named Levi*; who is said to be the son of Alphaeus, Mark ii. 14. and so it is said to be in Beza's ancient copy here; and who was also called Matthew, see Matt. ix. 9. *sitting at the receipt of custom*; at the place where custom was received, and toll taken, near the sea-side, of such that went over. The Syriac and Persic versions read, *sitting among publicans*, of which business he himself was; and these might be his servants under him, or partners with him; see the note on Mark ii. 14. *and he said unto him, follow me*: of all the publicans that were there, he singled out Levi, or Matthew, and directed his discourse to him, and called him to be a follower of him: an instance of powerful, special, and distinguishing grace this; see the note on Matt. ix. 9.

Ver. 28. *And he left all, &c.*] His company, his business, and all the profits of it: *rose up*: directly; such power went along with the words of Christ, that he could not withstand it: *and followed him*; not only

in a literal, but in a spiritual sense, and became a disciple of his.

Ver. 29. *And Levi made him a great feast in his own house, &c.*] At Capernaum, which, very likely, was made some time after his call, though recorded here; for it is not reasonable to think there could be time enough that day to get ready so great a feast, as this is said to be. Levi, it should seem, was a rich man, and in gratitude to Christ for his special grace and favour bestowed on him, made this entertainment for him; and he seems to have had also another view in it, to bring him into the company of his fellow-publicans, hoping he might be useful to them, as he had been to him; for of this nature is true grace, to wish for, and desire the salvation of the souls of others, as well as a man's own: *and there was a great company of publicans, and of others*: אחרים, which word is sometimes used in Talmudic writings for Gentiles; so אשת אחרים, *the wife of others*, is interpreted the wife of the Cuthites, or Samaritans<sup>f</sup>: and thus the Jews explain the text in Deut. xxiv. 14. *thou shalt not oppress an hired servant, that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren*, on which they make this remark, פרט לאחרים, *this excepts others*; that, is, as the gloss interprets it, it excepts the nations of the world, or the Gentiles: they go on to expound the text, *or of thy strangers that are in thy land*. these are the proselytes of righteousness: *within thy gates*: these are they that eat things that are torn<sup>g</sup>: so that the *others* are distinguished from the Jews, and from both the proselytes of righteousness, and of the gate; and it is easy to observe, that publicans and Heathens are sometimes mentioned together: here it means sinners, as appears from Matt. ix. 10. Mark ii. 15. such the Gentiles were reckoned: *that sat down with them*; being invited by Matthew.

Ver. 30. *But their Scribes and Pharisees, &c.*] Not the Scribes of the publicans and sinners that sat down, but the Scribes of the people in general; the Scribes of the Jewish nation: all the eastern versions leave out the word *their*: *murmured against his disciples, saying*; or, *murmured, and said unto his disciples*, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it: that is, they either murmured at the publicans and sinners sitting down at meat; or *against him*, as the Ethiopic version reads: either against Matthew for inviting them; or rather against Christ for sitting down with them: and not caring to speak to him, address themselves to his disciples in these words, *why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?* The other evangelists represent these as saying, why does he, or your master, eat with such? doubtless, they included both Christ, and his disciples; though they chiefly designed him, and to bring an accusation against him, and fix a charge upon him, in order to render him odious to the people.

Ver. 31. *And Jesus answering, said unto them, &c.*] Knowing that they aimed at him; though, according to this evangelist, they only mentioned his disciples, however, he takes up the cause, and vindicates both himself and them, by observing to them the following proverb; *they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick*: suggesting hereby, that as such

who are in good health, who are free from all diseases, wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores, stand in no need of the advice and assistance of a physician, or surgeon, but such who have either distempers or sores on their bodies; so they, the Scribes and Pharisees, who, in their own opinion, were free from the disease of sin, original and actual, and touching the righteousness of the law, were blameless, stood not in any need of him, the physician, who came to cure the maladies of the souls, as well as of the bodies of men; but such persons, who not only are sick with sin, but sick of it, who are sensible of it, and desire healing: and therefore this was the reason of his conduct, why he conversed with sinners, and not with the Scribes and Pharisees; his business, as a physician, lying among the one, and not the other; see the notes on Matt. ix. 12. and Mark ii. 17.

Ver. 32. *I came not to call the righteous, &c.*] Such as the Scribes and Pharisees were in their own apprehension, and in the esteem of others, who trusted in themselves, that they were righteous, and submitted not to the righteousness of Christ: these Christ came not to call by his grace, and therefore did not associate himself with them: *but sinners to repentance*: such as the publicans, and others, with them, were; and therefore he was chiefly with such, and chose to be among them: these he not only called to repentance by the outward ministry of the word, but brought them to it; he having power to bestow the grace of repentance, as well as to call to the duty of it; see the notes on Matt. ix. 13. and Mark ii. 17.

Ver. 33. *And they say unto him, &c.*] The Scribes and Pharisees, or the disciples of John; see Matt. ix. 14. *why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers?* set times apart frequently for fasting and prayer. The Ethiopic version reads, *why do the disciples of John baptize frequently, fast, and make prayers?* in which the former clause is added; and as without any authority, so without judgment, since it must suppose that the Pharisees did so likewise, whereas they rejected the baptism of John; for it follows, *and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees*: who fasted often, at least twice in the week, and made frequent prayers in the synagogues, and corners of the streets, and in widows' houses. *But thine eat and drink?* instead of fasting and praying; see the note on Matt. ix. 14.

Ver. 34. *And he said unto them, &c.*] The disciples of John, or the Scribes and Pharisees: *can ye make the children of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?* signifying, that he was the bridegroom, and his disciples the children of the bride-chamber; and that as it is unreasonable to expect, and morally impossible, that persons, attending the festivals of a nuptial solemnity, should be engaged in severe fastings; so it was not to be thought, that whilst Christ was corporeally present with his disciples, that they should be prevailed upon to live such an austere and mortified life.

Ver. 35. *But the days will come, &c.*] And that in a very little time, as they did: *when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them*: as their master, John, was taken away from them, and now in prison, and

<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 52. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

<sup>g</sup> T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 111. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

therefore it was no wonder they mourned and fasted; signifying, that in a short time he, the bridegroom of his church and people, should be taken away by death: *and then they shall fast in those days*; or mourn, and be humbled, of which fasting was a sign, for the death of their Lord, and on account of the many afflictions and persecutions they should endure for his sake; see the note on Matt. ix. 15.

Ver. 36. *And he spake also a parable unto them, &c.]* The Scribes and Pharisees; illustrating what he had just now said: *no man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; by a piece of a new garment* meaning the new and upstart notions and traditions of the elders, which were so in comparison of the law of Moses; and by the *old*, the robe of their own righteousness, wrought out in obedience to the moral and ceremonial law: and Christ suggests, that to join these together, in order to patch up a garment of righteousness, to appear in before God, was equally as weak and ridiculous, as to put a piece of new and undressed cloth into a garment that was old, and wore threadbare. *If otherwise, then both the new maketh the rent*: that is, much worse than it was, as it is expressed both in Matthew and Mark; the old and new cloth being unsuitable, and not of equal strength to hold together: by this Christ intimates, that the Jews, by being directed to the observance of the traditions of the elders, were drawn off from a regard to the commandments of God; so that instead of having a better righteousness, they had one much the worse, a ragged, and a rent one. *And the piece that was taken out of the new, agreeth not with the old*; and so the statutes of men, and the ordinances of God, or the traditions of the elders, and the commands of God, are no more like one another, than the piece of a new and an old garment, and as unlike is obedience to the one, and to the other; see the notes on Matt. ix. 16, 17, and Mark ii. 21, 22. where this, and the following parable, are more largely explained.

Ver. 37. *And no man putteth new wine into old bottles, &c.]* To which the Scribes and Pharisees are here compared, into whose hearts the new wine of Gospel-grace was not put; or to whom was not made known the love of God comparable to new wine; nor the blessings of the new covenant of grace, now exhibited; nor the truths of the Gospel now more clearly and newly revealed. *Else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled*; they not being able to receive and bear these things, no, not the relation of them: these were hard sayings to them, of which they said, who can hear them? they could not hear them with patience, much less receive them in the love of them; but were at once filled with wrath and indignation, and rejected them. *And the bottles shall perish*; their condemnation shall be the greater.

Ver. 38. *But new wine must be put into new bottles, &c.]* Such as the disciples of Christ were, and sinners called to repentance are, who are renewed by the spirit and grace of God: and these are filled with spiritual joy and comfort, as with new wine, arising from discoveries of the love of God, a view of interest in the blessings of the covenant, and an application of Gospel-truths and promises. *And both are preserved*: both these renewed ones, who are preserved unto the

kingdom and glory of Christ; and the grace that is put into them, which is a well of living water, springing up to everlasting life; as well as the Gospel, and its blessings.

Ver. 39. *No man also having drunk old wine, &c.]* Wine, though not in the text, is rightly supplied by our translators, as it is by the Syriac and Persic versions: *straightway desireth new*; new wine: *for he saith, the old is better*; old wine is more grateful, more generous, and more reviving to the spirits, than new wine is. This is a proverbial expression, and which Luke only records; which may be applied to natural men, who having drunk the old wine of their carnal lusts and pleasures, do not desire the new wine of the Gospel, and of the grace of God, and of spiritual things, but prefer their old sins and lusts unto them: carnal lusts may be signified by old wine, both for the antiquity of them, being as old as men themselves, and therefore called the old man, and for the gratefulness of them to them; and who may be said to drink of them, as they do drink iniquity like water; which is expressive of their great desire and thirst after it, and delight in it: now whilst they are such, they can't desire the new wine of the Gospel, which is insipid and ungrateful to them; nor the grace of God, to which their carnal minds are enmity; nor any thing that is evangelical and spiritual, at least, not straight-way, or immediately; not until they are regenerated by the spirit of God, and their taste is changed, but will prefer their old lusts and former course of life unto them: or it may be accommodated to legalists, and men of a *pharisaical* spirit, to whom spiritual and evangelical things are very disagreeable: Scribes and Pharisees, who have drank of the old wine of the law, and the traditions of the elders, do not desire the new wine of the Gospel, but prefer the former to it: the ceremonial law may be expressed by old wine, being originally instituted of God, and acceptable to him; and one part of which lay in libations of wine, and was of long standing, but now waxen old, and ready to vanish away; and likewise the traditions of the elders, which were highly pleasing to the Pharisees, and which pretended to great antiquity: and of these they might be said to drink, being inured to them from their youth, and therefore could not like the new dispensation of the Gospel, neither its doctrines, nor its ordinances; but preferred their old laws and traditions to them: or rather this proverb, as used by Christ here, may be considered as intimating the reason why the disciples did not give into the practices of the Pharisees, because they had drank of the old wine of the Gospel; which, as upon some account it may be called new, because of the new dispensation, fresh discovery and clearer revelation of it; in other respects it may be said to be old, being what was prepared and ordained before the world began; and what Adam drank of, in the first hint and promise of the Messiah; and after him Noah, the preacher of righteousness; and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom the Gospel was preached before; and even Moses, who wrote and testified of Christ, and David, and Solomon, and Isaiah, and all the prophets of the former dispensation: and now the disciples having more largely drank of it, under the ministry of Christ, could not easily desire

the new wine of the fastings and prayers of the Pharisees, and John's disciples; for the old wine of the Gospel was much better in their esteem, more grateful to the taste, more refreshing to their spirits, and more salutary and healthful, being the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ. Old wine, with the Jews<sup>a</sup>, was wine of three years old, and was always by them preferred to new: so they descant on those words in Deut. xv. 16. *because he is well with thee*<sup>b</sup>, (*i. e.* the servant,) "with thee in food, with thee in drink; for thou shalt not eat bread of fine flour, and he eat bread of bran; or thou drink, *יין יין*, *old wine*, and he drink, *יין חדש*, *new wine*." And sometimes they use this distinction of old and new wine proverbially and parabolically, as here<sup>c</sup>. "Rabbi Jose bar

"Juda, a man of a village in Babylon, used to say, 'he that learns of young men, to what is he like?' to him that eateth unripe grapes, and drinks wine out of the fat: but he that learns of old men, to what is he like? to him that eats ripe grapes, and drinks, *יין יין*, *old wine*:" signifying, that the knowledge of old men is more solid, and mature, and unmixed, and free from dregs of ignorance, than that of young men: though it follows, that "Rabbi had used to say, don't look upon the tankard, but on what is in it; for sometimes there is a new tankard full of old wine, and an old one in which there is not so much as new in it:" signifying, that sometimes young men are full of wisdom and knowledge, when old men are entirely devoid of them.

## C H A P. VI.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass on the second sabbath-day after the first, &c.*] Or *second first sabbath*, concerning which interpreters are greatly divided. Some think, that it was either the seventh day of the feast of unleavened bread, or the eighth day of the feast of tabernacles. Others, that it was the sabbath which fell that year on the day of Pentecost; and that as there were three grand festivals among the Jews, the feasts of passover, Pentecost, and tabernacles; so when the sabbath-day fell on the feast of the passover, it was called the first prime sabbath, when on the feast of Pentecost, it was called the second prime sabbath, and when on the feast of tabernacles, the third prime sabbath. Others have been of opinion, that as the Jews had two beginnings of their year, the one on civil accounts in Tisri, the other on ecclesiastical accounts in Nisan; so the first sabbath in Tisri was called the first first sabbath, and that in Nisan, which was this, the second first sabbath: but what seems most likely is, that this sabbath was, as it may be rendered, the *first sabbath after the second*; that is, the first sabbath after the second day of the passover, when the sheaf of the first-fruits was offered, and harvest might be begun; which suits well with ears of corn being ripe at this time, which the disciples rubbed. So the Jews reckoned the seven weeks from thence to Pentecost by sabbaths; the first after the second day they called the second first, or the first after the second day; the second they called the second second; and the third was named the second third; and so on, the second fourth, the second fifth, the second sixth, and second seventh, which brought on Pentecost, when the harvest was ended. So in the Jewish liturgies, there are collects for the first sabbath after the passover, and for the second sabbath after the passover, and so on to the sabbath before Pentecost. The eastern versions, Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic, not knowing what should be meant by it, have only rendered it, *on the sabbath-day*, as in Matt. xii. 1. see the note there. *That he went through the corn-fields*; that is, Jesus, as the Syriac, Persic, and

Ethiopic versions: *and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands*: after they had plucked them they rubbed them in their hands to get clean off the husk or beard, that were on them, and then ate the grains. And as plucking of the ears of corn was forbidden on a sabbath-day, see the note on Matt. xii. 2. so was rubbing them; though if they were rubbed before, the chaff might be blown off from them in the hand, and eat on the sabbath-day: the rule is this; "he that rubs ears of corn on the evening of the sabbath, (*i. e.* on the sixth day,) may blow them from hand to hand on the morrow, and eat." But the disciples both plucked them, and rubbed them, and blew away the chaff from them on the sabbath-day, and therefore were complained of by the Pharisees.

Ver. 2. *And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, &c.*] Unto the disciples. The Evangelists Matthew and Mark say, that they said this to Jesus: no doubt but they said it to both, first to one, and then to the other; probably last of all to Christ, who returned an answer to it: *why do ye that which is not lawful on the sabbath-day?* as to pluck ears of corn, and rub them, and eat them; see the note on Matt. xii. 2.

Ver. 3, 4. *And Jesus answering them, said, &c.*] For they brought the charge against the disciples to him, being desirous to know what he would say, and that they might have something to accuse him of; and who, at once, took up the cause of his disciples, and vindicated them, by observing what David did, when he, and his men were an hungry; how that he went into the tabernacle, and took the shew-bread, and ate of it, and gave it to his men, who also ate of it; which, according to the law, was only allowed to priests; and by taking notice of another instance, which this evangelist does not relate; namely, how on the sabbath-days the priests, by doing various servile works, profaned the sabbath-day, and yet were not charged with any blame; see the notes on Matt. xii. 3, 4, 5.

Ver. 5. *And he said unto them, &c.*] He adds this at the close of the instances he gave, at the end of his

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 51. 1. & Gloss. in ib. & Bava Bathra, fol. 98. 1. & Maimon. Hilch. Mecira, c. 17. sect. 6.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 22. 1.

<sup>k</sup> Pirke Ahot, c. 4. sect. 20.

<sup>l</sup> T. Bab. Betza, fol. 12. 2. & 13. 2. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat, c. 21. sect. 14. 17.

vindication of his disciples, and discourse with the Pharisees, as a full answer to their cavils; *that the son of man is Lord also of the sabbath*; and may do what he will, and suffer his disciples to do whatever he pleases on that day; see the note on Matt. xii. 8.

Ver. 6. *And it came to pass also on another sabbath, &c.*] Whether the following sabbath, or some time after, is not certain, *that he entered into the synagogue.* The Arabic version reads, *into their synagogue*, as in Matt. xii. 9. the synagogue of the Jews; in what place, whether at Capernaum, or some other city of Galilee, is not so clear: *and taught*; explained the Scriptures to the people, and instructed them in the doctrines of the Gospel: *and there was a man whose right hand was withered*; who was in the synagogue, and one of his hearers; see the note on Matt. xii. 10.

Ver. 7. *And the Scribes and Pharisees watched him, &c.*] See the note on Mark iii. 2. *whether he would heal on the sabbath-day*: there being such an object before him: *that they might find an accusation against him*; as they had before against his disciples.

Ver. 8. *But he knew their thoughts, &c.*] Being the omniscient God; though they had said nothing of their intentions, he knew what they designed, should he heal the man with his withered hand, as they expected he would: *and said to the man which had the withered hand, rise up, and stand forth in the midst.* The Syriac and Persic versions add, *of the synagogue*, and which is the true sense; see the note on Mark iii. 3. *and he arose and stood forth*; he rose up from his seat, and stood up in the midst of the synagogue, and of the people, that he might be seen of all.

Ver. 9. *Then said Jesus unto them, &c.*] The Scribes and Pharisees, who were watching him, and whose thoughts, and the reasonings of their minds, purposes, and intentions, he full well knew: *I will ask you one thing*; or question, as they had asked him one before; see Matt. xii. 10. *is it lawful on the sabbath-days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?* see the note on Mark iii. 4. to which may be added, that to save life on the sabbath-day was agreeable to their own canons: there were many things which they allowed might be done on the sabbath-day, when life was in danger, which otherwise were not lawful; see the note on Matt. xii. 8.

Ver. 10. *And looking round about upon them all, &c.*] The Scribes and Pharisees, and the rest of the people in the synagogue; see the note on Mark iii. 5. *he said to the man*; who had the withered hand, *stretch forth thy hand, and he did so*; he stretched it out, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it, which he was not able to do before: *and his hand was restored well as the other*; the phrase, *well as the other*, is left out in one copy, and in the Vulgate Latin version; and so is the word *well* in the Syriac and Arabic versions; and the word *immediately* is added in the Ethiopic version. And certain it is, that his withered hand was restored sound and well as the other, directly.

Ver. 11. *And they were filled with madness, &c.*] Both at the cure, and because they could not answer

him; nor properly fix a charge upon him, or accuse him before the people, without bringing their resentments on them: *and communed one with another what they might do with Jesus*: this they did after they came out of the synagogue, and when with the Herodians, as in Mark iii. 6. see the note there.

Ver. 12. *And it came to pass in those days, &c.*] When Christ was teaching by the lake of Gennesareth, or in one or other of the cities of Galilee near that place: *that he went out*; of the synagogue and city where he had been: *into a mountain to pray*; for the sake of solitude, and which lay near the sea of Tiberias; see the note on Matt. xiv. 23. *and continued all night in prayer to God*; or *with God*, as the Ethiopic version renders it; or *in the prayer of God*, as the phrase may be literally rendered; not in a prayer of God's making; though the Jews<sup>m</sup> sometimes speak of the prayer of God, and give us a form of it: but either this respects the object of his prayer; it was made to God, as our translation suggests; or the nature, matter, and manner of it; it was a divine prayer, it regarded divine things, and was put up in a very fervent manner, and with great vehemence; so the coals of love or jealousy are said to be *coals of fire, which hath* *של הברת יי*, *the flame of Jehovah*; that, is, as we render it, *a most vehement flame*, Cant. viii. 6. In like manner, *prayer of God* is a most vehement prayer; strong cries sent up to God with great eagerness and importunity, fervency, and devotion; and such was Christ's prayer, and in which he continued all night: unless by the prayer of God should be meant, as is thought by many, an house of prayer to God, in which Christ lodged all night, and spent it in prayer to God in it. Certain it is, the Jews had their *proseucha*, or prayer-houses. Philo the Jew<sup>n</sup> often speaks of them, and so does Josephus<sup>o</sup>; and there seems to be mention made of them in the Talmudic writings: when R. Jochanan ben Zaccai came to Vespasian, in his camp before Jerusalem, Vespasian asked him, what he should give him? he replied<sup>p</sup>, "I desire nothing of thee but this *Jabneh*, (a famous university,) that I may teach in it the disciples, and fix in it תפילה, *an oratory*, or *prayer-house*, and do in it all the commandments said in the law." And in another place<sup>q</sup>, "R. Judah says, that Samuel said it is free for a man to make water within four cubits, של תפילה; which I should choose to render, *of the proseucha*, or *prayer-house*:" though the Gemarists afterwards, and so the gloss seem to explain it of the time after prayer, in which a man should wait before he evacuates, even as long as he might go the length of four cubits. Juvenal<sup>r</sup> has reference to one of these oratories, when he says, *in qua te quæro proseucha?* and in one of these, 'tis very likely, Christ was in prayer all night long; for by the sea-side, and by the side of rivers, these oratories were used to be; see Acts xvi. 13, 16.

Ver. 13. *And when it was day, &c.*] Or morning; having spent the whole night in prayer to God, no doubt for his disciples, whom he was about to send forth as his apostles, to preach his Gospel, and work

<sup>m</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 7. 1. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 56, fol. 50. 2.

<sup>n</sup> De Vita Mosii, l. 3. p. 645. in Flaccum, p. 971, 972, 982. leg. ad Cajum, p. 1011, 1012, 1013, 1014, 1016, 1040, 1043.

<sup>o</sup> In Vita.

<sup>p</sup> Abot R. Nathan, c. 4. fol. 9. 4.

<sup>q</sup> T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 37. 2.

<sup>r</sup> Satyr. s. l. 295.

miracles, and for their success therein: *he called unto him his disciples*: the whole company of them, as in ver. 17. all that were his followers, and professed to believe in him, or as many as he pleased; see Mark iii. 13. *And of them he chose twelve*; and ordained them, and sent them out to preach, heal sicknesses, and cast out devils: *whom he also named apostles*; or *messengers*, from their being sent by him on such important business; and their names are as follow.

Ver. 15. *Simon, whom he also named Peter, &c.*] Which signifies a rock, or stone, as Cephas also does, see John i. 42. from his constancy, steadfastness, and solidity: *and Andrew his brother*; who was called at the same time with him, and were brethren, both in nature and grace: *James and John*: the two sons of Zebedee, who were called next: *Philip and Bartholomew*; the latter of these is by some thought to be Nathanael.

Ver. 15. *Matthew and Thomas, &c.*] The first of these was a publican, and who also was called Levi; and the latter had besides the name of Didymus; and was he that was so unbelieving of Christ's resurrection: *James the son of Alphaeus*; sometimes called James the less, and the brother of our Lord: *and Simon called Zelotes*; or the Canaanite; see the note on Matt. x. 4.

Ver. 16. *And Judas the brother of James, &c.*] Of that James, that was the son of Alphaeus; though the Syriac and Arabic versions call him *the son of James*, very wrongly: this Judas was also called Thaddæus and Lebbaeus, and is the writer of the epistle that bears his name: *and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor*; both his surname and his character are mentioned, to distinguish him from the other Judas: it is easy to observe, that these twelve are mentioned by pairs, or couples, and so they were sent out, two by two; see Mark vi. 7. as were also the seventy disciples afterwards; see Luke x. 1. There seems to be an allusion to the pairs and couples of the Jewish fathers and doctors, who in their succession are thus paired: Jose ben Joezer, and Joseph ben Jochanan; Joshua ben Perachia, and Nathan the Arbelite; Simeon ben Shetach, and Judah ben Tabai; Shemaia and Abtalion; the two sons of Bethira, whose names were Judah and Joshua; Hillel and Shammai: all before Christ's time.

Ver. 17. *And he came down with them, &c.*] With the twelve apostles, from the top of the mountain, where he had been praying all night, and where he had been that morning, ordaining, and giving instructions to the twelve he had chosen: *and stood in the plain*; in a lower part of the mountain, in a plain place on it; which was large, and capable of holding a great number of people; for it was still upon the mount, that Christ taught his disciples, and said many of the things hereafter mentioned in this chapter; see Matt. v. 1. *And the company of his disciples*; not only the twelve, but the large number out of which he had chosen twelve; and a great multitude of people; who were hearers of him, and attendants on him, and who had a great esteem for him, though they were not of all the number of his disciples; who came out of all

Judea, and Jerusalem, and from the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon: drawn from these several parts by the fame of him, some for one thing, and some another; some of which came to hear him: to hear him preach, and that they might know what manner of doctrine he taught: and others of them, to be healed of their diseases; their bodily diseases, and some came perhaps for both.

Ver. 18. *And they that were vexed with unclean spirits, &c.*] Were possessed with devils, and sadly tormented and afflicted by them: *and they were healed*: both such that had bodily diseases, and were under diabolical possessions.

Ver. 19. *And the whole multitude sought to touch him, &c.*] That is, the multitude of those that were sick and possessed; for they were persuaded, and they found it true by experience, that if they could but touch any part of his body, or his garments, they should be cured of their diseases: *for there went virtue out of him*; in great abundance, as water from a fountain; without his speaking a word, or using any gesture, such as laying his hands on them: *and they were healed*; in this secret and private way, of whatsoever disease they were afflicted with.

Ver. 20. *And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, &c.*] Either the whole company of them, or rather the twelve apostles, whom he saw coming to him, and fixing his eyes on them, he sat, *and said*; what follows, with many other things recorded by Matthew: *blessed be ye poor*; not only in the things of this world, having left all for Christ, but poor in spirit, as in Matt. v. 3. see the note there: *for yours is the kingdom of God*; or *heaven*, so in Matt. v. 3.

Ver. 21. *Blessed are ye that hunger now, &c.*] Not only suffer hunger and thirst in a literal sense, in this present life, but who have hunger and thirst in a spiritual sense, after righteousness and eternal life, as in Matt. v. 6. where it is also said as here: *for ye shall be filled*; with righteousness and life; see the note there: *blessed are ye that weep now*; under afflictions and pressures of life, and mourn for sin, their own, and others: *for ye shall laugh*; be filled with spiritual joy and pleasure, and be comforted with the consolations of the spirit; see the note on Matt. v. 4.

Ver. 22. *Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, &c.*] For the sake of Christ, and his Gospel: *and when they shall separate you*; from their company; either from civil conversation with them, as if they were Gentiles and uncircumcised persons; or from their religious assemblies, and so may have respect to that sort of excommunication in use among the Jews, called נרי, or *separation*: by which persons were not only excluded from the congregation, but from all civil society and commerce: such a person might not sit nearer to another than four cubits, and this continued for thirty days; and if not discharged then, he continued thirty more: *and shall reproach you*; as heretics, apostates, and enemies to the law of Moses, as the Jews did reproach the Christians; *and cast out your name as evil*; or *as of evil men*, as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it: this may have respect to the

\* Pirke Abot, c. 1.

\* Vid. Maimon. Talmud Tora, c. 7, sect. 4, 5, 6.

greater sorts of excommunication used among them, called *Shammatha* and *Cherem*, by which a person was accused, and devoted to destruction; so that our Lord's meaning is, that they should be esteemed and treated as the worst of men, and stigmatized in the vilest manner they were capable of: *for the son of man's sake*; not for any immorality committed by them, but only for professing and preaching that the Messiah was come in the flesh, and that Jesus of Nazareth was he; and that he who was the son of man, according to his human nature, was the son of God according to his divine nature.

Ver. 23. *Rejoice ye in that day, &c.*] When they should be hated, discarded, reproached, and anathematized: *and leap for joy*; as if the greatest honour and happiness imaginable had been conferred on them; and as persons do, when in the greatest rapture: *for behold, your reward is great in heaven, for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets*; see the note on Matt. v. 12.

Ver. 24. *But woe unto you that are rich, &c.*] Not in worldly riches and substance, for some of these have been, and are happy persons in a spiritual sense; and at most, it can only mean such, who trust in their riches, and place their happiness in them; but it chiefly regards such, as are rich in their own opinion, and stand in need of nothing; who place their confidence in their own righteousness, and do not apply to Christ, in whom alone are durable riches and righteousness: *for ye have received your consolation*; which they take from their own works, and a very unstable and short-lived one it is; for while they are crying Peace, Peace, to themselves, from their own services, sudden destruction comes upon them, and all their comforts vanish away: for there is no true solid comfort but in Christ, and in his righteousness; that administers consolation now, and lays a foundation for everlasting comfort hereafter.

Ver. 25. *Woe unto you that are full, &c.*] Not so much with the plenty and affluence of the things of this life, as of themselves, and their own righteousness; and so with conceit, vanity, and pride, and have no appetite for spiritual things, nor do they hunger and thirst after Christ, and the grace that is in him: *for ye shall hunger*; not that they shall truly and spiritually desire an interest in Christ, and his righteousness, or heaven and eternal life hereafter; but they shall be in starving and famishing circumstances; and whilst the saints are feeding upon the joys and glories of the other world, compared to a banquet, they shall be without, and have no share in these things; see Isa. lxx. 13, 14. *Woe unto you that laugh now*; at sin, rejoice in iniquity, make a mock at it, instead of mourning for it; or that glory in themselves, and in their righteousness, and rejoice in their boastings: *for ye shall mourn and weep*; shall be cast into outer darkness, where are weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth; and for all the fire they have kindled, and sparks they have encompassed themselves with, and danced in and about, this they shall have at the hand of God, they shall lie down in sorrow, and ever continue in it.

Ver. 26. *Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! &c.*] The word *all*, is left out in the Vulgate

Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and is wanting in many copies, though it is in the Alexandrian copy; and the meaning is, it looks ill in persons, when the men of the world, wicked men, all of them, or the greater part of them, applaud and commend them; for this can never be, if they are truly religious persons, and are faithful to their principles, and upright in their practices; and do not connive at, or comply with the errors and evil ways of wicked men; for it is no bad sign, to have the good word of good men, and therefore these must be excepted, and the passage must be limited to bad men; *for so did their fathers to the false prophets*; they spoke well of them, and heaped favours, riches, and honours upon them, that they might prophesy unto them things; see 1 Kings xxii. 6, 12, 27. Isa. xxx. 10. smooth.

Ver. 27. *But I say unto you which hear, &c.*] The Ethiopic version adds *me*, and the generality of interpreters understand the passage of the hearers of Christ, as distinct from the disciples, or together with them, and of the better sort of them; and of such as had ears to hear, and who heard with a desire of understanding, and of putting into practice what they heard; but I rather think it regards the hearers of the Scribes and Pharisees, then present, who had heard and received the traditions of the elders, to which the following rules of Christ are opposed; and to each of which, with others in Matthew, these words are prefixed; *ye have heard that it was said by them of old time—but I say unto you, &c.* Matt. v. 21. 27, 33, 38, 43. with which compare this phrase, and the sense will appear to be this; to you that hear day by day, the traditions of the elders urged upon you, and the false glosses the Scribes and Pharisees put upon the word of God; in opposition to them, I say to you what follows: *love your enemies*; whereas you have heard them say, hate your enemies, keep enmity in your hearts to them, and revenge yourselves on them: *do good to them that hate you*; whereas you have heard it said, that you should only do good to your friends, and should keep anger in your bosoms to such who hate you, and do you an injury; see the notes on Matt. v. 43, 44.

Ver. 28. *Bless them that curse you, &c.*] In common discourse, or anathematize you in their synagogues: *and pray for them which despitefully use you*: so Christ himself did; see the note on Matt. v. 44.

Ver. 29. *And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, &c.*] The right cheek: *offer also the other*; the left cheek, by turning it to him, that he may smite that likewise, if he thinks fit: by which proverbial expression, Christ teaches patience in bearing injuries and affronts, and not to seek private revenge; but rather suffer more, than indulge such a temper; and for the same purpose is what follows urged: *and him that taketh away thy cloak, forbid not to take thy coat also*: the phrase is inverted in Matthew; see the notes on Matt. v. 39, 40.

Ver. 30. *And give to every man that asketh, &c.*] See the note on Matt. v. 42. *And of him that taketh away thy goods*; not by force, but by consent, having either lent them, or sold them to him: for if they were taken away by force, the person so taking them



was to be deemed a thief and a robber, and to be treated as such; but one that takes them by agreement, and is not able to make a return of them, or to give a valuable consideration for them, of such an one *ask them not again*: don't exact or demand them, but give him a release, as the law requires, in Deut. xv. 2. which seems to be respected here; and where the same word is used by the Septuagint, as here.

Ver. 31. *And as ye would that men should do to you, &c.*] In matters of justice and beneficence, were they in your case, and you in theirs; *do ye also to them likewise*: a golden rule this, agreeably to the light of nature, and divine revelation, and is the sum and substance of the law and prophets; see the note on Matt. vii. 12.

Ver. 32. *For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? &c.*] Or, *what grace have ye?* this is no fruit, nor evidence of grace, nor any exercise of the true grace of love; nor is it any favour conferred upoh the object loved, which deserves the respect shewn, nor can any reward be expected for such treatment: and thus it is expressed in Matthew, *what reward have ye?* and the Arabic version renders it so here: *for sinners also love those who love them*: men that are destitute of the grace of God, profligate sinners, even the worst of them, such as publicans, do this; see the note on Matt. v. 46.

Ver. 33. *And if ye do good to them which do good to you, &c.*] As one good turn deserves another: *what thank have ye?* what grace or goodness is there in such an action? what glory or merit is there in it? *for sinners also do even the same*; wherefore no man should conclude himself a righteous man, or better than sinners, on such an account: this is to be found among the worst of men, and is natural to them, unless they are brutes indeed, to be kind to such as are kind to them. And yet, this was the whole of the doctrine of the Jews about doing good to men: for so they say, "an Israelite is obliged to do good to an Israelite his companion, and to lend without usury: this is kindness and goodness, and a greater good it is than a gift; for many men are ashamed to take a gift, and are not ashamed to take a loan: but not so an Israelite to a Gentile; for he is not bound to do good, or shew kindness to him, or to lend him his money freely; for many of them hate the Israelites; but it must be owned, that if a Gentile does a kindness, or good, to an Israelite; the Israelite is also bound to shew kindness to him, and do him good." In direct opposition to such narrow sentiments does our Lord deliver himself in this, and the following verses.

Ver. 34. *And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, &c.*] The same again, as from their brethren the Jews; or usury, as from the Gentiles: *what thank have ye?* and yet they looked upon this, in the first instance of it, as a very great kindness, and act of goodness, as appears from the above citation: *for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again; or what is equal*, and answerable to what they have lent them; that is, the same, or what is equivalent to it.

Ver. 35. *But love ye your enemies, &c.*] As before urged in ver. 27. *and do good and lend*; not to your friends only, but to your enemies; *hoping for nothing again*; either principal or interest, despairing of seeing either; lending to such persons, from whom, in all appearance, it is never to be expected again. The Persic version renders it, *that ye may not cause any to despair*: and the Syriac version, *that ye may not cut off, or cause to cease the hope of men*; and the Arabic version, *that ye do not deceive the hope of any*; that is, by sending such away, without lending to them, who come big with expectations of succeeding: *and your reward shall be great*: God will bless you in your worldly substance here, and will not forget your beneficence hereafter: *and ye shall be the children of the Highest*: that is of God; one of whose names is *אֱלֹהֵי הַקָּדוֹם*, the Most High; see Psal. lxxxii. 6. the meaning is, that such who from principles of grace, and with right views, do such acts of kindness and beneficence to their fellow creatures and Christians, shall be made manifest, and declared to be the children of God; since they will appear to be born of him, and made partakers of the divine nature, and bear a resemblance to him, by their imitating him: *for he is kind to the unthankful, and to the evil*; by causing his sun to rise, and his rain to fall on them, as on the righteous and the good; for as Jews<sup>1</sup> observe, "there is no difference with him, whether on the right hand or the left; for, he is gracious, and does good, even to the ungodly." And elsewhere they say<sup>2</sup>; that "he does good, and feeds the righteous and the ungodly."

Ver. 36. *Be ye therefore merciful, &c.*] Tender-hearted, kind, beneficent to all men, friends and foes: *as your father also is merciful*; that is, your father which is in heaven; who is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works: nothing is more common in Zohar<sup>3</sup>, and the Talmud<sup>4</sup>, than to express the Divine Being by no other name, than the *Merciful*; as, *רַחֲמָנָא אֱמֵר*, the *Merciful* said so, and so; that is, God: and so the Arabians generally begin their books and chapters with these words, *in the name of God, exceeding merciful, or the merciful commiserator*: a saying much like to this in the text, is the Targum of Jonathan, on Lev. xxii. 28. "O my people, the children of Israel, as your father, *רַחֲמָנָא*, is merciful in heaven, so be ye merciful on earth."

Ver. 37. *Judge not, and ye shall not be judged, &c.*] See the note on Matt. vii. 1. *Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned*; censure not men's persons, and judge not their state, or adjudge them to condemnation, for every offence in practice, or because they differ in principle, lest you should be treated in like manner by others; and especially, lest you should fall under the righteous censure, judgment, and condemnation of God: *forgive*; offences and trespasses committed against you, bear with, and pass by injuries and affronts: *and ye shall be forgiven*; of God; see the note on Matt. vi. 14.

Ver. 38. *Give, and it shall be given unto you, &c.*] Give liberally of your worldly substance to indigent persons, as you have an opportunity, according to

<sup>1</sup> Kinchi in Psal. xv. apud Huls. Theolog. Jud. par. 1. p. 480.

<sup>2</sup> R. Abraham ben Dior in Sopher Jetzira, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 69. 2, 3.

<sup>1</sup> Zohar in Lev. fol. 2. 2. & 9. 4. & 20. 1. & 29. 1.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Moed Katou, fol. 15. 2.

your ability, and as cases require: and it shall be returned again to great advantage, with great recompense, either in temporals or spirituals, or both: *good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom.* The allusion is to dry measure among the Jews, for to liquids, the terms used will not agree; and which, though right and full, which is here called good measure, they thrust and pressed to make it hold more; and shook it also for the same purpose, and then heaped it up as much as they could, till it fell over: of all these methods used in measuring, we have instances in their writings, which may serve to illustrate this passage: it is said of one, that "he measured, בְּמִדָּה כְּתוּשָׁה, *with measure pressed down*; and therefore they measured to him, with measure pressed down." Some of their measures they heaped, and some they did not: they say<sup>b</sup>, "all the measures which were in the sanctuary, בְּנִדְוֵשֵׁת, *were heaped*, except the high-priest's, and "his heap was contained in it." And elsewhere they observe<sup>c</sup>, that "there were two decimaries (or tithing vessels) in the sanctuary, one was גְּרִיטָה, *heaped*, and the other was מְרוּקָה, *stricken*: with that which was heaped they measured all the fine flour for the meat-offerings, and with the stricken, that which was for the cakes of the high-priest." With respect to this distinction of measures, they say 'tis a tradition of the Rabbins<sup>d</sup>, "that they don't strike in the place where they heap, nor heap in the place where they strike." Between these two measures there was another, which was full measure and just, and right, without heaping or striking<sup>e</sup>, "R. Papa inquired, whether the handful (of sweet incense the high-priest took on the day of atonement) which is spoken of Lev. xvi. 12. was of *stricken*, or *heaped* measure; R. Abba said to R. Ase, come, hear, the handful spoken of, is neither of *stricken* nor *heaped* measure, אֵלֵּי טַפְפוּת, *but of equal measure*;" sufficiently full, and no more. Dr. Lightfoot reads it, מְצוּפוּת, *flowing over*; by what authority I cannot say; though the gloss says, the word signifies, "flowing over, by reason of its height." But flowing or running over measure, was the same with that which was heaped, as appears from the following instance<sup>f</sup>: "all those that רִכְשֵׁי פִּיעֵץ, *in abundance*, בְּמִדָּה גְּדוּלָה, *cause to abound*, or *run over with the great measure*, it is lawful for them to sell that, of which it is doubted whether it has been tithed or no; and these are they, that *cause to run over*, or *heap with the great measure*, as corn-factors and fruiterers." Who buy corn and fruits to sell again, and which they buy by the large measure, and fill it up, add unto it, and heap it up; and so get more than what is properly due unto them, as the commentators observe<sup>g</sup>: would you know the quantity of the heap, or that which ran over, or the difference between even measure, and that which was heaped, learn it from hence: in 1 Kings vii. 26. 'tis said, the molten sea held two thousand baths, and in 2 Chron. iv. 5. three thousand baths; which difficulty the Jewish writers solve this

way, by observing, that the former text is to be understood of liquid measure, and the latter of dry measure, which was heaped: hence says R. Abai, we learn that, בְּדִשָׁה תִלְתָּהּ דֵּי, *the heap is the third part of the measure*<sup>h</sup>: now to this superabundant measure, Christ here refers; and signifies, that a large compensation should be made to such, who give liberally and generously to needy persons; that as they abounded in their acts of beneficence, so an overflowing plenty of good things should be returned to them: and when he says, that this should be *given into their bosom*, he alludes to the long and large garments the Jews wore, into which they were capable of receiving large laptulls of good things: the words may be read impersonally, *shall be given into your bosom*; or if personally, they may be understood of God, angels, and men, in different senses: the phrase *shaken together*, is not in the Syriac and Persic versions: *for with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again*; a common proverb with the Jews; see the note on Matt. vii. 2.

Ver. 39. *And he spake a parable unto them, &c.* The Vulgate Latin reads, *he spake also a parable unto them*; besides what he said; and the Arabic version renders it, *another similitude*, parable, or proverb, distinct from the comparisons, allusions, and proverbial expressions in the preceding verses. Though it should be observed, that these words were not spoken at the same time, nor on the mount, as the foregoing were; but this, and what follow, are a collection of various expressions of Christ at different times, some delivered on the mount, and others elsewhere; unless it should be rather thought, that these proverbs and sentences were repeated at different places and times, which is not improbable: *can the blind lead the blind?* they may do so, as the blind Scribes and Pharisees led the blind people of the Jews, which is what our Lord intends; but if they do, as they did, *shall they not both fall into the ditch?* yes, verily, what else can be expected? see the note on Matt. xv. 14.

Ver. 40. *The disciple is not above his master, &c.* Or *more excellent*, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render it; that is, in learning and knowledge; if the master is ignorant, the scholar will be so too; and thus it is with teachers, and their people under their care; if the leaders are blind and ignorant, those under their instructions will remain so likewise. These words are an illustration of the preceding parable, and are used to another purpose here than in Matt. x. 24. see the note there: *but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.* The Vulgate Latin reads it, *every one shall be perfect if he is as his master*; that is, if his master is a man of general learning, and a complete scholar, if he is like him, he will be so too: the Persic version renders it, *every disciple that desires perfection shall be as his master*: whoever is ambitious of being a thorough scholar, and is diligent and industrious, by all ways and means, to obtain such a character, shall be even as good an one as his master, under whom he

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 107. 2. T. Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 13. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Misan. Menachot, c. 9. sect. 5.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 97. 1, 2.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 89. 1.

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 46. 1.

<sup>f</sup> Misan. Demai, c. 2. sect. 4.

<sup>g</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>h</sup> T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 14. 2. Vid Targum, Jarchi, Kimchi, & R. Levi ben Gershom, in 1 Kings vii. 26. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 11. fol. 204. 3.

learns, and better he can't well expect to be; and this is sufficient; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *is it not enough that every one be as his master?* agreeably to Matt. x. 25. see the note there. Maimonides<sup>1</sup> has an expression much like this: "he that learns, shall not be greater than he of whom he learns, but shall be, כְּמִוְנוֹ, as he." Christ, in this 1st clause, seems to design his own disciples, who, with a perfect inknowledge, which is not to be expected in this state, unless in a comparative sense, will be like himself.

Ver. 41. *And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, &c.*] A lesser sin in comparison of others; for all sins are not alike, as the Stoics asserted: and though none are to be countenanced and indulged, yet some are not so severely to be animadverted upon as others, the nature, occasions, circumstances, and aggravations considered; for no man is perfect, or wholly free from sin; nor are the words preceding to be understood of such a perfection; for which reason perhaps these words, with what follow, are mentioned: *but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?* meaning a greater sin, such are guilty of, who are inquisitive searchers into the faults of others, and severe animadvertisers on them; and yet are blind to their own iniquities, and take no notice of them. These proverbial expressions were delivered by Christ on the mount, and are the same with those in Matt. vii. 3, 4, 5. see the notes there.

Ver. 42. *Either how canst thou say to thy brother, &c.*] Guilty of the lesser sin; *brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye;* that is, suffer me to reprove thee for thy sin: the word *brother* is omitted in the Cambridge copy of Beza's, and in the Persic version; nor is it in Matthew; but in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions it is read, *my brother;* pretending great affection and sincerity: *when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye?* that is, takest no notice of, and dost not refrain from a greater iniquity continued in: *thou hypocrite;* as such an one must be, that bears hard upon his brother, and severely censures him for a small crime, when he indulges in himself a far more abominable sin: *cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye:* the sense is, that a man should first reform himself, and then others.

Ver. 43. *For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit, &c.*] The particle *for* is left out in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; and so it is in Beza's ancient copy: nor do these words stand in close connexion with the preceding in Matthew's Gospel, though they may be very well considered as an illustration of them; for as that cannot be called a good tree, which brings forth bad fruit; so such men cannot be accounted good men, let them make ever so large pretensions to such a character, who are very busy in espying, discovering, and censuring the faults of their brethren; when they take no notice of, nor refrain from, nor relinquish their own. These words, with what follow in this, and the next verse, and the similes in them, are used by our Lord in Matthew, on account of false prophets

or teachers; where he suggests, that as good and faithful ministers of the Gospel cannot, and do not bring forth, and publish corrupt notions, and false doctrines, usually and knowingly; even as it is not usual, nor can it be, that a good tree should bring forth corrupt fruit; so, *neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit;* or men of corrupt minds deliver good and sound doctrine, or the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ: but here they seem to be applicable to other persons, even true believers and hypocrites: the former are comparable to good trees, and are called trees of righteousness, which being planted by the river of the love of God, and rooted in Christ, and filled with the fruits of righteousness by him, do not bring forth the evil fruit of sin, as the common and constant course of their lives and conversations; for that they never commit sin, or are entirely without it, cannot be said; but sin is not their usual and common practice, or they do not live in sin: and the latter, hypocrites, who pretend to a great deal of religion, and have none that is true and real, these are comparable to corrupt trees; which, though they may make a fair shew, yet do not bring forth good fruit, or perform works of righteousness which are truly such; what they do have only the appearance of good works, and are not properly so; see the note on Matt. vii. 16, 17, 18.

Ver. 44. *For every tree is known by its own fruit, &c.*] Good and bad preachers are known by their doctrines, the one being agreeable, the other disagreeable to the word of God; and good and bad men are known by their lives and conversations: the grace of God revealed to good men, and wrought in them, teaches them to live soberly, righteously, and godly; a holy life is the fruit of grace, and an evidence of it; and the wickedness that is in the heart of unregenerate men, and even the hypocrisy of formal professors, will shew themselves in the common and ordinary course of their conversations: *for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-bush gather they grapes;* nor can they be expected from them: and no more can an unregenerate man perform good works, or bring forth fruits of righteousness acceptable unto God; for these require a knowledge of his will, obedience to it, a principle of grace, love to God, faith in Christ, and a view to the glory of God; all which are wanting in such a person.

Ver. 45. *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart, &c.*] This, because of its suitableness and agreement with what goes before, is placed by Luke here; though, according to Matthew, it was spoken at another time and place, unless it should be a repetition there; see the note on Matt. xii. 35. *for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.* The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, Ethiopic, Syriac, and Persic versions, leave out the word *his;* and the two latter read *lips,* instead of *mouth;* see the note on Matt. xii. 34.

Ver. 46. *And why call ye me Lord, Lord, &c.*] Or, *my Lord, my Lord;* as the Syriac version renders it; acknowledging, in words, his government over them; claiming an interest in him, and making use of his name and authority: *and do not the things which I say, or command;* and therefore such words in their mouths

<sup>1</sup> In Mian. Bava Kama, c. 2. sect. 5.

would be of no use to them, since they neither did his father's will, which he taught them, nor observed his commands and ordinances which he enjoined them; and therefore should not enter into the kingdom of heaven, nor be owned by him another day, but should be bid to depart from him; see the notes on Matt. vii. 21, 22, 23.

Ver. 47. *Whosoever cometh to me, &c.*] To be a disciple and follower: *and heareth my sayings, and doth them*; see the note on Matt. vii. 24. *I will shew you to whom he is like; or to what thing he is like*; so the Syriac and Arabic versions; though what follows seems better to agree with person than thing.

Ver. 48. *He is like a man which built an house, &c.*] That is, intended to build one, having drawn the scheme of it in his mind, and provided materials, and fixed upon the spot of ground: *and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock*; that is, he dug deep in the earth, till he came at a rock, and there, and then, he laid the foundation of his house; in which he acted the part of a wise man, as he is called in Matthew: so a sensible sinner, desirous of building his soul, and the salvation of it, on a sure bottom, digs deep into the Scriptures, diligently searches them, till he finds out the scheme of salvation by Christ; which lies deep in God's counsel and covenant, was ordained before the world began, and was hid in God till revealed in the Gospel: and

finding Christ to be the rock of ages, in whom is everlasting strength, and the foundation which God has laid, nor is there another; he makes use of him as such, and builds the hope of his eternal salvation on him: *and when the flood arose*: an inundation, a multitude of waters, the swelling of the sea; or rather *when it was tide*, as the word here used signifies<sup>2</sup>: *the stream beat vehemently upon the house*; or the river, up which the tide came, dashed and broke against it; by which may be signified the temptations of Satan, the persecutions of the world, the corruptions of men's hearts, and the errors and heresies of false teachers: *and could not shake it*; as none of these can so shake as to move a soul, thus built on Christ, off of him the foundation: *for it was founded upon a rock*; see the notes on Matt. vii. 24, 25.

Ver. 49. *But he that heareth, and doth not, &c.*] Hears Christ's sayings externally, but does not obey his commands: *is like a man that without a foundation built upon the earth*; that is, without digging for a foundation, built his house upon the surface of the earth; *upon the dust of it*, as the Syriac version renders it; or, *upon the sand*, as Matthew says: *against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great*; see the notes on Matt. vii. 26, 27.

## C H A P. VII.

Ver. 1. *NOW* when he had ended all his sayings, &c.] That is, when Jesus, as the Persic version expresses it, had finished all the above sayings, doctrines, and instructions; not all that he had to say, for he said many things after this: *in the audience of the people*; of the common people, the multitude besides the disciples; and that openly, and publicly, and with a loud and clear voice, that all might hear: *he entered into Capernaum*; Jesus entered, as the Syriac version reads, into his own city, and where he had been before, and wrought miracles.

Ver. 2. *And a certain centurion's servant, &c.*] The same that Matthew makes mention of, ch. viii. 5, 6. see the notes there: *who was dear unto him*; to the centurion, being an honest, upright, faithful, and obliging servant; as Tabi was to Rabban Gamaliel, of whom his master said<sup>1</sup>, "Tabi my servant, is not as other servants, כִּשְׁר׃ דָּוִד, he is upright." *Was sick*; of a palsy; see Matt. viii. 6. *and ready to die*; in all appearance his case was desperate, and there was no help for him by any human means, which makes the following cure the more remarkable.

Ver. 3. *And when he heard of Jesus, &c.*] That he was come, as the Ethiopic version adds, into the city of Capernaum; or of his miracles, which he had done there, and elsewhere: *he sent unto him the elders of the Jews*; in whom he had an interest, judging himself, being a Gentile, very unworthy and unfit to go himself, and ask a favour of so great a person as Christ was, such was his modesty and humility. These elders he

sent, were not the more ancient inhabitants of the city, called קִבְּלֵי עַם הָאֶרֶץ, the elders of, or among the common people, as distinguished from קִבְּלֵי תוֹרָה, the elders of the law, or those that were old in knowledge; of both which it is said by R. Simeon ben Achasia<sup>2</sup>, that "the elders of the common people, when they grow old, their knowledge fails in them, as it is said, John xii. 20. but so it is not with the elders of the law; but when they grow old, their knowledge rests in them, as it is said, Job xii. 12." But these were either some principal officers of the city, called the elders of the people elsewhere; particularly, who were members of the sanhedrim; for as elders, when they design the elders in Jerusalem, mean the great sanhedrim<sup>3</sup> there; so elders, in other places, intend the sanhedrim, consisting of twenty-one persons, or the bench of three; and such were these, the centurion sent to Christ: *beseeking him that he would come and heal his servant*: he besought him most earnestly by these messengers, that he would come to his house, and cure his servant of the palsy, by laying his hands on him, or commanding the distemper off, by a word speaking; or in what way he should think fit, for he made no doubt that he was able to heal him.

Ver. 4. *And when they came to Jesus, &c.*] To that part of the city where he was; either at Peter's house, where he used to be when in this place; or rather it might be as he was passing along the streets, that they came up to him: *they besought him instantly*; or with great vehemence and importunity; very studiously and

<sup>1</sup> Vid. Rivinum de Venilia Salacin, &c. p. 681, 682.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Beraot, fol. 16. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Misn. Kenim, c. 3. sect. 6.

<sup>4</sup> T. Hieros. Sota, fol. 23. 3.

carefully they urged the case, and pressed him much to it: *saying, he was worthy for whom he should do this; or for whom thou shouldst do this*, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persian, and Ethiopic versions read, and some copies; and which reading connects the words best. This speech of theirs savours of their *pharisaic* tenet and notion of merit, and is very different from the sense the poor centurion had of himself.

Ver. 5. *For he loveth our nation, &c.*] The Jewish nation, which was Christ's nation, as well as theirs, he being a Jew; see John xviii. 35. This they mention as an argument to induce him to have a regard to the centurion, though he was a Gentile; since he was a friend of the Jews, and well affected and disposed to them, which was very rare: it was not common for the Gentiles to love the Jews, any more than the Jews the Gentiles; there was an hatred, yea, an enmity between them; but this man, very likely, was a proselyte to their religion, as the following instance seems to shew: *and he hath built us a synagogue*; at his own private charge, and by the assistance of his soldiers under him, whom he might employ in this work: sometimes a single person built a synagogue at his own expense, and gave it to the citizens; of which the Jews say, "if a man builds an house, and afterwards devotes it to a synagogue, it is as a synagogue."

Ver. 6. *Then Jesus went with them, &c.*] The elders of the Jews, towards the centurion's house, after hearing their request, and their reasons for it; and that without any reluctance, he at once complied, made no hesitation, or difficulty about it, but went with them very freely: *and when he was now not far from the house*; of the centurion, where his servant lay sick; he having some notice of his coming, and of his being near his house, in his great humility, and being conscientious to himself of his unworthiness to have such a person under his roof, sent messengers to prevent him: *the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself*; or do not fatigue thyself by coming to the house, stop, go no further; *for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof*: he might know full well the law of the Jews, that it was not lawful for a Jew to go into the house of an uncircumcised Gentile; and though he might be a proselyte of righteousness, and so his house was free of entrance; yet considering his own meanness, and the greatness of Christ, who was become so famous for his doctrines and miracles, he thought it too great a stoop for Christ to come into his house, and too high a favour for him to enjoy.

Ver. 7. *Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee, &c.*] In person; therefore he sent the elders of the Jews to him first, and now some of his friends, who delivered these words in his name: *but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed*; speak but the word only, rebuke the distemper, command it off, and it will be gone; so great was his faith in the power of Christ.

Ver. 8. *For I also am a man set under authority, &c.*] Of the Roman senate; or belonging to the emperor, as the Arabic version renders it; and under the command of a tribune, as a centurion was: so that this is not an

amplification, but a diminution of his office; and his sense is, that even he who was but an inferior officer, yet had such power as after related: *having under me soldiers*; an hundred, or more: *and I say unto one, go, and he goeth, and to another, come, and he cometh, and to my servant, do this, and he doth it*; as this his servant used to do, and whom he may intend, who now lay sick, and therefore was dear unto him. His meaning is, that Christ could as easily command, and call off a distemper, and it would obey him, as he could command obedience from his soldiers and servant, and have it, and more so.

Ver. 9. *When Jesus heard these things, &c.*] Which the friends of the centurion related from him, and in his name; or which he himself delivered, coming up to Christ after them: *he marvelled at him*; at his great humility and modesty, and the strength of his faith, and his manner of reasoning: *and turned him about*; from him, and his friends: *and said unto the people that followed him*: from the mount to Capernaum, and as he was passing along the streets: *I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel*; or among the Israelites, as the Syriac; or among the children of Israel, as the Persian; or in all Israel, as the Arabic version reads, as he did in this single Gentile; see the note on Matt. viii. 10.

Ver. 10. *And they that were sent, &c.*] Both the elders of the Jews, and the friends of the centurion: *returning to the house*; of the centurion, where his servant lay, and from whence they came: *found the servant whole that had been sick*; for he was healed directly, as soon as the centurion had expressed his faith, and Christ had declared that it should be according to it, Matt. viii. 13.

Ver. 11. *And it came to pass the day after, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin reads *afterward*, not expressing any day, as in ch. viii. 1. but the Syriac, Arabic, Persian, and Ethiopic versions, read to the same sense as we, the day after, the next day, on the morrow, after he had cured the centurion's servant in Capernaum, where he staid all night: *that he went into a city called Naim*; which Jerom<sup>p</sup> places near Mount Tabor, and the river Kison. The<sup>q</sup> Jews speak of a Naim in the tribe of Issachar, so called from its pleasantness, and which seems to be the same place with this. The Persian version reads it, *Nabetis*, or *Neapolis*, the same with Sychem in Samaria, but without reason: *and many of his disciples went with him*; not only the twelve, but many others: *and much people*; from Capernaum, and other parts, that followed him to see his miracles, or for one end or another, though they did not believe in him; at least these were only hearers, and had not entered themselves among the disciples.

Ver. 12. *Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, &c.*] Of Naim: *behold there was a dead man carried out*; of the city: for they used not to bury in cities, but in places without, and at some distance: the burying-places of the Jews were not near their cities; and they had different ways of carrying them out to be buried, according to their different ages: a child under a month old was carried out in the bosom of a person; if a full month old, in a little coffin,

<sup>p</sup> Piske Harosh Megilla, c. 4. art. 1.

<sup>q</sup> Tom. 1. ad Marcellum, fol. 44. B. & Epitaph. Paulæ, fol. 60. A.

<sup>r</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 98. fol. 86. 1.

<sup>s</sup> T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 80. 2. Gloss.

which they carried in their arms; one of a twelve-month old was carried in a little coffin on the shoulder; and one of three years old on a bier or bed<sup>1</sup>, and so upwards; and in this manner was this corpse carried out: who was *the only son of his mother*; hence the sorrow and mourning were the greater; see Zech. xii. 10. *and she was a widow*; and if she had been supported by her son, her loss was very considerable; and having neither husband, nor son, to do for her, her case was very affecting: *and much people of the city was with her*: according to the age of persons was the company that attended them to the grave: if it was an infant, not a month old, it was buried by one woman, and two men, but not by one man, and two women; if a month old, by men and women; and whoever was carried out on a bier or bed, many mourned for him; and whoever was known to many, many accompanied him<sup>2</sup>; and which was the case of this dead man: he seems to have been well known and respected by the company that attended him to his grave; of these some were bearers, and these had their deputies, and these again theirs; for as they carried their dead a great way, they were obliged often to change their bearers; and of the company, some went before the bier, and others went after it<sup>3</sup>: besides, what served to increase company at a funeral was, that it was looked upon as an act of kindness and mercy to follow a corpse to the grave<sup>4</sup>; to which may be added, and what must always tend to increase the number at such a time, that, according to the Jewish canons<sup>5</sup>, "it was forbidden to do any work at the time a dead man was buried, even one of the common people."

Ver. 13. *And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, &c.*] Knowing her case, that she was a widow, and had lost her only son: *and said unto her, weep not*; signifying, that he would help her, which he did without being asked to do it, as usual in other cases.

Ver. 14. *And he came and touched the bier, &c.*] Or bed, as the Syriac version renders it; and such was *בִּישָׁת*, the bier, or bed, on which one of three years old, and upward, was carried as above mentioned: so that on which Herod was carried to his grave is called *בִּישָׁת*, a bed, by Josephus<sup>7</sup>. As for the bed, or bier, of what sort it was that they carried out their dead upon, take the following account<sup>8</sup>: "formerly the rich carried out (their dead) upon a bed called Dargash, (which is said<sup>9</sup> to be a bed that was not platted with ropes, and is called a bed of fortune<sup>10</sup>;) and the poor carried out (their dead) upon one that was called Celicah (or Celibah, as sometimes read; and this was made in the form of an iron horn, on which they bound the corpse, that it might not fall; and it was called so, because it was made like a coup of birds<sup>11</sup>, as the word is used in Jer. v. 97.) and the poor were made ashamed; and therefore they ordered that all should carry out (their dead) on a Celicah, that all

"honour of the poor." To this Christ came near and touched: not that by his touching of that, the dead should be raised; but this he did as a signal, that the bearers should stop. The Jews<sup>4</sup> say, one of the charges that Jacob gave to his sons before his death, was, to "take care (says he) that no uncircumcised person, *יָנַע בְּמִשְׁתִּי*, *touch my bed, or bier*, lest the Shekinah remove from me; but, according to this order, do unto me, carry me, three on the north, three on the south, three on the east, and three on the west, &c." From whence it should seem, that a circumcised person, as Christ was, might touch a bier without offence, or hurt, and without contracting any ceremonial pollution: to touch a dead body, or the bone of man, or a grave, was forbidden by the law, Numb. xix. 16. and so, according to the traditions of the elders<sup>5</sup>, the stone that was rolled at the mouth of the sepulchre, and the side of the sepulchre, defiled by touching; but I don't find that touching a bier was ever forbidden. *And they that bare him stood still*: these are they that are called *בְּרִישָׁת דְּבִישָׁת*, the bearers of the bed, or bier: and Maimonides<sup>6</sup> says, "they carry the dead upon their shoulders to the grave; and the bearers of the bier are forbidden to put on their sandals, lest the latchet of any one of them should fail, and should be found to hinder him doing his duty." And elsewhere 'tis said<sup>7</sup>, "the bearers of the bed, or bier, and their deputies, and their deputies' deputies, both before the bier and after it, and whoever the bier stood in need of, were free;" *i. e.* from reading the Shema, or, *hear, O Israel*, &c. and from prayer: the reason of their having so many bearers was, because they carried the dead a great way to be buried. King Herod was carried after this manner two hundred furlongs from Jerusalem, to the castle of Herodion<sup>8</sup>: *and he said, young man, I say unto thee, arise*. The Ethiopic version adds, *and he arose*: Christ spoke as one that had the keys of death and the grave; and divine power went along with his words, which raised the dead man to life; and full proof this is of the true and proper deity of Christ.

Ver. 15. *And he that was dead, &c.*] That had been dead, (for he was now alive,) as it was a clear case to all his relations and friends, or they would never have brought him out to bury him: *sat up*; upon the bed, or bier: *and began to speak*: both which, his sitting up and speaking, were plain proofs of his being brought to life: *and he delivered him to his mother*; for whose sake he raised him from the dead, commiserating her case: wherefore, as Christ shewed his power in raising the dead man, he discovered great humanity, kindness, and tenderness, in delivering him alive to his mother; which might be done after he came off of the bier, by taking him by the hand, and leading him to his mother, and giving him up into her arms: think what an affecting scene this must be!

Ver. 16. *And there came a fear on all, &c.*] That

<sup>1</sup> T. Moed Katon, fol. 24. 1, 2. & Kiddushin, fol. 80. 2. Massech. Semachot, c. 3. sect. 2, 3. Maimon. Hilch. Ebel, c. 12. sect. 10, 11.

<sup>2</sup> Ut in locis supra citatis.

<sup>3</sup> Vid. Misn. Beracot, c. 3. sect. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Maimon. in Misn. Peah, c. 1. sect. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Piske Tosaphot Megilla, art. 106. T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 27. 2.

<sup>6</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 33. sect. 11.

<sup>7</sup> T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 27. 1, 2.

<sup>1</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 5. 4.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 56. 2.

<sup>3</sup> R. Sampson & Bartenora in Misn. Para, c. 12. sect. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 100. fol. 97. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Misn. Oholot, c. 2. sect. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Hilchot. Ebel, c. 4. sect. 3, 3.

<sup>7</sup> Misn. Beracot, c. 3. sect. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Josephus, ut supra.

were there present, and heard, and saw what was done. Not a fear of dread, and terror, and of punishment, as in devils and wicked men; but a fear and reverence of the divine majesty, whose power and presence they were sensible must be there at that time: *and they glorified God*; they praised him, and gave thanks to him, ascribing this amazing action to divine power, and gave God the glory of it; and blessed him for the Messiah, who was sent unto them, as they concluded Jesus to be, from this wonderful instance: *saying, that a great prophet is risen up among us*; even that great prophet Moses wrote of, and said should be raised up from among the children of Israel, Deut. xviii. 15, 18. *and that God hath visited his people*. The Arabic version adds, *for good*. For God sometimes visits for evil, in a way of wrath and sore displeasure; but this was a visitation for good: they concluded that God had looked upon them with a look of love, and had a gracious regard to them, and had sent them the Messiah, who, they hoped, would deliver them from the Roman yoke; as he had formerly looked upon, and visited their fathers, and sent a redeemer to them, to deliver them from Egyptian bondage. The Ethiopic version renders it, *and God hath mercy on his people*; and the Persic version, *God hath looked upon his people, and hath taken care of them*.

Ver. 17. *And this rumour of him, &c.*] Or the report of this surprising miracle in raising a dead man to life, that was carrying to his grave, *went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about*; not only Judea, and the several cities, towns, and villages in it, but all the country round about it, especially Galilee. The Persic version reads, *all countries which are round about Jordan*; see Matt. iii. 5.

Ver. 18. *And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things.*] The miracles that were wrought by Christ; particularly the healing of the centurion's servant, and the raising from the dead the widow of Naim's son, and what fame and reputation Christ got every where by his doctrine, and mighty works. John was now in prison, when these his disciples came and related these things to him; see Matt. xi. 2. and they spoke of them, not as commending Christ for them; but as envying, grieving, and complaining, that he carried away all the honour and glory from John their master, for whom they had the greatest regard.

Ver. 19. *And John calling unto him two of his disciples, &c.*] Which were a sufficient number to be sent on an errand, to ask a question, and report the answer, or bear witness to any fact they should see, or hear done. *Sent them unto Jesus, saying, art thou he that should come, or look we for another?* not that he doubted that Jesus was the Messiah; nor was it for his own satisfaction so much that he sent these disciples of his with this question, but for theirs; and to remove all doubt and hesitation from them about Christ.

Ver. 20. *When the men were come to him, &c.*] To Jesus; *those two men*, as the Arabic version reads; *the disciples*, as the Persic version; the same that John sent from the castle of Machærus, where he was now a prisoner, to Christ, who was teaching in some city

or town of Galilee: *they said, John the Baptist*; so well known by his being the administrator of the ordinance of baptism: *hath sent us unto thee, saying, art thou he that should come, or look we for another?* see the note on Matt. xi. 3.

Ver. 21. *And in that same hour, &c.*] Or at that same time, for a precise hour is not intended: one exemplar reads, *in that day*, in which these men came to Christ, *he, Jesus*, as the Persic version expresses it, *cured many of their infirmities*; bodily weaknesses and disorders: *and plagues*; which were inflicted on them as scourges and corrections for sin, very severe diseases, as epilepsies, leprosies, palsies, &c. *and of evil spirits*; or devils, which he dispossessed and commanded out of the bodies of men; though sometimes evil spirits, with the Jews, signify some kinds of bodily diseases: as when it is said, "whoever puts out a lamp because he is afraid of Gentiles, or of thieves, " or of רוח רע, *an evil spirit*, or because of a sick man " that is asleep, he is free." Upon which Maimonides observes, "an evil spirit they call all kinds of diseases, " which, in the Arabic language, go by the name of "melancholy"; for it is one kind of the diseases mentioned, which makes a sick man to fly, and separate himself from mankind, as if he was afraid of the "light, or of coming into the company of men:" *and unto many that were blind he gave sight*; freely, as an act of grace and kindness, as the word signifies, without any merit, or motive in them.

Ver. 22. *Then Jesus answering said unto them, &c.*] To the disciples, as the Persic; to both, as the Arabic: when he had wrought these cures, he turned himself to the disciples of John, and made answer to their question. The Vulgate Latin leaves out the word *Jesus*, rendering it, *and he answering*; in the following words: *go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard*. They had just seen many cured of infirmities, plagues, and evil spirits, and they had heard the doctrines of the Gospel preached by him; and the former were in confirmation of the latter, and both were proofs of his being the Messiah: the particulars of which follow, *how that the blind see*; that is, they that had been blind, and some that were born blind received their sight, which was what was never heard of before, from the beginning of the world; and which, as it is an instance of Christ's almighty power, shewing him to be God; so it was a fulfilment of a prophecy concerning him as the Messiah, who, when he came, was to open the eyes of the blind, Isa. xxxv. 5. and this was true, not only in a corporeal, but in a spiritual sense: and generally so it was, that when the blind received their bodily sight, they also received their spiritual sight; and both were evidences of the true Messiahship of our Lord Jesus. *The lame walk*; these were among those who were cured of their infirmities; and this also was prophesied of the Messiah, and was now accomplished by Jesus, that *the lame man should leap as an hart*, Isa. xxxv. 6. and so was to be considered by John, and his disciples, as another proof of his being the true Messiah: *the lepers are cleansed*; of this sort were they who were cured of their plagues: the leprosy was called a plague; hence the treatise of

leprosy, in the Misna, is, by the Jews, called Negaim, or plagues. *The deaf hear*: so in the above prophecy in Isaiah, it is predicted, that *the ears of the deaf should be unstopped* in the days of the Messiah; and which therefore must be considered as a further confirmation of Jesus being he that was to come, and that another was not to be looked for. *The dead are raised*: whether there were any raised at this time, or no, is not certain; but certain it is, that there had been one raised from the dead, if not in the presence of these disciples, yet just before they came to Christ, of which John had been informed by some of his disciples, if not these; and of which an account is given before in this chapter, and which is what none but the mighty God can do. *To the poor the Gospel is preached*: it was preached both by the poor, the disciples of Christ, and to the poor, mean, base, and illiterate among the Jews; and also to the poor, meek, and lowly in heart, as was prophesied should be, by the Messiah, Isa. lxi. 1. so that put all together, here were undoubted proofs, and a full demonstration, that Jesus was the Messiah; see the notes on Matt. xi, & 5.

Ver. 23. *And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.*] The Arabic version renders it, *blessed is he that doubts not of me.* The Persic and Ethiopic versions both add to the text, the former rendering the words thus, *blessed is he that is not brought into offence and doubt concerning me*; and the latter thus, *blessed are they who do not deny me, and are not offended in me*: particular regard is had to the disciples of John, who both doubted of Christ as the Messiah, and were offended at his popularity and success; see the note on Matt. xi. 6.

Ver. 24. *And when the messengers of John were departed, &c.*] The Syriac and Persic versions read, *the disciples of John*; and the Arabic version, *the two disciples of John*: the two that he sent, when they were gone back with the answer of Christ; he, Jesus, as the Persic version expresses it, *began to speak unto the people concerning John*; not caring to say any thing about him to the messengers, or whilst they were present, lest he should be charged with flattery; see the note on Matt. xi. 7. *What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? a reed shaken with the wind?* an inconsistent, wavering, and unstable man? if so, they were greatly mistaken; or the motions and gesture of the man? see the note as above.

Ver. 25. *But what went you out for to see? &c.*] If not his air and action, what was it? was it his apparel and dress? was it to see a man clothed in soft raiment? If this was the case, their labour was in vain, and they had their walk for nothing; for John was clothed with camels' hair, rough and undressed, and was girt with a leathern girdle; there was nothing in his person, mien, and garb, that was attractive: *they which are gorgeously apparelled*; or richly clothed, as John was not: *and live delicately*; in the most elegant manner, and on the richest dainties, as John did not, his food being locusts and wild honey: *are in kings' courts*; and not in a wilderness, where John came preaching.

Ver. 26. *What went ye out for to see? &c.*] What led your curiosity to go into the wilderness

after him, since it could not be any of the above things? was it to see a prophet? which was the case; for John was a prophet, and was known to be one; and the fame of him, as such, drew vast numbers to see and hear him, there not having been a prophet among the Jews, for some hundreds of years: *yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet*; not that he was the prophet Moses did say should come; nor was he the priest that should arise with the *Urim and Thummim*, that the *Tirshatah*, Nehemiah spoke of; nor was he the king Messiah; but he was his forerunner, he saw him and baptized him, and so was greater than any of the prophets that went before him.

Ver. 27. *This is he of whom it is written, &c.*] In Mal. iii. 1. see the notes on Matt. xi. 10. and Mark i. 2.

Ver. 28. *For I say unto you—there is not a greater prophet, &c.*] The word *prophet* is left out in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, as in Matt. xi. 11. see the note there.

Ver. 29. *And all the people that heard him, &c.*] Either Christ saying these things in commendation of John, and gave their assent to them, and shewed their approbation of them, having been baptized by him; or rather, the people that had heard John preach the doctrines of repentance and faith, and of baptism; for these words seem rather to be the words of Christ, relating the success of John's ministry among different persons: *and the publicans justified God*; even those wicked men, who were before profligate and abandoned sinners, when they came under John's ministry, were so wrought upon by the power and grace of God through it, that they approved of, and applauded the wisdom, goodness, and grace of God, in sending such a prophet as John; in qualifying him in the manner he did, and giving in him a commission to preach such doctrines, and administer such an ordinance as he did; and this their approbation of the divine conduct, and their thankfulness for the same, they testified by their *being baptized with the baptism of John*; they expressed their sentiments by their obedience; they declared it was right in God to institute such an ordinance, and for John to administer it; and that it became them to submit to it, as a part of righteousness to be fulfilled; they hereby signified, that they thought that it was agreeable to the nature of God, who is holy, just, and good, suitable to the Gospel dispensation, and very fit and proper for them.

Ver. 30. *But the Pharisees and lawyers, &c.*] Or Scribes, as the Syriac and Persic versions read; for the Scribes and lawyers were the same sort of persons. The Ethiopic version calls them, *the Scribes of the city*: these *rejected the counsel of God against themselves*; against their own advantage, to their hurt and detriment; since by their impentence and unbelief, and through their rejection of Christ and his forerunner, and the Gospel and the ordinances of it, they brought ruin and destruction, both temporal and eternal, upon themselves: *or towards themselves, or unt. them*; that is, they *rejected the command of God unto them*, as the Arabic version renders it: for by the *counsel of God* here, is not meant his purpose, intention, and design, with respect to these



persons, which was not, nor never is frustrated; but the precept of God, and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *they despised the command of God*: that is, the ordinance of baptism, which was of God, and the produce of his counsel and wisdom, as the whole scheme, and all the ordinances of the Gospel are, and not the invention of men: or they rejected this *in themselves*, as it may be rendered, and is by the Syriac and Persic versions; not openly and publicly, for they were afraid of the people, but inwardly and privately, and which their actions and conduct declared: *being not baptized of him*; of John: by their neglect of this ordinance, they testified their aversion to it, and rejection of it.

Ver. 31. *And the Lord said, &c.*] This clause is not in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, nor in some copies, nor in Beza's most ancient copy; and being omitted, more clearly shews, that the two former verses are the words of Christ, and not an observation the evangelist makes, on the different behaviour of Christ's hearers, upon the commendation he had given of John: *whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation*; or *to what men shall I liken them*, as the Persic version: the phrase *men of this generation*, is Rabbinical; so אֲנֹשֵׁי דְרִימָא דְרִימָא, the men of that generation, are more beautiful in work than these, says the Targumist on Eccl. vii. 11. *And to what are they like?* To that which follows.

Ver. 32. *They are like to children, &c.*] The Pharisees and lawyers, who rejected the counsel of God, and the baptism of John, were like to children; not for innocence, simplicity, meekness, and humility; their characters were the reverse; but rather, for their ignorance, and want of understanding, their folly and weakness; nor are they here compared to the children that piped and mourned, but to those surly and ill-natured ones, who made no answer to those that did. They, together with Christ, and John the Baptist, are in general likened to children, *sitting in the market-place*; where children were wont to be seen, there being a variety of persons and things to be seen; and which may design the temple, or the synagogues, or any place of concourse, where the Pharisees met, with John, Christ, and their disciples: *and calling one to another, and saying*; they that were good-natured, and more disposed to mirth and innocent diversions: *we have piped unto you, and ye have not danced*; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept: they imitated the pipers at weddings, expecting their companions would have danced, as was usually done by the others, when the pipe was played upon; and they mimicked the mourning women at funerals, expecting their fellows would have made as though they had wept; whereas they would do neither, shewing a dislike both to the one and to the other. The children that imitated the pipers, represent Christ and his disciples, who delivered the joyful sound of the Gospel; and the children that acted the part of the mourners, signify John the Baptist, and his disciples, who preached the doctrine of repentance; and the children that would not join with, nor make any answer to the one, or the other, intend the Scribes and Pharisees, who were not pleased with either of

them, as the following words shew; see the notes on Matt. xi. 16, 17.

Ver. 33. *For John the Baptist, &c.*] Who is designed by the children that mourned in the above simile, with whom his character and conduct agree; he preached very mournful doctrine, delivered it in a very solemn and awful manner, and lived a very austere life, and fasted much, as did also his disciples. The word *Baptist* is here added by Luke, which Matthew has not, to distinguish him from others; and it may be, because he had just spoke of his baptism. The Persic version only reads, *the Baptist*; of him our Lord says, that he *came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine*; which were the common food and drink of men, but his diet were locusts and wild honey, and from this he often abstained; nor would he attend festivals and entertainments, or be free and sociable with men: *bread and wine* are here mentioned, which are not in Matthew: *and ye say, he hath a devil*; is mad, or melancholy; for madness and melancholy, or the hypochondriac disorder, was by them sometimes imputed to a diabolical possession, and influence, as the cause of it; and though these men pretended to great austerity of life, and frequent fastings, yet John was too abstemious for them, and they could not agree with his doctrine nor method of living; see the note on Matt. xi. 18.

Ver. 34. *The son of man is come eating and drinking, &c.*] That is, eating bread and drinking wine, as other people do; and shuns no man's company, goes to a wedding, dines with a Pharisee, and eats with publicans and sinners, and carries it freely and courteously to all men: *and ye say, behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber*; an epicure, a drunkard, a mere sot, one that gives up himself to sensual pleasures: *a friend of publicans and sinners*: a good fellow, a boon companion, that sits with them, and encourages them in their revellings and drunkenness: such an ill use did the Jews make of our Lord's free, harmless, and innocent conversation with men; and in such a horrid manner did they traduce and vilify him, who was holy in his nature, harmless in his life, separate from sinners, knew no sin, nor ever committed any.

Ver. 35. *But wisdom is justified of all her children.*] That is, Christ, who is the wisdom of God, and who acted the wise part, in behaving in such a free manner with all sorts of men, and even with publicans and sinners, whereby he became useful to their souls, called them to repentance, converted and saved them: and these are his children, which were given him by the father; for whose sake he partook of flesh and blood, and whom he redeemed, that they might receive the adoption of children; and to whom, believing in him, he gives power to become the children of God: and these justify him from all such scandalous imputations, and by their lives and conversations shew, that the doctrine of Christ is not a licentious one, or leads to libertinism, and indulges men in their carnal sensual lusts and pleasures; but, on the contrary, teaches them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly: the word *all*, is inserted by Luke, which is not in Matthew; signifying, that this is the universal sense and practice of all the real offspring

of Christ, the sons of wisdom, who are wise to do good.

Ver. 36. *And one of the Pharisees, &c.*] Whose name was Simon, ver. 40. 43, 44. *Desired that he would eat with him*; take a meal with him, either a dinner or a supper: this he did under a disguise of respect, and shew of affection to him; though very likely with a design upon him to ensnare him, or take some advantage against him if he could; for it is certain, that he did not treat him with those civilities and ceremonies commonly used to guests; see ver. 44, 45, 46. *And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat*: he made no hesitation about it, but at once accepted of his invitation, though he knew both the man and his intentions; having nothing to fear from him, and being willing to carry it courteously to all men, and give proof of what he had just now said of himself, ver. 34.

Ver. 37. *And behold, a woman in the city, &c.*] 'Not Mary Magdalene, spoken of in the next chapter, ver. 2. under another character; and is a different person, who had not been taken notice of by the evangelist before; nor Mary the sister of Lazarus, who is said to anoint the feet of Christ, and wipe them with her hair, John xii. 3. The character given of this woman, does not seem so well to agree with her; at least, the fact here recorded, cannot be the same with that; for this was in Galilee, and that in Bethany; this in the house of Simon the Pharisee, that in the house of Lazarus; this was some time before Christ's death, for after this he went a circuit through every city and village, that was but six days before his death, and after which he never went from those parts; nor is this account the same with the history, recorded in Matt. xxvi. 6, 7. Mark xiv. 3. for that fact was done in Bethany also, this in Galilee; that in the house of Simon the leper, this in the house of Simon the Pharisee; that was but two days before the death of Christ, this a considerable time before; the ointment that woman poured, was poured upon his head, this upon his feet: who this woman was, is not certain, nor in what city she dwelt; it seems to be the same in which the Pharisee's house was; and was no doubt one of the cities of Galilee, as Naim, Capernaum, or some other at no great distance from these: *which was a sinner*; a notorious sinner, one that was known by all to have been a person of a wicked life and conversation; a lewd woman, a vile prostitute, an harlot, commonly reputed so: the Arabic word here used, signifies both a sinner and a whore<sup>k</sup>; and so the word, *sinner*, seems to be used elsewhere by Luke; see ch. xv. 1, 2. compared with Matt. xxi. 31, 32. Some think she was a Gentile, Gentiles being reckoned by the Jews sinners, and the worst of sinners; but this does not appear: *when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house*; having observed it herself, that he was invited by him, and went with him, or being informed of it by others, *brought an alabaster*

*box of ointment*: ointment was used to be put in vessels made of alabaster, which kept it pure and incorrupt; and this stone was found about Damascus<sup>l</sup>, so that there might be plenty of it in Judea; at least it might be easily had, and such boxes might be common; and as this woman appears to have been a lewd person, she might have this box of ointment by her to anoint herself with, that she might recommend herself to her gallants. The historian<sup>m</sup> reports, that "Venus gave to Phaon an alabaster box with ointment, with which Phaon being anointed, became the most beautiful of men, and the women of Mitylene were taken with the love of him." If this box had been provided with such a view, it was now used to another and different purpose.

Ver. 38. *And stood at his feet behind him, &c.*] Christ lay upon a bed, or couch, as was the custom of the ancients, both Jews and others, at meals, with his feet put out behind; and between the couches and the walls of the room, there was a space for servants to wait and serve, and such are therefore said to *stand at the feet*; and the phrase is used, as descriptive of servants in waiting<sup>n</sup>; and in such a situation this woman put herself, as being also ashamed and afraid to come before Christ, and look him in the face; and here she stood weeping for her sins, and melted down with the love of Christ to her soul, and at his discourse: *and began to wash his feet with tears*: which fell from her eyes in such abundance upon his feet, as she stood by him, that they were like a shower of rain, as the word signifies, with which his feet were as it were bathed and washed; his shoes or sandals being off, as was the custom at eating so to do, lest they should daub the couch or bed, on which they lay<sup>o</sup>. Her tears she used instead of water; for it was the custom first to wash the feet before they were anointed with oil, which she intended to do; and for which purpose she had brought with her an alabaster box of ointment: it is said<sup>p</sup> of one, "when he came home, that his maid brought him a pot of hot water, and he washed his hands and his feet in it; then she brought him a golden bason full of oil, and he dipped his hands and his feet in it, to fulfil what is said, Deut. xxxiii. 24. and after they had eaten and drank, he measured out oil, &c." And it is a general rule with the Jews<sup>q</sup>, "that whoever anoints his feet, is obliged to washing or dipping." *And did wipe them with the hairs of her head*; which were long, and hung loose about her shoulders, it being usual and comely for women to wear long hair, 1 Cor. xi. 15. That which was her ornament and pride, and which she took great care of to nourish and put in proper form, to render her desirable, she uses instead of a towel to wipe her Lord's feet, and her tears off of them. A like phrase is used of one by Apuleius, "*his verbis & amplexibus mollibus decantatus maritus, lachrymasque ejus suis crinibus detergens, &c.*"<sup>r</sup> and kissed his feet. This was no unusual prac-

<sup>k</sup> Vid Castell. Lex. Heptaglott. col. 1195.

<sup>l</sup> Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 36. c. 8.

<sup>m</sup> Elian. var. Hist. l. 12. c. 8.

<sup>n</sup> Vid. Alstorpium de lectis veterum, p. 106, 107

<sup>o</sup> Ib. p. 129, 124.

<sup>p</sup> T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 85. 2.

<sup>q</sup> T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 26. 2. Maimon. Hilchot Biath Hamikdash, c. 5 sect. 5.

<sup>r</sup> Metamorph. l. 5.

tice with the Jews; we often read of it\*: "R. Jonathan and R. Jannai were sitting together, there came a certain man, וַיִּשָׁק רַגְלָיו, and kissed the feet of R. Jonathan." Again†, "R. Meir stood up, and Bar Chama, וַיִּשָׁקוּ אֶמְרָעוֹתָיו, kissed his knees, or feet." This custom was also used by the Greeks and Romans among their civilities, and in their salutations": and anointed them *with the ointment*; which she brought with her.

Ver. 39. *Now when the Pharisee, which had bidden him, saw it, &c.*] Simon, who had invited Christ to eat with him, when he saw what was done by the woman, how she stood at his feet, and washed them with her tears, and wiped them with her hairs, and then kissed and anointed them: *he spake within himself*: not openly and publicly, being in good manners, though not in real respect to Christ, unwilling to affront his guest; but turned these things over in his mind, and reasoned upon them within himself: *saying, this man, if he were a prophet*; as he was said, and believed to be by many, but questioned by this Pharisee: *would have known who and what manner of woman this is, that toucheth him*; he took it for granted that Christ did not know this woman personally, that she was one of the city; nor her character, or *what was her fame*, as the Syriac version renders it, which was very ill; or *her condition*, as the Arabic version, she being not a religious person, but a notorious lewd one: this he concluded, from his admitting her to such nearness to him, and familiarity with him; and from hence argues within himself, that he could not be a prophet; since, according to his notion of a prophet, he must know persons and their characters; though this was not always requisite in a prophet, nor did the prophetic gift at all times shew itself in this way: however, this man reasoned upon the commonly received notions of the Pharisees, both of the Messiah, the prophet that Moses said should come, and of their own conduct, and of all religious men: their notion with respect to the Messiah was, that he should be of so quick an understanding, or smell, as in Isa. xi. 3. that he should know at once who was a wicked person, and who not. "Bar Coziba (they say)" reigned two years and a half; he said to the Rabbans, I am the Messiah; they replied to him, it is written of the Messiah, Isa. xi. 3. that he smells, or is of quick understanding, and judges (the gloss on it is, he smells on a man, and judges and knows, מִי דְרִיב, *who is a wicked man*): let us see whether he smells and judges; and when they saw that he did not smell and judge, they killed him." But Jesus, the true Messiah, could do so; he knew who were sinners, he knew this woman to be one, as the following account shews: and their notion with respect to the conduct of religious persons towards the common people, and those of a bad character, and which the Pharisee here suggests, was, that the touch of such persons was defiling, and therefore to be avoided: for they say‡, that "the Pharisees, if they touched the

garments of the common people, they were defiled." And therefore when they walked in the streets, "they walked in the sides (of the ways), that they might not be defiled, בִּמְנוּעַ, *by the touch of the common people*." For she is a sinner: a notorious one; or that she is a sinner; and the sense is, Christ, had he been a prophet, the Pharisee intimates, would have known that this woman was a vile creature; and he would have shewn it, by his abhorrence and rejection of her; or as the Persic version adds, *would have declared her sins*.

Ver. 40. *And Jesus answering said unto him, &c.*] Christ being God omniscient, knew not only the character and conversation of this woman, which were publicly known by all, that knew any thing of her, but also the secret thoughts and reasonings of the Pharisee, and makes answer to them; which shews, that he was a prophet, in the sense of this man; yea, more than a prophet: *Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee*; this could not be Simon Peter, Christ spoke to, as some have suggested; for the answer is made unto the Pharisee, and he is the person addressed by the name of Simon; even he, into whose house Christ entered, and now was, as appears from ver. 44. *And he saith, Master*; or teacher, or doctor; or as the Syriac version, *Rabbi*; which was the common salutation of doctors: *say on*. This was a way of speaking in use with the Jews, giving leave to proceed in a discourse; and as Christ was now a guest in this man's house, he asks leave of him, and he grants him it: so we read of R. Simeon ben Gamaliel‡, that he said to R. Ishmael ben Elishah, "is it thy pleasure that I should say before thee one thing?" he said unto him, אַמֵּר, *say on*." Again, R. Jochanan ben Zaccai said\* to a certain governor, "suffer me to say one thing to thee: he replied to him, אַמֵּר, *say on*."

Ver. 41. *There was a certain creditor, &c.*] All the Oriental versions premise something to this. The Syriac version reads, *Jesus said unto him*. The Arabic version, *then he said*. The Persic version, *Jesus said*; and the Ethiopic version, *and he said to him*; and something of this kind is understood, and to be supplied in the text: *which had two debtors, the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty*; these were, as the word shews, Roman *denarii*, or pence; the former of these sums, reckoning a Roman penny at seven-pence halfpenny of our money, amounted to fifteen pounds and twelve shillings and six-pence; and the latter, to one pound eleven shillings and three-pence; the one of these sums was ten times larger than the other. This is a parable: by *the creditor*, God is meant; to whom men owe their beings, and the preservation of them, and all the mercies of life; and are under obligation to obedience and thankfulness: hence no man can merit any thing of God, or pay off any old debt, by a new act of obedience, since all is due to him: by *the two debtors* are meant, greater and lesser sinners: all sins are debts, and all sinners

\* T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 15. 4. & Kiddushin, fol. 61. 3. T. Bab. Cetu-  
bot, fol. 49. 2. Vid. ib. fol. 63. 1.

† T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 27. 2.

‡ Vid. Aristophanem in vespiis, p. 473. Arrian. Epictet. l. 3. c. 26. &  
Alex. ab. Alex. Gen. Dier. l. 2. c. 19.

\* T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 2.

† Maimon. in Mish. Chagiga, c. 3. sect. 7.

‡ B. Hichot Abot Hatanoot, c. 13. sect. 8.

\* Abot R. Nathan, c. 38. fol. 9. 2.

† Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 4. fol. 183. 1.

are debtors; not debtors to sin, for then it would not be criminal, but lawful to commit sin, and God must be pleased with it, which he is not, and men might promise themselves impunity, which they cannot; but they are debtors to fulfil the law, and in case of failure, are bound to the debt of punishment: and of these debtors and debts, some are greater, and others less; not but that they are all equally sinners in Adam, and equally guilty and corrupted by his transgression; and the same seeds of sin are in the hearts of all men, and all sin is committed against God, and is a breach of his law, and is mortal, or deserving of death, even death eternal; but then as some commands are greater, and others less, so must their transgressions be: sin more immediately committed against God, is greater than that which is committed against our neighbour; and besides, the circumstances of persons and things differ, which more or less aggravate the offence.

Ver. 42. *And when they had nothing to pay, &c.*] Neither the lesser nor greater debtor; for though not alike in debt, yet both insolvent: man has run out his whole stock, which the God of nature gave him, in his original creation and primitive state; and is become a bankrupt and a beggar, is poor, wretched, and miserable; he has no money, he has nothing to offer for a composition, much less for payment; he has no righteousness, and if he had, it would be nothing to pay with; since that itself, even in perfection, is due to God, and can't discharge a former debt: sin being committed against an infinite being, is in some sense an infinite debt, and requires an infinite satisfaction, which a finite creature can never give; and he is therefore liable to a prison, and that for ever: but behold the wonderful grace of God, the creditor! *he frankly forgave them both*; their whole debts, without regard to any merits of theirs, which they could not have, or any motives in them, or any conditions to be performed by them, but purely of his sovereign will, free grace, and rich mercy, though not without regard to the satisfaction of his son; which by no means hinders the frankness of the pardon, or obscures the grace of it, but increases and illustrates it; seeing this satisfaction is of God's own finding out, providing, and accepting; and is at his own expense, and without money and price, to the debtors: *tell me therefore, which of them will love him most; or ought to love him most*, as the Ethiopic version. The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, leave out the first part of this clause, *tell me*.

Ver. 43. *Simon answered and said, &c.*] Very readily, without any hesitation, not being aware of the application of it, to the instance he had been pondering in his mind: *I suppose, that he to whom he forgave most; it was his opinion, and to him a plain case, that he that owed the largest debt, and that being forgiven him fully, and freely, as he was under the greatest obligation, so as he ought, he would shew the greatest love and affection to his kind and gracious creditor: and he said unto him*; that is, Jesus said, as the Syriac and Persic versions express it: *thou hast rightly judged; this is a right and true judgment of the case; it is ac-*

ording to the nature and truth of things, and what is obvious and clear at first sight, and which every one must agree to.

Ver. 44. *And he turned to the woman, &c.*] That stood behind him at his feet, and said to Simon, *seest thou this woman?* and what she has done? pointing to her, and comparing him, and her, and their actions together, whereby he might judge of the preceding parable, and how fitly it might be applied to the present case: *I entered into thine house*; not of his own accord, but by the invitation of Simon, and therefore might have expected the usual civilities: *thou gavest me no water for my feet*: to wash them with, no, not so much as water; a civility very common in those hot countries, where walking without stockings, and only with sandals, they needed often washing; and which was very refreshing, and was not only used to travellers and strangers, but to guests, and was usually done by the servants of the house; see the note on ver. 38. *but she hath washed my feet with tears*. The Persic version reads, *with the tears of her eyes*: which made a bath for his feet; and *wiped them with the hairs of her head*. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read only, *with her hair*, which she used instead of a towel, when Simon neither gave him water to wash with, nor a towel to wipe with.

Ver. 45. *Thou gavest me no kiss, &c.*] A token of civility among friends, when they met together on any occasion. The Jews have a saying<sup>b</sup>, that "all kisses are foolish, excepting three; the kiss of grandeur or dignity, as in 1 Sam. x. 1. and the kiss at parting, as in Ruth i. 14. and the kiss at meeting, as in Exod. iv. 27. (of which sort this kiss may be thought to be), to which some add the kiss of consanguinity (or that used by relations to one another), as in Gen. xxix. 11." *but this woman, since the time I came in*. The Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, *since she came in*; and so two of Stephens's copies; which seems to be the more agreeable reading, seeing Christ was in Simon's house before this woman came; for she knowing that he was there, came thither after him: *hath not ceased to kiss my feet*; which shews, that this action was repeated by her times without number, even ever since she came into the house.

Ver. 46. *Mine head with oil thou didst not anoint, &c.*] No not with common oil, so usually done at feasts, see Psal. xxiii. 5. *but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment*; even *with ointment מְשֻׁמֵת, of spices*, as the Syriac version renders it. There is, throughout the whole account, an opposition between the conduct of Simon, and this woman: he gave him no common water to wash his feet with, she shed floods of tears, and with them bathed his feet, and then wiped them clean with the hairs of her head; he gave him not the usual salutation by kissing his head or lips, but she kissed his feet, and that over and over again; he did not so much as anoint his head with common oil, when she anointed his feet with costly ointment brought in an alabaster box. These several ceremonies to guests were used by their hosts, in other nations, such as washing, anointing, and kissing<sup>c</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> Shemot Rabba, sect. 5. fol. 91. 3, 4.

<sup>c</sup> Vid. Apuleii Metamorph. i. 1. prope finem.

Ver. 47. *Wherefore I say unto thee, &c.*] Not for this that she hath done, as the Persic version very wrongly renders it; nor because she had washed Christ's feet with tears, and wiped them with her hairs, and kissed and anointed them, therefore her sins were forgiven; nor upon this account, and for those reasons did Christ say, or declare, that they were forgiven; but *αἰτιῶν, for this cause, or reason,* he said this to Simon the Pharisee, to remove his objections, to rectify his mistakes, and stop his murmuring and complaining, by observing, that though she had been a great sinner, yet she was now not such an one as he took her to be; she was a pardoned sinner, and not that guilty and filthy creature he imagined; the guilt of all her sins was removed, and she was cleansed from all her filthiness: *her sins, which are many, are forgiven;* though she was like the largest debtor in the parable, which owed five hundred pence, yet the whole score was cleared; though her sins were numerous, and attended with very aggravating circumstances, which denominated her a sinner in a very emphatic sense, a notorious one, yet they were all fully, and freely forgiven: *for she loved much; or therefore she loved much:* her great love was not the cause of the remission of her sins, but the full and free remission of her many sins, which had been manifested to her, was the cause of her great love, and of her shewing it in the manner she had done: that this is the sense of the words, is clear from the parable, and the accommodation of it to the present case, otherwise there would be no agreement. Upon relating the parable of the two debtors, Christ puts the question to Simon, which of the two it was most reasonable to think would love most? his answer is, and which Christ approved of, he to whom most was forgiven; where, 'tis plain, that according to our Lord's sense, and even Simon's opinion of the case, that forgiveness is the cause, and love the effect; and that according as the forgiveness is of more or less, love is proportionate; and which is applied to the case in hand: this poor woman had been a great sinner; her many sins were pardoned; and therefore she expressed much love to him, from whom she had received her pardon by the above actions, and much more than Simon had done: *but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little;* this is an accommodation of the other part of the parable, and has a very special respect to Simon, the Pharisee, whose debts, in his own opinion, were few or none, at least ten times less than this woman's; and he had little or no sense of the forgiveness of them, or of any obligation to Christ on that account; and therefore was very sparing of his love and respect, and even of common civilities to him.

Ver. 48. *And he saith unto her, &c.*] Directing his discourse to the woman that now stood before him: *thy sins are forgiven;* which was said, partly on account of the Pharisee, to let him see, that he knew this woman, what she was, and had been; that she had been a sinner, a great sinner, one that owed five hundred pence, but was now forgiven, washed, cleansed, sanctified, and justified, and therefore not to be shunned and avoided; and partly on the woman's account, that she might have a fresh discovery of the forgiveness of her sins, for her comfort under the severe censure of the Pharisee, and that her faith in it might be strengthened; as also on his own account, to shew that he was not only a prophet that had extraordinary knowledge of persons, and their characters, but that he was the most high God, to whom belonged the prerogative of pardoning sin.

Ver. 49. *And they that sat at meat with him, &c.*] Other Pharisees that sat at Simon's table with Christ, whom he had invited as guests, on this occasion of seeing and conversing with Jesus; or some of Simon's family, that sat down to eat with him; *began to say within themselves:* that is, either thought and reasoned in their own minds, or whispered among themselves: *who is this that forgiveth sins also?* who not content to transgress the traditions of the elders, by admitting a sinful woman to touch him, but assumes that to himself which is peculiar to God, to forgive sin: this they said, not as wondering at him, what manner of person he must be, that with such authority pronounced the forgiveness of sin, as Grotius thinks; but rather as offended with him, and filled with indignation against him, and so censuring and reproaching him for wickedness and blasphemy.

Ver. 50. *And he said to the woman, &c.*] Notwithstanding the Pharisee's censure, both of him and her: *thy faith hath saved thee;* meaning either the object of her faith, himself, who was the author of eternal salvation to her; or that she, through faith in him, had received the blessings of salvation, pardon, righteousness, and life from him, and the joys and comfort of it; and had both a right unto, and a meetness for eternal glory and happiness: *go in peace;* of conscience, and serenity of mind; let nothing disturb thee; nor the remembrance of past sins, which are all forgiven, nor the suggestions of Satan, who may, at one time or another, present them to view; nor the troubles and afflictions of this present life; which are all in love; nor the reproaches and censures of men of a pharisaic spirit: *go home to thy house, and about thy business, and cheerfully perform thy duty both to God and men; and when thou hast done thy generation-work, thou shalt enter into eternal peace and joy.*

C H A P. VIII.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass afterwards, &c.*] After Christ had healed the centurion's servant at Capernaum, and had raised a widow's son that was dead, to life, at Naim; after John's disciples had been with him, and he had dismissed them, and had said many

things in commendation of John, and in vindication both of him, and of himself; and after he had taken a meal in a Pharisee's house, where he met with a woman that had been a notorious sinner, who shewed great affection for him, which occasioned much dis-

course between him and the Pharisee: *that he went throughout every city and village*: that is, in Galilee, where he now was, as is clear from the foregoing chapter, and from what follows in this, see ver. 26. and besides, it was by the sea of Galilee that he delivered the following parable concerning the sower; see Matt. xiii. 1. *preaching, and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God*: of the Gospel dispensation, which was now taking place, and had been long expected; publishing the doctrines and mysteries of it, such as free and full remission of sins for his own sake, justification by his righteousness, acceptance in him the beloved son of God, and complete salvation by him as the Saviour of his people, than which nothing could be more welcome news, or better tidings; pointing out the ordinances of that dispensation, and shewing who were the proper subjects of them, and directing and encouraging such to submit unto them; as also signifying what the kingdom of grace lies in, not in meats and drinks, or any outward things, but in inward holiness, peace, and joy; and what is a meetness for entrance into the kingdom of glory, namely, regenerating grace; and what gives a right unto it, even a better righteousness than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, and which was no other than his own: *and the twelve were with him*; the twelve apostles, whom Christ had chose, and ordained as such: these attended him wherever he went, that they might be witnesses of his miracles, and learn his doctrines; that so they might be thoroughly furnished for their future ministry, both in Judea, and among the Gentiles.

Ver. 2. *And certain women which had been healed of evil spirits, &c.*] Of devils, who had possessed them, and were healed by Christ, dispossessing them; see the note on ch. vii. 21. *and infirmities*: various diseases of body: some were dispossessed of devils, and others freed from bodily disorders; of the first sort was *Mary Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils*; by the order of Christ, for he cast them out, Mark xvi. 9. and which shews, that this is to be understood, in a literal sense, of devils, and the dispossession of them by Christ; and not in a figurative sense, of vices, and the expulsion of them by the power of divine grace; for this same phrase is used where real dispossession is intended: nor need it be thought strange that seven devils should be in one person, when, in this same chapter, we read of a legion in one man, and which also Christ cast out, see ver. 30, 33, 35. This woman seems to be a different person from her spoken of in the latter part of the preceding chapter, seeing this looks as if it was the first time of her being taken notice of by this evangelist, and is described by a different character. She is called *Magdalene*, to distinguish her from others of the same name; the reason of which see in the note on Matt. xxvii. 56. She is said<sup>a</sup> to be a widow, and so not being bound to an husband, was at leisure to follow Christ.

Ver. 3. *And Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, &c.*] Joanna, or Juchan, as the Syriac version calls her, was a name, among the Jews, for a woman, as Jochanan, or John, was for a man. In the Talmud<sup>e</sup> we read of one Jochani, or Joanni, the daughter of Retibi, the same name with this. Her husband's name was Chuza. Dr. Lightfoot observes, from a Talmudic treatise<sup>f</sup>, such a name in the genealogy of Haman, who is called the son of Chuza; and Haman being an Edomite, and this man being in the family of Herod, who was of that race, suggests it to be an Idumean name. But in my edition of that treatise, Haman is not called the son of Chuza, but *בן כיוזא*, *the son of Ciza*; and besides, Chuza is a Jewish name, and the name of a family of note among the Jews: hence we read<sup>g</sup> of R. Broka the Chuzite; where the gloss is, *for he was, כבדו חוזאי, of the family of Chuzai*. And elsewhere<sup>h</sup> mention is made of two sons of Chuzai; and both the gloss, and Piske Harosh upon the place, say, *they were Jews*: so Abimi is said to be of the family of Chuzai, or the Chuzites<sup>i</sup>; and the same is said of R. Acha<sup>k</sup>. This man, here mentioned, was Herod's steward; a steward of Herod the tetrarch, of Galilee. The Arabic version calls him his *treasurer*; and the Vulgate Latin, and the Ethiopic versions, his *procurator*; and some have thought him to be a deputy governor of the province under him; but he seems rather to be a governor, or *chief of his house*, as the Syriac version renders it: he was one that presided in his family, and managed his domestic affairs; was an overseer of them, as Joseph was in Potiphar's house; and the same Greek word that is here used, is adopted by the Jews into their language, and used of Joseph<sup>l</sup>: and who moreover say<sup>m</sup>, "let not a man appoint a *steward* in his house; for if Potiphar had not appointed Joseph, *אפוטרופוס, a steward*, in his house, he had not come into that matter," of calumny and reproach. It was common for kings, princes, and great men, to have such an officer in their families. We read<sup>n</sup> of a steward of king Agrippa's, who was of this same family. The Persic version is very foreign to the purpose, making Chuza to be *of the family of Herod*. This man might be either dead, as some have conjectured; or, if living, might be secretly a friend of Christ, and so willing that his wife should follow him; or, if an enemy, such was her zeal for Christ, that she cheerfully exposed herself to all his resentments; and chose rather meanness, contempt, and persecution with Christ, and for his sake, than to enjoy all the pleasures of Herod's court without him. *And Susannah*; this also was a name for a woman with the Jews, as appears from the history of one of this name with them, which stands among the apocryphal writings. She, as well as Joanna, and perhaps also Mary Magdalene, were rich, and persons of substance, as well as note, as should seem by what follows: *and many others*; that is, many other women; for the words are of the feminine gender: *which mi-*

<sup>a</sup> Jerom in Mar. xv. 40.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Sota, fol. 99. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Maaschet Sophe rim, c. 13. sect. 6.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 92. 1.

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 92. 1.

<sup>f</sup> Juchasin, fol. 75. 1.

<sup>g</sup> Juchasin, fol. 78. 1.

<sup>h</sup> Targum Jon. & Jerus. in Gen. xxxix. 4.

<sup>i</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 63. 1. & Maimon. Issure Bia, c. 22. sect. 15. & Maggid Mish. in ib.

<sup>k</sup> T. Bab. Succa, fol. 97. 1.

nistered unto him of their substance; four ancient copies of Beza's, and five of Stephens's, and the Syriac version read, *which ministered unto them*; that is, to Christ, and his disciples, as the Persic version expresses it. This shews the gratitude of these women, who having received favours from Christ, both for their souls and bodies, make returns to him out of their worldly substance, in a way of thankfulness; and also the low estate of Christ, and his disciples, who stood in need of such ministrations; and may be an instruction to the churches of Christ to take care of their ministers, and to communicate in all good things to them, of whose spiritual things they partake; and may be a direction to them to minister to them of what is their own substance, and not another's; and to minister a proper part, and not the whole, as these women ministered to Christ, and his apostles, of substance which was their own, and that not all of it, but out of it.

Ver. 4. *And when much people were gathered together, &c.*] To Jesus, as he was by the sea-side, the sea of Galilee, or Tiberias: *and were come to him out of every city*; of Galilee, to hear him preach, and see his miracles: *he spake by a parable*; the following things.

Ver. 5. *A sower went out to sow his seed, &c.*] By whom Jesus Christ is chiefly designed; though it is true of every preacher of the Gospel, who goes forth, being sent by Christ, with the precious seed of the word: for the phrase, *his seed*, which only Luke has, best agrees with Christ, he being the proprietor and subject of it. The Alexandrian copy reads, *the seed of himself*. The Persic version reads the whole clause thus, *a sower chose ground, and there he sowed seed*: he fixed on the spot of ground to sow his seed in, as Christ did on the people of the Jews, and afterwards the Gentiles. *And, as he sowed, some fell by the way-side*; on the road, which was by the side of the field, in which people commonly walked, and so was beaten hard, and the seed lay upon it, and was not received; which designs such hearers of the word, as are not susceptible of it, don't take it in, and have no manner of understanding of it. *And it was trodden down*; by every one that passed by, as the Gospel preached to such hardened and ignorant hearers, is despised and trampled under foot by them. *And the fowls of the air devoured it*; who generally flock about places where seed is sowing; and here intend the devil and his angels, that have their dwelling in the air; and frequent places of public worship to hinder the usefulness of the ministry of the word, as much as in them lies.

Ver. 6. *And some fell upon a rock, &c.*] Which the other evangelists call *stony places*, and *stony ground*; by which are meant such hearers whose hearts are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and continue so notwithstanding the preaching of the word unto them. *And as soon as it sprung up*; as it did immediately, as the other evangelists say; and that for this reason, which they give, because *it had no depth of earth*; only a small crust, or shell of earth over the rock; and signifies, that these hearers had only a superficial knowledge of the word, and hastily made a profession of it, which soon came to nothing: *it withered away, because it lacked moisture*; the other evangelists say, *when the sun was up, it was scorched*;

meaning tribulation and persecution, the grace of God being wanting to support under fiery trials: the reason given in Matthew and Mark why it withered, is, *because it had no root*; and so read the Persic and Ethiopic versions here.

Ver. 7. *And some fell among thorns, &c.*] On ground, which had within it the roots of thorns and briars; and design such hearers who have their hearts filled with worldly cares, and sensual lusts and pleasures: *and the thorns sprang up with it*; and grew faster than that: *and choked it*; as the above things do the word, and make it useless and unprofitable; so that though it took place for a while, and was professed, yet in process of time was neglected and dropped; and, as Mark says, *it yielded no fruit*; at least that came to perfection.

Ver. 8. *And other fell on good ground, &c.*] The Syriac version reads, *on good and beautiful ground*; and so the Cambridge copy of Beza's; ground which both looked well, and proved well; and signifies such hearers who have good and honest hearts, made so by the spirit of God; who receive the word in the love of it, have a spiritual understanding, and real experience of it; *and sprang up, and bare fruit, an hundred fold*; or, *a hundred for one*, as the Syriac version renders it; a hundred grains for one that was sown. The Ethiopic version adds, *and it was to thirty, and it was to sixty*; that is, as the other evangelists say, *some thirty*, and *some sixty fold*; for the word of God is more fruitful in some of those gracious hearers, than in others: *and when he had said these things, he cried*; with a loud voice, that what he was about to say might be attended to: *he that hath ears to hear, let him hear*; see this parable more largely explained in the notes on Matt. xiii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

Ver. 9. *And his disciples asked him, &c.*] That is, as Mark says, *when he was alone*; after the multitude were departed, and they were by themselves, it may be in some house with other disciples: *saying, what might this parable be?* what is the sense and meaning of it? According to Matthew, they asked why he spake in parables to the people; and to such a question the following words are a proper answer.

Ver. 10. *And he said, unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, &c.*] The doctrines of the Gospel, which to have spiritual knowledge of, is a special and peculiar gift of God. The Vulgate Latin and Persic versions read, *the mystery*, in the singular, as in Mark: *but to others in parables*; that is, the doctrines of the Gospel are delivered in a parabolical way to others; to such as *are without*, as the Evangelist Mark expresses it, who are strangers and foreigners, and not children, who are not the favourites of heaven, and the disciples of Christ: *that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand*; what was delivered to them; see the notes on Matt. xiii. 11, 13, 14.

Ver. 11. *Now the parable is this, &c.*] Or *this is the sense of the parable*, as the Arabic version renders it: *the seed is the word of God*; the Gospel, as preached by Christ, his apostles, and faithful ministers, which has God for its author, is concerning the grace of God, and is what he blesses, and makes effectual to answer any good purpose.

Ver. 12. *Those by the way-side are they that hear, &c.*] The word of God, though only by accident, and very carelessly, and without understanding what they hear: *then cometh the devil*; signified by the fowls of the air: *and taketh away the word out of their hearts, or memories*; that little of it, which is retained there, and diverts their minds from it by other objects; so that they quite forget what they have heard; *lest they should believe, and be saved*: this clause is only in Luke; and with it may be compared 2 Cor. iv. 4. for with true faith in Christ the sum and substance of the word salvation is connected; and Satan being an enemy to the salvation of souls, does all he can to hinder their faith in him.

Ver. 13. *They on the rock are they, which when they hear, &c.*] The seed that fell upon the rock, or stony ground, signify such sort of hearers, *who receive the word with joy*. The Ethiopic version reads, *with joy of heart*. But this sort of hearers receive not the word into their hearts, or with their hearts believe it, and from their hearts obey it, only into their heads, and have only an historical faith of it; nor with hearty, spiritual, solid joy, or joy in the Holy Ghost: for their hearts remain like a rock, unbroken by the word; but with a flash of natural affection, which quickly goes off. *And these have no root*; neither in themselves, as the other evangelists say, they have no true grace in them; nor have they any root in Christ, nor in the love of God: *which for a while believe*: their faith is a temporary one, like that of Simon Magus; which shews it is not true faith; for that is an abiding grace, Christ, who is the author, is the finisher of it, and prays for it, that it fail not. The Persic version renders it, *in the time of hearing they have faith*; and such sort of hearers there are, who, whilst they are hearing, assent to what they hear, but when they are gone, either forget it, or, falling into bad company, are prevailed upon to doubt of it, and disbelieve it. The Arabic version renders it, *they believe for a small time*; their faith don't continue long, nor their profession of it, both are soon dropped: *and in the time of temptation fall away*: or *go back*, as the Vulgate Latin version, they draw back unto perdition; or *forsake that*, as the Arabic version reads, the word, they have heard, and received, their faith in it, and profession of it: *and soon become apostates*, as the Persic version renders it. *By the time of temptation*, is not meant any particular and sore temptation of Satan, but a time of affliction and persecution, as appears from the other evangelists; which is a trying time to professors of religion, and when those who have not the root of the matter in them, fall away.

Ver. 14. *And that which fell among thorns are they, &c.*] The seed that fell among thorns, or were sown on thorny ground, represent such hearers: *which, when they have heard, go forth*: from hearing the word to their worldly business; or go on in the pursuit of their worldly lusts and pleasures notwithstanding; for the word translated, *go forth*, belongs to the next clause; *and are choked with cares and riches, and pleasures of this life*: and with it to be read thus, *and going on in, or under*, that is, under the power and influence of, *the cares, and riches, and pleasures of life, they are choked*; to which agrees the Arabic version, which

renders it, *in which they walk, or which they follow*. The Vulgate Latin version is, *and from the cares, and riches, and pleasures of life, going, they are choked*: but it is not going from them, but going on in them, which chokes them, or suffocates the word they have heard, whereby it becomes of no effect; unless it should be rendered, *by the cares, &c. they are choked, and bring no fruit to perfection*: for what fruit such hearers do bring forth, in a way of profession, soon drops off, and perishes.

Ver. 15. *But that on the good ground are they, &c.*] The seed that fell on good ground design such hearers, *which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it*: who hear with an honest and good intention, and faithfully keep it, and hold it fast: *and bring forth fruit with patience*; with great constancy, suffering much for the sake of it; and the more they suffer, the more fruitful they are. See this explanation of the parable more largely insisted on in the notes on Matt. xiii. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.

Ver. 16. *No man, when he hath lighted a candle, &c.*] Christ by this, and some proverbial sentences following, observes to his disciples, that though the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven were delivered in parables for the present, that they might not be seen and understood by some; and though he gave to them the explanation of such parables, as of the above, in a private manner; yet his intention was not, that these things should always remain a secret with them; but as they were the lights of the world, they should communicate them to others; and that that light of the Gospel, and the knowledge of the doctrines of it, which he had imparted to them, were not to be retained and concealed in their bosoms, but to be diffused and spread among others: even as no man, when he lights a candle, *covereth it with a vessel*; any sort of vessel, as with a bushel, Matt. v. 15. see the note there; or with a bucket, or with a shell, as the Persic version here interprets, rather than translates: *or putteth it under a bed*; whether a bed to sleep on, or a couch to sit or lie upon at meals: *but setteth it on a candlestick*; a vessel, or instrument made for that use and purpose, to put and hold a candle in: *that they which enter in*; to the house, or room, where it is, *may see the light of it, and be enlightened by it*: even so it is the will of Christ, that what evangelical light and knowledge he bestows on any persons, they should not hide it, nor their gifts and talents, or keep it back from the view of others, but should hold it forth both in their preaching, and in their practice.

Ver. 17. *For nothing is secret that shall not be made manifest, &c.*] Meaning, whatever was then wrapped up in parables and dark sayings, or was secretly, and in a private manner, committed to them, should be made manifest by them to others hereafter: *neither any thing hid, that shall not be made known, and come abroad*; for what had been whispered to them, in the most secret and silent manner, was to come abroad not only in Judea, but in all the world, and to be published upon the house-tops; see the notes on Matt. x. 26, 27.

Ver. 18. *Take heed therefore how ye hear, &c.*] That ye hear not in a careless and negligent manner, since what truths and doctrines ye now hear with the ear,



are to be preached by you unto others: *for whosoever hath*; that is, hath knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel, and hath gifts and abilities to preach them to others: *to him shall be given*; more knowledge, and by using his gifts they shall be increased: *but he that hath not*; true, solid, spiritual knowledge of divine things, though he has had considerable advantages and opportunities of learning it, as the apostles especially had: *from him shall be taken, even that which he seemeth to have*; or that which he thinks he has, as the Syriac version renders it; that which he seemed to others to have, or thought himself he had: the knowledge he had of truth, and which was rather a shew of knowledge than real, shall be taken from him; his seeming gifts and parts shall die, and vanish away, and he shall be left to fall into ignorance, error, and heresy. Observe that this is to be understood not of internal grace, and experimental knowledge, but of speculative notions of the Gospel, and of external gifts; and so furnishes out no argument against the final perseverance of real saints; see the notes on Matt. xiii. 12. and xxv. 29.

Ver. 19. *Then came to him his mother and his brethren, &c.*] It was when Christ was preaching in an house at Capernaum, that Mary his mother, and some of his near kinsmen with her, came from Nazareth to him: these brethren of his were relations according to the flesh, either by Joseph, or his mother's side: who they were, can't be said with certainty: it may be they were Joses and Simon; for as for James and Judas, they were among the twelve apostles, and with him; and these are the four only persons that are mentioned by name, as his brethren, Matt. xiii. 55. though there were others that were so called, who did not believe in him, John vii. 5. *and could not come at him for the press*; the multitude of people that were about him, who were so thick, that there was no coming near him, much less was there an opportunity of speaking privately with him. The Syriac version renders it, *they could not speak unto him for the multitude.*

Ver. 20. *And it was told him by certain, which said, &c.*] The phrase, *which said*, is omitted in the Vulgate Latin version, and in Beza's most ancient copy. The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions only read, *and they said unto him*; and the Persic version renders it, *a certain person said*; some one person, as in Matt. xii. 47. *thy mother, and thy brethren, stand without, desiring to see thee*; and to speak with thee, as in Matt. xii. 47. see the note there.

Ver. 21. *And he answered and said unto them, &c.*] Not to his mother and brethren, but to those that told him of them; who either designed to reproach him with them, by reason of the meanness of them, or to interrupt him in his work: *my mother and my brethren are these*; pointing to his disciples: *which hear the word of God*; which he had been preaching, and was meant by the seed in the preceding parable: *and do it*; behave in their lives and conversations agreeably to it; and observe the precepts and ordinances in it; elsewhere called the will of God his father; see the notes on Matt. xii. 49, 50.

Ver. 22. *Now it came to pass on a certain day, &c.*] The same day at even, as Mark says, ch. iv. 35. in which he delivered the parables of the sower, and of

the seed cast into the ground, and of the grain of mustard-seed: *that he went into a ship with his disciples*; they following him into it, as in Matt. viii. 23. *and he said unto them, let us go over unto the other side of the lake*; of Gennesareth, or sea of Galilee: *and they launched forth*; into the sea; they set sail, and proceeded: this clause is omitted in the Syriac and Persic versions.

Ver. 23. *But as he sailed he fell asleep, &c.*] On a pillow, in the hinder part of the ship, as in Mark iv. 38. *and there came down a storm of wind on the lake*, see the note on Matt. viii. 24. *and they were filled*; with water; not the disciples, but the ship in which they were; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *their ship was filled with water.* The Syriac and Persic versions render it, *the ship was almost sunk*, or immersed: *and were in jeopardy*; of their lives, in the utmost danger, just ready to go to the bottom. This clause is left out in the Syriac and Persic versions.

Ver. 24. *And they came to him, and awoke him, &c.*] That is, the disciples came from some part of the ship, to the hinder part of it, where Christ was asleep; and by their shrieks and cries, and repeated vociferations, awaked him out of sleep: *saying, Master, Master, we perish.* The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, only read *master*, without a repetition of the word, as in Matthew and Mark; but the Syriac and Persic versions repeat it, and render the words, *our master, our master*; see the note on Matt. viii. 25. *Then he arose, and rebuked the wind, and the raging of the water, and they ceased, and there was a calm*; see the note on Matt. viii. 26.

Ver. 25. *And he said unto them, where is your faith? &c.*] That is, he said so to his disciples, who had professed faith in him, but now discovered very little: *and they being afraid, wondered*; being filled with an awful sense of his majesty, were amazed at his power and authority, in rebuking the wind and sea, which at once obeyed him, and were still: *saying one to another*; among themselves, privately: *what manner of man is this? for he commandeth even the winds and water*; or the sea, as the Vulgate Latin. The Syriac version reads both, *the floods and the sea*; and *they obey him*: according to Matthew, these words seem to be spoken by the men of the ship, the mariners; but here, according to Luke, they seem to be the words of the disciples; see the notes on Matt. viii. 27. and Mark iv. 41.

Ver. 26. *And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, &c.*] In Matt. viii. 28. it is called the *country of the Gergesenes*, see the note there, as it is here, in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions; and *of the Gerasenes*, in the Vulgate Latin; but the Syriac and Persic versions read, *of the Gadarenes*, as in Mark v. 1. see the note there: *which is over-against Galilee*: from whence the ship launched, and Christ and his disciples came.

Ver. 27. *And when he went forth to land, &c.*] The Persic and Ethiopic versions read, *when they went forth to land*; when Christ and his disciples came out of the ship, and went ashore: *there met him out of the city a certain man*; or rather there met him a certain man of the city; that is, one that belonged to, and was an inhabitant of Gadara, or some city thereabout; who had been born and brought up, and had lived there;

for certain it is, that he did not now come out of the city, but out of the tombs, as in Matt. viii. 28. Mark v. 2. and to which agrees the account of him, that follows here; in the Vulgate Latin version, these words, *out of the city*, are omitted; which the interpreter not understanding, might leave out, as carrying in it a seeming contradiction to the accounts of him: *which had devils long time*. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Arabic versions, read in the singular number, *which had a devil*; and which agrees with ver. 29. for though more are after mentioned, yet the many might be under one head, and chief of them; but in all the copies 'tis read in the plural number, *devils*; and to this agrees the name of legion, for there were many devils in him, and they had a possession of him a long time, which aggravates the miserable condition of this man, and illustrates the power of Christ, in freeing him from them: *and wore no clothes*; but went naked, and when any were put upon him, would tear them in pieces: *neither abode in any house, but in the tombs*: see the note on Mark v. 3.

Ver. 28. *When he saw Jesus, &c.*] Even afar off, at some considerable distance, he ran towards him, Mark v. 6. *He cried out, and fell down before him*; that is, the man possessed with the devil did so, under his impulse, and through his agitation of him: *and with a loud voice said*; which was the unclean spirit in the man: *what have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of God, most high? I beseech thee torment me not; i. e. before the time*; see the note on Matt. viii. 29.

Ver. 29. *For he had commanded the unclean spirit, &c.*] That had the rest of the devils under his authority, and power, to come out of the man; this he had done, either before, or just as he came up to him; see the note on Mark v. 8. *For oftentimes it had caught him*; possessed him, and wrought so strongly in him, and with so much fury, that there was no governing him: *and he was kept bound with chains and fetters*; attempts were made to bind him, and keep him bound, but in vain: *and he brake the bands*; see Mark v. 4. *And was driven of the devil into the wilderness*; into some desert and desolate place, where were the tombs and sepulchres of the dead; this was done by the prince of the legion.

Ver. 30. *And Jesus asked him, saying, what is thy name? &c.*] This question was put, not out of ignorance in Christ, but for the sake of those that were with him; and partly, that the miserable condition of this man might be the more known; and partly, that his own power might be the more manifest in the dispossession: *and he said, legion, because many devils were entered into him*; see the note on Mark v. 9.

Ver. 31. *And they besought him, &c.*] That is, all the devils, the whole legion of them, entreated Jesus, under whose power, and at whose dispose they were: *that he would not command them to go out into the deep*; meaning, not the deep waters of the sea, for thither they ran the swine at their own request; but the bottomless pit of hell, where others of these spirits lay in chains of darkness; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *into hell*: they desired, that when they went out of this man, they might not be ordered thither, or remanded to their former prison; for they knew that if he gave the word of command,

they must obey; but that they might be suffered to continue in that country, and range about on earth, or be any where, rather than in hell.

Ver. 32. *And there was there an herd of many swine, &c.*] About two thousand, Mark v. 13. *Feeding on the mountain*; see the note on Mark v. 11. *And they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them*; which they could not do, without his leave: *and he suffered them*; see the notes on Mark v. 12, 13.

Ver. 33. *Then went the devils out of the man, &c.*] Being obliged by the power of Christ, sore against their wills, having had possession of him a long time: *and entered into the swine*; possessed them: *and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake*: that is, of Gennesareth; or the sea, as the Syriac and Persic versions read; that is, the sea of Galilee, the same with the former: *and were choked*; in the waters, and died, as the Ethiopic version adds.

Ver. 34. *When they that fed them saw what was done, &c.*] That the devils went out of the man possessed by them, and entered into the herd of swine, which becoming mad therewith, ran furiously down the precipice into the sea, and were drowned: *they fled*; as persons affrighted, at these uncommon and surprising events, and as afraid to see their owners: *and went and told it in the city*; that is, of Gadara, or some other city near at hand; the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, *in the cities*; in all the cities round about, in that country: *and in the country, or fields, in the villages adjacent, and in the houses which were scattered about in the fields for conveniency, for rural business*.

Ver. 35. *Then they went out to see what was done, &c.*] That is, the inhabitants of the city, or cities and villages, and houses in the fields; these went out from their respective places of abode, to see with their own eyes, what the swineherds had related to them, concerning the man that had been possessed with devils, and what was become of the swine: *and came to Jesus*; where he was, which was not far from the sea-shore: *and found the man out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus*; quiet and serene, in an humble posture, and as a disciple of Christ, receiving instructions from him: *clothed, and in his right mind, and they were afraid*; see the note on Mark v. 15.

Ver. 36. *They also which saw it, &c.*] The disciples of Christ, or the men of the ship, or persons who lived hard by in the fields, who were eye-witnesses of these several things: *told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed*; see the note on Mark v. 16.

Ver. 37. *Then the whole multitude, &c.*] For it seems a very large number of people were presently gathered together, from all parts of the country, upon the report of the swineherds, who fled, 'tis very likely, some one way, and some another: *of the country of the Gadarenes round about*; of the country that was round about Gadara. The Vulgate Latin reads, of the Gerasenes; and the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, of the Gergesenes: and they all, with one accord, *besought him to depart from them, for they were taken with great fear*: lest they should suffer other and greater losses, than the loss of the swine; choosing rather that the devils should be retained among them, than Christ

continue with them: *and he went up into the ship*; directly, granted their request at once; not desirous of staying with such an ungrateful people, that loved their swine more than him, yea, than the bodily health and welfare of their countrymen: *and he returned back again*; to Galilee, at least in a very little time, after some short discourse with the dispossessed man; having staid but a very small time in that place, just landed as it were, and not having proceeded far from the seashore.

Ver. 38. *Now the man out of whom the devils were departed, &c.*] Sensible of the power of Christ, and of the favour he had received from him, was of a quite different mind from his countrymen: and *besought him that he might be with him*; see the note on Mark v. 18. *But Jesus sent him away*; from him, into the country: *saying*, as follows.

Ver. 39. *Return to thine own house, &c.*] Which very likely was in the city of Gadara, whither he went, and throughout the whole of which he published the account of the dispossession of the devils from him: Mark adds, *to thy friends*; relations, acquaintance, and countrymen: *and shew how great things God hath done unto thee*; for none but God could effect such things, tacitly suggesting to him hereby, that he himself was God. Mark adds, *and hath had compassion on thee*; signifying, that what he had done for him, did not arise from merit in the man; but from mercy in himself; see the note on Mark v. 19. *And he went his way*: he obeyed the orders of Christ, as love and gratitude obliged him: *and published throughout the whole city*; of Gadara, and not only there, but in the rest of the ten cities, called Decapolis, Mark v. 20. one of which was this of Gadara, as Pliny relates<sup>p</sup>: *how great things Jesus had done unto him*; having cast out a legion of devils from him, clothed him, and brought him to his right mind; and had not only delivered his body from a diabolical possession, but had given him spiritual and saving instructions for his soul, on which he had wrought a real work of grace.

Ver. 40. *And it came to pass, that when Jesus was returned, &c.*] From the country of the Gadarenes, to the other side of the sea of Tiberias, to Galilee; and particularly to his own city, Capernaum; see Matt. ix. 1. *The people gladly received him*; who were of a different cast from those he had just left; being sensible of the benefits they received from him, both by his ministry and miracles; and which was the reason of their receiving him with so much joy and gladness: *for they were all waiting for him*: on the shore, looking out very eagerly for him, being earnestly desirous of his speedy return to them; having many that wanted his assistance, both for their souls and bodies, of which the following are instances.

Ver. 41. *And behold, there came a man named Jairus, &c.*] See the note on Mark v. 22. *and he was a ruler of the synagogue*; at Capernaum; and it was the more remarkable, that such an one should come to Christ, and express any regard to his person, or faith in his power, and therefore a *behold* is prefixed to this account; see the note on Matt. ix. 18. *And he fell down at Jesus' feet*; shewing great reverence and humility,

and as Matthew says, *worshipped him*; if not in a religious, yet in a civil way: *and besought him that he would come into his house*; which was at some distance from thence, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 42. *For he had one only daughter, &c.*] And so exceedingly dear to him: *about twelve years of age*; see the note on Matt. ix. 18. *And she lay a dying*, or *was near death*, as the Syriac and Persic versions; or *was just ready to die*, as the Ethiopic version. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it, *she was dead*, or *now dead*, and which agrees with Matt. ix. 18. see the note there: *but as he went*; along the streets of Capernaum, from Matthew's house; where he had been entertained with his disciples, and others, and where he had a conversation with some of the Pharisees and John's disciples, to the ruler's house: *the people thronged him*; such a vast multitude followed him to see the cure, that he was even crowded, and so pressed on all sides, that it was difficult to walk along.

Ver. 43. *And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, &c.*] The Persic version reads, *there was a woman in that city, &c. in the city of Capernaum*; see the note on Matt. ix. 20. *Which had spent all her living upon physicians*; she had applied to one physician and another, and had consumed all her substance in this way: *neither could be healed of any*; though she had followed the directions and prescriptions of many, who pretended they were able to cure her; see the note on Mark v. 26.

Ver. 44. *Came behind him, &c.*] In the press and crowd of people, being ashamed to come before him, and tell him her case: *and touched the border of his garment*; the fringe the Jews were obliged to wear at the bottom of their garments, Numb. xv. 38. Deut. xxii. 12. and which the more religious sort did, for by this they were distinguished from the common people: 'tis asked<sup>p</sup>, "who is a plebeian, or one of the common people? every one that does not read *Keriat Shema*, (i. e. *hear, O Israel, &c.* Deut. vi. 4.) morning and evening, with the blessings belonging to it, the words of R. Meir: but the wise men say, whoever does not put on the *Tephillin* (the frontlets, Deut. vi. 8.) Ben Azzai says, whoever has not *ציצית*, the fringe on his garment;" see the note on Matt. ix. 20. This woman was persuaded in her own mind, if she could but touch the clothes of Christ, she should be healed, and accordingly she was: *and immediately her issue of blood stauched*; stopped, and was dried up; see Mark v. 28, 29.

Ver. 45. *And Jesus said, who touched me? &c.*] This he said, not as ignorant of the person that had done it, but in order to discover her to the people, and the cure she had received, as well as her faith; see the note on Mark v. 30. *When all denied*; both the disciples and the multitude, as many as were near him, and who might be thought to have done it; all excepting the woman, who afterwards came and declared it; for it is very likely, that as soon as she had touched his garment, and got her cure, she drew further off: *Peter, and they that were with him*; the rest of the disciples, who were in company together, as appears from Mark v. 31. *Said, Master, the multitude*

<sup>p</sup> Lib. 5. c. 18.

<sup>p</sup> T. Bab Sucea, fol. 22. 1.

through thee, and press thee, and sayest thou, who touched me? or my garment, as the Ethiopic version reads; see the note on Mark v. 31.

Ver. 46. *And Jesus said, somebody hath touched me, &c.*] Not in a common and accidental way, but with design, and in the strength of faith: *for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me*: for the cure of the person that had touched him, and that not without his knowledge and will; see ch. vi. 19.

Ver. 47. *And when the woman saw that she was not hid, &c.*] From Christ, among the crowd, nor the thing that she had done. The Syriac and Arabic versions render it, *that he had not forgot her*; she hoping he would be diverted from taking any notice of her and her action, through the crowd of people about him; *she came trembling*: for fear of the anger and resentment of Christ, and lest the favour should be revoked, and the penalty of the law inflicted; see the note on Mark v. 33. *And falling down before him*; in the most humble manner, *at his feet*, as the Arabic version reads; and *worshipped him*, as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions have it; gave him the glory of the cure, and thanks for it: *she declared unto him before all the people*; the whole truth of the matter, what a disease she had laboured under for so long a time, what means she had used to no purpose: *for what cause she had touched him*; namely, in order to have a cure, which she believed she should have in that way: *and how she was healed immediately*; as soon as ever she had touched him.

Ver. 48. *And he said unto her, daughter, &c.*] Instead of frowning upon her, and chiding her for what she had done, he addressed her in a very affable and affectionate manner; bidding her *be of good comfort*; and not be afraid; this clause is left out in the Vulgate Latin version, as in Mark v. 34. but is in the copies, and other versions: *thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace*; see the notes on Matt. viii. 2. Mark v. 34. Luke vii. 50.

Ver. 49. *While he yet spake, &c.*] The above words to the woman; *there cometh one*: Mark suggests there were more than one, ch. v. 35. see the note there; and the Persic version here reads, *some of the ruler's family came*; that is, to him, who was now with Jesus: *from the ruler of the synagogue's house*; so the word *house* is supplied by the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; otherwise the words would be, *from the ruler of the synagogue*; which could not be, since he was still with Christ: hence some versions, as the Vulgate and Arabic, render them, *to the ruler of the synagogue*; and which give a true sense, and a right view of the case; for this messenger both came from his house, and to him: *saying to him, thy daughter is dead, trouble not the master*; to bring him any further, since all hope of help was now gone. The Vulgate Latin version, instead of *master*, reads *him*; and the Ethiopic version, *Jesus*.

Ver. 50. *But when Jesus heard it, &c.*] The message that was brought to the ruler, and the hint that was given, that it was needless to give him any further trouble: *he answered him*; not the messenger, but *the father of the child*, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read: *saying, fear not*: don't be dismayed at this message, nor despair of help, not-

withstanding such is the case: *believe only, and she shall be made whole*; exercise faith in me, that I am able to raise her from the dead, and I will do it; and she shall be restored to life, and to perfect health and strength again.

Ver. 51. *And when he came into the house, &c.*] Of the ruler of the synagogue; *he suffered no man to go in*: to the room, where the dead body lay: *save Peter, James and John*; not one of the multitude that followed him, nor any of the disciples, but these three; who were his favourite ones, and were a sufficient number to be witnesses of the miracle: *and the father and mother of the maiden*; these also were admitted. The Persic version very wrongly joins these last words with the beginning of the next verse, reading them thus, *the father and mother of the maiden, with the domestics, wept and bewailed her*.

Ver. 52. *And all wept and bewailed her, &c.*] Not only her relations and friends, and the servants of the house, but the mourning women, that were hired on this occasion, and employed for this purpose: *but he said, weep not*; neither in shew, as the mourning women did, nor in reality, as the friends of the deceased: *she is not dead, but sleepeth*; see the notes on Matt. ix. 24. Mark v. 39.

Ver. 53. *And they laughed him to scorn, &c.*] The servants, neighbours, and relations, the pipers, and mourning women: these, from weeping for the dead, fell to laughing at Christ, having him and his words in the utmost derision: *knowing that she was dead*; some of them having been employed in laying her out, and all of them having seen her, and were satisfied, and thoroughly assured, that she was actually dead, as ever any person was, as she doubtless was; but they were ignorant in what sense Christ meant she was not dead, but asleep; see the notes as before.

Ver. 54. *And he put them all out, &c.*] Of the room, where the maiden lay, all the mourners and pipers; all excepting the parents of the child, and his three disciples. This clause is left out in the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions; nor was it in two of Beza's ancient copies, and in two of Stephens's; but in the rest, and in the other versions: *and took her by the hand, and called, saying*: in the Syriac language, *Talitha cumi*, as in Mark v. 41. *Maid, arise*; see the note there.

Ver. 55. *And her spirit came again, &c.*] Her soul, which was departed from her, upon the all-powerful voice of Christ, returned to her body; and *re-entered*, as the Ethiopic version adds: this shews that the soul is immortal, and dies not with the body; that it exists in a separate state from it after death, and will hereafter re-enter the body, and be again united to it in the resurrection, of which this instance was a kind of pledge and emblem: where her spirit was during this time of separation, is needless, and would be curious and rash to inquire; it is enough to say with the Scripture, that it had returned to God, that gave it, Eccles. xii. 7. and by whom it was sent back to its body again: *and she arose straightway*: from off the bed, and as Mark says, *walked*; for she was at an age capable of it, and which actions of arising and walking, clearly proved that she was alive, and in health: *and he commanded to give her meat*; which was done, partly to

shew, not only that she was alive, but that her disorder was removed, and her appetite restored, and that she could eat and drink, as she had done before her illness; and partly, to observe that she was raised not to an immortal life, as none were before Christ, but to an animal life, which was to be supported by eating and drinking, and so a mortal one; see the note on Mark v. 43.

Ver. 56. *And her parents were astonished, &c.*] At the miracle that was wrought, to see their child restored to life; to see her arise, walk, and eat, being in perfect health and strength, and no disorder attending her; but he charged them that they should tell no man what

was done. The Ethiopic version reads, *what he had done, nor any thing that was done* not that the thing itself could be concealed, but the way and manner in which, and the means by which it was done, and the circumstances of it; how that by taking her by the hand, and commanding her to arise, she forthwith arose, and walked and ate: Christ's meaning is, that he would not have them take any pains to publish this affair, or to make it more known than was necessary; not to acquaint any person with the particulars of it, but keep them as private as they could: his reasons for this, see in the note on Mark v. 43.

## C H A P. IX.

Ver. 1. *THEN he called his twelve disciples together, &c.*] The Persian version reads, *all his twelve disciples*: the other nine, besides the three that were with him, when he raised Jairus's daughter, recorded in the foregoing chapter; the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, *the twelve apostles*, for so Christ had named his disciples; see ch. vi. 13. The Syriac version only reads, *his own twelve*; and this is agreeably to Luke's way of speaking; see ch. viii. 1. and ix. 12. *And gave them power and authority over all devils*: that is, all kinds of devils, particularly to cast them out of the bodies of men, possessed by them: *and to cure diseases*: of all sorts.

Ver. 2. *And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, &c.*] The Gospel, which gives an account of the kingdom of the Messiah; of his kingly office and power; of his church, which is his kingdom, and of the government of it, by the ministration of the word, and the administration of ordinances; of the kingdom of grace in the hearts of Christ's subjects, and the nature of it; and of the kingdom of glory, and what is the saints' meetness for it, and right unto it: *and to heal the sick*; of every disease of body, and thereby confirm their mission and commission from Christ, to preach the Gospel, and recommend it to men.

Ver. 3. *And he said unto them, take nothing for your journey, &c.*] Throughout the towns and cities of Judea, where they were sent to preach the Gospel: *neither staves*. The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read in the singular number, *neither staff*, rod, or club; and so it was in one of Beza's ancient copies, but in all the rest in the plural, as in Matthew; which last must be the true reading, since one staff was allowed, according as in Mark vi. 8. though more than one were forbidden: *nor scrip*; or bag to put provision in; see the note on Matt. x. 10. *Neither bread, neither money*; gold, silver, or brass, to buy bread with; because they were to have it, wherever they came, given them, as their due, and the reward of their labour; *neither have two coats apiece*; the word *apiece* is left out in one copy, nor is it expressed in the Vulgate Latin and the eastern versions, which read as in Matt. x. 10. though the word does aptly and clearly express the sense of the prohibition, which was not that they should not have two coats among them, but not two apiece; or

each man should not have two, or have change of raiment; see the note on Matt. x. 10.

Ver. 4. *And whatsoever house ye enter into, &c.*] In any town, or city, they should come to in their journey through Judea, and should enter into for the sake of lodging, during their stay: *there abide*: don't shift quarters, or move from house to house: *and thence depart*; the house you come into first, go out of last, when ye leave the town or city. The Vulgate Latin and Persian versions read, *and thence do not depart*; and so Beza says 'tis read in a certain copy, but then the sense is the same, as the Ethiopic version renders it, *do not go out from thence, until ye depart*; that is, don't leave the house, till you depart out of the town or city; agreeably to which is the Arabic version, *remain in it until the time of your going out*; see the note on Matt. x. 11.

Ver. 5. *And whosoever will not receive you, &c.*] Into their houses: *when ye go out of the city*; where lodging and entertainment are refused you; *shake off the very dust from your feet, for a testimony against them*; see the notes on Matt. x. 14. and Mark vi. 11.

Ver. 6. *And they departed, &c.*] That is, the apostles, as the Syriac and Persian versions express it: they went from Christ, and the place where he was, from Capernaum, at least from some place in Galilee: *and went through the towns*; the Syriac, Persian, and Ethiopic versions add, *and cities*; that is, of Judea, as well as Galilee, even the whole land of Israel: *preaching the Gospel*; which explains what is meant by the kingdom of God, ver. 2. *and healing every where*; all sorts of bodily diseases, wherever they came.

Ver. 7. *Now Herod the tetrarch, &c.*] Of Galilee, and who is called a king in Mark vi. 14. as he is here in the Ethiopic version: *heard of all that was done by him*; of all the miracles that were wrought by Christ, and his apostles; the fame of which were the more spread through the mission of the apostles, and the journey they took through all the towns and cities of Galilee, which were in Herod's jurisdiction; by which means he, and his court, came to the knowledge of them, the whole country ringing with the account of the same: *and he was perplexed*; anxious, and distressed, not knowing well what to think of Christ, and the different sentiments of men about him: he was

afraid lest he should be John the Baptist risen from the dead, whom he had beheaded: he hesitated about it at first, though he afterwards was fully persuaded, in his own mind, that it was he, as some affirmed; and this gave him great uneasiness, and filled him with distress and horror: *because that it was said of some that John was risen from the dead*; and he began to fear it was true, though willing to disbelieve it, at least to make a question of it, especially in public; though in private, to his own family and servants, he was free to tell his mind.

Ver. 8. *And of some, that Elias had appeared, &c.*] Who had been translated, body and soul, to heaven, and whom the Jews expected a little before the coming of the Messiah: *and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again*: that is, one of the former prophets. It is well known, that the Jews distinguish the prophets into the former and latter; the books of the prophets of the Old Testament are so distinguished; the writings of the former prophets are those of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 of Samuel, and the first and second of Kings: the latter prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, which are the greater prophets, and the twelve lesser ones: and in the Talmud 'tis asked, "who are *נביאים הראשונים, the former prophets?*" Says R. "Huna, they are David, Samuel, and Solomon—and "why are they called former prophets? to except (or "distinguish) them from Haggai, Zachariah, and "Malachi, who are the latter." So that by one of the old prophets, may be meant one of those that were before the times of Elias, as Samuel or David.

Ver. 9. *And Herod said, John have I beheaded, &c.*] That is, he had ordered him to be beheaded, and which was accordingly done by the executioner; of which he had full proof, since the head was brought him in a charger, and which he delivered to the daughter of Herodias: *but who is this of whom I hear such things?* such wonderful things, such amazing miracles, as were done by Christ: he seems to have reasoned after this manner with himself, surely this can't be John, for I have beheaded him! and yet who should it be? and whereas some affirmed, that it was John that was risen from the dead, he began to fear that it was he; *and he desired to see him*: that he might be satisfied whether it was he or no; for he had had personal knowledge of John, and converse with him, and therefore, upon sight of him, could tell whether it was he that was risen from the dead, or no; but we don't find Herod had a sight of Christ, until he was sent by Pilate to him at Jerusalem; see Luke xxiii. 7, 8.

Ver. 10. *And the apostles, when they were returned, &c.*] From the several parts of the land where they had been sent, and had been preaching and working miracles, having gone through their circuit, and finished the service they were sent to do: *told him all they had done*; what doctrines they had taught, how they had been received, and what success they met with, what miracles they had wrought, how they had dispossessed devils, and healed all sorts of diseases: *and he took them and went aside privately*: by ship, over some part of the sea of Galilee; see Mark vi. 32. *into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida*;

the city of Andrew and Peter, John i. 44, and which, as Josephus<sup>r</sup> says, was by the lake of Genesareth, and by Philip called Julias; and this desert place was the desert of Bethsaida, a lonely, wild, uncultivated, and desolate place, not far from it. Hither Christ went with his disciples, that they might be retired and alone, and have some refreshment and rest from their labours, and where they might privately converse together; and he gave them some fresh instructions, and directions, and comfort.

Ver. 11. *And the people, when they knew it, &c.*] Having heard of his departure from others, and seeing him go off themselves: *followed him*; not by ship, but on foot, going over the bridge at Chanmath of Gadara, and got thither before Christ and his disciples did: *and he received them*; very kindly, and in a very affectionate manner, and with great respect, though they had prevented the private interview between him and his apostles; *and he spake unto them of the kingdom of God*; of the Gospel dispensation, now setting up, and of the doctrines and ordinances of it, of the governing principle of grace in the hearts of his people, and of the glory of the world to come: *and healed them that had need of healing*; for their bodies; as well as preached the doctrines of grace for the good of their souls; he both taught doctrine and wrought miracles.

Ver. 12. *When the day began to wear away, &c.*] Or *to decline*, as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions; or *to incline*, as the Syriac; that is, as the Ethiopic version renders it, *when the sun was declining towards the horizon*, and was almost set; or *when the evening-time was come*, as the Persic version: *then came the twelve*; that is, the disciples, as the Persic version; or *his disciples*, as the Syriac: and *said unto him, send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about*; the place where they were, round about the city of Bethsaida, the several adjacent houses in the fields, villages, towns, and cities: *and lodge, and get victuals*; where they might have lodging for that night, it being too far for them to reach their habitations that evening; and also that they might provide themselves with proper and sufficient food, which was not to be had in the place where they were: *for we are here in a desert place*; which afforded no conveniency for lodging, nor any supply of food.

Ver. 13. *And he said to them, give ye them to eat, &c.*] Signifying, that it was not his will to dismiss the people, and send them scattering abroad into the adjacent cities, towns, or houses; and that there was no need of it, but that his will was, that they should be supplied with provisions out of their stock: *and they said, we have no more than five loaves and two fishes*; and these loaves were barley loaves, and the fishes small, John vi. 9. *except we should go and buy meat for all this people*; which would at least cost them two hundred pence; and which they represent as impossible to be done, either through want of so much money, or the scarcity of provision in those parts; where, had they money, it would be difficult, at least to get such a quantity of provisions at once, which so great a number of persons required.

<sup>r</sup> T. Bab. Sota, fol. 48. 2.

<sup>r</sup> Antiqu. l. 18. c. 3.

Ver. 14. *For they were about five thousand men, &c.] Beside women and children, Matt. xiv. 21. and he said to his disciples, make them to sit down by fifties in a company; and by hundreds also; some companies had a hundred apiece in them, and others fifty; and which was done partly for the more easy numbering of them, and partly and chiefly for the more convenient distribution of food to them; see Mark vi. 39, 40.*

Ver. 15. *And they did so, and made them all sit down.] The disciples did not dispute the case any longer with Christ, but obeyed his orders, and ranged the multitude in companies, a hundred in one, and fifty in another; and ordered them to sit down in their distinct companies and ranks upon the green grass. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, and they all sat down; and so it is read in some copies of the Vulgate Latin version.*

Ver. 16. *Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, &c.] Into his hands, being brought him by the disciples from the lad that had them: and looking up to heaven: to his father there, from whom all the mercies and blessings of life come; he blessed them; either asked, or commanded a blessing on them, that they might multiply and increase, that there might be a sufficiency for all the people, and that they might be nourishing to them. Beza observes, that in his most ancient copy 'tis read, he blessed upon them; which perfectly agrees with the Jewish way of speaking, בָּרַךְ עַל הַפֶּתַח, he that blesseth upon the bread; בָּרַךְ עַל הַדֵּיין, he that blesseth upon the wine; and so upon the fruits of trees, and upon the fruits of the earth, and upon other things; and brake; the loaves, and divided the fishes into parts: and gave to the disciples to eat before the multitude; as they sat in ranks, and in their distinct companies.*

Ver. 17. *And they did eat, and were all filled, &c.] Every one had a part, and enough: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them, twelve baskets: see the note on Matt. xiv. 20.*

Ver. 18. *And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, &c.] To his God and father, for himself as man, and mediator; for the success of his Gospel, and the increase of his interest; and for his disciples, that they might have a clearer revelation of him; and which they had, as appears in their after-confession of him by Peter, as the mouth of them all. The place where he now retired for private devotion, was somewhere in the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi; for he was now gone from the desert of Bethsaida, as appears from Matt. xvi. 13. and when he is said to be alone, the meaning is, that he was retired from the multitude, but not from his disciples; for it follows, his disciples were with him, in this solitary place: and he asked them, being with them alone; saying, whom say the people that I am? what are the sentiments of the common people, or of the people in general concerning me? The Alexandrian copy, and the Arabic version read, men, as in Matt. xvi. 13. see the note there.*

Ver. 19. *They answering said, John the Baptist, &c.] This was the opinion of some who thought that he was risen from the dead, as in ver. 7. but some say*

*Elias; the prophet, and the Tishbite; who, according to the Jewish notion, was to be the forerunner of the Messiah, so in ver. 8. and others say that one of the old prophets is risen again; see the note on ver. 8. and thus were they divided in their sentiments about him.*

Ver. 20. *He said unto them, but whom say ye that I am? &c.] Which was the main thing he had in view in this private conference; and in order to introduce which, he puts the former question; Peter answering: in the name of the rest of the disciples, they assenting to it: said, the Christ of God; see the note on ch. ii. 26. The Persic version reads, Christ God; the Messiah, who is the son of God, and God over all, blessed for ever. The Cambridge copy of Beza's reads, the Christ, the son of God.*

Ver. 21. *And he strictly charged them, and commanded them, &c.] Though he highly approved of this their confession, and pronounced Peter blessed upon it; and signified that it was a discovery which flesh and blood could not make, but what was made to him by his father: yet he gave them a strict charge, and laid his commands on them, to tell no man that thing; that he was the Messiah, and the eternal son of God, and the true God, as well as the son of man, and really man: the reasons for this see in the note on Matt. xvi. 20.*

Ver. 22. *Saying, the son of man must suffer many things, &c.] In his person and character, in his soul and body, at the hands of God, and of men, and devils: and be rejected of the elders, and chief priests, and Scribes; who made up the grand sanhedrim of the nation: by these he was to be, and was rejected as the Messiah; and when put up with another which should be released, that other should be preferred, and he rejected; and which was done at the instigation of these men, who were the builders; of whom it was foretold that they should reject the head-stone of the corner, Psal. cxviii. 22. and be slain; or put to death, with the death of the cross: and be raised the third day; according to the types and prophecies of the Old Testament. This he added for the comfort of his disciples.*

Ver. 23. *And he said to them all, &c.] Not only to all the disciples, but to the multitude, as the Arabic version renders it, who were now called unto him, with his disciples, as is clear from Mark viii. 34. if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me; the same is said here, as in Matt. xvi. 24. Mark viii. 34. see the notes there; only here the word daily is added; and which, though as Beza observes, is not in the Complutensian edition, nor in five ancient copies; yet is in others, and in the Vulgate Latin, and in all the Oriental versions; and to be retained, as having a very considerable emphasis in it; shewing that afflictions, trials, and persecutions of one sort or another, are to be expected every day by the people of God, and to be continually submitted to, and borne with cheerfulness.*

Ver. 24. *For whosoever will save his life, &c.] See the note on Matt. xvi. 25.*

Ver. 25. *For what is a man advantaged if he gain the whole world, &c.] Or what profit will it be unto*

him? all the honours, riches, and enjoyments of it will be of no use and service to him if he himself is lost: *and lose himself*; or his own soul; for he that loses his soul, which is his better and immortal part, loses himself: *or be cast away*; finally, and eternally, or *suffer loss* of eternal happiness and glory; that is, perishes, and is destroyed with an everlasting destruction; see the note on Matt. xvi. 26.

Ver. 26. *For whosoever shall be ashamed of me, &c.*] Of my person and offices, of me, as the Messiah, Saviour, and Redeemer, of my grace, righteousness, blood, and sacrifice: *and of my words*; of the doctrines of the Gospel, one and another of them. In Mark 'tis added, *in this adulterous and sinful generation*; having a peculiar respect to the people of the Jews, and the age in which Christ lived; but is true of any other people and age in which men live: *of him shall the son of man be ashamed when he shall come in his own glory*; in the glory of his human nature, when his glorious body, as now, in heaven, shall be seen by all; and in the glory of his office, as mediator, and the judge of all the earth; and in the glory of his divine nature, which will appear in the resurrection of the dead, in the gathering of all nations before him, in separating one sort from another, and in passing and executing the definitive sentence on them; particularly the glory of his omnipotence and omniscience will be very conspicuous: *and in his father's*; which is the same with his own, as he is the son of God, and the brightness of his glory; and which, as mediator, he has from him, and will be the object of the saints' vision to all eternity; *and of the holy angels*; who shall attend him at his second coming, and be employed in various offices under him. The Syriac version renders these last clauses as they are in. Matt. xvi. 27. Mark viii. 38. *in the glory of his father, with his holy angels*; see the notes there.

Ver. 27. *But I tell you of a truth, &c.*] And let it be received as such; you may assure yourselves of it, that not only at the last day, the son of man will come in this glorious manner, and shew his resentment to all such as have been ashamed of him; but also *there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death till they see the kingdom of God*; the Gospel dispensation visibly taking place, both among Jews and Gentiles, upon the resurrection of Christ, and the pouring forth of his spirit; and when it should come in power both in the conversion of God's elect in great numbers, and in the destruction of the Jewish nation, for their rejection of the Messiah; see the note on Matt. xvi. 28.

Ver. 28. *And it came to pass, about an eight days after these sayings, &c.*] About a week after he had declared the above things, at, or near to Caesarea Philippi. The other evangelists, Matthew and Mark, say it was six days after: the reason of this difference is, because Luke takes in the day in which he delivered these sayings, and that in which he was transfigured, and they only reckon the intermediate days: *he took Peter, and John, and James*: the same that he admitted to be with him at the raising of Jairus's daughter, and in the garden afterwards: *and went up into a mountain to pray*; to his God and father, that his disciples might have a visible display of his glory, as an em-

blem and pledge of that in which he shall hereafter appear: it was usual with Christ to go up into a mountain to pray; see Matt. xiv. 23. Luke vi. 12. see the note on Matt. xvii. 1.

Ver. 29. *And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, &c.*] It became exceeding bright and glorious, it shone like the sun, Matt. xvii. 2. and hereby his prayer was answered; and thus, as Christ was heard and answered, whilst he was yet speaking, so are his people sometimes; and even their countenance is altered, when they are favoured with communion with God, and instead of a sad and dejected countenance, they have a cheerful one. *And his raiment was white and glistening*: it was as white as the light, as snow, and whiter than any fuller on earth could whiten, as the other evangelists say, and so glistened exceedingly; see the notes on Matt. xvii. 2. and Mark ix. 3.

Ver. 30. *And behold there talked with him two men, &c.*] Of great note and fame: *which were Moses and Elias*; the one the giver of the law from God to the people of Israel, as well as the redeemer of them from Egyptian bondage, and who led them through the wilderness, to the borders of Canaan's land; and the other a prophet famous for his zeal for God, and his worship, and who was translated, soul and body, to heaven: these appeared and talked with Christ on the mount; and what they talked of is mentioned in the following verse; see the note on Matt. xvii. 3.

Ver. 31. *Who appeared in glory, &c.*] In a very glorious manner, in most divine and beautiful forms to Christ, and to his disciples: *and spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem*: the word, rendered *decease*, is *Exodus*, the name of the second book of Moses; so called from the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, it gives an account of; and which departure is expressed by this word, in Heb. xi. 22. and to which the allusion is here. Death is a departure out of this world, and goes by this name, 2 Pet. i. 15. and so here it signifies Christ's death, or exit, which he was to make at Jerusalem; and Moses and Elias talk with him about this; the nature, manner, use, and near approach of it; and to which they might encourage him, as man. The sufferings and death of Christ were what Moses and the prophets had foretold; and these two speak of the same things now; and which must serve to confirm what Christ a few days ago had shewed his disciples, that he must go to Jerusalem, and there suffer and die. Dr. Lightfoot thinks, that the ascension of Christ to heaven is contained in the word *Exodus*, which was his final departure out of this world, as well as his sufferings and death; and especially if there is any allusion to the Israelites' departure out of Egypt, which was in victory and triumph; and the rather, because *the time of his receiving up*, ver. 51. may be thought to refer to this; and so Moses and Elias conversed with him, not only about his sufferings and death; but his ascension, and of which also the *Exodus*, or going of Elias out of this world to heaven, which was by a translation and ascension, was a figure. Some render this word, *Expedition*; and think it refers to the whole affair of the redemption of Christ's people by him, from the bondage of sin,



Satan, and the law, by his sufferings and death; of which the deliverance of the people of Israel out of Egypt was a lively representation: an expedition which Moses was sent upon, and accomplished: but now the discourse turns upon an expedition of greater importance, which shortly was to be accomplished at Jerusalem, where Christ was to be arraigned, and condemned, and then suffer without the gates of it, in order to obtain eternal redemption for the whole Israel of God.

Ver. 32. *But Peter, and they that were with him, &c.]*

The other two disciples, James and John; *were heavy with sleep*; as they afterwards were in the garden, while Christ was praying, as he had been now; being weary with the labours of the day past, and it being now night, as is very probable, since that was an usual time Christ spent in prayer: *and when they were awake.* The Syriac version reads, *scarcely awake*: they were so heavy with sleep, that it was with difficulty they were awaked out of it, even by the rays of light and glory that were about them. The Ethiopic version adds, *suddenly*: such a lustre darted from these glorious forms, especially from the body of Christ, as at once surprised them out of their sleep; and being thoroughly awake, *they saw his glory*: the brightness of his countenance, and the whiteness of his raiment: *and the two men that stood with him*; Moses and Elias, and the glory in which they appeared.

Ver. 33. *And it came to pass, as they departed from him, &c.]* That is, as Moses and Elias departed from Christ; or *when they began to depart*, as the Syriac version renders it; or *would depart*, as the Arabic and Persic versions; seemed desirous of going, or made some signal or other by which the disciples perceived they were about to go; for, as yet, they were not gone: *Peter said unto Jesus, master, it is good for us to be here, let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias*: see the note on Matt. xvii. 4. *not knowing what he said, nor what to say*, as Mark observes, being in a surprise, and not in a situation to consider and weigh things well, whether what he said was right and proper, or not; see the note, as before.

Ver. 34. *While he thus spake there came a cloud, &c.]* While Peter was making the above request, before an answer was returned, a cloud appeared, a very uncommon one, as a symbol of the divine presence: *and overshadowed them*; Jesus, Moses, Elias, and the disciples: *and they feared as they entered into the cloud*: either as they themselves entered into it, that coming gradually over them, because of the glory of it, and the solemnity that attended it; or as Moses and Elias entered into it; and so the Syriac and Persic versions read, *they feared when they saw Moses and Elias enter into the cloud*: which took them out of their sight: just as the cloud received Jesus out of the sight of his disciples, when he ascended to heaven, Acts i. 9.

Ver. 35. *And there came a voice out of the cloud, &c.]* See the note on Matt. xvii. 5.

Ver. 36. *And when the voice was past, &c.]* The above words were delivered, and it was heard no more: *Jesus was found alone*; by his disciples; Moses

and Elias being gone, and he in the same form in which he was before his transfiguration. *And they kept it close*; as Christ strictly charged them, when coming down from the mount with them; Matt. xvii. 9. *And told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen*; no, not any of their fellow-disciples, until that Christ was risen from the dead.

Ver. 37. *And it came to pass, that on the next day, &c.]* For Jesus and his disciples staid all night on the mountain: *when they were come down from the hill*; to the bottom of it: *much people met him.* The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions read, *met them.*

Ver. 38. *And behold, a man of the company, &c. One that was in the company, and among the multitude, that met him: cried out*; with great vehemence and earnestness: *saying, Master; doctor, or Rabbi: I beseech thee*; most humbly, for he was now on his knees: *look upon my son*; with pity and compassion, and help him: *for he is mine only child*; wherefore he was dear unto him, and he was greatly concerned for him, and earnestly desirous of his being restored to health; and this he mentions, to move the compassion of Christ.

Ver. 39. *And, lo, a spirit taketh him, &c.]* An evil spirit, the devil, as in ver. 42. seizes and possesses him at once, *and he suddenly crieth out*; in a most terrible manner, giving dreadful shrieks, as soon as he perceives that he is seized by the demon: *and it teareth him, that he foameth again*; throws him into convulsions, so that he foams at the mouth: and so we read of a son of a certain Jew, that "a certain spirit passed before him and hurt him, convulsed his mouth, and his eyes, and his hands were convulsed, and he could not speak." *And bruising him*; by dashing him against the wall, or throwing him to the ground: *hardly departeth from him*: is very loath to leave him, even after he has distressed, convulsed, and bruised him in this dreadful manner, such was his cruelty and malice; see the notes on Matt. xvii. 45. and Mark ix. 18.

Ver. 40. *And I besought thy disciples, &c.]* The nine disciples that were left behind, whilst Christ, and the other three, were gone up to the mountain: *to cast him out*; the devil out of his child: *and they could not*; see the note on Matt. xvii. 16.

Ver. 41. *And Jesus answering, said, &c.]* To the father of the child, and those that were with him; and with a particular view to the Scribes and Pharisees, who had been insulting the disciples, and triumphing over them, because of their inability to cast out the evil spirit: for the words are not spoken to the disciples, as they might seem at first view to be, and as the Persic version renders them, *and Jesus turned his face to the disciples, and said*; but to the unbelieving Jews, *O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? bring thy son hither*; see the note on Matt. xvii. 17.

Ver. 42. *And as he was yet a coming, &c.]* Whilst he was in the way bringing to Jesus, before he came to him: *the devil threw him down, and tare him*; knowing who Jesus was, and that he was able to dispossess him: and having reason to believe he would, was resolved to do all the mischief he could, and give him all

<sup>1</sup> Zohar in Lev. fol. 21. 4.

the pain and distress he was able, whilst he was in him; and therefore threw him to the ground, and convulsed him in a terrible manner at the same time: and *Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit*: for his malice and cruelty, and ordered him to depart: and *healed the child*; by dispossessing the spirit: and *delivered him again to his father*; free from the possession, and in perfect health, and which must be very pleasing and acceptable to him.

Ver. 43. *And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God, &c.*] Or *at the greatness, or majesty of God*; which was displayed in this cure: for the great power of God was manifestly seen in it, to the astonishment of the disciples, who could not cure this child, and of the parent and friends of it, and of the whole multitude: and to the confusion of the Scribes and Pharisees: *but while they wondered every one, at all things which Jesus did*: and were applauding him for them, and speaking in his praise on account of them: *he said unto his disciples*; privately, when they were alone together, the following words, that he might not seem to be lifted up with the praise of men; and also to shew their inconstancy, that those who now admired him, would one day crucify him; and to take off the thoughts of the disciples from a temporal kingdom and glory, they were so much in expectation of, and which every miracle of Christ, and the applause he got thereby among men, strengthened them in.

Ver. 44. *Let these sayings sink down into your ears, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, *in your hearts*: Christ's sense is, that they would diligently attend to them, seriously consider them, and carefully lay them up in their memories; and what he refers to are not the words he had spoken, but what he was about to say; namely, as follow: *for the son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men*; by whom he should be killed, though he should rise again the third day; see Matt. xvii. 2.

Ver. 45. *But they understood not this saying, &c.*] What was meant by being betrayed into the hands of men, and by his being put to death; they knew not how these things could possibly be, for they could not by any means reconcile them with the notions they had of a temporal Redeemer, and victorious Messiah: and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not; the true meaning of this saying was hid from their understanding which was veiled with the above notion of the worldly grandeur of the Messiah, that they did not take it in; and they feared to ask him of that saying, of the meaning of it; imagining that he had a secret mystical meaning in it, which they could not reach; lest he should reproach them with their dulness and stupidity; or should rebuke them with the like sharpness and severity he had reprov'd Peter <sup>†</sup> long ago, upon the same head.

Ver. 46. *Then there arose a reasoning among them, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions read, *a thought entered into them*; suggested very likely by Satan, which broke out into words, and issued in a warm dispute among them; and this was in the way, as they were travelling from Caesarea Phi-

lippi, to Capernaum; see Mark. ix. 33. *Which of them should be greatest*; that is, in the kingdom of heaven, as in Matt. xviii. 1. in the kingdom of the Messiah, which they expected would be a temporal one: wherefore the dispute was not about degrees in glory, nor in grace; nor who should be the greatest apostle and preacher of the Gospel; but who should be prime minister to the king Messiah, when he should set up his monarchy in all its grandeur and glory.

Ver. 47. *And Jesus perceiving the thought of their heart, &c.*] Not by any words he had heard; for the dispute was on the road, as they came along behind him; but as the omniscient God, who is the discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart, he was privy to all their ambition, and the vanity of their minds, and to all their reasonings and debates: though he was before them, and out of the reach of hearing of them: and when he came to Capernaum, after having asked them what they disputed about by the way; *he took a child and set him by him*. The Ethiopic version reads, *before them*, the disciples; and Matthew and Mark say, *he set him in the midst of them*; all which were true, Jesus sitting in the midst of them; so that the child he set by him, was in the middle of them and before them; see the note on Matt. xviii. 2.

Ver. 48. *And said unto them, whosoever shall receive this child, &c.*] Or *one such little child*, as in Matt. xviii. 5. and so the Syriac version here, *a child like to this*; and the Arabic version, *one like to this child*; not in age, but in meekness and humility; one that is not proud and haughty, ambitious of worldly honour, and envious at the superior state of others: whoever receives such an one into his house and heart, and the Gospel he preaches, *in my name*; because he belongs to me, is sent by me, and represents me, and delivers my message: *receiveth me*; personated by him, and will be so taken: and *whosoever shall receive me, receiveth him that sent me*; see the note on Mark ix. 37. *For he that is least among you all*; that is so in his own opinion, and behaves as such in his conduct, who is lowly and meek, and humble; and so the Ethiopic version, rather interpreting than translating, renders it, *for he that makes himself humble, who is lesser than all*; who considers himself as the least of the apostles, and unworthy to be one, as did the Apostle Paul: *the same shall be great*: shall be highly honoured with gifts, and made greatly useful, as the above-mentioned apostle was: a saying like this, the Jews have; "every one, <sup>הַמְּקַטֵּץ עֵצֵי</sup> *הַמְּקַטֵּץ עֵצֵי*, that *makes himself little*, for the words of the law in this world, <sup>נַעֲשֵׂה נְדוּל</sup> *נַעֲשֵׂה נְדוּל*, shall be made great in the world "to come;" that is, in the days of the Messiah: and again 'tis said by \* them, "worthy is he that makes himself little in this world, how great and high shall he be in that world!—whoever is little shall be great, and he that is great shall be little."

Ver. 49. *And John answered and said, Master, &c.*] The Syriac and Persic versions read, *our Master: we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbid him*; see the note on Mark ix. 38. *Because he followeth not with us*; the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, *because he followeth not thee with us*; did not

<sup>†</sup> T. Bah Bava Metzla, fol. 65. 2.

<sup>\*</sup> Zohar in Num. fol. 70. 1. & Tosaphita in Zohar in Gen. fol. 76. 2.

join in company with them, and follow Christ along with them, and as they did.

Ver. 50. *And Jesus said unto him, forbid him not, &c.*] Or *forbid not* him, or any other so doing: *for he that is not against us, is for us*: in two exemplars of Beza's 'tis read, *for he is not against you*: the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, instead of *us*, in both clauses read *you*, and so likewise the Persic and Ethiopic versions; see the notes on Mark ix. 39, 40.

Ver. 51. *And it came to pass, when the time was come, &c.*] Or *days were fulfilled*, an usual Hebraism; when the period of time fixed for his being in Galilee was come to an end: when he had fulfilled his ministry, and finished all his sayings, and wrought all the miracles he was to work in those parts; when he was to quit this country, and go into Judea, and up to Jerusalem, signified in the next clause: *that he should be received up*; or as all the Oriental versions rightly render the words, *when the time, or days of his ascension were fulfilled*: not of his ascension to heaven, as interpreters generally understand the passage, because the word is used of that, in Mark xvi. 19. Acts i. 2, 11, 22. 1 Tim. iii. 16. much less as others, of his being taken and lifted up from the earth upon the cross, and so signifies his crucifixion, and sufferings, and death; for of neither of these can it be said, that the time of them was come, or the days fulfilled, in which either of these should be: for if Christ was now going to the feast of tabernacles, as some think, it must be above half a year before his death, and still longer before his ascension to heaven: and if to the feast of dedication, it was above three months to his ascension: hence interpreters that go this way, are obliged to interpret it, that the time drew near, or was drawing on, or the days were almost fulfilled; whereas the expression is full and strong, that the time was come, and the days were fulfilled; and which was true in the sense hinted at, that now the time was up, that Jesus must leave the low-lands of Galilee, having finished his work there; and go into the higher country of Judea, and so up to Jerusalem; for of his ascension from Galilee to Jerusalem, are the words to be understood; see Matt. xix. 1. Mark x. 1. And it is observable, that after this, he never went into Galilee any more; and this sense is confirmed by what follows: *he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem*; or *strengthened his face*, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; set his face like a flint, as in Isa. l. 7. denoting not impudence, as hardening of the face is used in Prov. xxi. 29. but boldness, courage, constancy, and firmness of mind: or *he prepared his face*, as the Syriac; or *turned his face*, as the Arabic, he looked that way, and set forward; or as the Persic version renders it, *he made a firm purpose*, he resolved upon it, and was determined to go to Jerusalem, his time being up in Galilee; and though he knew what he was to meet with and endure; that he should bear the sins of his people, the curse of the law, and wrath of God; that he should have many enemies, men and devils to grapple with, and undergo a painful, shameful, and accursed death; yet none of these things moved him, he was resolutely bent on going thither, and accordingly prepared for his journey; see 2 Kings xii. 17.

Ver. 52. *And sent messengers before his face, &c.*]

Who very likely were his two disciples, James and John, since they so highly resented the ill treatment their master met with from the Samaritans: *and they went*: before him: *and entered into a village of the Samaritans*; or *city*, as the Vulgate Latin, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, and so one of Stephens's copies; which lay in the way from Galilee to Judea, where the disciples had been forbid to enter, that is, in order to preach, Matt. x. 5. *To make ready for him*; to prepare a lodging, and proper food for him and his disciples, as they passed on in their journey, for his intention was not to make any stay there.

Ver. 53. *And they did not receive him, &c.*] The Ethiopic version reads *them*, the messengers; but it should rather seem, that they did receive the messengers, and promised them lodging and entertainment; being glad that so great a person would honour them with his presence, hoping that miracles would be done by him, among them; and that he would stay with them, and shew some approbation of them, and their worship; but when Christ came in person, with his disciples and the multitude, they would not admit him; the reason follows, *because his words as though he would go to Jerusalem*: by all circumstances, by his words and looks, and gestures; by all that they could see and hear, and learn from him, his determination was to make no stay with them, but proceed on to Jerusalem, after he had took a night's lodging with them, and had refreshed himself and company, and therefore they would not receive him: it had been of a long time a controversy, between the Jews and Samaritans, which was the right place of worship; whether at the temple at Jerusalem, or whether at their temple on Mount Gerizzim? Now if Christ would have interested himself in this contest, in favour of them, and would have staid with them, and worshipped where they did, they would have gladly received him; but they perceived he was going to Jerusalem, either to keep the feast of tabernacles there, or the feast of the dedication of the temple; and if the latter, it must be still more provoking to them, because it shewed, that he preferred that temple to theirs: and however, it seems to be on this account that they would not admit him, because he favoured the temple worship at Jerusalem; otherwise his bare going thither, could not give the offence.

Ver. 54. *And when his disciples, James and John, saw this, &c.*] The Persic version reads thus; *when James and John, and the disciples saw this*: that is, the other disciples besides them, so making all the disciples say what follows; whereas only those two are intended, who having been the messengers, were the more provoked at this indignity to their Lord and master: *they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them*; being enraged at this conduct of the Samaritans towards Christ, and burning with love to him, and zeal for his honour; being Boanerges's, sons of thunder, they were for punishing of them in a most terrible manner, even with fire from heaven; by which Sodom and Gomorrhah, and the cities of the plain, were destroyed: this they doubted not of doing, knowing what miraculous power was conferred upon them; but did not think proper to attempt to exert it, until they had asked leave of Christ to do it;

even as *Elias did* : upon the two captains of fifties, with their fifties, as recorded in 2 Kings i. 9, 10, 11, 12. This clause was wanting in a certain copy of Beza's, and is not in the Vulgate Latin version ; but is in other copies and versions, and by all means to be retained.

Ver. 55. *But he turned and rebuked them, &c.*] He turned himself about to them, and looking upon them with a stern countenance, sharply reproved them for their intemperate zeal, their passion of wrath and anger, and desire of revenge : *and said, ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of ;* or do not consider that this is not the true spirit of zeal, but of anger and revenge ; and is not agreeable to the spirit of the meek and humble followers of Christ, or to the spirit of God, and those gifts of his bestowed on them, nor to the spirit of the Gospel dispensation : so good men, for want of attention, may not know sometimes from what spirit they act ; taking that for a good one, which is a very bad one ; being covered with specious pretences of love and zeal, and the examples of former saints ; not observing the difference of persons, times, and things.

Ver. 56. *For the son of man, &c.*] Meaning himself, in his state of humiliation : *is not come to destroy men's lives ;* the word *men's* is omitted in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions ; and both words, *men's lives*, are left out in the Arabic version : *but to save them ;* as they might easily observe, by his casting out devils from the bodies of men, and healing all sorts of diseases : and therefore, though it was agreeable to the legal dispensation, and the times of Elijah, to punish offenders in such a manner, it was not agreeable to the Gospel dispensation, and to the ends of the Messiah's coming into the world : so far in this verse, and the latter part of the former verse, are left out in five ancient copies of Beza's, and in the Ethiopic version, but are in the rest of the Eastern versions, and in other copies, and are rightly retained : *and they went to another village ;* in Samaria, more civil and courteous, and less prejudiced, and where they got lodging and entertainment.

Ver. 57. *And it came to pass, as they went in the way, &c.*] From one village of the Samaritans, to the other ; though if this is the same history related in Matt. viii. 19. it was as Christ went from Capernaum to the seaside, in order to go to the other side of it ; and must be inserted here, without regard to the order of time : *a certain man said unto him ;* if the same as in Matthew, he is there said to be a Scribe ; *Lord, I will follow thee, wheresoever thou goest.* The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read these words by way of question, *Lord, shall I not follow thee wheresoever thou goest ?* see the note on Matt. viii. 19.

Ver. 58. *And Jesus said unto him, foxes have holes, &c.*] Both the words of this man to Christ, and Christ's answer to him, are exactly the same as in Matthew, which makes it look as if it was the same history ; though it is not improbable, that Christ might be accosted in the same manner by another person, at another time and place, and return a like answer to each ; see the note on Matt. viii. 20.

Ver. 59. *And he said unto another, follow me, &c.*]

According to Matthew, one of his disciples, who had attended him some time, and whom he now called to the ministerial work ; see the note on Matt. viii. 21. The Ethiopic version reads, *another said to him, shall I not follow thee ?* but without any foundation : they are certainly the words of Christ, directed to another person, at the same time he met with the former : *but he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father ;* see the note on Matt. viii. 21.

Ver. 60. *Jesus said unto him, let the dead bury the dead, &c.*] See the note on Matt. viii. 22. *but go thou and preach the kingdom of God ;* that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, the Gospel dispensation is now ushering in, and the kingdom of the Messiah is setting up ; go and publish the things concerning the kingdom of grace, which lies not in outward rites and ceremonies, but in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost ; and declare the things relating to the kingdom of glory, and eternal life and happiness ; assert, that unless a man is born again, and has a better righteousness than his own, he is neither fit for, nor has he a right unto everlasting bliss.

Ver. 61. *And another also said, &c.*] *To him,* as the Syriac and Arabic versions add, that is, to Christ ; the Ethiopic version reads, *and a third said to him ;* for this is the third person mentioned in this relation of Luke's ; only two are spoken of by Matthew, but a third is added here : *Lord, I will follow thee ;* he moves it himself, to be a disciple of his, and a preacher of his Gospel, only with this condition : *but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house ;* as Elisha desired Elijah, that he might go and kiss his father and his mother, and then he promises he would follow him, 1 Kings xix. 20. The Syriac version adds, *and I will come ;* and the Persic, *and give commands, and then will I come :* and the phrase not only signifies, that he desired to take leave of his friends, but to compose and set in order his family affairs, and dispose of his worldly effects among his domestics, relations, and friends, in the best manner he could ; and then he should have leisure, and be at liberty to follow Christ, and attend his service.

Ver. 62. *And Jesus said unto him, &c.*] The copulative *and*, is left out in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions : *no man having put his hand to the plough ;* or *plough-share*, as reads the Syriac version ; or *plough-handle*, as the Persic ; referring, as Beza thinks, to the business of Elisha, in 1 Kings xix. 19. *And looking back ;* behind him ; for the ploughman ought to look before him, on his plough, and the ground he is ploughing, or he is not fit to be a ploughman ; nor will he make proper furrows, or do his work well ; and so he that enters upon the ministerial work, and looks back, and engages himself in the affairs of the world, sets his heart on them, and spends his time in them, *is not fit for the kingdom of God :* that is, to preach the kingdom of God, as in ver. 60. He cannot serve God and mammon, his own interest, and the interest of Christ ; he can't rightly perform the work of the ministry, whilst his thoughts and time are taken up in the affairs of the world.

## C H A P. X.

Ver. 1. *AFTER these things, &c.*] After the calling and mission of the twelve apostles, and giving them their powers, commissions, and instructions, with other things that followed thereon; see ch. ix. 1. *the Lord appointed other seventy also*: not that he had appointed before seventy, and now made an appointment of seventy more; but as the Syriac version renders it, *Jesus separated out of his disciples, seventy others*: that is, besides the twelve, whom he chose and called out, from among the multitude of the disciples, and ordained them apostles, he selected and ordained seventy others, in allusion to the seventy elders of Israel, Numb. xi. 16, 24, 25. The Vulgate Latin and Persic versions read, *seventy-two*, and so does Epiphanius<sup>2</sup>. The Jewish sanhedrim is sometimes said to consist of seventy-one<sup>7</sup>, and sometimes of seventy-two<sup>2</sup>; though commonly said to be of the round number seventy, as these disciples might be. The above-mentioned ancient writer gives the names of some of them, as the seven deacons; Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas; together with Matthias, Mark, Luke, Justus, Barnabas, Apelles, Rufus, and Niger. The names of all these disciples, according to ancient traditions, though not to be depended on, are given in an alphabetical order, with the places where they afterwards presided as bishops, or pastors, by a late learned writer<sup>4</sup>, and are as follow, viz. Agabus, the prophet; Amphias, of Odysseus, sometimes called Amphiatius; Ananias, who baptized Paul, bishop of Damascus; Andronicus, of Pannonia, or Spain; Apelles, of Smyrna, or, according to others, of Heraclea; Apollo, of Casarea; Aristarchus, of Apanca; Aristobulus, of Britain; Artemas, of Lustra; Asyncrius, of Hyrcania; Barnabas, of Milain; Barnabas, of Heraclea; Casar, of Dyrrachium; Caius, of Ephesus; Carpus, of Berytus, in Thracia; Cephas, bishop of Konia; Clemons, of Sardinia; Cleophas, of Jerusalem; Crescens, of Chalcedon, in Galatia; Demas, a priest of idols; Epænetus, of Carthage; Epaphroditus, of Andriace; Erastus, of Paneas, or, according to others, of the Philippians; Evodus, of Antioch; Hermas, of Philippi, or Philippolis; Hermes, of Dalmatia; Hermogenus and Phygellus, who followed Simon Magus; Hermogenus, bishop of the Megarenes; Herodion, of Tarsus; James, the brother of our Lord, of Jerusalem; Jason, of Tarsus; Jesus Justus, bishop of Eleutheropolis; Linus, of Rome; Luke, the evangelist; Lucius, of Laodicea, in Syria; Mark, who is also John, of Biblopolis, or Byblus; Mark the evangelist, bishop of Alexandria; Mark, the sister's son of Barnabas, bishop of Apollonia; Matthias, added to the apostles; Narcissus, of Athens; Nicanor, he died when Stephen suffered martyrdom; Nicolaus, of Samaria; Olympius, a martyr at Rome; Onesiphorus, bishop of Corone; Parmenas, of the Soli; Patrobulus, the same with Patrobas, in Rom. xvi. 14. of Puteoli, or as others,

of Naples; Philemon, of Gaza; Philemon (in the Acts he is called Philip), by whom the eunuch of the queen of Ethiopia was baptized, of Trallium, of Asia; Philologus, of Sinope; Phlegon, bishop of Marathon; Phygellus, of Ephesus; Prochorus, of Nicomedia, in Bithynia; Pudens; Quartus, of Berytus; Rhodion, a martyr at Rome; Rufus, of Thebes; Silas, of Corinth; Sylvanus, of Thessalonica; Sosipater, of Iconium; Sosthenes, of Colophon; Stachys, of Byzantium; Stephen, the first martyr; Tertius, of Iconium; Thadæus, who carried the epistle of Jesus, to Edessa, to Abgarus; Timon, of Bostra, of the Arabians; Trophimus, who suffered martyrdom with the Apostle Paul; Tychicus, bishop of Chalcedon, of Bithynia; Tychicus, of Colophon; Urbanus, of Macedonia; and Zenas, of Diospolis. According both to this account, and Epiphanius, Luke was one of these seventy, and he is the only evangelist that makes mention of the appointment of them: *and sent them two and two before his face*: as he did the twelve before, to be his harbingers and forerunners: *into every city and place, whither he himself would come*: which he intended to visit: he sent them before-hand to acquaint the inhabitants of it; and prepare them by their ministry, for the reception of him; as John the Baptist, who was in a more eminent sense the harbinger and forerunner of Christ, went before him in his ministry, and prepared the way for him.

Ver. 2. *Therefore said he unto them, &c.*] That is, *the Lord Jesus*, as the Ethiopic version expresses it; he said to the seventy disciples, what he had before said to the twelve apostles in Matt. ix. 37, 38. where are the same words as here: *the harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few, pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labourers into his harvest*: for though there was such a number of disciples called to the ministerial work, and sent out, there was still need of more; so great was the harvest of souls, or number of hearers, that the labourers were yet but few; and therefore the Lord of the harvest, and whose all souls are, was to be prayed unto to send forth more laborious preachers; see the notes on Matt. ix. 37, 38.

Ver. 3. *Go your ways, &c.*] Into all the villages, towns, cities, and places, where he directed them to go, to make ready for him. *Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves*; as harmless, innocent, profitable, and defenceless creatures, among spiteful, malicious, cunning, and cruel men; see the note on Matt. x. 16.

Ver. 4. *Carry neither purse, &c.*] The Syriac version reads, *purses*, to put money, gold, silver, and brass in; and the prohibition regards the money in the purse chiefly: *nor scrip*; the Syriac version here also reads in the plural number, *scrips*, to put victuals in, provisions of any sort for their journey, which they were not to carry with them, any more than money to buy food with. *Nor shoes*; any more than those they had upon

<sup>2</sup> Contr. hæres. hæres. 90.

<sup>7</sup> Maimon. Hilkot Sanhedrim, c. 1. sect. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Misn. Yadaim, c. 3. sect. 5. Atcu Ezra in Num. 11. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Fabricii Lux Evangelii, p. 115, 116, &c.

their feet; see the notes on Matt. ix. 9, 10. *and salute no man by the way*: that they might not be retarded, and hindered in their journey by tedious ceremonies, and long inquiries into the health of persons and friends, and the business they were going about, and places where; and by discourses and confabulations, drawn out to great length, as was often the case at meeting on the road: and, for the same reason, a like charge is given to Gehazi, 2 Kings iv. 29. and which, as the Jewish commentators on the place observe <sup>a</sup>, was, that he might not multiply words with persons he met with, and might not be stopped by the way; and that his intention might be in his work, and his mind might not turn to any other thing, either by word or deed. So our Lord's intention, by this order was, not to teach them their incivility, or to be morose and uncourteous; but that they might dispatch their business with the utmost expedition, and rather forego some common civilities and ceremonies, than to neglect, or, in the least, to hinder a work of so much importance they were sent about: and this was the more necessary, since, according to the Jewish maxim <sup>b</sup>, "prevent every man with a salutation;" they saluted all that they met, which took up time, and hindered business. Some sorts of persons indeed were excused, as those who were mourners <sup>c</sup> for the dead, and such as kept fasts for rain <sup>d</sup>: but such were not these disciples; they neither mourned, nor fasted, nor could they, so long as the bridegroom was with them.

Ver. 5. *And into whatsoever house ye enter, &c.*] When ye come into any city, town, or village, *first say, peace be to this house*: salute the inhabitants in the usual form, saying, peace be to you; wishing them all happiness and prosperity, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. This shews our Lord did not disapprove of civil salutations.

Ver. 6. *And if the son of peace be there, &c.*] If there be any elect person or persons in the house, whom God has chosen to partake of peace by the blood of Christ, and the benefits arising from it; and of a conscience-peace in their souls, upon the best foundation; and of eternal peace in the world to come, though yet in a state of nature; and which may be known by this sign; *your peace shall rest upon it*: the salutation, or wish of peace, shall be well taken, and gratefully received; and upon this you'll be kindly invited into the house, and used well by those of the family; *if not, it shall turn to you again*: if there are no sons of peace, no elect persons there, your salutation, or wish of peace and prosperity to the family, will be despised and rejected, and will return to you without any good effect upon them.

Ver. 7. *And in the same house remain, &c.*] Where the sons of peace are, and the peace rests, and into which you are invited, and kindly received and used: *eating and drinking such things as they give*: or rather, *such things as are with them*, as the Vulgate Latin renders it; or *of that which is theirs*, as the Syriac version; all one, and with as much freedom, as if they were your own; the reason follows, *for the labourer is worthy of his hire*; what you eat and drink is your due; what you ought to have; your diet is a debt, and

not a gratuity; see the note on Matt. x. 10. *go not from house to house*: as if fickle and inconstant, as if not satisfied with your lodging and entertainment, and as seeking out for other and better, or as if burdensome where they were; see the note on Matt. x. 11. The Jews have a proverb, expressing the inconvenience and expensiveness, and the danger of moving from place to place: "he that goes, מבית לבית, *from house to house*, " (loses his) shirt, (*i. e.* comes to distress and poverty,) "from place to place (his) life"; or he is in great danger of losing his life.

Ver. 8. *And into whatsoever city ye enter, &c.*] Into whatsoever house in it ye go, and apply to for lodging and entertainment, *and they receive you*, readily and cheerfully, *eat such things as are set before you*; though ever so mean, accept of them, and don't object to them on that account, lest it should be thought you serve your own bellies, and seek to gratify your appetites; nor, on the other hand, don't think any thing too good for you, or that you are burdensome and chargeable, but eat as if it were your own; nor ask questions about the cleanness and uncleanness of it, or whether it has been tithed or not; but feed upon it without any scruple.

Ver. 9. *And heal the sick that are therein, &c.*] Of all their bodily diseases, which would not only shew their power and warrant, their mission and commission, but also their goodness and beneficence to men; and would be a sufficient return for what they ate and drank: *and say unto them*: not only to the sick that are healed, and those in the house in which they were, but to all the inhabitants of the city; *the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you*: the Gospel dispensation, the kingdom of the Messiah, and even the Messiah himself, as might be concluded from the miracles they wrought; and thus by their ministry and works, were they to go before Christ, and prepare his way.

Ver. 10. *But into whatsoever city ye enter, &c.*] On the other hand Christ here directs how to behave towards other cities they should come to, and be rejected: *and they receive you not*: refuse to admit them into their houses, or provide in any shape for them, nor hear their message: *go your ways out into the streets of the same*. The Ethiopic version reads, *cast the dust off your feet into the streets of it*: and say: aloud, in the most public manner, in the ears of all the people, as follows.

Ver. 11. *Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, &c.*] The Syriac version adds, *to our feet*: and so in Beza's most ancient copy, and the Arabic and Persic versions read, *which cleaves to our feet*; which agrees with Matt. x. 14. Mark vi. 11. *we do wipe against you*; for a testimony against them, that they had been with them, and were rejected by them; see the notes on Matt. x. 14. Mark vi. 11. *notwithstanding be ye sure of this*; they might assure themselves of this, and which will be an aggravation of their guilt, and increase their punishment another day: *that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you*; was at their very doors, since the ministers of it, of the Gospel dispensation, the harbingers of the Messiah, who were sent to publish his Gospel, to proclaim him as king, and de-

<sup>a</sup> Jerchi, mechi, & R. Levi Ben Gerson in 2 Kings iv. 29.

<sup>b</sup> Pirke A. R. c. 4. sect. 15.

<sup>c</sup> Misn. Moed Katon, c. 3. sect. 6.

<sup>d</sup> Misn. Taanith, c. 1. sect. 7.

<sup>e</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 39. fol. 34. 3.

clare that his kingdom was at hand, had been with them, and they had despised them.

Ver. 12. *But I say unto you, &c.*] The same that he said to the twelve apostles, when he sent them out, Matt. x. 15. *that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city.* By *that day* is meant, the famous day to come, the last day; the day of judgment, as it is expressed in Matthew; and so the Ethiopic version reads here, *it shall be better in the day of judgment.* Sodom was a very wicked city, and was destroyed by fire from heaven for its iniquity, and its inhabitants suffer the vengeance of eternal fire: and there was also Gomorrhá, a neighbouring city, guilty of the same crimes, and shared the same fate; and which is mentioned along with Sodom in Matthew; and is here read in the Persic version. And the sense of the whole is, that though the iniquities of Sodom and Gomorrhá were very great, and their punishment very exemplary; yet, as there will be degrees of torment in hell, the case of such a city, which has been favoured with the Gospel, and has despised and rejected it, will be much worse than the case of those cities, which were devoured by fire from heaven; and than that of the inhabitants of them in the future judgment, and to all eternity; see the note on Matt. x. 15.

Ver. 13. *Woe unto thee Chorazin, &c.*] See the note on Matt. xi. 21. *Woe unto thee Bethsaida;* a city of Galilee, a fishing-town, from whence it has its name, and was the native place of those two fishermen, Peter and Andrew: very likely Chorazin was near it, since they are here, and in Matthew, mentioned together; and woe is pronounced upon them both for their impotence and unbelief, which were attended with aggravating circumstances: *for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you;* meaning both the ministry of the word by Christ, which was with power and authority, and the miracles of Christ, which were the works of almighty power, and shewed him to be the mighty God: these were not done in Tyre and Sidon, cities in Phœnicia; for though our Lord was on the borders of those places, yet not in them, they being Gentile cities, to which he was not sent, and in which he did not preach, nor do miracles; but he did both in Bethsaida and Chorazin, and they repented not of their sins; nor did they embrace his doctrine, though confirmed by miracles; whereas, in all likelihood, humanly speaking, had the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon had the like advantages, *they had a great while ago repented:* they would have repented immediately, it would have been soon visible in them, of which they would have given proof, by *sitting in sackcloth and ashes;* which was an outward token of repentance, used by penitent sinners, as by the Ninevites, and others. The same things are said at another time, and on another occasion, as here; see the notes on Matt. xi. 21, 22, 23, 24.

Ver. 14. *But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, &c.*] Or *in the day of judgment,* as read the Syriac, Persic, Ethiopic, and Gothic versions; and as it is in Matt. xi. 22. *than for you;* the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida, who will be more severely punished than these Gentile cities; for

by how much greater were their light, privileges, and advantages against which they sinned, by so much will be their severer punishment.

Ver. 15. *And thou Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, &c.*] Referring either to the situation of it, which was on a very high hill; or to its privileges, through the ministry and miracles of Christ; or the phrase may be expressive of the pride and loftiness of the inhabitants of it, who were elated with the mercies they enjoyed, it being a most delightful, pleasant, and comfortable place to live in, as its name signifies. It was a famous port, commodiously situated by the sea of Tiberias; and, as Josephus<sup>f</sup> says, was in an excellent temperament of the air, and watered with a most choice fountain, called by the same name. *Shalt be thrust down into hell;* meaning either the low condition to which it was to be, and has been reduced in a temporal sense, and continues in to this day; there being nothing of it now remaining, as travellers, who have been eye-witnesses of it, say<sup>g</sup>, but a few little houses and cottages; or else the sad and miserable condition of the inhabitants of it hereafter: and so it is, that such who have lived in great plenty and pleasure in this life, and have thought themselves to be the favourites of heaven, and that they should enter there, shall be thrust down to hell by the arm of vengeance, with the utmost indignation in God, and shame to themselves: it follows in Matthew, *for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day; but I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee.*

Ver. 16. *He that heareth you, heareth me, &c.*] This is said for the encouragement of the seventy disciples, that though they would be rejected by some, they would be received by others, who would hear them, and embrace their doctrine, as if the Messiah himself had been among them; they looking upon them as personating him: and so Christ himself considers them as ambassadors in his name, and as representing his person, taking what is done to them, as done to himself; see the note on Matt. x. 40. *and he that despiseth you, despiseth me:* every degree of contempt cast upon them by words or actions, Christ looked upon as cast on himself, and will resent it another day, and punish for it. The despising of wise men, or doctors, and their disciples or scholars, was accounted with the Jews a very heinous crime, and was severely punished both by excommunication and fines: for thus it is said<sup>h</sup>, “a great iniquity it is to despise the wise men, or to hate them. Jerusalem was not destroyed until the disciples of the wise men were despised in it, as it is said, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. *but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets:* as if he should say, they despised those that taught his words: and thus saith the law, *if ye despise my statutes;* they that teach my statutes ye will despise; and every one that despiseth the wise men, hath no part in the world to come; and lo! this is included in that general rule, *for he hath despised the word of the Lord.* Although he that despiseth the wise men hath no part in the world to

<sup>f</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 35.

<sup>g</sup> Vid. L'Empereur, Not. in Benj. Itinerar. p. 69.

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>h</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Talmud Torá, c. 6. sect. 11, 12.

“ come, if witnesses come (and depose) that he hath despised them even in words, he is guilty of excommunication: and the sanhedrim excommunicate him publicly, and fine him a pound of gold in every place, and give it to the wise men: and he that despiseth a wise man by words, even after his (the wise man's) death, the sanhedrim excommunicate him; and they free him when he returns by repentance: but if the wise man is alive, they don't free him till he pleases.”

*And he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me:* this is said to aggravate the sin of the despisers of Christ's ministers, and to deter from it; since the contempt does not terminate in them, nor even in Christ, but reaches his father also. The Ethiopic version adds, *and he that heareth me, heareth him that sent me:* but is not supported by any copy, or any other version.

Ver. 17. *And the seventy returned again, &c.*] The Syriac version adds, *whom he had sent:* these disciples having received orders and instructions from Christ, went as he directed them; and when they had finished their embassy, they returned again to him, and gave him an account of their journey and success. The Vulgate Latin and Persic versions read here, *the seventy-two*, as they do in ver. 1. *with joy*; with great joy, as read the Syriac and Persic versions; notwithstanding the difficulties that had attended them, the reproaches cast upon them, the ill treatment they might have met with in some places, and the labours and fatigues of their journey, and the dangers they had been exposed to: *saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name:* they found the miraculous power conferred on them was greater than they at first imagined, or could collect from what Christ said to them, who only bid them heal the sick, ver. 9. but when they came to make use of it, they found they had a power of casting out devils; not in their own name and strength, but in the name, and through the power, and by the authority of Christ; and this had thrown them into an ecstasy of joy, and in a sort of a rapture: they express themselves as men astonished at the powers bestowed on them.

Ver. 18. *And he said unto them, &c.*] In order to abate their surprise, and reduce their transport of mind: *I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven:* meaning, that this was no news to him, nor any surprising event, that devils should be cast out of men, and be in a state of subjection; for as he existed as the eternal son of God before his incarnation, he was present, and saw him and his angels fall from heaven, from their first estate, their habitation of bliss and glory, down to hell, upon their sin and rebellion, as violently, swiftly, and suddenly, as the lightning falls from heaven to earth; and when he sent out these his disciples, as soon as they began their work, and all along in it, he, by his divine omniscience, saw the powers of darkness falling before their ministry and miracles; and he also foresaw how Satan hereafter, in a more conspicuous manner, would fall before the preaching of his Gospel by his apostles, not only in Judea, but especially among the Gentiles, where he, the prince of this world, would be cast down from his throne, and out of his kingdom; so that what they related, as it was what he knew before, it was but little in comparison of what he himself had seen

long ago, and of what he foresaw would be; and even he would give them power to do other miraculous works besides these.

Ver. 19. *Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, &c.*] Which may be literally understood, as in Mark xvi. 18. Acts xxviii. 3, 5. or figuratively of the devil, and his principalities and powers, and all his emissaries, who, for their craft and cunning, and for their poisonous and hurtful nature and influence, may be compared to serpents and scorpions: *and over all the power of the enemy:* of mankind in general, and of the seed of the woman, Christ and his people in particular, Christ has a power over all his power, his whole posse of devils, even the power of the air, of which he is prince; and he communicated this power to his disciples, even to the seventy: adding, *and nothing shall, by any means, hurt you;* not the most hurtful and poisonous animals, nor the most malicious persecutors on earth, nor all the devils in hell: as the former venomous creatures, when took up in their hands, should not hurt their bodies; so the other, whatever they might be permitted to do with respect to their lives, and outward estate, should never hurt their souls, and the eternal welfare of them; nor even hinder the work of God prospering in their hands.

Ver. 20. *Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, &c.*] That their power was enlarged, or that they had, the same as before: *that the spirits, evil spirits, devils, are subject unto you;* and come out of men at your command; rejoice not so much in this, or chiefly and principally; not but that it was matter of joy both with respect to the gift bestowed upon them, and the benefits men received by it, and the glory that was brought to Christ through it; *but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven;* in the book of life, called the Lamb's book of life, written from the foundation of the world: in divine predestination to everlasting glory and happiness: which shews that God's election to eternal life is of particular persons, of persons by name; that it is sure, and certain, and immutable, being in opposition to what is written in earth, Jer. xvii. 13. that the knowledge of this may be attained to, through the grace of God, the revelation of Christ, and the witnessings of his spirit; and that this is matter of the greatest joy, since it is the foundation and security of all the blessings of grace and glory.

Ver. 21. *In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, &c.*] In his human soul: his heart was filled with joy, not so much at the success of the seventy disciples, and the subjection of the devils to them, as in the view he had of the spread of the Gospel, and of the revelation and application of the truths of it to multitudes of mean and despicable persons, while it was rejected by the wise and learned; and particularly at the sovereign and distinguishing grace of God towards the elect, whose names are written in heaven; upon the mention of which his soul was so affected, that he broke out in an exulting strain, into thanksgivings to God, in the following manner, *and said, I thank thee, O father, &c.* see the notes on Matt. xi. 25, 26. in three ancient copies of Beza's, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions 'tis read, *in the*



*Holy Spirit*; and the Persic version reads, *he spake*, or *confabulated with the Holy Spirit*: but the former reading and sense are best.

Ver. 22. *All things are delivered to me of my father, &c.*] In some ancient copies, and in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, before these words, are read, *and turning to his disciples he said, all things, &c. and no man knoweth who the son is*; what is his name, his nature, his perfections and glory; and how he is the son of God, his only-begotten son: *but the father*; who begat him, and whose own, and proper son he is: *and who the father is*; what are his perfections, purposes, grace, greatness, mind, and will: *but the son*; who is of him, and lay in his bosom: *and he to whom the son will reveal him*: in himself, by his spirit; see the note on Matt. xi. 27.

Ver. 23. *And he turned him unto his disciples, &c.*] Both to the twelve apostles, and seventy disciples; *and said privately*; or *to them apart*: the phrase *privately* is wanting in the Vulgate Latin version: *blessed are the eyes that see the things that ye see*; the person of the Messiah, his kingdom setting up in the world, miracles wrought by him, and Satan falling before him; see the note on Matt. xiii. 16.

Ver. 24. *For I tell you that many prophets and kings, &c.*] As Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, who were prophets, as well as patriarchs, and David, Solomon, and others: *have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them*, meaning himself, doctrines, and miracles; see the note on Matt. xiii. 17.

Ver. 25. *And behold a certain lawyer stood up, &c.*] From his seat, having been hearing Christ preach, very likely, in some synagogue; when and where this was, is not certain. The Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions call this man a Scribe; and a lawyer and a Scribe were the same, as appears from Matt. xxii. 35. compared with Mark xii. 28. *and tempted him*; or tried him whether he understood the law, or whether he would say any thing contrary to it, and see if he could gain any advantage against him, and expose him, and get credit and applause to himself: *saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?* the same question as was put by the young ruler in Mark x. 17. see the note on Matt. xix. 16. for they were both of the same complexion, and upon the same foundation, seeking eternal life by their own works: *he said unto him*; that is, Jesus, as all the Oriental versions express it.

Ver. 26. *What is written in the law? &c.*] Christ, with great propriety, sends him to the law, to see and observe what was written there, what are the terms and conditions of life, as fixed there; partly, because this man, by his office and character, was an interpreter of the law; and partly, because his question was, *what shall I do? how readeest thou?* in the law, every day; referring to the *Keriat Shema*, the reading of the Shema, i. e. those words in Deut. vi. 4, &c. *Hear, O Israel, &c. morning and evening*<sup>1</sup>, as appears by his answer.

Ver. 27. *And he answering said, thou shalt love the*

*Lord thy God, &c.*] This was part of their phylacteries, which they recited every day; see the notes on Matt. xxii. 37, 39. and on Mark xii. 28, 29.

Ver. 28. *And he said unto him, thou hast answered right, &c.*] It is so written, and read; and this, as if he should say, is the sum and substance of the law, and what that requires men should do; wherefore, *do this, and thou shalt live*; for the bare reading of it was not sufficient; though these men placed great confidence in reading this passage, or in reciting their phylacteries, of which this was a part, morning and night. Our Lord intimates by this, that, according to the tenour of the law, eternal life was not to be had without a complete and perfect performance of the duties of love to God, and to the neighbour, contained in these words; and this he suggests, in order to convict him of the impossibility of obtaining life by the works of the law, since such a performance cannot be made by man.

Ver. 29. *But he willing to justify himself, &c.*] Upon the foot of his own righteousness, and to make himself appear to be righteous to others; for this the Jews thought themselves able to do, both to justify themselves before God by their own works, and make it out to men, that they were truly righteous persons; and it is a maxim with them, that "every one רוכבדיק את עצמו, *that justifies himself*, below (on "earth), they justify him above (or in heaven)."<sup>2</sup> No wonder then that this man was desirous of justifying himself; and in order to which he *said, and who is my neighbour?* he takes no notice of God, and love to him, as coming into the account of his justification, only of his neighbour; thinking when this question was answered, he should be very able to make it out, that he was not wanting neither in doing justice between himself and his neighbour, nor in shewing kindness and beneficence to him; for by his neighbour he meant only an Israelite; one of the same nation and religion with him. So the Jews commonly interpret the word *neighbour*, either of one that is related to them in nature, קרוב, that is, near akin to them in blood<sup>1</sup>; or that professes the same religion as they do, and whom they call a neighbour in the law; and so they explain the passage now cited, *and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, שוהו רעך, *בתורה*; that is, *who is thy neighbour in the law*<sup>2</sup>: for they will not allow a Gentile, no, not even a proselyte of the gate to be a neighbour: for thus they say<sup>3</sup>, "an Israelite that slays a proselyte of the gate, or the stranger that dwells with him, is not slain for him" by the sanhedrim; for it is said, Exod. xxi. 14. *but if a man comes presumptuously upon his neighbour to slay him, &c. and there is no need to say he is not slain for a Gentile.*" And again<sup>4</sup>, "when a man sees one of them (the Gentiles) fall into the sea, he need not take him up; as it is said, Lev. xix. 16. *neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour, ואתן זה רעך*, *but this is not thy neighbour.*" This notion Christ opposes and disproves in the following parable, which is an answer to the lawyer's question.

Ver. 30. *And Jesus answering, said, &c.*] The fol-

<sup>1</sup> Vid. Mian. Beracot, c. 1. sect. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> F. Bab. Taanith, fol. 8. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Kimchi in Psal. xv. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Mosus Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. affirm. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Mainon. Hilh. Rotzeach, c. 2. sect. 11.

<sup>6</sup> Ib. c. 4. sect. 11.

lowing things; which may either be considered as a narrative of matter of fact, or as a supposed case, and delivered by way of parable; and in either way, though the general design of it is in answer to the lawyer's question, to shew who may be called a neighbour; and that a man who is a stranger, and accounted an enemy, yet doing acts of mercy, kindness, and beneficence, to one in distress, ought to be accounted a neighbour: and has a much better title to such a character, than one of the same nation and religion, who takes no notice of a distressed object; yet it may be considered, as representing the sad estate and condition of mankind by the fall, and their recovery by Christ; whereby he shews himself to be their best neighbour, and truest friend: *a certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho.* The distance between these two places, the Jews say<sup>p</sup>, was ten *parsas*, that is, forty miles; for every *parsa* was four miles, and ten *parsas* are expressly said<sup>q</sup> to be forty miles; which must be understood of the lesser miles, otherwise a *parsa* itself was but a mile: the Jews had two sorts of miles, the greater was 2000 cubits, the lesser 1000 cubits: the man is said to go down from the one to the other, because Jerusalem stood on high ground, and Jericho in a valley. This *certain man*, may represent mankind falling in Adam, from a state of happiness, into misery: human nature was originally in one man, but one man was created at first, and he had all human nature in him, and was the representative of mankind; he was made upright, but sinned, and fell from his uprightness, and all mankind in him: he may be said to go down from Jerusalem, which signifies peace, and the vision of it; and was a city compact together, beautiful and well situated; where were the worship of God, and his Shekinah, or divine presence; to Jericho, a city accursed by Joshua, and a very wicked place in the days of Christ: since man by sinning against God, departed from his happy and peaceful state, from a state of peace and tranquillity with God, with the holy angels, and even with the beasts of the field; and also from peace and serenity in his own conscience, as well as from communion with God; and from his pure worship and service, to a sensual, earthly, worldly, wicked, and accursed state: *and fell among thieves:* in the way to Jericho, was a place called Adomim, which signifies *bloods*, because much blood was shed there, by the frequent incursions of thieves and robbers, as Jerom observes<sup>r</sup>; and was about four hours journey from Jericho<sup>s</sup>: and by the man's falling among thieves, may be expressed mankind coming into the hands of sin and Satan, which are as robbers, that steal, kill, and destroy; since these have robbed man of his honour, defaced the image of God in him, and deprived him of the glory of God, and were murderers of him from the beginning: *which stripped him of his raiment;* as thieves and robbers are used to do; signifying the loss of original righteousness, by sin, which was a covering to man, in which he could appear before God; and was very ornamental to

him, being pure and perfect in its kind, though only a creature's righteousness, and a created one; and which was natural and loseable, as the event has shewn: hence man is become a naked creature, has nothing to cover himself with, but stands exposed to the law, justice, and wrath of God; is destitute of a righteousness, nor can he work out one that will stand him in any stead, or justify him before God: *and wounded him:* which is the common usage of such men; and may set forth the morbid and diseased condition that sin has brought man into; being from the crown of the head, to the sole of the foot, full of wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores; and such as are in themselves mortal, and incurable by any, but the great physician of souls, the Lord Jesus Christ; and yet men are naturally insensible of them, and unconcerned about them: *and departed, leaving him half dead:* or *near death*, as the Arabic version renders it; which may be applied to death, natural, spiritual, and eternal: to death natural, which comes by sin, seeing it is but one part, or half of the man that dies this death, namely, his body; and to a spiritual death, or the death of the soul, which is dead in trespasses and sins, whilst the body is alive; and to eternal death, to which men are exposed for sin, and are under the sentence of it, though not executed; and in each of these senses may be said to be *half dead*: and which is no ways to the advantage of the doctrine of man's free-will, and the powers and abilities of it; as if man was not in a spiritual sense so dead, that he can do nothing in a spiritual manner; but the phrase is used, to show the power of sin, and the malice of Satan, and yet that man is still recoverable by the grace of God.

Ver. 31. *And by chance there came down a certain priest that way, &c.]* Who had been at Jerusalem, to take his turn in the courses, and was now returning to Jericho, where the stationary men were, to which he belonged: for it is said<sup>t</sup>, that "the former prophets appointed twenty and four courses; and for every course there was a station at Jerusalem, of priests, and of Levites, and of Israelites; and when the time of the course came to go up, the priests and Levites went up to Jerusalem. The Rabbins teach, that there were twenty-four courses in the land of Israel, and there were twelve at Jericho." And which is elsewhere<sup>u</sup> related thus; "the former prophets appointed four-and-twenty courses, and for every course there was a station at Jerusalem, of priests, of Levites, and of Israelites; the tradition is, that four-and-twenty thousand were the station from Jerusalem, and half a station from Jericho; though Jericho was able to furnish out a perfect station itself; but for the sake of dividing the glory to Jerusalem, it produced but half a station." So that it is no wonder to hear of priests and Levites passing to and fro in this road. Nor was this a chance matter with respect to God, by whose providence all things are ordered, directed, and governed; nor any wonderful thing with respect to men, which fell out in an uncommon way.

<sup>p</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 20. 2. & 39. 20. Bartenora in Misn. Tamid, c. 3. sect. 8.

<sup>q</sup> T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 93. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

<sup>r</sup> Ad Eustochium, Tom. I. fol. 59. I. K.

<sup>s</sup> Masius in Josh. xv. 7.

<sup>t</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 27. 1.

<sup>u</sup> T. Hieros. Pesachim, fol. 30. 3. & Taanith, fol. 67. 4.

beyond expectation; the phrase only signifies, that so it came to pass: *and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side*: when he saw him naked, and in such a bloody condition, he might take him for one really dead, and therefore crossed the way on purpose, lest he should any ways touch him, and be defiled by him, and so break the law, and incur the penalty of it, mentioned in Numb. xix. 16. or to shun so horrible a sight; or rather, through hardness of heart, and want of compassion.

Ver. 32. *And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, &c.*] Where the poor man lay in this deplorable condition: *came and looked on him*: and that was all; but neither spoke a comfortable word, nor administered any relief to him, or in the least assisted him: *and passed by on the other side*; as the priest had done before him: by the *priest* may be meant, the moral law, and by the *Levite* the ceremonial law; and so by both, the whole law of Moses; and intimates, that no mercy is to be expected from thence: the law makes no abatement in its demands, nor any allowance for the fall and weakness of man: nor is it become milder under the Gospel dispensation; nor will it accept of an imperfect, though sincere obedience, in the room of a perfect one; and is deaf to all repentings, cries, and tears: no relief is to be had from thence, for a naked, wounded, and dead man; no robe of righteousness to cover a naked soul; for by the law is the knowledge of sin, but not a justifying righteousness by the deeds of it: for the deeds of the law, performed by sinful men, are impure and imperfect; and were they pure and perfect, they would be unprofitable, and could not justify in the sight of God from former sins; for could they, they would establish boasting, and disannul the death of Christ, and frustrate the grace of God; and therefore righteousness cannot be by the law, that leaves a man as naked as it finds him: nor is there any healing by it to a wounded conscience; there's no pity from it, no justification by it, no pardon through it, no expiation or atonement of sin, by obedience to it; no word of comfort is spoken by it; so far from it, that when it comes with power, it opens the wounds of sin, fills the conscience with wrath and terror, destroys all the man's former hopes of happiness, and leaves him where it found him; without healing him itself, or pointing out a physician to him: much less can it give life to a dead sinner: spiritual life is not communicated by it, nor can eternal life, or any true hope of it, be attained through it; it is so far from it, that it is the killing letter, and the ministration of condemnation and death.

Ver. 33. *But a certain Samaritan, &c.*] By whom Christ may be meant; not that he was really so, for he was a Jew, a son of Abraham, and of David, according to the flesh, but he was so called by the Jews, John viii. 48. and was treated as such by them: and since it is the design of the parable in general to shew, that he that does acts of kindness and mercy to persons in distress, is a neighbour in the truest sense, though he is not an Israelite, but even a Samaritan, who was, above all men, hated by the Jews; why may it not be thought to be the view of Christ in particular, to prove himself the best neighbour and friend of men, though he was traduced by the Jews as a Samaritan? *as he journeyed*;

which may design the assumption of human nature, which is sometimes expressed, by his coming from his father, by his descending from heaven, and coming into this world; which phrases intend his incarnation, and carry in them the idea of journeying: for as his ascent to heaven is expressed by taking a journey, Matt. xxv. 15. so may his descent from heaven; and while he was here on earth, he was as a stranger and pilgrim, as a sojourner and traveller: *came where he was*; put himself in the law-place, and stead of his people, who fell with the rest of mankind in Adam; he became their surety from eternity, and clothed himself with their nature in time; he took upon him their sins, as their representative, and fulfilled the righteousness of the law on their account, and bore the penalty of it in their room: *and when he saw him*; Christ saw the elect before the fall, as they were chosen in him, and given unto him, in all the glory they were to be brought into; when he loved them, and his delight was with them: and when he came to redeem them, he saw them as follows; as lost, as weak and strengthless, as wicked, and as the worst of sinners, as ungodly, and enemies, as children of wrath by nature, as others; and he shed his blood for them, and washed them from their sins, that he might present them to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; just such an one he had seen them to be, in the glass of his father's purposes, in his council and covenant; and he sees them in their blood, and in the impurity of their nature, when he comes to call them by his grace: *and he had compassion on him*. The compassion of Christ on his elect, is to be seen in his eternal covenant-engagements; for his tender mercies have been ever of old; and in his assumption of their nature, which was through his own, as well as the tender mercy of his father; and in the redemption of them, which was in love and pity; and also in their regeneration and conversion, for the great things there, and then done for them by him, are owing to his compassion.

Ver. 34. *And went to him, and bound up his wounds, &c.*] Which sin had made; it being part of the work of Christ, to bind up the broken-hearted, to heal wounded sinners, and restore comforts to mourners; and which he does, by *pouring in oil and wine*: by which, in general, may be designed, the blood of Christ, applied to the conscience of a wounded sinner; which cleanses from all sin, heals all the wounds and diseases of sin, cheers and revives fainting spirits, gives ease, peace, and pleasure, and is therefore exceeding valuable and precious: and in particular by *oil* may be meant, the grace of the spirit of God; compared unto it, for its sweet smell, its cheering and refreshing virtue and efficacy, and its cooling, softening, suppling, and healing nature: and by *wine*, the doctrines of the Gospel; such as free justification by Christ's righteousness, and pardon through his blood; which when applied to distressed minds, cause joy and gladness, and them to forget their sorrow, and remember their misery no more: and the *pouring in* of these, may denote the plentiful effusion of Christ's blood, and the riches of his grace in the application of it; and the freeness and generosity of this action, which is his own: for man cannot do it. It was usual with the Jews, to mix oil and wine together, for the healing of wounds: hence

those rules and traditions \*; " they anoint a linen cloth " for a sick man on the sabbath; when? when they " mingle the oil and the wine on the sabbath-eve, but " if they do not mingle it on the sabbath-eve, it is " forbidden; it is a tradition, says R. Simeon ben Eleazer, R. Meir pronounced it lawful, לְשֵׁרָרָהּ יִין וְשֵׁן, " to mingle wine and oil, and to anoint the sick on the " sabbath." So oil and wine were mingled together, and used to heal the sore occasioned by circumcision \*; and set him on his own beast; by which may be meant, either the red horse of Christ's humanity, Zech. i. 8. to which he has united all his people; and in which he has bore their persons, and has represented them, and still bears them on his heart: or the white horse of the Gospel, Rev. vi. 2. compared to a horse for its strength, swiftness, and usefulness in battle; and to a white one, for the purity of its doctrines, the joy and peace it brings, and the victory it obtains: and this is Christ's own, and on which he himself rides, and shews his glory, and goes forth conquering and to conquer: and on which he sets his people, and they are carried out of the reach of men and devils to destroy them, and are caused to ride on the high places of the earth: and brought him to an inn; a church of Christ, where the Gospel guides, directs, and carries souls: saints are not at home in their proper city and country, they are travellers here, and need refreshment by the way; and a church of Christ is as an inn, for the entertainment of such: 'tis large, and has room enough for as many as come to it; and is well stored with provisions of all sorts, signified by bread, and milk, and wine, a feast of fat things, a furnished table, Zion's provisions, the goodness and fatness of God's house; and has rivers of pleasure, and very good lodgings, sure dwellings, and quiet habitations; all which is agreeable to weary travellers: and hither Christ brings his people, whom he saves and calls; it is his will that they should be in a church-state, and it is his own act to bring them there, and 'tis their great privilege to be thither brought: and took care of him; clothed him with his righteousness, fed him with the choicest of provisions, gave him reviving cordials of love, refreshing promises, exceeding great and precious ones; and larger supplies of grace, with protection and preservation from all evils.

Ver. 35. *And on the morrow when he departed, &c.]* Having taken care of him all night, and put him into a comfortable way, leaves him, though in good hands; as Christ does his people, to learn to live by faith upon him: and he took out two-pence; two Roman denarii, or pence; which amount to about fifteen-pence of our money, and were equal to the half shekel, paid for the redemption of an Israelite: by which may be meant, not the law and Gospel; for though these both bear the image and superscription of God, and are his current coin, and are both delivered by Christ, and to be regarded and dispensed by the ministers of the word; yet they are not of equal value and use, as these two pence seem to be: wherefore, rather the two Testaments, Old and New, may be designed, since they are both inspired by God, and dictated by the same spirit, and bear the same impress; and are alike, and exactly agree, as two pence do; and

are given to the ministers of the Gospel to handle, and make use of for the good of souls: unless the two ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's supper, should rather be thought to be intended: these bear the same stamp and authority, and are both jointly necessary to communion, and church-order; and are given by Christ to his ministers, to be administered by them, for the good of his church; and are similar, as two breasts are, they being both breasts of consolation, and agree in setting forth the sufferings and death of Christ: or rather, the gifts and graces of the spirit of God, to qualify men for the work of the ministry; which both come from the self-same spirit of God, and are jointly necessary to fit a man for such service; and are given for the benefit and advantage of the Lord's people, and in an eminent manner by Christ, on his departure from hence, when he ascended on high, and received gifts for men, and gave them to them: and gave them to the host; or the keeper and master of the inn; by whom are meant, the ministers of the Gospel; who are governors in the church, the masters of that spiritual inn; who have the provisions of God's house under their care, and whose business it is to invite travellers in, and to dress their food for them, and set it before them, and bid them welcome: and said unto him, take care of him; which is the work of Christ's ministers to do, by feeding souls with the words of faith and sound doctrine; by ministering the Gospel to them in a faithful manner; and by a constant administration of the ordinances of it; and by keeping a diligent watch over them, both with respect to principles and practice; and by speaking a word in season to them: and whatsoever thou spendest more: faithful ministers spend much, and are at great expense in taking care of the souls of men; in fervent and frequent prayer to God; in diligent searching the Scriptures; in the laborious ministry of the word and ordinances; and in the constant exercise and improvement of their spiritual gifts; and in the loss of reputation and credit, and of health, and sometimes of life itself: when I come again, I will repay thee: Christ will certainly come again a second time, to judge both quick and dead; and then he'll recompense his ministers, for all their toil and labour, care and expense; he'll then bid them, as good and faithful servants, enter into the joy of their Lord; and when they shall every one receive the reward of his own work, in a way of grace, and shall shine as the stars in the firmament, for ever and ever.

Ver. 36. *Which now of these three, &c.]* The priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan, thinkest thou, was neighbour to him that fell among the thieves? the priest and Levite that passed by, and took no notice of him, and gave him no relief, neither by words nor actions; or the Samaritan, that did all the above kind and generous things to him?

Ver. 37. *And he said, he that shewed mercy to him, &c.]* Meaning the Samaritan; which he was obliged to declare, though of another country and religion, and accounted as an enemy; yet the case was so plain, as put by Christ, that he could not with any honour or conscience, say otherwise: then said Jesus unto him, go and do thou likewise; such like acts of beneficence and

\* T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 14. 3. & Beracot, fol. 3. 1.

\* Misn. Sabbat, c. 19. sect. 2.

kindness, though to a person of a different nation and religion, and though even an enemy; and by so doing, thou wilt not only appear to be a good neighbour thyself, but to love thy neighbour as thyself.

Ver. 38. *Now it came to pass as they went, &c.*] As Christ and his disciples went from Jerusalem, having been at the feast of tabernacles, John vii. 2. 10. or at the feast of dedication, John x. 22. to some other parts of Judea: *that he entered into a certain village*; called Bethany, which was about fifteen furlongs, or two miles from Jerusalem, John xi. 1, 18. *and a certain woman named Martha.* This is a common name with the Jews; hence we read of Samuel bar Martha<sup>r</sup>, and of Abba bar Martha<sup>s</sup>, and of Isaac bar Martha<sup>s</sup>; and of Martha, the daughter of Baithus<sup>b</sup>, who is said to be a rich widow; and this Martha here, is thought by Grotius to be a widow also, with whom her brother Lazarus, and sister Mary lived: though sometimes, this name was given to men; so we read of<sup>c</sup> Martha, the uncle of Rab, who had five brethren; and the same writer observes<sup>d</sup>, that it is not known whether Martha is a man or a woman, but this is determined here: *received him into her house*; in a very kind and courteous manner, she being mistress of it; and having known Christ before, or at least had heard much of him, and believed in him, as the true Messiah.

Ver. 39. *And she had a sister called Mary, &c.*] Which also was a common name with the Jews, and is the same with Miriam; so we read of Mary, the daughter of Nicodemus, the same perhaps with Nicodemus; and the same person that is before called Martha, the daughter of Baithus, is sometimes called Mary, the daughter of Baithus<sup>e</sup>, though these two names are certainly distinct: *which also sat at Jesus' feet*; was a disciple of his, as well as Martha; for it was usual for disciples, or the scholars of the wise men, to sit at the feet of their masters, to which the allusion is in Deut. xxxiii. 3. see the note on Acts xxii. 3. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Coptic versions, read *at the Lord's feet*; so Beza's ancient copy, and one of Stephens's; and the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, *at our Lord's feet.* The phrase is expressive of her great affection for Christ, her humble deportment, and close attention: *and heard his word*: or discourse; for as soon as he entered into the house, he began to preach to those that were in it, and that came along with him, improving every opportunity for the good of souls; and Mary heard him with great eagerness and diligence, affection, pleasure, and profit.

Ver. 40. *But Martha was cumbered about much serving, &c.*] Or was *drawn off*, from hearing the word, from attending on Christ; being taken up in providing for him, and those that came with him; in dressing the food, or in ordering her servants, how she would have every thing done, and in overlooking them, that every thing was done in proper order; so that she had a great deal of business upon her head and hands, which distracted her thoughts, or took them off of divine things, and put her in great hurry and concern. The Ethiopic

version renders it, *Martha laboured in preparing many things for him*: making a large and sumptuous entertainment: and the Persic version, which is rather a comment than a translation, renders it, *Martha was busied in preparing food, and making a feast*: sparing no cost nor pains, thinking nothing too good, nor too grand, for such a guest she had in her house: *and she came to him and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?* she came to him; that is, to Jesus, as the Persic version expresses it: she came out of the room where she was getting ready the entertainment, into the room where Christ was preaching; and, as the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, *she stood and said*: she did not sit down at his feet, as Mary did, to hear his word, but stood as about to go away again, after she had said what she came about: she did not think fit to speak to Mary herself, though perhaps she might do that first; who, shewing an unwillingness to go with her, she therefore applies to Christ, as believing that he would, with her, look upon it as a very reasonable thing, that she should take her part with her; and that a word from him would go a great way with her sister. And she seems to speak, not only by way of complaint of Mary, who had left her to prepare and serve up this entertainment alone; but even of Christ himself, in some sort, as if he had not shewed that care and concern in this matter, which she thought was necessary. However, she was willing to have his sense of her sister's conduct, and hoped, and even doubted not, but that he would be of the same mind with herself: *bid her therefore that she help me*; that she join, assist, and put an helping hand in this service; speak but a word to her, give her orders, and she'll observe and obey.

Ver. 41. *And Jesus answered and said unto her, &c.*] Calling her by her name, and repeating it, Martha, Martha, which expresses great intimacy and friendship, and much earnestness, and, as it were, pitying her present situation and circumstances: *thou art careful and troubled about many things*; intimating, that she was over anxious, and too solicitous, and more thoughtful and careful than she need be: he did not require such preparations for him, and so much attendance; she gave herself an unnecessary trouble in providing so many things for his entertainment, when less would have sufficed; so that instead of joining with her in her request, he reproves her for her over-anxious care and solicitude, to have a nice and plentiful feast. The Persic version gives a sense quite contrary to the design of the text, rendering the words thus, *thou art adorned in all things, and hast the preference above many women.*

Ver. 42. *But one thing is needful, &c.*] Meaning not that one dish of meat was sufficient, and there was no need of any more, in opposition to Martha's carefulness in preparing many; for this is too low a sense of the words; which yet some ancient writers have given into: but rather the hearing of the word, the Gospel

<sup>r</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 13. 2. & 25. 2. & Pesachim, fol. 106. 2. Yoma, fol. 19. 2. Juchasin, fol. 76. 2.

<sup>s</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 121. 2. Juchasin, fol. 72. 2.

<sup>t</sup> T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 33. 2. Juchasin, fol. 91. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Misn. Yebanot, c. 6. sect. 4. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 18. 1. Succa, fol. 52. 2. Cetubot, fol. 104. 1. Gittin, fol. 56. 1. Juchasin, fol. 57. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Juchasin, fol. 69. 1.

<sup>d</sup> Ib. fol. 105. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Echa Rabbat, fol. 49. 2.

of Christ, which Mary was engaged in; and which, ordinarily speaking, is necessary to the knowledge of Christ, and salvation by him, and to faith in him, Rom. x. 14, 17. not that this is the only needful thing; nor does Christ say there is but one thing needful, but that there is one thing needful; for there are other things that are also needful, and useful, as meditation and prayer, and attendance on, and submission to the ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's supper, and all the duties of religion: but Christ's meaning seems plainly to be, that Mary hearing the word from his mouth, and at his feet, was one necessary thing, in opposition to Martha's many unnecessary ones, about which she was cumbered: and *Mary hath chosen that good part: or the good part, or portion*: Christ, the sum and substance of the word she heard, and eternal life and salvation by him. God himself is said to be the portion of his people, and a good one he is, and a portion that lasts for ever; and so is Christ; see Psal. lxxiii. 28. Lam. iii. 24. where the Septuagint use the same word as here.

The heavenly inheritance also, eternal glory and happiness, is the saints' portion; it is called in Col i. 12. the part, or portion of the inheritance with the saints in light. The word answers to the Hebrew word, *חֵלֶק*; as in that saying of the Misnic doctors<sup>f</sup>, "all Israel have, *חֵלֶק*, a part, or portion in the world to come." All the Oriental versions add, *for herself*, and this choice she made, not from the natural power of her own free-will, but as directed, influenced, and assisted by the spirit and grace of God, and in consequence of God's eternal choice of her unto salvation by Jesus Christ: and the part she chose is, that *which shall not be taken away from her*: by men or devils: faith which comes by hearing of the word, and so every other grace of the spirit is what can never be lost; nor an interest in God, as a covenant God, or in Christ as a Saviour, nor a right and title to, nor meetness for eternal life, nor that itself, can be taken away, or the believer ever be deprived thereof.

## C H A P. XI.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass that as he was praying, &c.*] The following directions concerning prayer, though they agree with those in Matt. vi. 9. &c. yet were delivered at another time, and in another place, and upon another occasion: Christ was then in Galilee, now in Judea: he gave the former directions unasked for, these at the request of one of his disciples; the other were given as he was preaching, these immediately after he had been praying; as soon as he had done a work he was often employed in, as man and mediator, on account of himself, his disciples, cause, and interest: and this was done *in a certain place*; perhaps in the Mount of Olives, which was not far from Bethany, where we hear of him last, since this was a place where he used to abide in the night, and pray, Luke xxi. 37. The Arabic version reads, *in a desert place*; and after he had been at Bethany, he did go to a country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, John xi. 54. *when he ceased*: from praying; when he had concluded his prayer, and finished all his petitions, and was off of his knees: *one of his disciples*: perhaps one of the seventy disciples who had not heard the summary of prayer, and the directions about it before given on the mount, Matt. vi. 9. The Persic version reads, *his disciples*: as if they all united in the request: *and said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples*; who, as Tertullian says<sup>g</sup>, brought in a new order and method of praying, and gave his disciples some instructions and directions concerning it, much better than what the Jews in common had: and this disciple looking upon his Lord and master as much better qualified to give directions in this important affair than even John himself was, requests of him that he would; and what might put him upon it at this time seems to be, his observing that Christ had now been at prayer.

Ver. 2. *And he said unto them, &c.*] That is, Jesus,

as the Syriac and Persic versions express, who directed his speech to all the disciples; for though but one of them addressed him, it was in the name of the rest: and besides, the instructions Christ was about to give concerned them all, even those that heard them before, and those that had not: *when ye pray, say, our father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth*; the last petition is left out in the Vulgate Latin; see the notes on Matt. vi. 9, 10.

Ver. 3. *Give us day by day our daily bread.*] Or *for the day*: or *every day*, as the Syriac version renders it; see the note on Matt. vi. 11.

Ver. 4. *And forgive us our sins, &c.*] Beza's most ancient copy reads *debts*, as in Matt. vi. 12. see the note there; and which best agrees with the phrase *indebted*, after mentioned: *for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*; see the notes on Matt. vi. 12, 13. The doxology there used, and the word *Amen*, are here omitted. Some of the petitions in this prayer are not delivered in the very same words as they are in Matthew. The three first petitions are word for word the same; for though the third petition is different in our translation, it is the same in the original. The fourth and fifth vary: in Matthew the fourth is, *give us this day our daily bread*; here in Luke, *give us day by day our daily bread*. The fifth in Matthew is, *and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*; here, *and forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us*. And these verbal variations, though the sense is the same, together with the omission of the doxology, and the word *Amen*, shew, that this prayer was not designed to be an exact form, and to be so used, but as a directory of prayer. I have, in my notes on Matt. vi. 9, &c. shewn the agreement there is between the petitions in this prayer, and some that

<sup>f</sup> Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1.

<sup>g</sup> Contr. Marcion. l. 4. c. 26.

were made use of among the Jews; and have supposed that our Lord took notice of such petitions, which the good people among the Jews frequently used; and which he approved of, and singled out, and put them into the order and method in which they stand, with some alterations for the better, to be a directory to his disciples and followers. Which to suppose, I apprehend, does not at all countenance the making and using stunted forms of prayer; since the petitions used by good men among the Jews, were not used as forms of prayer, but what they were led unto by the spirit of God from common and constant experience to make use of; just as we may observe now, that good people in different parts, who use no form of prayer, nor have ever heard one another pray, and yet make use of the same petitions, and almost, if not altogether, in the self-same words, their wants, necessities, cases, and circumstances being the same; and these frequently returning, oblige to a repeated use of them, in the same words, or near unto them. And though forms of prayer might not be in use among the Jews in the times of Christ, yet it is easy to account for it, how Christ came to be acquainted with the petitions in general use with good men; since not only he is God omniscient, and knows all the prayers of his people, both in public and private; but, as man, must know what were used, by his attendance on public worship, and by the private communion he had with the saints and children of God. It must indeed be owned, that forms of prayer very early obtained among the Jews; and if not in Christ's time, yet in the times of his apostles. There is frequent mention <sup>h</sup> of the eighteen prayers in the times of Gamaliel, the master of the Apostle Paul; and of a nineteenth composed by one of his disciples <sup>i</sup>, Samuel the little, who is thought, by some, to be Saul himself, whilst he was a scholar of his; and which is directed against the heretics, or Christians, as they were called by the Jews; and this easily accounts for, how the petitions of the ancient good men among the Jews came to be put with others into their forms of prayer, where we now find them. For that they should take these petitions from this directory of Christ's, is not reasonable to suppose, considering their implacable enmity against him. Moreover, supposing, but not granting, that these petitions which our Lord took, and put into this order, for the use and instruction of his disciples, had been used by good men as forms of prayer, it will not justify the use of forms by any authority of Christ, or as being agreeable to his will; since it is certain, that however these petitions were used by good men before, our Lord never designed they should be used as an exact, precise form of prayer by his disciples; seeing there are several variations in them as here delivered, from what they are as they stand in Matthew; whereas, had they been intended as a stunted form, they would have been expressed in the self-same words: and moreover, to approve of here and there a petition, which for their matter are excellently good, and to approve of them all together, as a form, are two different things:

to which may be added, that though there is an agreement between the petitions, as used by the Jews, and those our Lord directs to; yet there are some variations and alterations much for the better, which destroy the form of them.

Ver. 5. *And he said unto them, which of you shall have a friend, &c.*] A neighbour, or acquaintance: *and shall go unto him at midnight*; which may seem a very unseasonable time, and which nothing but real distress, not knowing what otherwise to do, would put a man upon: *and say unto him, friend, lend me three loaves*: it was usual of the Jews to borrow bread of one another, and certain rules are laid down, when, and on what condition, this is to be done; as for instance, on a sabbath-day <sup>k</sup>, “a man may ask of his “friend vessels of wine, and vessels of oil, only he “must not say, lend me: and so a woman, מַחְבִּירָה, מַחְבִּירָה, כִּכְרוֹת, bread of her friend.” Again <sup>l</sup>, “so said Hil- “lell, let not a woman lend לחֲבֵרָה, bread to “her friend, till she has fixed the price; lest wheat “should be dearer, and they should be found coming “into the practice of usury.” For what was lent, could not be demanded again under thirty days <sup>m</sup>.

Ver. 6. *For a friend of mine in his journey, &c.*] *Or out of the way*: having lost his way, being benighted; and has rambled about for some time, and at length, *is come to me*: for lodging and entertainment: *and I have nothing to set before him*; to refresh him with, after such a fatigue, before he goes to bed, which was very requisite and proper.

Ver. 7. *And he from within shall answer and say, &c.*] The friend within doors, shall reply to him that is without at his door, in the street: *trouble me not*: by knocking at the door, and importuning to rise and lend loaves; whereby his rest would be disturbed, and trouble given him; *the door is now shut*: being very late at night, and which could not be opened without noise and inconvenience: *and my children are with me in bed*: sleeping, as the Persic version adds; there were none, children, or servants up, to let him in: *I cannot rise*; without disturbing them: *and give thee*; the loaves desired.

Ver. 8. *I say unto you, &c.*] This is the accommodation of the parable; to these words are premised, in the Vulgate Latin version, the following, *if he continue knocking: though he will not rise and give him, because he is a friend*; though mere friendship will not influence and engage him to rise from his bed, at such an unseasonable time, and fulfil the request of his friend; yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth: as he asks for, or more, if necessary: the design of this parable, is the same with that of the widow and the unjust judge, in ch. xviii. which is to shew the force of importunity, where friendship, as here, and the fear of God, and regard of men, which were wanting there, have no influence; and so to encourage to constancy and perseverance in prayer, with earnestness; taking no denial at the hand of God, but still continuing to make pressing instances.

<sup>h</sup> Misn. Beracot, c. 4. sect. 3. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 28. 2. T. Hieros. Taanot, fol. 65. 3. Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 7. sect. 7.  
<sup>i</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, ab. Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 2. sect. 1, 2.  
<sup>k</sup> Ganz. Tzenach David, par. 1. fol. 23. 2.

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>l</sup> Misn. Sabbat, c. 23. sect. 1.

<sup>m</sup> Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 5. sect. 9.

<sup>n</sup> T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 3. 2. Jarchi in T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 148. 1.

Bartenora in Misn. Sabbat, c. 23. sect. 1.

Ver. 9. *And I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given you, &c.*] This is said by Christ, to encourage to prayer, and importunity in it; that if any one asks of God, in the name of Christ, and in faith, whether it be bread for the body, or food for the soul; or any blessing whatever, whether temporal or spiritual, it shall be given; not according to their deserts, but according to the riches of the grace of God; who is rich unto all that call upon him, in sincerity and truth: *seek, and ye shall find*: whether it be Christ, the pearl of great price, or God in Christ; or particularly, pardoning grace and mercy through Christ, or the knowledge of divine things; and both grace here, and glory hereafter, as men seek for hidden treasure; such shall not lose their labour, but shall enjoy all these valuable things, and whatever they are by prayer, and in the use of other means, seeking after: *knock, and it shall be opened to you*: the door of mercy with God; the door of fellowship with Christ; the door of the Gospel, and the mysteries of it, and of the Gospel dispensation and church-state, into which is admission, to all that seek; and the door of heaven, into which there is entrance by the blood of Jesus: the several phrases denote prayer, the continuance of it, and importunity in it; see the note on Matt. vii. 7.

Ver. 10. *For every one that asketh receiveth, &c.*] Some indeed ask and receive not, because they ask amiss, Jam. iv. 3. who either apply to a wrong person, or ask in a wrong manner, or from wrong principles, or with wrong ends in view: but when a man is right in the object of prayer, and in the matter and manner of prayer, and in the end he proposes to himself, let him be what he will, of whatsoever nation, or ever so mean a person, he has the petitions which he asks, either immediately, or, at least, he may be assured he shall have them in God's due time: *and he that seeketh findeth*; whoever not only prays, but makes use of means, as attendance on other ordinances, and is diligent in the use of them, sooner or later finds his account herein, and what his soul seeks for: *and to him that knocketh it shall be opened*: not only who prays heartily, and seeks diligently, but who is importunate, and will have no denial; continues knocking; though there may be some time a seeming delay, yet the door will not always be shut to him; after much knocking it will be opened; see the note on Matt. vii. 8.

Ver. 11. *If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, &c.*] Our Lord illustrates and confirms what he had said before by an instance common among men: the relation between a father and a son is natural, and it is very near; and it is usual for a son, when hungry, and at the proper times of meals, to ask bread of his father: and when he does, *will he give him a stone?* should he do so, he would shew that his heart was as hard, or harder than the stone he gives: *or if he ask a fish, will he, for a fish, give him a serpent?* And endeavour to deceive him by the likeness of the one to the other, especially some sort of fish, which would poison or sting him, but not refresh and nourish him: such inhuman brutish parents are not surely to be found; see the notes on Matt. vii. 9. 10.

Ver. 12. *Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? &c.*] Of which there are three sorts; some are terrestrial, or land-scorpions, scorpions of the earth, a kind of serpents, very venomous and mischievous, to whom the wicked Jews are compared, Ezek. ii. 6. and the locusts in Rev. ix. 3, 5. others are airy, or flying scorpions, a sort of fowl; and others are sea-scorpions, of the fish kind: it is not easy to say which of them is here meant. There is an herb which is called עקרבנין, *the scorpion*: its leaves are like unto a scorpion, as the Jewish commentators say<sup>p</sup>. This is observed with the same view as the former. By it may be meant here, either the fish that is so called, since a fish is mentioned before; or rather, the land-scorpion, which is of the serpent kind; this brings forth little worms, in the form of eggs, as<sup>q</sup> Pliny says: and it is said, that a scorpion put into an empty egg-shell, has been used to be given to persons, whose death has been desired; which it bursting from, at once strikes and kills: but what father would do so to a child!

Ver. 13. *If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, &c.*] See the note on Matt. vii. 11. *How much more shall your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* instead of the Holy Spirit here, the Vulgate Latin version reads, *good Spirit*, and so two copies of Beza's; and the Ethiopic version, *the good gift of the Holy Spirit*; and doubtless intends the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, in distinction from, and as preferable to the good things given by earthly parents, to their children.

Ver. 14. *And he was casting out a devil, &c.*] At a certain time, either the same that is recorded in Matt. ix. 32. or in Matt. xii. 22. for both of them were attended with the same effect upon the people, and with the same calumny of the Pharisees, mentioned here: *and it was dumb*. The Ethiopic version reads, *deaf and dumb*; that is, the devil, which possessed the man, made him both deaf and dumb; if the same as in Matt. xii. 22. he was blind, as well as dumb: *and it came to pass, when the devil was gone out*: of the man possessed by him, by the command of Christ: *the dumb spake*: as other men did, and as he had done before; the cause being removed, the effect ceased: *and the people wondered*; at the power of Christ, and concluded that he must be the Messiah, the son of David.

Ver. 15. *But some of them said, &c.*] The Pharisees, Matt. ix. 34. and xii. 24. who could not bear that he should be thought to be the Messiah, and therefore put an ill construction on the miracle: *he casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of devils*; in several copies he is called Beelzebub, and in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions; which last adds these words, *and he answered and said, how can Satan cast out Satan?* see the note on Matt. xii. 20.

Ver. 16. *And others tempting him, &c.*] Others of the Scribes and Pharisees, or Sadducees: *sought of him a sign from heaven*; see the notes on Matt. xii. 38. and xvi. 1.

Ver. 17. *But he knowing their thoughts, &c.*] Being God omniscient, *said unto them*; the following parables, as they are called in Mark iii. 23. or proverbial

<sup>p</sup> Misn. Erubin, c. 2. sect. 6.  
<sup>q</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>p</sup> Lib. 11. c. 25.



expressions, very pertinent to the purpose, and sufficient to set aside the base calumnies of the Pharisees: *every kingdom divided against itself, is brought to desolation*; in process of time, division will end in destruction; and as it does in the kingdoms of the world, of which there have been fatal instances, so it would in the kingdom of Satan, was there in it a division, which the calumny of the Pharisees supposes: *and an house divided against an house, falleth*. The Persian version renders it, *an house divided from the foundation, falls*; the sense is, a family, in which one part is opposed to the other, issues in the ruin of both; see the notes on Matt. xii. 25. and on Mark iii. 24, 25.

Ver. 18. *And if Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? &c.*] This is the accommodation of the above parables, or proverbial sentences; suggesting, that Satan must be against himself, if what the Pharisees said was true; and consequently, his kingdom and government, could not long subsist: *because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub*: which is all one as to say, that Satan is divided against himself, which is not reasonable to suppose; see the notes on Matt. xii. 26. and on Mark iii. 26.

Ver. 19. *And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, &c.*] Which is what the Pharisees charged him with; in the Greek copies, and so in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions it is read, *by Beelzebub*, and so in the preceding verses; see the note on Matt. x. 25. *By whom do your sons cast them out? by whose help? or in whose name?* for the Jews pretended to cast out devils, and to heal those that were possessed with them; which they did sometimes, by making use of the names of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and sometimes of the name of Solomon: Josephus<sup>1</sup> speaks of many in his time, who had this power of healing; and he himself saw one Eleazar, in the presence of Vespasian, his children, officers, and soldiers, cure many that were possessed of devils: and his method was, by putting a ring to the nose of the possessed, under the seal of which, was a root directed to by Solomon, and thereby brought out the unclean spirit; and as soon as the man was healed, he adjured the devil never to return more; at which time he made mention of the name of Solomon, and rehearsed the enchantments written by him: the said Eleazar, to give a specimen of the efficacy of his art, set a cup full of water upon the ground, and commanded the devil when he went out of the man, to turn it over, as a sign that he had left the man, and the devil immediately obeyed his order: now if these sons of theirs cast out devils, which they would not say were done by the help of the devil, or in his name, why should they ascribe the ejection of devils by Christ, to a diabolical assistance? *therefore shall they be your judges; or judges against you*, as the Arabic version; *or shall reprove you*, as the Ethiopic; convict and condemn you; see the note on Matt. xii. 27.

Ver. 20. *But if I with the finger of God, &c.*] The power of God, referring to Exod. viii. 19. and so the Cabalistic Jews<sup>2</sup> explain it, "the finger is one of the

"five in the hand, and is that finger which works by the power of Elohim;" it is the same with the spirit of God; see the note on Matt. xii. 28. which is often called the hand of the Lord, Ezek. i. 3. and iii. 22. and xxxvii. 1. and xl. 1.

Ver. 21. *When a strong man armed, &c.*] By the *strong man*, is meant the devil; see the note on Matt. xii. 29. and who may be said to be *armed*, both with his own temptations, which are as fiery darts, and which are thrown by him thick and fast, suddenly and swiftly, privily; and with great art and cunning, and with great strength, and are very injurious; and also with the sins and lusts of men, which are armor of unrighteousness, and which Satan turns upon them, and makes use of against them, to their great detriment; and who *keepeth his palace*: which is the corrupt heart of an unregenerate man, where he dwells as a king, has his throne, keeps his court, and has his courtiers, and attendants, the lusts of the flesh, and the desires of the will, and the carnal affections; and which, as filthy a palace as it is, is perfectly agreeable to his nature; and this is kept by a guard of devils, and worldly lusts, till its strong holds are demolished by the Gospel, and Christ the King of glory enters in; till such time, *his goods are in peace*: there is no concern in such an heart about sin, no uneasiness on that account, no sense of danger, nor inquiry after salvation; no dread upon the mind at the curses of the law, nor fears of hell, and damnation; but such a man lives in entire security, crying Peace, Peace, to himself.

Ver. 22. *But when a stronger than he, &c.*] By whom is meant Christ, who is the mighty God, the Almighty; and appears to be so, in the creation of all things, in upholding them by the word of his power, in the government of the world, and the works of providence, in the redemption of his people from sin, Satan, and the law, and in the conversion of them, by the efficacy of his grace, and in the preservation of them by his power; and who is manifestly stronger than Satan, not only by these instances, but by what follows: *shall come upon him*; as he did in person, when he dispossessed him from the bodies of men; and does by his spirit in conversion, when he enters into his palace, the heart of man, binds him, and looses men from him, and turns them from the power of Satan, to God, and sets up a throne of grace, where he himself dwells and reigns: so he comes upon him as an adversary, and often at an unawares; and always with great power and strength, and succeeds: Satan came upon Christ in the wilderness, in the garden, and on the cross, and attacked him, but without success; whence it is clear, that he is stronger than he: *and overcame him*; he overcame him in the wilderness, and obliged him to retreat; and on the cross, when he obtained a complete victory over him, destroyed him, his principalities and powers, and all his works, and led him captive; and in conversion, so as to deliver his people from him, that were led captive by him, as that he can never regain his dominion over them more; and though he is suffered to tempt them, he cannot destroy them; and the saints shall overcome him at last,

<sup>1</sup> Antiqu. Jud. l. 8. c. 2.

<sup>2</sup> R. Mosch in Sepher Hashreu, apud Cabal. Denudata. T. I. par. 1. p. 146.

and have him bruised under their feet: and at the same time, *he taketh from him all his armour, wherein he trusted*: as his temptations, which he himself repelled in the wilderness, and wrenched out of his hands, and made them useless, and he gives power to his people to resist them, and succours them under them, and delivers them out of them; and also the sins of men, which he took away on the cross, when he bore them, and the punishment of them there: and in conversion, he greatly weakens the power of sin, and takes away the dominion of it; and though the being of it is not removed, hence Satan has something to work upon, yet its power is so far gone, that neither that nor Satan, can destroy such who are truly called by the grace of God: *and divideth his spoils*: he spoils his house, the heart of man, from being any longer a palace for him, and his goods, his mind and conscience, which are enlightened and awakened, and purged: or by his spoils are meant, the souls of men; which are taken as a prey out of his hands, and become trophies of victorious grace.

Ver. 23. *He that is not with me, is against me, &c.*] Our Lord does not mean one, that was not personally with him; for there might be some, and doubtless were many, who were not in person with him, and yet were not against him, but friends to him, and to his interest; nor one that was not a professed disciple of his, or not a follower of him, and his apostles; for there were some who called themselves John's disciples, and did not attend on Christ, and yet were not against him, but cast out devils in his name; and such an one perhaps was he, that is made mention of in Mark ix. 38, 39, 40. on occasion of whom, Christ there says some words, which may seem at first view, not so well to accord with these: but such are intended, who acted a neutral part between him and the Pharisees; who could bear to hear them accuse him of casting out devils by the prince of devils, and be easy at it: and such persons are condemned, who can hear all manner of blasphemy against the deity, sonship, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, and express no indignation at it; these, as they can't be said to be with Christ, may be truly ranked among those that are against him: *and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth*: whoever did not encourage persons to attend on the ministry of Christ, which was confirmed by such miracles the Pharisees spoke so reproachfully and contemptuously of, were reckoned by Christ as such, who were the means of hindering persons gathering unto him: as well as those who menaced and excommunicated them for so doing: the allusion is either to the gathering of the sheep into the fold, and the scattering of them by the wolf; or to the gathering of the wheat, and binding it in sheaves, and bringing it home in harvest; and to the scattering of the wheat loose in the field, whereby it is lost, and comes to nothing; see the note on Matt. xii. 30.

Ver. 24. *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, &c.*] That is, the devil, who is in, and works in the children of disobedience, whether under a profession of religion or not; whose hearts are unclean like himself, wherefore there he delights to dwell; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *the evil demon*: who may be said to go out of a man in appearance,

when he outwardly reforms and takes up a profession of religion. *He walketh through dry places or a desert*, as the Ethiopic version; to which the Gentile world is sometimes compared in the Old Testament, Isa. xxxv. 1. and xli. 18, 19, and xlii. 11. whither Satan might go, being disturbed in Judea, through the many dispossessions by Christ; or rather leaving for a while the Scribes and Pharisees, who outwardly appeared righteous before men, he went to the Gentiles; *seeking rest, and finding none*: being also made uneasy among them, through the preaching of the Gospel, which was sent unto them after Christ's resurrection; and not being able to keep his place in the hearts of men, nor do the mischief he was desirous of. *He saith, I will return unto my house, whence I came out*: to the Jews again, who were blinded and filled with rage and enmity to the Gospel by him, and whom he instigated to persecute the apostles of Christ, and preachers of the word, wherever they came; see the notes on Matt. xii. 43, 44.

Ver. 25. *And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished.*] In Matthew it is also said to be *empty*; and so it is read here in the Arabic version; and in the Ethiopic version, *empty of men*: but rather the sense is, that he found it empty of all goodness, notwithstanding all the sweeping and garnish of an outward reformation. The Persic version renders it, *heated and prepared*: heated with wrath and fury against Christ, and his Gospel, and so was prepared and fitted to be a proper habitation for Satan; and in such a case as this was the Jewish nation from the time of Christ's death to the destruction of Jerusalem; see the note on Matt. xii. 44.

Ver. 26. *Then goeth he and taketh to him seven other spirits, &c.*] Or *demons*, as the Ethiopic version, whom he took to him as his consorts and companions, as the same version calls them. *More wicked than himself*; for it seems there are degrees of wickedness among the devils, as well as among men: *and they enter in and dwell there*: the unclean spirit, and the other seven: so seven devils were in Mary Magdalene, and a legion in another man; and indeed the evil heart of man is an habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit: here it may chiefly design the place and power which the devil had among the Jews before their destruction: *and the last state of that man is worse than the first*: the Persic version adds, *and more miserable*; as was the case of the Jews, to which this parable refers; as appears by what is subjoined in Matthew, which manifestly applies it to them, *even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation*; see the note on Matt. xii. 45.

Ver. 27. *And it came to pass as he spake these things, &c.*] That is, as Christ spake, or had finished these sayings, as the Persic version expresses it, before related, in vindication of himself and his miracles, from the blasphemy of the Scribes and Pharisees to their entire confusion, and had delivered the above parable concerning the unclean spirit, which had a particular regard to them: *a certain woman of the company*: observing the miracle he had wrought, in casting out a devil, and being affected with his discourse, in which he so fully cleared himself, and so strongly confuted his enemies, and set them forth in so just a light: *lift*

up her voice, and aid unto him . aloud, in the hearing of all the people, and with great earnestness and fervour: *blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast suck'd*: whether this woman personally knew Mary, the mother of Christ, is not certain; it may be that she was now present, or at least not far off; and this woman hearing that she, with the brethren of Christ, were without, and desired to speak with him, might be the occasion of her uttering these words; see Matt. xii. 46. though they are said not so much in praise, and to the honour of Mary, as in commendation of Christ, from whom, and for the sake of bearing and suckling so great a person, she was denominated blessed as before, both by the angel and Elisabeth, Luke i. 28, 42. This was a form of blessing among the Jews: so it is said of R. Joshua ben Chananiah, a disciple of R. Jochanan ben Zaccai, who lived about these times, אשוי יולדו, *blessed is she that bore him*: and they had also a form of cursing among them, much after the same manner, as ליש ביזא דבן, *cursed be the paps that suckled him*<sup>1</sup>. The Jews, in their blasphemous rage against Christ, and all that belong to him, say of Mary, the daughter of Eli, by whom they seem to design the mother of our Lord, that she hangs in the shades by the fibres of her paps<sup>2</sup>; but this woman had a different opinion of her.

Ver. 28. *But he said, &c.*] Christ said to the woman, as the Persic version reads, as correcting her, though not denying it, nor reproving her for it, but improving upon it: *yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it*: intimating, that though his mother was happy in bearing and suckling such a son, yet it was a far greater happiness to hear the word of God; meaning either himself, the eternal Logos, so as to embrace him, believe on him, and have him formed in the heart; or the Gospel preached by him, so as to understand it, receive it as the ingrafted word, and bring forth fruit, and act in obedience to it, observe it, and abide by it, and never relinquish it. This is a greater happiness than to be related to Christ in the flesh, though ever so nearly. The Ethiopic version reads, *that hear the word of God, and believe, and keep it*: for faith comes by hearing, and shews itself in doing. Barely to hear the word, and even give an assent to it, will be of little avail, unless what is heard and believed is put in practice.

Ver. 29. *And when the people were gathered thick together, &c.*] Upon this woman's lifting up her voice, and saying the things she did; or rather to see what sign he would give, which some had desired, ver. 16. *he began to say, this is an evil generation*. The Alexandrian copy, two copies of Beza's, and the Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions read, *this generation is an evil generation*: and also it was an *adulterous* one, as is added in Matt. xii. 39. *they seek a sign*. for they had asked one of him, ver. 16. *and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet*; one like unto it: see the note on Matt. xii. 39.

Ver. 30. *For as Jonas was a sign to the Ninevites, &c.*] As he was by lying three days and three nights in the whale's belly, and then cast on shore alive;

which sign, or miracle was wrought to confirm his mission and message, and to engage the Ninevites to give credit to him, and repent, or they might assure themselves they would be utterly destroyed; *so shall also the son of man be to this generation*: by lying three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, and then rising again from the dead the third day; and which should be done to confirm the truth of his Messiahship, and to declare him to be the son of God with power, and to engage persons to believe in him; and to assure that wicked generation, that in case they remained, after such a sign, impenitent and unbelieving, wrath would come upon them to the uttermost; see Matt. xii. 40.

Ver. 31. *The queen of the south, &c.*] That is, the queen of Sheba, which was a country of Arabia, which lay south of Judea; of whom it is said, that *she shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them*: the sense is, that at the last day, when all shall rise from the dead, both Jews and Gentiles, this Heathen queen shall rise together with the men of the present generation among the Jews, stand in judgment with them, and against them; and that her conduct would be brought as an evidence against them, and be improved as an aggravation of their condemnation: *for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon is here*: the difference between them, and what aggravates the case is, that she was a Gentile that knew not God, they were Jews, his professing people; she came from afar, they were near, upon the spot, where Christ was, he was preaching in their streets, temple, and synagogues; she came to hear only natural or moral wisdom, but they might have heard spiritual and heavenly wisdom, with which eternal happiness is connected; she came to hear only a mere man, but they might have heard him who is the wisdom of God, and the only wise God, and our Saviour; see the note on Matt. xii. 42.

Ver. 32. *The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, &c.*] Luke changes the order of these instances; Matthew mentions this before the instance of the queen of Sheba; but Luke puts it last: this circumstance is not material, and the design of it is the same with the former: *for they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold a greater than Jonas is here*: what in this case will aggravate the condemnation of the Jews in the day of judgment is, that these men were Heathens, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, and were not used to have prophets sent to them; and yet as soon as Jonas, a mere man, came to them, and preached but one sermon among them, they repented of their sins, and turned from them; whereas the Jews, who had a better notion of religion, and who, though they had the son of God himself among them, and preached to them, and that many sermons, and whose ministry was confirmed by miracles, and afterwards his apostles for a course of years, had yet remained impenitent and unbelieving; see the note on Matt. xii. 41.

<sup>1</sup> Pirke Ahot, c. 2. sect. 8.

<sup>2</sup> T. Hieros. Celaim, fol. 27. 2. Pereshit Rabba, sect. 5. fol. 5. 1.

<sup>3</sup> T. Hieros. Chagiga, fol. 77. 4, & Sanhedrin, fol. 23. 3.

Ver. 33. *No man when he hath lighted a candle, &c.*] These words are often repeated by Christ on different occasions, see Matt. v. 15. Luke viii. 16. and the notes there; and here seem to design the free, open, and clear ministry of Christ, who excelled Solomon in wisdom, and Jonas in powerful preaching. It being as a candle, which, when lighted, no man putteth in a secret place: as under a bed, Mark iv. 21. where it can't be seen, and its light be of any use: *neither under a bushel, but on a candle-tick, that they which come in may see the light*: intimating, that Christ and his disciples did not preach in corners, or in private houses, and secret places, but in the streets of the city, and in the temples and synagogues, the public places of worship: and therefore the Jews were the more inexcusable, that they did not attend to the ministry of the word; and this would be their condemnation, that light was come among them, and they preferred darkness to it, John iii. 19.

Ver. 34. *The light of the body is the eye, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin, and all the eastern versions read, *the light of thy body is thine eye*. The sense is, that as the eye gives light to the body, and the several members of it, by which they are guided and directed; so the understanding is the light of the soul, and the guide to all the powers and faculties of it; therefore *when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light*: as when the eye is free from vicious humours, and its sight is clear, the whole body reaps the advantage of it, and is perfectly illuminated by it; so when the eye of the understanding is opened and enlightened by the spirit of God, into the truths of the Gospel, and a single regard is had unto them, and to the glory of Christ in them, the whole soul is filled with light, joy, and comfort: *but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness*: as when the eye of the body is attended with any bad humours that hinder the sight, all the members of it are in darkness; so, when the understanding is darkened through the blindness and ignorance there is in men, with respect to Gospel truths, all the powers and faculties of the soul are in a very miserable and uncomfortable condition. The 35th and 36th verses are not in Beza's most ancient copy.

Ver. 35. *Take heed therefore, &c.*] By attending to the light of the Gospel, shining in the ministrations of it, and don't neglect and despise it: *that the light which is in thee be not darkness*: lest being given up to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart, not only the light of nature, which the Jews had in common with the Gentiles, but even that notional light and knowledge of divine things, which they had by being favoured with an external revelation, the writings of the Old Testament, should be lost.

Ver. 36. *If thy whole body therefore be full of light, &c.*] That is, if the whole soul, as the Ethiopic version reads, be full of Gospel light, through the illuminating influences of the blessed spirit accompanying the word: *having no part dark*: every power and faculty of the soul being affected with it, and influenced by it, though, as yet, the light and knowledge of evangelical things is not perfect in any: *the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light*: the whole soul shall be as full of

light and joy, which the Gospel always brings with it, as a room is full of light, when a candle is lighted, and shines brightly, and burns clearly in it.

Ver. 37. *And as he spake, &c.*] Either the above words, or others at another time: *a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him*: as one of the same sect had before, in ch. vii. 36. and who either was better affected to Christ than the generality of them were; or had a design upon him to get him into company with others, in private, and ensnare him if they could, and overcome him, who was an over-match for them before the people; among whom they feared, should they go on thus publicly to attack him, their credit and reputation would sink, and be lost. *And he went in and sat down to meat*: whatever were the intentions of the Pharisee, Christ, who was always affable and free with all sorts of men, readily accepted of the invitation, and at once went along with him to his house; and dinner being ready, and on the table, he immediately sat down without any ceremony.

Ver. 38. *And when the Pharisee saw it, &c.*] That Christ laid himself down on one of the couches and began to eat: *he marvelled*: that so great a prophet as he was, and a man of so much religion and holiness, should show no regard to a common custom with them, and which was one of the traditions of their elders, and which they put upon a level with the commands of God. The Vulgate Latin version, and so Beza's most ancient copy, and another exemplar, read, *he began to say, thinking (or judging) within himself*: he was moved at it, as the Persic version renders it; he was filled with astonishment and indignation, *that he had not first washed before dinner*: especially since he had been in a crowd of people, ver. 29. for the Pharisees not only washed their hands, by immersing them up to the elbow before eating; but when they had been at market, or among any large number of people, or had reason to think they had, or feared they had touched any unclean person or thing, they immersed themselves all over in water: and which is the sense of the word βαπτίζομαι, here used; see the notes on Mark vii. 2, 3, 4.

Ver. 39. *And the Lord said unto him, &c.*] Jesus, as the Syriac and Persic versions read; the Lord Jesus, as the Ethiopic. *Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup, and the platter*: being very tenacious of the traditions of the elders, concerning the washing of cups and pots, which had been of late years brought in among them, and therefore the word *now* is used; see the notes on Matt. xxiii. 25. and Mark vii. 4. *but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness*: meaning either their souls, which were full of all manner of sin, the cleansing and purity of which they had no concern about, whilst they were very strict and curious in washing their bodies, their cups and platters; or rather the vessels which were filled with meat and drink got by extortion, rapine, and oppression; see Matt. xxiii. 25.

Ver. 40. *Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without, &c.*] That is, made clean that which is without, or the outside of the cup and platter; *make that which is within also?* does not he make the inside clean likewise? whoever washes a cup or platter, but washes and makes clean the inside, as well as the out-

side? and so ye who are so very careful to have your cups and platters clean, should be as careful what you put in them, that they are clean also; not only that they are clean according to the law, in a ceremonial sense, but in a moral sense, that they are honestly and lawfully got. The word, *ποιου*, rendered *made* and *make*, answers to the Hebrew word *עשה*, which sometimes signifies to beautify and adorn, and to cleanse, and remove away filth, as by paring nails, and washing the feet; so in Deut. xxi. 12. it is said of a captive woman that a man takes into his house for his wife, among other things, *ועשתה*, *she shall make her nails*: that is, *pare* them, as we render it, and remove the filth from them. Again, in 2 Sam. xix. 24. it is said of Mephibosheth, that from the day king David departed, he had not, *עשה*, *made his feet*; that is, as the Targum renders it, *לא שפת*, *he had not washed his feet*; and so other Jewish interpreters understand it, either of his having not washed his feet, much less his whole body\*, or of not having pared his nails†; and so the Vulgate Latin renders it, that he came to meet the king *with unwashed feet*: which may serve to illustrate and confirm the sense before given: though interpreters generally understand this of God, as the maker of the soul, as well as of the body; and therefore the purity of the former should be regarded, as well as that of the latter.

Ver. 41. *But rather give alms of such things as ye have, &c.*] The phrase *תא עניניו*, is variously rendered, and so furnishes out various senses: the Syriac version renders it, *give that which is*, which is yours; or *which is given to you*, as the Persic version, and agrees with ours, *such things as ye have*; and which carries in it but a very odd sense; for none can give of that which they have not. The Vulgate Latin version reads, *that which is over and above*: superfluous substance, and which may be easily spared without hurting a man, or his family: others, *as much as you can*: according to a man's ability, and as God has prospered him in the world. The Ethiopic version renders it, *that which is necessary*: which the necessities of the poor call for, and is right and proper to give them: and the Arabic version, very foreign from the sense of the phrase, reads, *before every thing*: above all things give alms. But the true sense of it is contained in the literal version of it, *things that are within*; that is, that are within the cup and the platter; give meat and drink to the poor, your platters and cups are full of, gotten by injustice and oppression. Some read it not imperatively, *give*, but indicatively, *ye do give*: you oppress and defraud men, devour widows' houses, and fill your own with the spoils of others; and then give out of your cups and platters drink to the thirsty, and meat to the hungry, to make atonement for your avarice and extortion: *and behold all things are clean unto you*; that is, according to their own opinion, who fancied that alms-deeds justified them in the sight of God, cleansed them from their sins, delivered them from hell, and gave them a title to eternal life; see the note on Matt. vi. 1. for it can never be thought to be our Lord's meaning in earnest, that either their

persons, or what they had, should be pure and clean unto them, by giving a part of their ill-gotten goods to the poor; but he speaks their sense, in an ironic way. From this opinion of theirs it is, that the Hebrew word, *זכה*, which signifies *to be clean*, is used by them for giving alms: so it is said, that "R. Jonathan and Resh Lekish went down to bathe themselves in the baths of Tiberias; and a certain poor man met them, and said unto them, *זכין בי*, *give me alms*: they said unto him, when we come back we will *זכין בך*, *give thee alms*:" and so the Mahometans call alms by the same name, because they imagine that they cleanse their other substance from pollution, and their souls from avarice.

Ver. 42. *But woe unto you Pharisees, &c.*] Though these words, with several other passages in this chapter, are much alike with those in Matt. xxiii. yet 'tis clear that they were spoken at different times, these in the house of a Pharisee, and they in the temple at Jerusalem: *for ye tithe mint and rue*; see the note on Matt. xxiii. 23. The Persic version here reads, *mint and anise*, as there; and the Ethiopic version only *hyssop*: and *all manner of herbs*; or *every herb*: that is, all sorts of herbs that grow in the garden, and were not common to all; and *pass over judgment, and the love of God*: by judgment may be meant justice, or doing that which is right between man and man, both publicly and privately, which was greatly neglected by these extortioners and unjust men: and by the *love of God* may be intended, both love to God, which shews itself in the observance of the first table of the law, and love to the neighbour, which God requires, and regards the second table: *these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone*; see the note on Matt. xxiii. 23.

Ver. 43. *Woe unto you Pharisees, for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, &c.*] And also *the uppermost rooms at feasts*, Matt. xxiii. 6. and *greetings in the market*; see the note on Matt. xxiii. 6, 7.

Ver. 44. *Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, &c.*] As they are all along called by Matthew; though only here by Luke. The Vulgate Latin only reads, *woe unto you*, leaving out all the rest: but the whole is retained in all the Oriental versions; *for ye are as graves which appear not*: being covered with grass; or *which were not marked*, as the Ethiopic version renders it; that is, were not whitened or covered with lime, as some were, that they might be seen at a distance, and be known what they were; that so men might avoid going near them, and prevent their being defiled with them; see the note on Matt. xxiii. 27. *and the men that walk over them are not aware of them*; and so are defiled by them. Christ compares the Pharisees, because of their hypocrisy, and secret iniquity, both to whitened sepulchres, and to those that were not: to those that were, because, like them, they looked beautiful without, and righteous in the sight of men, and yet were inwardly full of all manner of pollution and sin; and to those that were not, because they did not appear to be what they were,

\* R. David Kimchi and Rabbenu Issiah in loc. Vid Jarchi in ib.  
† R. Levi ben Gerson in ib.

† Vajjika Rabba, sect. 34. fol. 174. 2. Vid. fol. 173. 3, 4. & 174. 4.

and men were deceived by them; and under specious pretences to religion and holiness, were by their corrupt doctrines and practices unawares drawn into the commission of sin. Regard may not only be had to graves covered with grass, or not marked with lime, by which they might be known; but also to what the Jews call, קבר התהום, *the grave of the abyss*; a grave that is not known no more than if it was in the bottomless pit: so uncleanness by touching a dead body, which a man is not conscious of, is called the uncleanness of the abyss, or an unknown one<sup>a</sup>.

Ver. 45. *Then answered one of the lawyers, &c.*] Or Scribes, as the Syriac and Persic versions read: and so the Ethiopic version calls him, *a Scribe of the city*: the Scribes and lawyers were the same sort of persons who were interpreters of the law, and equally tenacious of the traditions of the elders Christ had referred to, as the Pharisees, and in general were Pharisees; though some of them might be of the sect of the Sadducees. This man observing that Christ, in his last words, joined the Scribes and Pharisees together, and charged them both with hypocrisy, and pronounced a woe upon them, was very uneasy at it: *and saith unto him, master, thus saying, thou reproachest us also; us lawyers, or Scribes also; both by mentioning their names, and accusing the Pharisees of the same things, which they must be conscious to themselves they were equally guilty of; so that if the one were criminal, the others were also.* The Ethiopic version reads by way of interrogation, *what thou sayest, does it not injure us?*

Ver. 46. *And he said, woe unto you also, ye lawyers, &c.*] Christ was so far from calling back what he had said or suggested, that he repeats and confirms it, and more particularly names them, and enlarges on their evil practices: *for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers*; see the note on Matt. xxiii. 4.

Ver. 47. *Woe unto you, &c.*] Meaning particularly the lawyers or Scribes, together with the Pharisees, and even the whole body of the people, who in general were of the cast and complexion here described: *for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets*; see the note on Matt. xxiii. 29. *and your fathers killed them*; the prophets; or *whom your fathers killed*, as read the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions; the one put them to death, and the other erected stately monuments over them, or adorned them; and yet both had the same malignant spirit against the faithful servants and messengers of God; and which shewed their great hypocrisy.

Ver. 48. *Truly ye bear witness, that ye allow the deeds of your fathers, &c.*] *Or ye bear witness, and ye allow*; that is, they both witnessed that their fathers killed the prophets, and they consented to what they did, and approved of their actions: *for they indeed killed them*; it must be owned, and not their sons; *and ye build their sepulchres*; which was a bearing and keeping up a testimony against them, and a continuing a remembrance of their crimes; and which

looked as though they approved of them, or otherwise they should have been content to have the prophets lie buried in silence, and not erected stately monuments over them, which seemed to be raised more for the honour of those that put them to death, than of the prophets themselves. Or, whereas they did this under specious pretences of disliking their fathers' sins, which yet secretly they loved, and were of the same wicked disposition against the ministers of the word, and which they would quickly shew; this discovered their hypocrisy, and confirmed the character Christ had before given of them; for it follows,

Ver. 49. *Therefore also said the wisdom of God, &c.*] The Syriac version only reads *wisdom*; by which seems to be meant not the perfection of God's wisdom: though it is usual with the Jews to represent the divine perfections as speaking, as the justice and mercy of God. They say<sup>b</sup>, that "when the holy blessed God sought to make Hezekiah the Messiah, and Sennacherib, Gog, and Magog, מִידַת הַדָּיָן, *the property of judgment, or justice, said before* "the holy, blessed God, Lord of the world, &c." and so the sense may be here, that the infinite wisdom of God said within himself, determined in his own breast, to do what follows. But I rather think that Christ is intended, who, as God, is the essential wisdom of God; and, as man and mediator, has the spirit of wisdom resting on him, and the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid in him; since this is said by Christ, Matt. xxiii. 34. though the words here seem to be the words of the evangelist relating what Christ had said. Some have thought, that some book, under the name of *The Wisdom of God*, is here cited, which had in it the following words, *I will send them prophets and apostles*; which, in Matthew, are called prophets, wise men, and Scribes; and by whom are meant the apostles of Christ, and the ministers of the Gospel. The Persic version reads, *lo, I send to you*, as in Matt. xxiii. 34. *and some of them they shall slay and persecute*; some of them they shall put to death, and others they shall persecute from one place to another; see the note on Matt. xxiii. 34.

Ver. 50. *That the blood of all the prophets, &c.*] The same with *all the righteous blood*, or the blood of all the righteous men, in Matt. xxiii. 35. *which was shed from the foundation of the world*: for there were prophets from the beginning, which prophesied of Christ, Luke i. 70. and whose blood was shed very early; for Abel, the son of the first man, and who was the first whose blood was shed, was not only a righteous man, but a prophet; for by the sacrifice which he offered up, he gave a prophetic hint of the sacrifice of Christ, in that he spoke beforehand of it, as being dead he yet speaks: and now the Lord was about to send apostolical prophets, whom the Jews would slay, and he would suffer them to slay, that so the blood of all the former ones may be required of this generation; and they be punished for it: just as in Babylon will be found, when God makes inquisition for blood, as he sooner or later always does, the blood of the prophets and

<sup>a</sup> Misn. Parah. c. 3. sect. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Parah. c. 3. sect. 2.  
<sup>b</sup> Maimon. in Misn. Nazir, c. 9. sect. 2. & Pesach. c. 7. sect. 7.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 1. Vid. Targum in Eccl. x. 8. & in Lam. i. 1. & ii. 20.

saints, and of all that are slain upon earth, ever since Rome papal has been in power, Rev. 18. 24.

Ver. 51. *From the blood of Abel, &c.] Righteous Abel*, as in Matt. xxiii. 35. and so read the Arabic version here, and two manuscripts in the Bodleian library, and three of Stephens's copies; the Persian version renders it, *innocent Abel*: he is mentioned because he was the first man that was slain, and he was slain because of his righteousness. *Unto the blood of Zacharias*; in the Cambridge copy of Beza's, it is added, *the son of Barachias*, as in Matt. xxiii. 35. and so the Arabic version, *the son of Barasciah*: who he was, see the note on Matt. xxiii. 35. *which perished between the altar and the temple; or the house*, that is, the holy place: and the Ethiopic version renders it, *the holy house*; here he died, being slain by the Jews; see the note, as before. *Verily I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation; as it was at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem.*

Ver. 52. *Woe unto you lawyers, &c.]* Who are particularly addressed again in distinction from the Pharisees, though much the same things are said to them both in Matt. xxiii. 13. *for ye have taken away the key of knowledge*; of the Scriptures, of the law, and the prophets, and the true interpretation of them, and especially of such places as refer to the Messiah, and the Gospel dispensation, called the kingdom of heaven, Matt. xxiii. 13. they had not only arrogated the knowledge of these to themselves, setting up for the only interpreters of the sacred writings; but they had took away from the people the true knowledge and sense of them, by their false glosses upon them, so that they were destroyed for lack of knowledge: and hence came that famine of hearing the word, which they say<sup>c</sup> should be before the coming of the King Messiah, and now was. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, *the keys of knowledge*; and the Ethiopic version, *the key of*

*righteousness*. The Jews sometimes speak of *the keys of the law*, and represent the oral law as the root and key of the written law<sup>d</sup>: but, alas! it was by the oral law, or traditions of the elders, that they took away the key, or obscured the true sense of the written law. Some think, that here is an allusion to the custom of delivering a key to any one, when he was ordained or promoted to the dignity of a doctor: it is said of R. Samuel<sup>e</sup>, that "when he died they put, *כפתורו*, *his key*, and his writing-book into his coffin, "because he was not worthy of a son" to succeed him: *ye entered not in yourselves*; into the kingdom of heaven, the Gospel dispensation, neither receiving its doctrines, nor submitting to its ordinances: *and them that were entering in ye hindered*; by reproaching the miracles and ministry of Christ; by threatening and excommunications; see the note on Matt. xxiii. 13.

Ver. 53. *And as he said these things unto them, &c.]* Denounced the above woes upon them, charging them with the above crimes, and threatening them with divine vengeance: *the Scribes and Pharisees began to urge him vehemently*; to fall upon him with their tongues, and express great rage, wrath, and virulence against him: *and to provoke him to speak of many things*; they put questions to him, and urged him to answer them, and did all they could to irritate him to say things that they could improve against him, to draw words out of his mouth, and then wrest and pervert them.

Ver. 54. *Laying wait for him, &c.]* To ensnare and entangle him, watching his words, observing what he said, and laying hold thereon: *and seeking to catch something out of his mouth*; like beasts of prey, or hunters, that were watching for their prey; or lay in ambush, diligently looking out, and greedily catching at every thing they thought for their purpose: *that they might accuse him*; either of heresy or sedition, to the Jewish sanhedrim, or the Roman governor.

## C H A P. XII.

Ver. 1. *IN the mean time, &c.]* While Christ was discoursing with the Pharisees, and they were using him in the vilest manner, throwing out their invectives against him in order to draw off the people from him: *when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people*. There were *myriads* of them, as in the original text, and a *myriad* is ten thousand; the meaning is, that there were several thousands of them: *insomuch that they trod one upon another*; striving to get near to Christ, either to see his person, or to hear his discourses; and particularly, what he would say to the Pharisees, who had fallen upon him in so violent a manner: *he began to say unto his disciples first of all*; he directed his discourse not to the Pharisees, nor to the multitude, but to his disciples in the first place; at least, chiefly to them; for whom he had a special regard, who were his dear friends, and were to be the preachers of his Gospel every where; and therefore it

was proper that they should be aware of the dissembling arts of the Scribes and Pharisees, and have their minds fortified against approaching dangers, persecutions, and death itself: the last phrase, *first of all*, is omitted in the Vulgate Latin version; and by all the Oriental versions, it is joined to the next clause, and read thus, *especially, or before all things, beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy*; expressed both in their doctrines, and in their lives; which carried a great shew of piety and holiness, but was in appearance only: very aptly is hypocrisy in doctrine and manners, compared to leaven; which at first is small and little, but gradually increases and spreads itself, and lies hid and covered, and is not easily discerned, nor its influence and effects observed; but in time, it infects and corrupts the whole of men's principles and practices, and puffs and swells them up with a vain opinion of themselves:

<sup>c</sup> Targum in Ruth 1. 1.

<sup>d</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 46. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Vid. Cameron. in loc.

and when our Lord bids his disciples beware of it, his meaning not only is, that they take heed that they were not infected with it themselves, but that they were not imposed upon by the specious pretences of these artful and designing men.

Ver. 2. *For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, &c.*] No sin, be it ever so secret or privately done, as nothing is more covered than hypocrisy, but what shall be detected sooner or later; if not in this world, which is often the case, yet at the last judgment, and in the world to come: *neither hid, that shall not be known*; for how careful soever men may be to hide their vices from others, they are known to God; who will bring every thing into judgment, and make manifest the secrets of all hearts. These were general sentences, which were used by Christ at different times, upon different occasions, and applied to particular cases; see the note on Matt. x. 26.

Ver. 3. *Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, &c.*] In the most private manner, to one another: *shall be heard in the light*; which makes all things manifest, the day shall declare it: *and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets*; whispered to persons in their bedchambers, and places of the most secret retirement; *shall be proclaimed upon the housetops*; declared in the most public manner: in Matt. x. 27. these words are so expressed, as to carry in them such a sense as this; that what was told the disciples by Christ, in the most private place and way, should be published by them, in the most free and open manner; see the note there.

Ver. 4. *And I say unto you, my friends, &c.*] Whom he dearly loved, and had taken into the greatest intimacy and familiarity; making known to them whatever he had heard from his father; giving them the best instructions, the most faithful and friendly advice, and proper precautions; all which, and more, shewed them to be his friends, and for whom he after laid down his life: *be not afraid of them that kill the body*; though he would have them beware of the Pharisees, he would not have them be afraid of them; he would have them know them, and avoid their hypocrisy, and guard against it; but not fear them, or the worst they could do unto them, which was to kill the body; and that they had no need to be afraid of, since at death, their souls would be immediately happy, in the enjoyment and vision of God; and their bodies would sleep in Jesus, and be raised in the resurrection morn, and be united to their souls, and be both for ever blessed: *and after that have no more that they can do*; they have nothing more to kill, or which they can put to pain or misery; the soul is out of their reach, is an immortal spirit, and can't be hurt or destroyed by them.

Ver. 5. *But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear, &c.*] I will be your monitor, and direct you to the proper object of fear and reverence, and whom you should be careful to displease and offend: *fear him, which after he hath killed*: your body, as the Persic version adds; hath taken away the life of it, by separating soul and body asunder, by sending one disease or another, or death in one shape or another: *hath power to cast into hell*; your soul, as the above version

also adds; yea, to destroy both body and soul in hell, as in Matt. x. 28. see the note there: *yea, I say unto you, fear him*; and none else, not with a servile, but with a filial fear.

Ver. 6. *Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, &c.*] As two were sold for one farthing, Matt. x. 29. see the note there; so in buying and selling, where more money is laid out, things are bought cheaper; the Persic version reads, *for two barley-corns: and not one of them is forgotten before God*; a single sparrow, a bird of little value and worth, is taken notice and care of by him; it has its life from him, and is provided for with food by him, and is under his protection; nor does he ever forget it, nor can any thing be done to it, without his permission; it can't be struck, so as to cause it to fall on the ground, or be taken in a snare, or be killed in any shape, without the knowledge of God: his providence reaches to the minutest creatures and things, and much more then to rational creatures, to men; and still more to his dear children, ministers, and apostles.

Ver. 7. *But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered, &c.*] Not only their persons had passed under the hands of him that telleth them, who is the *Palmoni*, or wonderful numberer, as in the margin of Dan. viii. 13. and not only the several members of their bodies, or the more substantial parts of them, were written in the book of his purposes, according to which they were fashioned in time, but the more minute parts, and less to be regarded, were all told over, and kept in account; even the very hairs of their head, and not one of them could fall to the ground, any more than a sparrow; or be plucked off by men, without the knowledge and will of God; so careful is the providence of God, of all his people: *fear not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows*; for if the hairs of their heads are as much regarded as sparrows, their persons and their lives must be of more account, than an infinite number of them, nor are they to be mentioned with them.

Ver. 8. *Also I say unto you, &c.*] The same as in Matt. x. 32. *whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the son of man also confess before the angels of God*: only instead of I, he here calls himself *the son of man*; and instead of *before my father which is in heaven*, here it is, *before the angels of God*; who will accompany Christ when he comes to judgment, and will be present, when he shall acknowledge his true followers as the blessed of his father, the chosen of God, his redeemed and sanctified ones; and reject others before his father, and the whole universe of rational beings: 'tis said in the Targum on Cant. i. 15. "when the children of Israel do the will of their king, he by his word" (the Logos) praises them in the family of the holy "angels." This Christ, the eternal word, will do at the great day.

Ver. 9. *But he that denieth me before men, &c.*] That is, that continues to deny Christ, and lives and dies a denier of him; for otherwise it is possible for a person to deny Jesus to be the son of God, or the Messiah, and afterwards confess him, as a Pagan or Jew; and through temptation, a real Christian may be left for a while, in one shape or another, to deny him and his truths, and afterwards truly repent, and at



last be saved, as Peter; but they that deny Christ publicly, and persist in it, *shall be denied before the angels of God*: they will be denied by Christ as belonging to him; they will be denied admission into heaven; they will be covered with shame and confusion publicly; they'll be sent into everlasting burnings, and be forever tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels.

Ver. 10. *And whosoever shall speak a word against the son of man, it shall be forgiven him, &c.*] These words, though introduced by Luke among the sayings of Christ, recorded in Matt. x. yet were said by Christ, on occasion of the Pharisees, ascribing his works to diabolical influence and assistance, in Matt. xii. 32. see the note there: *but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost*; as the Pharisees did, by charging the miracles of Christ with being done by the help of the devil, when they were wrought by the finger of the spirit: *it shall not be forgiven.* The Ethiopic version adds at the close of this verse, as in Matthew, *neither in this world, nor in that which is to come.*

Ver. 11. *And when they bring you unto the synagogues, &c.*] Of the Jews, to be examined and scourged by the rulers of them: *and unto magistrates and powers*; Heathen ones; the Persic version reads, *princes and kings*; and the Ethiopic version, *princes, kings, and judges*; see Matt. x. 18. *Take ye no thought how, or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say*; be not anxiously concerned, neither about the manner, nor the matter of your answer, apology, and defence: in the first part of this clause, the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, only read, *how*; and the Arabic version only, *what*; see the note on Matt. x. 19.

Ver. 12. *For the Holy Ghost shall teach you, &c.*] Shall give both words and matter: *in the same hour*; instantly, immediately: *what ye ought to say*; what will be proper to be said, for the honour of Christ, the defence of the Gospel, and the confusion of enemies; see the note on Matt. x. 20.

Ver. 13. *And one of the company said unto him, &c.*] Not one of the disciples of Christ, but one of the multitude, or crowd, about him, ver. 1. *Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me*: the first-born, according to the law, in Deut. xxi. 17. had a double portion: but the elder brother here, it seems, was for keeping all, and would not divide any part to his younger brother; wherefore he applies to Christ, to interpose his authority, which he imagined would have great weight with his brother, who might be a hearer of Christ, and favourer of him: or however, such was the fame of Christ, and such credit he obtained by his ministry and miracles, that he concluded a word from him, would go a great way with his brother, to engage him to make a right and proper division, as he ought; and especially, if he looked upon him, as the king Messiah the Jews expected, he might take this to be part of his work and office, to settle such civil affairs as these: we often read in the Jewish writings, of brethren dividing their substance, left by their parents; so it is said<sup>f</sup>, “*חֲדָרְוִין שְׁחֻלְקִין, brethren that di-*

*vide*, (a field,) give two corners (to the poor); if they return and become partners, they give but one.” Where there were but two brethren, as here, the one was called בכור, *the first-born*; and the other, פשוט, *simple*; having no title or character: and concerning dividing inheritances, there are the following rules<sup>g</sup>: “the first-born takes a double portion of his father’s goods, as is said, Deut. xxi. 17. how? a man leaves five children, and one of them is the first-born; the first-born takes the third part of the substance, and every one of the four simple ones, takes a sixth part: if he leaves nine children, and one of them is the first-born, he takes the fifth part, and every one of the eight simple ones, takes a tenth part; and so according to this division, they divided for ever—he that has two sons, a first-born and a simple one, and they both die in his lifetime, the first-born leaves a daughter, and the simple one leaves a son; lo, the son of the simple one inherits the third part of the old man’s goods, which is his father’s part; and the daughter of the first-born, inherits the two-thirds, which is the part of her father.” And again<sup>h</sup>, “two brethren that divide, and a brother comes to them from the province of the sea; and so three brethren that divide, and a creditor comes and takes the part of one of them, though the one takes land, and the other money, the division is void, and they return and divide the rest equally: if any one orders at the time of his death, that there should be given to such an one a palm-tree, or a field out of his substance, and the brethren divide, and do not give such an one any thing, lo, the division is void: and how do they do? they give what he ordered the heirs, and after that they return and divide as at the beginning: brethren that divide, value what is upon them; but what is upon their sons and their daughters, which they have in possession, they do not value—he that leaves fatherless children, some that are grown up, and others little ones, and they are willing to divide their father’s goods, so that those that are grown up may take their part, the sanhedrim appoint a guardian for the little ones, and he chooses a good part for them; and when they are grown up, they can’t make it void, for lo, by the decree of the sanhedrim, they divided for them; but if the sanhedrim err in computation, and give them less, they may make it void, and make another division when they are grown up.” But it would be tedious to transcribe all the rules, relating to such cases.

Ver. 14. *And he said unto him, man, &c.*] Or *friend*, as the Ethiopic version renders it; that is, Jesus said to him, as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions express it: *who made me a judge, or a divider over you?* referring to the words of one of the Hebrews to Moses, when he interposed in a difference, Exod. ii. 14. suggesting, that the same might be retorted on him, should he engage in such an affair: the reason why Christ avoided meddling with it, was not because it is unlawful for Christians to concern themselves in arbi-

<sup>f</sup> Misn. Peah, c. 3. sect. 5.

<sup>g</sup> Maimon. Hilchot Nechalot, c. 2. sect. 1. 7.

<sup>h</sup> Maimon. Hilchot Nechalot, c. 10. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4.

trations about civil affairs, and in making up family differences, which is very commendable; but lest by such a step, he should give occasion to them, to conclude he was a temporal king: whereas his kingdom was not of this world, and his business lay not in civil affairs, and the management of them; but in spiritual concerns, in preaching the Gospel, and doing good to the souls of men; wherefore this was out of his province: and besides, it was a matter of covetousness, either in this person, or his brother, or both; which Christ takes an occasion from hence to expose, agreeably to his office; to which may be added, that this man seems to have disturbed Christ in his public work, and was of such a worldly spirit, as to prefer the care of his secular affairs, to the hearing of the word, and the welfare of his immortal soul.

Ver. 15. *And he said unto them, &c.*] Either to the two brethren, or to his disciples, as the Syriac and Persic versions read, or to the whole company: *take heed, and beware of covetousness; of all covetousness,* as read the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and some copies; that is, of all sorts of covetousness, and every degree of it, which of all vices is to be avoided and guarded against, being the root of all evil; and as the Persic version renders it, *is worse than all evil,* and leads into it: *for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth;* of flocks and beasts, as the Persic version renders it: a man's natural life cannot be prolonged by all the good things of the world he is possessed of; they cannot prevent diseases nor death; nor do the comfort and happiness of life, lie in these things; which are either not enjoyed by them, but kept for the hurt of the owners of them, or are intemperately used, or some way or other embittered to them, so that they have no peace nor pleasure in them: and a man's spiritual life is neither had nor advantaged hereby, and much less is eternal life to be acquired by any of these things; which a man may have, and be lost for ever, as the following parable shews.

Ver. 16. *And he spake a parable unto them, saying, &c.*] He supposed the following case, and made use of it by way of illustration of what he had said: *the ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully;* who notwithstanding his riches, was but a fool, as the sequel shews; rich men are not always wise in things natural and civil; and very few of them are spiritually wise, or wise in spiritual things, in things which relate to the welfare of their souls; but however, this man was very prosperous in his worldly affairs, as a man of a small share of common sense may be, and wicked men often are: the word translated *ground,* signifies a *region, or country,* which expresses the more, the riches of this man, that he had not a common and ordinary farm, but a whole country as it were; at least a very large part of one, and all this fruitful.

Ver. 17. *And he thought within himself, &c.*] And foolish thoughts they were; he did not think of God, or that there was one, and much less that he was the author of all his outward prosperity and plenty; and was still further off of thinking of returning thanks

to God for it: or of asking counsel of him, what he should do with it; but he consults himself only, and thought only within, and for himself; and not at all of his poor neighbours, or for the good of others; nor did he think even of his own soul, but altogether about his worldly substance: *saying, what shall I do?* he does not say what shall I do for God? for his interest, service, and glory? for the poor, the hungry, and thirsty, and naked? or for my own soul, that that may be eternally saved? but what shall I do with my goods? *because I have no room where to bestow my fruits;* he had gathered in his harvest, and filled his barns as full as they could hold, so that they had no room for more; and yet had still an abundance to lay up, and about which he was anxiously concerned; not thinking of the empty bellies, barns, and houses of the poor, where he might have stowed much.

Ver. 18. *And he said, this will I do, &c.*] This was the resolution he came to, and which he took up, without consulting God, or asking leave of him: *I will pull down my barns, and build greater:* which was not a very wise one; for he might have let his present barns have stood, and have added new ones to them: *and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods;* he ascribes the increase of his substance to himself, and reckons them his own acquisitions, and entirely owing to his diligence and industry; and therefore calls them *my fruits, and my goods;* and accounts them his good things, his only good things; as worldly men place all good and happiness in outward enjoyments, having no notion of spiritual and eternal good things; he determines to lay up *all* in his barns, for his own use and service, and nothing for God and his interest, nor any thing for the poor and their relief.

Ver. 19. *And I will say to my soul, &c.*] Himself, see Psal. xlix. 18. or to his sensual appetite, which he sought to indulge and gratify, for he was wholly a sensual and carnal man: *soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years:* he foolishly promises himself a long life, when no man can boast of to-morrow, or knows what a day will bring forth; or can assure himself he shall live a day, an hour, or moment longer: and he also depended upon the safety of his goods, thus laid up; whereas his barns might be consumed by fire at once, or his goods be devoured by vermin, or plundered by thieves, and by various ways taken out of his hands; for riches are uncertain things, and often make themselves wings and fly away: *take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry;* spend thy life in ease, luxury, and mirth; put away the evil day far from thee: never trouble thyself about a future state, to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundantly; and thou hast enough to make thyself happy, and let nothing disturb thee, and give a loose to all sensual pleasures, and carnal joys. This is the language of an epicure among the Jews, and is forbidden to be used, especially on fast-days; for so it is said, "let not a man say I will go to my house, and I will eat and drink, (and say) שלים עידי נפשי, *peace to thee, O my soul;* if he does so, of him the Scripture says, "Isa. xxii. 13, 14. *Behold joy and gladness, saying: oven, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking;*

" wine, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die—surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die, &c."

Ver. 20. *But God said unto him, &c.*] He determined within himself he should die that night; for the time of a man's death, as well as of his birth, is fixed by God; or he sent the messenger of death, some disease or another, the language of which was, immediate death, or death in a very short time; or he spoke to his conscience, and impressed it on his mind, that he should die that night, and not live: *thou fool*; as he appeared to be, throughout the whole of his conduct: *this night thy soul shall be required of thee*; which is of God's immediate formation, is immortal, of more worth than a world, and its loss irreparable; and for which a man is accountable to God, the father of spirits; and which he requires at a man's hands at death, which is here designed; and shews, that a man has no power over it to retain it, but must give it up when it is called for, even that very instant, *this night*: which may refer to the time when covetous persons are employing their thoughts about their worldly goods, or when epicures and sensual persons are indulging themselves in luxury and intemperance; and to the condition the soul is in, being in the night and in darkness, and knows not whither it is going; and denotes its immediate remove, and the suddenness of divine wrath and vengeance; the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, agreeably to the Greek text, read the words, *this night do they require thy soul of thee*; or *out of thy body*, as the Persic version reads: the Ethiopic version renders it, *they shall take thy soul from thee*: that is, the evil angels, the devils having a commission from God, shall demand thy soul; and as soon as ever it is separated from the body, shall seize upon it, and carry it to hell; just as the good angels carry the souls of the saints to heaven, Luke xvi. 22. *Then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?* not his own, for he can carry nothing with him; nor does he know whose they will be, whether the persons he designed them for, or some others whom he abhorred, and would, if possible, have prevented their enjoyment of them; and should he have them for whom he intended them, he does not know how he will turn out, whether a wise man or a fool, or what use he'll make of them.

Ver. 21. *So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, &c.*] This is the accommodation of the parable. Just such a fool is he, and this will be the end of him, who employs all his thoughts, and spends all his time, in amassing to himself worldly riches and wealth, in laying up treasures on earth for himself, for futurity; and makes no use of his earthly substance for the good of others; nor shews any concern for spiritual and eternal riches; but places all his hope, trust, and confidence, in uncertain riches: *and is not rich towards God*; or *in God*, as the Syriac and Arabic versions read; in things pertaining to God, in spiritual things, in faith, and in good works; and is not concerned to lay up a treasure in heaven, to have an interest in durable riches and righteousness; whereas one that is rich towards God, acknowledges that he receives all his

riches from God, as the Ethiopic version reads; he gives up all into the hands of God, depends upon his providence for the increase, security, and continuance of it; and uses it to his honour and glory, and for the good of his interest; and is chiefly concerned for the riches of grace and glory; and enjoys much of God, and places all his riches in him: such a man is a wise man, but the reverse of this is the fool in the parable.

Ver. 22. *And he said unto his disciples, &c.*] Having finished the parable which he spake to the whole audience in common, he directed himself to his disciples, who were poor, and apt to be over-anxious about their living in the world: *therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat*. The Ethiopic version adds, *and what ye shall drink*; and so a manuscript in Gonvill and Caius College in Cambridge, which seems to be transcribed from Matt. vi. 25. life is very near and dear to man; all that a man has, he'll give for it; and it is his duty to be careful to preserve it, and to make use of means for the support of it; but then, as he should not be dainty about the food he eats, and should refuse no good creature of God, but receive it with thanksgiving, so he should not distress himself for fear of wanting bread, nor distrust the promises of God, and a supply from him; but should cast all his care upon the Lord, who daily cares for him: *neither for the body, what ye shall put on*: it is highly proper and necessary that the body should be clothed, partly for decency, and partly to secure it from the inclemency of the weather; but then persons should not be difficult and over-nice about what they wear, nor be distressed, fearing they should be clothed with rags; but should trust in the Lord, who gives food and raiment, and all things richly to enjoy

Ver. 23. *The life is more than meat, &c.*] What in Matthew is put by way of question, is here strongly affirmed; and these words contain a reason or argument to dissuade from an anxious, distressing thought and care about the necessaries, conveniences, and comforts of life: and all the Oriental versions read, *for, or seeing the life is more than meat*; that is, it is more excellent and valuable in its own nature, being that for the support of which meat is provided; and seeing God is the author and giver of life, it need not be doubted but he will give meat for the maintenance and continuance of it, so long as it is his pleasure it should subsist. *And the body is more than raiment*; it is of more worth than the richest clothing that can be had; the finest piece of embroidery is not comparable to the curious workmanship of the body, Psal. cxxxix. 15. and he that has so curiously wrought that, will not fail to provide suitable and proper clothing for it; and therefore there ought to be no anxiety on this account; see the note on Matt. vi. 25.

Ver. 24. *Consider the ravens, &c.*] According to the Jews<sup>k</sup> there are three sorts of ravens, the black raven, the raven of the valley, which is said to be white, and the raven whose head is like a dove. In Matthew, the *fowls of the air* in general are mentioned, as they are here in the Cambridge copy of Beza's; but in others, *the ravens* in particular, they being fowls of very little worth, and disregarded by

<sup>k</sup> T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 6r. 1.

men, and odious to them, as well as unclean by the law; and yet these are taken care of by God. The Arabic version reads, *the young ravens*; and these are they which are said to cry unto God, who provides food for them, and gives it to them, Job xxxviii. 41. cxlvii. 9. *for they neither sow nor reap, which neither have storehouse nor barn*; and yet they are provided for, and therefore, why should men, and especially God's own people, distrust his providence over them, when they both sow and reap, have the seed-time, and harvest in the appointed seasons: they cast their seed into the earth, and it springs up and brings forth much fruit, which they reap when ripe, and gather into their barns and storehouses, from whence they are supplied till another season returns; wherefore they have no reason to distress themselves, seeing, though this is not the case of ravens, yet *God feedeth them*; their young ones, as the above places shew. Jerom says<sup>1</sup>, that it is affirmed by some philosophers, that they live upon dew. The Jews<sup>2</sup> have a notion, that the old ravens being cruel to their young, and hating them, the Lord has pity on them, and prepares flies, or worms for them, which arise out of their dung, and enter into their mouths, and they eat them. One of their commentators says<sup>3</sup>, when the young ones are hatched they are white, and the old ones leave them, not taking them for their own, and therefore bring them no food, and then they cry to God; and this is mentioned by some Christian writers, but not sufficiently confirmed: and another of them observes<sup>4</sup>, that the philosophers of the Gentiles say, that the ravens leave their young as soon as they are hatched; but what Aristotle<sup>5</sup>, Pliny<sup>6</sup>, and Ælianus<sup>7</sup> affirm of these creatures is, that as soon as they are able to fly they turn them out of their nests, and even drive them out of the country where they are; when, as it is said in Job, they *wander for lack of meat, and cry unto God*, who gives it to them: and since this is the case, and the providence of God is so much concerned for such worthless creatures, the people of God, and disciples of Christ, ought by no means to distrust it: for as it follows, *how much more are ye better than the fowls: or than these*, as the Vulgate Latin version reads; that is, than these ravens, or any other fowls whatever; see the note on Matt. vi. 26.

Ver. 25. *And which of you with taking thought, &c.*] In an anxious and distressing manner, for food and raiment, in order to preserve and continue life, *can add to his stature one cubit?* The Persic version reads, *to his stature and height*, as if this referred to the height of stature; whereas it seems rather to regard the age of a man, and the continuance of his life; see the note on Matt. vi. 27.

Ver. 26. *If ye then be not able to do that which is least, &c.*] As to make the smallest addition to a man's stature, or rather to add one moment to his days: *why take ye thought for the rest?* which are much greater, as to preserve the body in its whole bulk, and all its parts, or for the feeding and clothing

of it, or rather for the continuation and preservation of life to any length of time; for if it can't be by all a man's care and solicitude lengthened out one moment longer than is the pleasure of God, how should it be by such anxiety continued for months and years?

Ver. 27. *Consider the lilies how they grow, &c.*] Some copies read, *the lilies of the field*, as in Matt. vi. 28. The Persic version renders the word, *the roses and lilies of the field*; and the Arabic version, *the flowers*; any flowers of the field; for what is afterwards said, is true of any of them, but particularly of the lilies: now, as the former instance of God's feeding the ravens is designed to remove all anxious and distressing thoughts about food for the body; this is mentioned to take off every thing of that kind with respect to clothing for it; wherefore, in Matthew, these words are premised to it, *and why take ye thought for raiment?* there will be no need of it, when it is considered how the lilies, or tulips, or any other flowers grow up out of the earth, and in what a fine beautiful dress they appear, without any care or labour of their own, and even without the care and management of a gardener; for flowers of the field are here meant: *they toil not, they spin not*; they neither labour as men do, in sowing flax, and dressing it, or in combing of wool, or in spinning of either: *and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.* The Ethiopic version renders it, *in the whole time of his glory*; throughout his glorious reign, at any time; whenever upon any extraordinary occasion he was dressed out in the finest manner, yet even then a lily outdid him; its glory being natural to it, whereas his, at best, was but artificial, and an imitation of nature; see the note on Matt. vi. 29.

Ver. 28. *If then God so clothe the grass, &c.*] As lilies and tulips; for they are no other than grass, weak, frail, fading, short-lived flowers, which have all their gaiety and beauty from the great Creator of them: *which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven*: the grass is one day in the field, in all its verdure, glory, and beauty; and being cut down before evening, the next day it is withered, and dried, and made fit to put into an oven, or under a furnace to heat them with: *how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?* The Persic version renders the words, *how much more excellent are ye than that, O ye of little faith?* they are more excellent in their nature, and of a longer duration, and are designed for greater ends and purposes; and therefore if God clothes the one in such a manner as he does, how much more will he not clothe the other? and such who are distrustful and diffident in this matter, may well be called men of little faith; see the note on Matt. vi. 30.

Ver. 29. *And seek not what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, &c.*] That is, in an anxious and distressing manner, with a tormenting and vexatious care; otherwise food is to be both asked of God every day, and to be sought for and after in the use of proper

<sup>1</sup> Comment. in Job xxxviii. 41. & in Psal. cxlvii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Jarchi in Job xxxviii. 41. & in Psal. cxlvii. 9. & Kimchi in ib.

<sup>3</sup> Kimchi ib. Vid. T. Bab. Cetabot, fol. 49. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

<sup>4</sup> Aben Ezra in Psal. cxlvii. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 31.

<sup>6</sup> Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 12.

<sup>7</sup> De Animal. Natura, l. 2. c. 49.

means: *neither be ye of doubtful minds*; questioning and distrustful that ye shall have any thing to eat or drink: be not fickle, unstable, and inconstant, and wandering in your thoughts about these things, like the meteors in the air, which are carried about here and there; let not your minds be disturbed and distracted about them; or be anxiously solicitous for them; see the note on Matt. vi. 31.

Ver. 30. *For all these things do the nations of the world seek after, &c.*] That is, the Gentiles, as in Matt. vi. 32. who are frequently, in the Jewish writings, called, in distinction from the Jews, אֲרָמִים אֲשֶׁר עוֹלָם, *the nations of the world*'. This is an argument used to dissuade from an immediate and anxious concern for food and raiment, because it is Heathenish, and therefore very unbecoming the disciples and followers of Christ: it need not be wondered at in those that know not God, and do not acknowledge his providence, and are strangers to his covenant and promises; but must be very unsuitable to the characters of such who know that godliness has the promise of this life, and of that which is to come: *and your father knoweth that ye have need of these things*; and therefore it is needless to be so anxious about them: the Persic version reads, *all these things*, and so some copies; that is, meat, drink, and clothing, all the necessaries of life; see the note on Matt. vi. 32.

Ver. 31. *But rather seek ye the kingdom of God, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin version adds, *first*, as also, *and his righteousness*, as in Matt. vi. 33. and the Ethiopic version reads, *seek his kingdom and righteousness*; meaning either the grace of God, which is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17. or the heavenly glory; unless the Gospel, and the dispensation of it, which is the Messiah's kingdom, and which was then just ushering in, should rather be intended. *And all these things shall be added unto you*: food and raiment, which are as much as can be enjoyed; and godliness with these, and contentment with them, is great gain; see the note on Matt. vi. 33.

Ver. 32. *Fear not little flock, &c.*] These words are particularly directed to the immediate apostles and disciples of Christ; but are true of all the saints in all ages of time, who are compared to a *flock* of sheep, being separated from the rest of the world in election, redemption, and effectual vocation, and being folded together in a Gospel church-state; and also for their patience, meekness, humility, and harmlessness: these are a *little flock*; few in number, when compared with the wicked of the world; and mean and despicable in the account of men; and little in their own eyes: these are subject to many *fears*; some relate to their outward state, and condition, as that they shall want food and raiment, and not have the necessaries of life; which seems to be in the first place here intended, as appears from the context: and some regard their spiritual and eternal estate, as lest they should have no interest in the love of God, and in the covenant, in the blessings and promises of his grace; lest they should not belong to Christ; or the good work of grace should not be begun in them; or

that they should not persevere to the end, and should at last miscarry of eternal life and happiness: and these fears arise from a body of sin, from the temptations of Satan, the hidings of God's face, and the prevalence of unbelief; for they have no true reason for them: God is on their side, and will not leave, nor forsake them, nor shall they want any good thing; Christ is their shepherd, and he has bought them with his own blood, and will lose none of them; and therefore they need not fear being taken care of both in soul and body, for time and eternity: and especially when what follows is considered, *for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom*: not only the Gospel, and the knowledge of the mysteries of it; nor the Gospel church-state, and a right to all its ordinances; nor only the kingdom of grace, which cannot be moved; but the kingdom of glory: and which is a gift unto them, not obtained by any deserts or works of theirs; nor is their right unto, and enjoyment of it depending upon any such thing: and it is their father's gift, who is so by adopting grace, and through Christ Jesus their Lord; and which he gives according to his sovereign will and pleasure, and with a good will, delighting in them, and rejoicing over them to do them good, both here and hereafter: so that they may depend upon every good thing needful for them both in this world, and in the world to come; nor should they indulge anxious cares, or slavish fears.

Ver. 33. *Sell that ye have, and give alms, &c.*] Since they had a kingdom bequeathed them by their heavenly father, they should be so far from indulging an anxious care about food and raiment, that when there was a call in providence for it, and rather than the poor should go without a supply, it became them to sell their houses and lands, and whatever possessions they had, and relieve them; and so they did not long after; for some of those who sold their estates, and brought the money to the apostles, Acts iv. 34, 35. might be now present; and the more readily and cheerfully do what they did, remembering these words of Christ: *provide yourselves bags which was not old*; as do the bags of misers: their bag is, צִוּרִי נִקְוֶה, *a bag pierced through*, or that has a hole in it, which lets the money out as it is put in, Hag. i. 6. and which the Targum renders by, לְמַאֲרָתָא, *for a curse*; as money hoarded up in bags by covetous persons generally is: Christ would have his followers put their money up in other bags; not in such which rot through age, or are worn out, and are full of holes through use; but into the hands and bellies of the poor, the fruit and reward of which will always abide; *a treasure in the heavens that faileth not*: whereas treasure on earth does, being either taken away from the possessors of it by various ways, or they from that: *where no thief approacheth*: can come near to steal it away, which is often the case here on earth: *neither moth corrupteth*; as it does the best of garments, wore by men: but the robes of glory and immortality can never be corrupted: see the note on Matt. vi. 20.

Ver. 34. *For where your treasure is, &c.*] Whether in heaven, or in earth, *there will your heart be also*:

the heart is always set upon the treasure, and as is a man's treasure, such is his heart, that is, set upon it; if his treasure is only here, and he has not the true riches, his heart is only earthly and carnal; but if his treasure is heavenly, his heart and conversation will be in heaven; see the note on Matt. vi. 21.

Ver. 35. *Let your loins be girded about, &c.*] With the girdle of truth, Eph. vi. 14. keeping close to the doctrines of the Gospel, abiding faithfully by them, even unto death: the allusion is either to the eating of the first passover, Exod. xii. 11. or rather to servants, who, in these eastern countries, wore long garments; and therefore, when in business, used to gather them up, and gird them about them, that they might perform their service with greater strength, more ease, quicker dispatch, and less hinderance: the phrase denotes readiness for business: *and your lights burning.* The Vulgate Latin version adds, *in your hands*; meaning torches that were held in the hand: and may design either the Scriptures of truth, which were to be a light or lamp unto them, guiding and directing them in the ministration of the Gospel; or the lamps of profession, which should be kept clear and bright, and good works, becoming them, that should so shine before men, that all may see them, and glorify God. The allusion is to persons waiting at a wedding in the night, with torches and flambeaus in their hands.

Ver. 36. *And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, &c.*] Who either was at a wedding, or was the bridegroom himself; so be ye in a readiness, waiting for the coming of Christ, the bridegroom of the church: *when he will return from the wedding.* The Syriac version renders it, *from the house of feasting*; from any entertainment, or from the marriage-feast, or rather the marriage itself, to the bride-chamber: so when Christ has, by the preaching of the Gospel, and the power of his grace, espoused all his elect, he'll descend from heaven, and take them to himself; they shall then be called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, and enter with him into the nuptial-chamber, and be for ever with him: *that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately*; and let him in without any delay, as soon as ever he comes to the door; and at the first knock, open it to him at once, having light, and being in a posture of readiness, and in constant expectation of him: so such who have believed in Christ, and have been faithful to his cause and interest, and have held fast the profession of their faith without wavering, when Christ shall either come and knock at their doors by death, or shall come to judgment, and sound the alarm of it, they shall be ready to obey the summons with the greatest cheerfulness, and meet him with the utmost pleasure.

Ver. 37. *Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, &c.*] The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, *their Lord*; the master of them, or the Lord Jesus Christ: *when he cometh shall find watching*; for him, and not asleep. The Ethiopic version reads, *so doing, and watching*; girding up their loins, trimming their lamps, and waiting for their Lord's coming: such servants are happy, they will appear to be in the

favour of their master, who will take notice of them, and shew some marks of respect to them; as Christ will to all his good and faithful servants, whenever he comes, whether at death, or at judgment; and who will be happy then, being found so doing, and found in him: *verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself*; not that Christ shall really do this, or appear in the form of a servant; but that he shall readily, cheerfully, and at once introduce his servants into his joy, and make them partakers of all the glories of the other world: *and make them to sit down to meat*; at his table in his kingdom; see Matt. viii. 11. Luke xxii. 30. *and will come forth and serve them*: with food, yea, will feed them himself, and lead them to fountains of living water, Rev. vii. 17. The Arabic version renders it, *he shall stand to minister unto them*: the phrase is expressive of the posture of a servant; who, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, is *מְרַדְדִים*, *walking*, and who goes round about the table, whilst others sit<sup>1</sup>: some think there is allusion in the words to a custom used at some feasts, particularly at the feasts in honour of Saturn, in which servants changed clothes with their masters, and sat at their tables, and their masters served them<sup>2</sup>.

Ver. 38. *And if he shall come in the second watch, &c.*] Of the night, that is, after nine o'clock, or any time between nine or twelve; for the second watch was from nine o'clock till twelve; and this was coming early from an entertainment, or a wedding, which were commonly kept in the night, and late; or come in the third watch; or after twelve o'clock, or any time between twelve and three; for the third watch was from twelve o'clock to three, which was late; see the note on Matt. xiv. 25. The Persic version reads, *in the second, or third part of the night*; and the Ethiopic version, *in the second or third hour of the night*; and find them so. The Arabic version adds, *doing*; as above described, with their loins girt, lights burning, and they watching for their Lord's coming: *blessed are those servants*; since they shall be used and treated as before related.

Ver. 39. *And this know, &c.*] The Ethiopic version reads, *this only know*; only take notice of this one thing, and it may be of some use to direct you in your conduct how to behave during the absence of your Lord, until the time he shall come again: *that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come*; that is, if the owner, or master of the house, whose the goods in the house are, could by any means know what time of the night the thief would come to break into his house, in order to plunder it, and carry off his goods: *he would have watched*; either he himself in person, or he would have set a watch about his house, or in it: *and not have suffered his house to be broken through*; either the door to be broken up, or the wall to be dug through, but by a guard about it, or within it, would have prevented such a design. And so in like manner, could it be known in what time Christ would come, either to the destruction of Jerusalem, or at death, or to judgment, every thoughtful, prudent man that should know it, would be upon his guard, that he might not be surprised with it; and though the pre-

<sup>1</sup> Jarehi in T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 77. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Vide Lipsii Saturnal. l. 1. c. 2. p. 6.

cise time could not be known, yet inasmuch as the thing itself is certain, it became all the servants of Christ to be watching for it; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 43.

Ver. 40. *Be ye therefore ready also, &c.*] Not only habitually, but actually, in the exercise of grace, and the discharge of duty, with loins girt, and lights burning. This may be understood either of a readiness to meet the Lord in the way of his judgments, and particularly the destruction of Jerusalem, which was to be in a few years; or of a preparation for death, and the last judgment, which lies in the righteousness of Christ imputed, and his grace imparted: and to have a comfortable view of the one, and a gracious experience of the other, as they will engage to the performance of good works, to which such are ready; so they make meet for the coming of Christ, be it in what way, and whensoever it will: and the rather, a concern should be had for such a preparation, because of the following reason, *for the son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not*; in either of the above ways; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 44.

Ver. 41. *Then Peter said unto him, Lord, &c.*] The Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, *our Lord speaketh thou this parable*: of the master at the wedding, and his servants waiting for him, or of the house-keeper watching that his house be not broken up, or both: *unto us, or unto all?* Peter was in doubt whether the above discourse was peculiarly directed to them, the apostles, as containing special instructions to them in the discharge of the ministerial work; or whether it was designed for all his disciples and followers, both in the present age, and in time to come, to the end of the world.

Ver. 42. *And the Lord said, who then is that faithful and wise steward, &c.*] Christ does not directly, and in express words, answer to Peter's question, but suggests, that though he intended it as a caution to all his people, and in it spake to them all to be upon their watch and guard, Mark xiii. 37, yet that he had a special regard to them, his apostles, and succeeding ministers of the Gospel, whose characters, office, work, dignity, and honour, are here described. Such are stewards in Christ's family, they are entrusted with the stores and provisions of his house, and *faithfulness* and *wisdom* are requisite in them; the one, that they do not corrupt and adulterate the word of God, and mix it with human doctrines, but that they deliver it out pure and sincere as it is; and the other, that they may rightly divide it, and wisely distribute it: *whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household*: Christ's household, or family, is his church, over which the ministers of the Gospel are appointed *rulers*, to govern the house according to the laws of Christ, and keep every thing in good decorum and order; and particularly their work, and which agrees to their character as stewards is, *to give them their portion of meat in due season*: in doing which they answer the characters of faithful and wise stewards: they are faithful who give out the whole portion allotted, without adulterating it, or keeping back any part of it; and they are wise, who deliver it to them in proper time and season. The word translated *portion of meat*, is only used in this place, and is rendered in the Vulgate Latin version, *a measure*

*of wheat*; but it may be applied to any food in general, and an allotment of it; and signifies such a portion as was given to servants for one month, or rather every day; and may signify that portion of the word of God, and the interpretation of it, which is to be given forth every Lord's day to his people, suitable to their condition, cases, and circumstances. The Septuagint translators use the verb in Gen. xlvii. 12. who render the text thus, *and Joseph,  $\epsilon\sigma\theta\omicron\mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\iota$ , measured out to his father, and to his brethren, and to all the house of his father, wheat, or bread, according to their persons, i. e. the number of them*: to which passage there may be some reference here; at least it serves to illustrate this; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 45.

Ver. 43. *Blessed is that servant, &c.*] Who is faithful and wise, rules well, and discharges his trust with integrity, and disposes of the provisions of the house, in his hands, with great discretion and prudence: *whom his Lord, when he cometh*; to take vengeance on the wicked Jews, or by death, or at judgment: *shall find so doing*; behaving as a good ruler, and as a wise and faithful steward.

Ver. 44. *Of a truth I say unto you, &c.*] This, with Christ, was a strong way of asserting the truth of any thing; and the sense is, you may assure yourselves of it, this will certainly be the happy case of such a servant: *that he will make him ruler over all that he hath*; as Joseph was made by Pharaoh. Such an one shall reign with Christ on earth a thousand years, and then in heaven with him to all eternity, where he shall enjoy all things; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 47.

Ver. 45. *But and if that servant say in his heart, &c.*] Not the same servant before spoken of as a wise and faithful steward, that gives to all in the family the portion of meat in due season, and shall be found so doing, and be made ruler over his master's goods; but another, who also, as he, is made by his Lord ruler over his household, and is in a like post, and in the same office, but is an *evil servant*, as Matthew calls him, to distinguish him from the other; and so the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read here: *my Lord delayeth his coming*; though a wicked servant, he calls Christ his Lord; but it is not saying Lord, Lord, that will be of any avail, but doing the will of God, by believing in Christ, and obeying his commands: he had a notion of the coming of Christ, though he did not desire it; and because he tarried longer than was expected, supposed him to be slack concerning his promise, and began to think, and hope, and at length to believe, that he would not come at all, and therefore gave himself up to a wicked and licentious way of living: *and shall begin to beat the men-servants and maidens*; to persecute the ministers of the Gospel, and the true disciples of Christ, the undefiled virgins, that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes: *and to eat, and drink, and to be drunken*; to live a voluptuous and sensual life, to give himself up to intemperance and debauchery: and, generally speaking, as professors of religion, when they turn apostates, are the most violent persecutors of the saints; so such persecutors of Christ's faithful followers are commonly drunkards and debauchees; see the notes on Matt. xxiv. 48, 49.

Ver. 46. *The Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, &c.*] For, not coming as

was expected, he gives over looking, and concludes he'll not come at all; in which he'll find himself mistaken, for he'll come in the very day which is appointed, though men know not of it, and don't look for it: *and at an hour when he is not aware*: for as neither the day, nor hour of Christ's coming are known to any man, it becomes men to look for it every day and hour, lest it come upon them unawares; as it will, on such evil servants before described, with whom it will go ill, as follows: *and will cut him in sunder, and appoint him his portion with unbelievers*; whose portion is the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death, Rev. xxi. 8. and by these are meant, not only the Heathens, who never heard of Christ; nor the Jews only, who disbelieved the Messiah, and rejected him when he came; but all deists and atheists, who deny revelation; even all unbelievers of, and scoffers at the coming of Christ, and who put away the evil day far from them; compare with this Job xx. 29. see the notes on Matt. xxiv. 50, 51.

Ver. 47. *And that servant which knew his Lord's will, &c.*] Not his secret, but his revealed will; the will of God, which lies in the declarations of his grace and mercy in the Gospel, and in the commands and ordinances expressed in his word; and which are the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God; the knowledge of which is necessary, in order to practice: and where there is a spiritual and saving knowledge, there will be practice: but there may be knowledge, where there is no practice, and which was the case here: Christ here distinguishes between wicked servants, some being knowing, and others ignorant; and accordingly the aggravations of their guilt are more or less: *and prepared not himself*; so the Arabic and Ethiopic versions supply, but the Syriac version, *for him*, that is, for his Lord: but it may as well be read as in the Vulgate Latin, without any supplement, *and prepared not*; he took no thought nor care about doing it; there is no preparation, readiness, nor disposition, in a natural man, to the will of God: no man is prepared or ready to do it, but he that is regenerated, or is made a new creature; who has the laws of God written on his heart, and who has the spirit of God put within him, to cause him to keep them; and who has faith in Christ, and strength from him to observe them; but there may be knowledge, where such a preparation is wanting; persons may know much, and profess to know more, and in works deny all, and be to every good work, unfit, disobedient, and reprobate: this clause is left out in the Persic version: *neither did according to his will*; the will of God is done aright, when what is done, is done according to the command of God, in the strength of Christ, from love to him, in the exercise of faith on him, and with a view to his glory, and without any dependence on what is done; but there may be knowledge, without any thing of this: the words, *neither did*, are wanting in the Syriac version: and such a man that has knowledge without practice, *shall be beaten with many stripes*; alluding to the law of the Jews, by which a wicked man was to be punished, by beating him with stripes, not exceeding forty, according to the nature of his fault, Deut. xxv. 2, 3. and here

it signifies, that persons who have light and knowledge, and the means thereof, and act not according to them, shall be punished with the greatest severity, and endure the greatest degree of torments in hell; see Matt. xi. 21, 22, 23, 24.

Ver. 48. *But he that knew not, &c.*] His Lord's will; either not having the means of knowing it, as the Heathens; or through neglect of them, not attending to them, and making use of them, which is the case of many, where the Gospel revelation is: *and did commit things worthy of stripes*: or punishment; as the Gentiles, by sinning against the law, and light of nature; and those who might have the advantage of a divine revelation, but neglect it: the Septuagint in Deut. xxv. 2. have the same phrase as here, *αξιός παλαίων, worthy of stripes: shall be beaten with few stripes*; their punishment shall be less, and it shall be more tolerable for them in the day of judgment, than for knowing professors. The Jews did not always inflict forty stripes, or forty save one, upon delinquents; but according to their crimes, and as they were able to bear them, more or fewer: so it is said \*, "when they judge a sinner, how many (stripes) he can bear, they don't reckon, but by stripes that are fit to be trebled: if they judge he is able to bear twenty, they don't order that he be beaten with twenty-one, that so they may be trebled, but that he be beaten with eighteen: if they adjudge him to receive forty, and after he is begun to be beaten, they observe him to be weak, and they say he can't bear any more than these nine, or twelve, with which he has been beaten, lo, he is free; if they adjudge him to receive twelve, and after that he is beaten, they see that he is strong and able to bear more, lo, he is free, and he is not to be beaten any more, upon that estimation: if they adjudge him to-day that he is to be beaten with twelve (stripes), and they don't beat him till to-morrow, and lo, to-morrow he is able to bear eighteen, they don't beat him but with twelve." And elsewhere the rule is \*, "he that commits a sin, in which there are two negative (commands broken) if they pronounce but one sentence, he is beaten and is free; but if not (*i. e.* if more than one) he is beaten, and when he is healed, he is beaten again." *For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required*: the more knowledge a man has, the more practice is expected from him; and the greater his gifts are, the more useful he ought to be, and diligent in the improvement of them: *and to whom men have committed much, or to whom much is committed, of him they will ask the more*: not more than what was committed to him, but more than from him, who has less committed to him; in proportion to what a man is entrusted with, the greater increase and improvement 'tis expected he should make.

Ver. 49. *I am come to send fire on the earth, &c.*] Meaning either the Gospel, which is as fire, that gives both light and heat, warms the hearts of God's people, and causes them to burn within them; though very distressing and torturing to wicked men; so the word of God is compared to fire, in Jer. xx. 9. and xxiii. 29. Or else zeal for it, and which would be opposed with sharp contentions by others; or rather persecution for

\* Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 17. sect. 2, 3.

\* Mism. Maccot, c. 3. sect. 11.



the sake of the Gospel, called sometimes the fiery trial; which tries men, as gold is tried in the fire, what they are, and what their principles and profession be; unless the Holy Ghost, and baptizing with him, and with fire, should be meant: since Christ in the next verse, speaks of the baptism of his sufferings, which that was to follow: *and what will I?* what shall I say concerning this fire? what shall I wish and pray for? what would be pleasing and agreeable to me? even this, *if it be already kindled; or that it were already kindled, or O that it were already kindled:* meaning either that the Gospel was warmly preached by his disciples, and zealously defended by them, as it was after his death and resurrection; or that hot persecution was raised against it which was now beginning, since the advantage of it would be far greater than the evil in it: or that the Holy Ghost was come down in cloven tongues, like as of fire.

Ver. 50. *But I have a baptism to be baptized with, &c.* Not water-baptism, for he had been baptized with that already; nor the baptism of the spirit, which he had also received without measure; though the Ethiopic version reads it actively, *with which I shall baptize*, referring doubtless to that; but the baptism of his sufferings is meant, which are compared to a baptism, because of the largeness and abundance of them; he was as it were immersed, or plunged into them; and which almost all interpreters observe on the text, and by which they confess the true import and primary signification of the word used; as in baptism, performed by immersion, the person is plunged into water, is covered with it, and continues awhile under it, and then is raised out of it, and which being once done, is done no more; so the sufferings of Christ were so many and large, that he was as it were covered with them, and he continued under them for a time, and under the power of death and the grave, when being raised from thence, he dies no more, death hath no more dominion over him. This baptism he *had*, there was a necessity of his being baptized with it, on his father's account; it was his will, his decree, and the command he enjoined him as Mediator; it was the portion he allotted him, and the cup he gave unto him: and on his own part, he obliged himself unto it, in the counsel and covenant of peace; for this purpose he came into this world, and had substituted himself in the room and stead of his people; and it was necessary on their part, for their sins could not be atoned for without sufferings, nor without the sufferings of Christ; moreover, the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament concerning them, made them necessary: *and how am I straitened until it be accomplished:* these words express both the trouble and distress Christ was in, at the apprehension of his sufferings as man; which were like to the distress of persons, closely besieged by an enemy; or rather of a woman, whose time of travail draws nigh, when she dreads it, and yet longs to have it over: and likewise they signify, his restless desire to have them accomplished; not that he desired that Judas should betray him, or the Jews crucify him, as these were sins of theirs; nor merely his sufferings as such: but that thereby the justice of God might be satisfied, the law might be fulfilled, and the salvation of his people be obtained: and this

eager desire of his, he had shewn in various instances, and did shew afterwards; as in his ready compliance with his father's proposal in eternity; in his frequent appearances in human form before his incarnation; in sending one message after another, to give notice of his coming; in his willingness to be about his father's business, as soon as possible; in rebuking Peter, when he would have dissuaded him from all thoughts of suffering: in going to Jerusalem on his own accord, in order to suffer there; in his earnest wish to eat the last passover with his disciples; in the joy that possessed him, when Judas was gone out, in order to betray him; in stopping in the midst of his sermon, lest he should over-run, or outslip the time of meeting him in the garden, John xiv. 30, 31. in his going thither, and willingly surrendering himself up into the hands of his enemies; and in cheerfully laying down his life: all which arose from the entire love he had for the persons he died for; and because it was his father's will, and his glory was concerned herein, and his own glory also was advanced thereby; moreover, his death was the life of others, and the work required haste.

Ver. 51. *Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? &c.*] To set up a temporal kingdom, in great pomp, and outward peace and tranquility? Christ came to make peace with God for men, and to give the Gospel of peace, and spiritual and eternal peace to men; but not external peace, especially that, which is not consistent with the preservation of truth: *I tell you, nay;* whatever suppositions you have made, or whatever notions you have entertained, I solemnly affirm, and you may depend upon it, I am not come into the world on any such account, as to establish outward peace among men; *but rather division;* so he calls the Gospel, which in Matthew is styled a *sword*; and the Ethiopic version seems to have read both here, since it renders it, *but a sword that I may divide:* the Gospel is the sword of the spirit, which divides asunder soul and spirit, and separates a man from his former principles and practices; and sets men apart from one another, even the nearest relations, at the greatest distance; and is, through the sin of man, the occasion of great contention, discord, and division.

Ver. 52. *For from henceforth there shall be five in one house, &c.*] Which are the five following, mentioned in the next verse; the father and the son, the mother and the daughter, and her daughter-in-law, or son's wife; for the mother and mother-in-law are one and the same person, only standing in different relations; as a mother to her own daughter, and a mother-in-law to her son's wife, or to her husband's daughter by his first wife; though the former best answers to the word used: now from the time of Christ's saying these words, or quickly after this, immediately upon his baptism of sufferings, or soon after his death, when the Gospel should be preached more publicly and extensively, this should be the effect of it; that supposing a family consisting of the above number, they should be *divided* from one another, in the following manner: *three against two, and two against three:* three that did not believe in Christ, against two that did believe in him; or two that did not believe, against three that did; or three that did, against two

that did not; or two that did, against three that did not. The Ethiopic version reads, *two shall be separated from three, and one shall be separated from two.*

Ver. 53. *The father shall be divided against the son, &c.*] Shall oppose him, differ with him, and be alienated from him, and so the other relations as follow; see the notes on Matt. x. 35; 36.

Ver. 54. *And he said also to the people, &c.*] For what Christ had before said, were chiefly, if not solely, directed to his disciples; but now he turned himself to the innumerable multitude that were about him, and particularly addressed himself to the Scribes and Pharisees that were among them: *when ye see a cloud rise out of the west*; the watery vapours being attracted by the heat of the sun, out of the Mediterranean Sea, which lies west of the land of Judea, and formed into a cloud, and drove by the wind: *straightway ye say there comes a shower*; as soon as it is seen, it is presently concluded and affirmed, that a very heavy shower will soon fall, it having been frequently observed so to do, when this has been the case: *and so it is*; for the most part, there commonly follows a large shower on such an appearance, and they were seldom mistaken in their conclusions.

Ver. 55. *And when ye see the south wind blow, &c.*] From the hot countries of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Arabia, which lay south of Judea: *ye say there will be heat*; or hot sultry weather, scorching heat, which such a wind brings with it: *and it cometh to pass*; generally speaking, as is asserted.

Ver. 56. *Ye hypocrites, &c.*] A word often used of the Scribes and Pharisees, and which suggests, that there were such in company, to whom Christ more especially directs his discourse; and this may be the rather thought, since much the like things are said by him to the Pharisees, with the Sadducees, in Matt. xvi. 1, 2, 3. and the same appellation is given them there, as here: *ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth*; from the appearance of the sky, they could tell how it would be with the earth, and the inhabitants of it, whether they should have dry or wet weather, heat or cold: *but how is it that ye do not discern this time?* that this is the time of the Messiah's coming, and that it is the accepted time, and day of salvation, if ye receive him, and believe in him; and a time of vengeance, if ye reject him: this might have been discerned by the prophecies of the Old Testament, which fix the characters of the Messiah, and the time of his coming; and describe the manners of the men of that generation, in which he should come: and point out both their happiness and their ruin; as also by the doctrines they heard Christ preach, and especially by the miracles which were wrought by him, it might have been known he was come.

Ver. 57. *Yea, and why even of yourselves, &c.*] From their own observation, as in discerning the signs of the weather; in a rational way, by the light of reason, and according to the dictates of their own consciences; by what they themselves saw and heard; by the signs and wonders which were done, they might have concluded, that now was the time of the Messiah's coming; and that he was come, and that Jesus of Nazareth was he: this was as easy, by observation, to be discerned, as the

face of the sky was; even of themselves, without any hints or directions from others: *judge ye not what is right? or truth*, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it; concerning the present time, the coming of the Messiah, and the accomplishment of the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament in him: or why do ye not of yourselves judge, what is fit and right to be done between man and man, without going to law? and that, in cases which are plain and clear, the consequences of which may be as easily discerned, as what weather it will be by the signs in the heavens; to which sense the following words incline.

Ver. 58. *When thou goest with thine adversary, &c.*] The creditor, as the Persic version, and who is the prosecutor, that has commenced a suit of law against another, in order to obtain his right: for Christ is here speaking of a bad man, that will not pay his just debts, so that his creditor is obliged to prosecute him, and have him to the *magistrate*; ruler, or prince; the Nasi, or prince of the sanhedrim, who sat as judge there: as thou art *in the way*; going along with the creditor, or prosecutor, to the court of judicature; *give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him*. The Persic version renders it, *give him the money*; and the Arabic version, *give what thou owest*; and the Syriac version, *give the gain*; or pay the interest, about which the dispute is, and so escape out of his hands; lest when the matter is brought into court, sentence should be given, to pay both interest and principal, with all costs and charges; or however, make up matters with him, satisfy him in some way or other, before things are brought to an extremity: *lest he hale thee to the judge*; the same that is called the magistrate, or prince before, that sits chief upon the bench, hears and tries causes, and passes sentence: *and the judge deliver thee to the officer*: who upon hearing the matter in difference, and giving the cause against the defendant, and for the prosecutor, delivers the debtor into the hands of a proper officer, in order to commit him to prison: the word rendered *officer*, signifies an exactor of debts, or fines, and was one that obliged such as were cast, to do what the judge appointed to be done: in the Septuagint on Isa. iii. 12. it answers to an *oppressor*; and such men were wont to use rigour, to bring persons to the payment of their debts, or fines: *and the officer cast thee into prison*; which he had power to do, when committed into his hands by the judge, in case the sentence pronounced was not immediately complied with; see the note on Matt. v. 25.

Ver. 59. *I tell thee, &c.*] The Syriac version before these words, prefixes an *Amen*, or *verily*, for the sake of the stronger affirmation, which seems to be taken from Matt. v. 26. *thou shalt not depart thence*; get out of prison: *till thou hast paid the very last mite*: of the sum in debate, which was what the Jews call a *prutah*, and that was the eighth part of an Italian farthing, and half a common farthing; see Mark xii. 42. and the note there: with this agrees what Maimonides says<sup>7</sup>, that "when he that lends, requires what he has lent, though he is rich, and the borrower is distressed, and straitened for food, there's no mercy shewed him in judgment, but his debt is demanded of him, עני פרוטה אחרונה, unto the last prutah, or mite."

## C H A P. XIII.

Ver. 1. *THERE* were present at that season, &c.] Among the innumerable multitude of people, ch. xii. 1. that were then hearing the above discourses and sayings of Christ: *some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.* These Galileans were very likely some of the followers of Judas Gaulonitis, or Judas of Galilee; see Acts v. 37. who endeavoured to draw off the Jews from the Roman government, and affirmed it was not lawful to give tribute to Cæsar; at which Pilate being enraged, sent a band of soldiers, and slew these his followers; who were come up to the feast of the passover, as they were offering their sacrifices in the temple, and so mixed their blood with the blood of the passover lambs: this being lately done, some of the company spoke of it to Christ; very likely some of the Scribes and Pharisees, whom he had just now taxed as hypocrites; either to know his sense of Pilate's conduct, that should he condemn it as brutish and barbarous, they might accuse him to him; or should he approve of it, might traduce him, and bring him into contempt among the people; or to know his sentiments concerning the persons slain, whether or no they were not very wicked persons; and whether this was not a judgment upon them, to be put to death in such a manner, and at such a time and place, and which sense seems to be confirmed by Christ's answer. Josephus <sup>2</sup> relating a slaughter of the Samaritans by Pilate, which bears some likeness to this, has led some, though without any just reason, to conclude, that these were Samaritans, who are here called Galileans. This history is neither related nor hinted at, by any other writer but Luke. The phrase of mingling blood with blood, is Jewish; it is said of one Trogius the wicked (perhaps the Emperor Trajan), that he slaughtered the Jews, *ויערב דמן בדם*, and mingled their blood with their blood; and their blood ran into the sea, unto Cyprus <sup>3</sup>. The Jews <sup>b</sup> have a notion, that "in the age in which the son of David comes, Galilee shall be destroyed." Here was a great slaughter of the Galileans now; see Acts v. 37. but there was a greater afterwards by the Romans: it may be that the Pharisees made mention of this case to Christ, to reproach him and his followers, who were called Galileans, as his disciples chiefly were.

Ver. 2. *And Jesus answering, said unto them, &c.*] Neither approving, nor condemning Pilate's action; and though he allowed the Galileans to be sinners, which could not be denied, he does not bear hard upon them, but improves the instance for the conviction of his hearers, and in order to shew them the necessity of repentance, and to bring them to it: *suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?* such a supposition they seem to have made, by their speaking to Christ concerning this matter; and concluded from their violent and untimely deaths, that they had been noto-

rious and uncommon sinners, and guilty of the most enormous crimes, which had brought upon them the just judgments of God: whereas this is not a rule of judging; oftentimes the best of men suffer exceedingly in this life; God's judgments are a great deep, and not to be fathomed by us, nor is it to be easily known, when any thing befalls persons in a way of judgment; there's nothing comes by chance, but every thing by the wise disposal of divine providence, to answer some end or another; nor are persons that are punished, either immediately by the hand of God, or by the civil magistrate, to be insulted, but rather to be pitied; besides, love and hatred, the characters and states of men, are not to be known by these effects in providence.

Ver. 3. *I tell you, nay, &c.*] They were not greater sinners than others of their neighbours, nor is it to be concluded from the bloody slaughter that was made of them; others might be much more deserving of such an end than they, who yet escaped it: *but except ye repent; of sin, and particularly of the disbelief of the Messiah: ye shall likewise perish;* or perish in like manner, as these Galileans did: and so it came to pass in the destruction of Jerusalem, that great numbers of the unbelieving Jews, even three hundred thousand men were destroyed at the feast of passover <sup>c</sup>; and that for sedition, as these men very likely were.

Ver. 4. *Or those eighteen, &c.*] Men; the Persic version reads, *those twelve;* but all copies, and other versions, agree in this number: *upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them;* there was a pool near Jerusalem, called the Pool of Siloam, John ix. 7. near, or over which, was a tower built, which fell down and killed eighteen men; very likely as they were purifying themselves in the pool, and so was a case very much like the other, and might be a very late one: and this Christ the rather observes, and puts them in mind of, that they might see that not Galileans only, whom they had in great contempt, but even inhabitants of Jerusalem, died violent deaths, and came to untimely ends; and yet, as not in the former case, so neither in this was it to be concluded from hence, that they were sinners of a greater size, or their state worse than that of other men: *think ye that they were sinners; or debtors; for as sins are called debts, Matt. vi. 12, so sinners are called debtors: above all men that dwell in Jerusalem?* there might be, and doubtless there were, as great, or greater sinners, in that holy city, and among such that made great pretensions to religion and holiness, as they were.

Ver. 5. *I tell you, nay, &c.*] I affirm it, and you may depend upon it, they were not greater sinners than others: though such a melancholy accident befell them, not without the providence of God: *but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish;* or perish in the same manner; that is, shall be buried under the ruins of the city and temple of Jerusalem, when one stone

<sup>2</sup> Antiqu. l. 18. c. 5.

<sup>3</sup> T. Hieros. Succa, fol. 55. 2. Vid. Lightfoot Hor. in loc.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Vid. Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 11. & l. 7. c. 17. Euseb. l. 3. c. 5.

should not be left upon another; just as these eighteen men were buried under the ruins of the tower of Siloam, of which it was a pledge and emblem; and accordingly great numbers of them did perish in the temple, and were buried under the ruins of it<sup>4</sup>.

Ver. 6. *He spake also this parable, &c.*] That is, Jesus spake, as the Persic version expresses it, that which follows; and at the same time, and upon the above occasion; setting forth the patience of God towards the Jewish nation, their unfruitfulness, and the danger of their being destroyed, in case of non-amendment: *a certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard.* This was not at all contrary to the law in Deut. xxii. 9. *thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds:* for according to the Jewish canons<sup>5</sup>, "the prohibition on account of divers seeds in a vineyard, concerned divers sorts of corn, (as wheat, barley, &c.) and divers sorts of herbs only: but it was lawful to sow other sorts of seeds in a vineyard, and there is no need to say other trees." And there are cases put, and instances given, which express, or suppose fig-trees, particularly, to have been planted in vineyards; for it is said<sup>6</sup>, "if a man carries a vine over part of a tree for meat, he may sow seed under the other part of it—it happened that R. Joshua went to R. Ishmael to Cephaz Aziz, and he sheved him a vine, carried over, בַּקֶּצֶה תָּאֵנָה, *part of a fig-tree.*" Again, more than once it is said in a parabolical way<sup>7</sup>, "this is like unto a king that has a paradise, or orchard planted, שׂוּרֵי תְּאֵנִים וְשֵׁל נִפְתִּיחִים, *a row of fig-trees, and of vines,* and of pomegranates, and of apples, &c." By the *certain man* may be meant, either God the father, who is sometimes called a husbandman; or rather the Lord Jesus Christ, who is truly man, as well as properly God; and by *his vineyard* may be meant, the Jewish nation; see Isa. v. 1, 2, 7. which were his own nation and people, from whence he sprung, and to whom he was particularly sent, and among whom he had a special property; and may also be applied to the church of God in any age or nation, which is often compared to a vineyard, consisting of persons separated from the world, and planted with various plants, some fruitful, pleasant, profitable, and valuable, and are Christ's by his father's gift, and his own purchase. And by the *fig-tree* planted in it, may be principally meant the Scribes and Pharisees, and the generality of the Jewish people; who were plants, but not of Christ's father's planting, and therefore to be cut down, or rooted up: and may be accommodated to professors of religion; some of which are true and real, and may be compared to the fig-tree, because of its large and green leaves, expressive of their profession; and become fruitful, as they are, being filled with the fruits of the spirit, of righteousness, and of grace; and because it puts forth its fruit before its leaves, as there should be the fruit of grace before a profession of faith is made. Others are only nominal professors; and are like a fig-tree, of which sort was this in the parable, that has large leaves, but no fruit; make a large profession, but bring forth no fruit to the glory

of God; and though they are planted in the house of God, yet not by God the father, nor by Christ, only at best by ministers and churches hoping well of them, but mistaken in them: *and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.* This, if understood of God the father, designs his coming to the Jewish people by his servants and prophets, time after time, and at last by John the Baptist, and Jesus Christ, and his apostles, seeking and requiring fruits of holiness, righteousness, and judgment, but found instead thereof the wild grapes of wickedness, oppression, and violence: but if of Christ, which sense is rather to be chosen, it denotes his incarnation, or his coming into the world in human nature, and seeking by his ministry, the fruits of faith in himself, and repentance towards God among the people of the Jews, but found none; at least instances of faith in Israel were very rare, and few repented of their evil works; and hence he upbraided many with their impentence and unbelief; see Matt. xi. 20.

Ver. 7. *Then said he unto the dresser of the vineyard, &c.*] If by the owner of the vineyard is meant God the father, then by the dresser of the vineyard Jesus Christ is intended; but as he seems rather designed by the owner, the vine-dresser, or the gardeners, as the Persic version reads, in the plural number, may signify the ministers of the word, to whom Christ, who is Solomon's antitype, lets out his vineyard to dress and cultivate it, and to keep the fruit of it; see Cant. viii. 11, 12. *behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none; or behold, there are three years since I came:* so read the Vulgate Latin and Persic versions, and Beza's most ancient copy. Some think Christ here refers to the three years of his public ministry, which he had now gone through among the Jews with little success; but he seems rather to allude to the nature of fig-trees, which, if fruitful, bear in three years time; for even בְּנֵת שֵׁד, *a sort of white figs,* which are the longest before they bring forth fruit to perfection, yet their fruit is ripe in three years time. These trees bear fruit once in three years; they bear fruit indeed every year, but their fruit does not come to maturity till after three years<sup>8</sup>; and this may be the reason why this number is fixed upon; for if such fig-trees do not bring forth ripe fruit in three years time, there's little reason to expect any from them: and thus it was time after time with the Jewish nation; and so it is with carnal professors: hence it follows, *cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? or that it may not cumber; or render the ground useless,* as read the Arabic version, and one of Beza's copies; for unfruitful trees suck up the juices of the earth, and draw away nourishment from other trees that are near them, and so make the earth barren, and not only hurt other trees, but stand in the way and place of fruitful ones; and therefore 'tis best to cut them down. So barren professors, as were the Jews, are not only useless and unprofitable themselves, being fruitless, but make churches barren, and stand in the way of others, who are stumbled by

<sup>4</sup> Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Maimon. Hilchot Celaim, c. 5. sect. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Misn. Celaim, c. 6. sect. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Vajikra Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 164. 3. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 9. 2.

<sup>1</sup> T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 35. 4. Jarchi, Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Demai, c. 1. sect. 1. & Sheviith, c. 5. sect. 1.

them; they are grieving to God, to Christ, and to the blessed Spirit, and are troublesome and burdensome to churches, ministers, and true believers: and the cutting them down may regard the judgment of God upon the nation of the Jews, which Christ would not have his apostles and ministers interpose for the averting of; or the excommunication of such worthless and hurtful professors out of the churches by them.

Ver. 8. *And he answering, said unto him, Lord, &c.*] Which, if understood of God the father, may intend the intercession of Christ with him, who not only intercedes for his elect, for those that are unconverted, that they may be converted; and for converted ones, for the carrying on of the work of sanctification; for fresh discoveries of pardoning grace; for consolation and support under trouble; for their final perseverance, and eternal glorification: but also for his enemies, for profane sinners, and for formal professors; for the sake of his own people among them, and for their preservation, and for the averting of divine judgments from them, at least as yet: and so the Jewish nation was spared for some time after this, though now deserving of immediate destruction. But rather, the intercession of the ministers of Christ, and other good men, may be here meant; who, as Abraham interceded for Sodom, and Moses and Aaron for Israel, so do they for a sinful nation, a barren and unfruitful church and people, and particular persons, that they may be spared, at least a little longer, as here: *let it alone this year also; have patience one year more, or a little while longer.* The Ethiopic version renders it, *until the winter*, that being a time for digging about, and dunging of trees, as follows, *till I shall dig about it, and dung it*; these same phrases are used in the *Misna*<sup>h</sup>, “מבולין ומעדרין, *they dung and dig in gardens*” of cucumbers, and gourds, until the beginning of “the year:” upon which their commentators say, that they carry dung into their gardens to moisten the earth, and dig about the roots of the trees, and lay them bare, and cover them again, and prune them, and smoke them to kill the worms. And by these phrases may be signified the various means Christ made use of by his own ministry, and by the ministry of his apostles, to make the Jews a fruitful people; and rather the means Christ’s ministers make use of, as did the apostles with the Jews, to reach the cases of barren professors; as by *digging*, striking at, and exposing some secret sin or sins, which are the root and source of their barrenness; shewing them, that they have no root in Christ, nor the root of the matter in them; and declaring to them the insufficiency of a mere profession of religion to save them: and *dunging*, which as it supposes want of heat, or coldness, which is the cause of barrenness, and signifies, that such professors are without spiritual life, and without spiritual heat, or real warmth of love to Christ, his truths, ordinances, and people, and discharge their duty in a cold and lifeless manner; so it may design the means they make use of to warm and fire them with zeal for God, and true religion; by preaching the soul-quickening doctrines of the Gospel, and by laying before them the

agreeableness of a becoming zeal, and the disagreeableness of a lukewarm spirit and disposition, an indolence and unconcern for the glory of God, and interest of Christ.

Ver. 9. *And if it bear fruit, well, &c.*] If hereby barren professors, as the Jews, become fruitful, ’tis well, a good thing is done; ’tis well for themselves, they shall eat the fruit of their doings; ’tis well for the churches where they are, for good works are profitable to men; and it is well for the owner of the vineyard, and the dresser of it too, for when Christ has his fruit from his churches, his ministers have theirs also: *and if not, then after that; for the time to come*, as the Vulgate Latin; or *year following*, as the Persic version renders it: *thou shalt cut it down*; do with it as thou pleasest, nothing more will be said or pleaded in its behalf; full consent shall be given, and no more intercession used: any trees might not be cut down, only barren ones; there’s a law in Deut. xx. 19, 20. about cutting down trees, and which the Jews explain thus<sup>m</sup>; “they may not cut down trees for meat without the city, nor withhold from them the course of water, that so they may become dry; as it is said, *thou shalt not destroy the trees*; and whoever cuts any down is to be beaten, and not in a siege only, but in any place: whoever cuts down a tree for meat, by way of destroying it, is to be beaten; but they may cut it down if it hurts other trees, or because it hurts in the field others, or because its price is dear; the law does not forbid, but by way of destroying. Every barren tree it is lawful to cut down, even though a man hath no need of it; and so a tree for meat, which does hurt, and does not produce but little fruit, and it is not worth while to labour about it, it is lawful to cut it down: and how much may an olive-tree produce, and it may not be cut down? the fourth part of a *Kab* of olives; and a palm-tree which yields a *Kab* of dates, may not be cut down.” Much such a parable as this is formed by the Jews, upon Moses’s intercession for the people of Israel<sup>n</sup>. Says R. Abin, in the name of R. Simeon ben Joseph, a parable, to what is it like? to a king that hath an uncultivated field; he says to his gardener, go and manure it, and make it a vineyard: the gardener went and manured that field, and planted it a vineyard; the vineyard grew, and produced wine, and it turned to vinegar; when the king saw that the wine turned to vinegar, he said to the gardener, go, וקרוץ אותה, *and cut it down*, why should I seek after a vineyard that brings forth that which is sour? the gardener replied, my lord, the king, what expense hast thou been at with this vineyard before it was raised? and now thou seekest to cut it down; and shouldst thou say because its wine turns sour; the reason is, because it is young, therefore its wine turns sour, and it does not produce good wine: so when Israel did that work (of the golden calf), the holy blessed God sought to consume them; said Moses, Lord of the world, hast thou not brought them out of Egypt from a place of idolatry, and now they are young, or children, as it is said, Hos.

<sup>h</sup> Sheviith, c. 2. sect. 2.

<sup>i</sup> Jarchi, Maimou. & Bartenora in ib

<sup>m</sup> Maimou. Hilch. Melacim, c. 6. sect. 8, 9.

<sup>n</sup> Shenot Rabba, sect. 43. fol. 141. 2.

“ xi. 1. wait a little for them, and go with them, and they will do good works in thy presence.”

Ver. 10. *And he was teaching in one of the synagogues, &c.*] That is *Jesus*, as the Syriac and Persic versions express it; which was his work, he being a teacher sent from God, and who took all opportunities of instructing men in the truths of the Gospel; this was done either in Galilee, or in Judea, in one of the synagogues of some city there, for in their larger cities there were more synagogues than one. In Jerusalem, we are told<sup>o</sup>, there were three hundred and ninety-four synagogues; and other writers<sup>p</sup> increase their number, and say, there were four hundred and eighty: and it was *on the sabbath*; which was now in force, and was religiously observed by Christ.

Ver. 11. *And behold there was a woman, &c.*] In the synagogue, who, as infirm as she is hereafter described, got out to the place of worship; and which may be a rebuke to such, who, upon every trifling indisposition, keep at home, and excuse themselves from an attendance in the house of God: *which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years*; or a weakness that was brought upon her by an evil spirit, by Satan, as appears from ver. 16. who, by divine permission, had a power of inflicting diseases on mankind, as is evident from the case of Job; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *whom a demon had made infirm*: and this disorder had been of a long standing; she had laboured under it for the space of eighteen years, so that it was a known case, and had been given up as incurable, which made the following miracle the more illustrious and remarkable. *And was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself*; or lift up her head, look up, or stand upright; it was a thing utterly impossible, which she could by no means do; her body was convulsed, and every part so contracted, that, as the Persic version renders it, she could not *stretch out a hand or foot*.

Ver. 12. *And when Jesus saw her, &c.*] In the synagogue among the people, either whilst, or after he had done teaching: *he called her to him*, to come nearer him, and *said unto her*; of his own accord, without being asked by the woman, or any other for her, out of great compassion to her, seeing her in this miserable condition, and knowing full well the nature, cause, and long continuance of her disorder: *woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity*; which had not only bowed her, but it had bound her, as if she had been bound with cords; but Christ by saying these words, with his hands laid upon her, burst her bonds asunder, dispossessed the evil spirit, and delivered her from her long affliction.

Ver. 13. *And he laid his hands on her, &c.*] As he spoke the above words, which he sometimes did when he healed diseases. *And immediately she was made straight*; she lift up herself, stood upright, and her body, and all the parts of it were as straight as ever they had been, or as any were in the synagogue. *And glorified God*; that is, *the woman glorified God*, as the Persic version expresses it; she was filled with thankfulness for the mercy, and gave God the glory of it.

This woman was an emblem of a poor sinner held in the bonds of iniquity by Satan, and led captive by him at his will, who can by no means raise himself; nor is he able to lift up his head to heaven, or look upwards to Christ for deliverance; and yet attends upon the outward ministry, when Christ, in his own time, meets with him under it, and manifests his power and grace, breaks his bonds asunder, delivers him out of Satan's hands, and from the bondage of his own corruptions, sets him straight, and causes him to lift up his head, and look to him for life and salvation; and so puts a new song into his mouth, even praise to God, to whose free grace and favour he readily ascribes his deliverance.

Ver. 14. *And the ruler of the synagogue, &c.*] For there never was but one in a synagogue, whatever some writers have observed to the contrary; see the note on Matt. ix. 18. the Ethiopic version reads, *the chief priests*, but wrongly; these dwelt at Jerusalem, and not in Galilee: *answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath-day*; his indignation was at Christ, and the miracle he had wrought, being filled with envy at the honour it would bring unto him; though he covered it under pretence of its being a violation of the sabbath, and that it ought not to have been done on such a day, and in such a place, which were appropriated not to servile works, but to religious worship; *and said unto the people*; over whom he had an authority, and who stood in awe of him, because of his office and dignity; and not daring to attack Christ himself, at least not directly, though he struck at him through the people, whose doctrine and miracles were so extraordinary. *There are six days in which men ought to work, in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath-day*; referring to the fourth command: but this observation and reproof were impertinent and needless, for the people did not come to be healed; for ought appears, the cure was unthought-of and unexpected; nor was healing, especially as performed by Christ, by a word and a touch, a servile work, and therefore could not be any breach of the law referred to. The Ethiopic version reads, *is there not a sixth day?—come on that day*; the day before the sabbath.

Ver. 15. *The Lord then answered him and said, &c.*] Though he did not direct his speech to him, he knew that he struck at him, and suggested that he was a violator of the sabbath, as well as the people: and therefore in defence of himself, and of what he had done, and to expose the hypocrisy of this man, made answer as follows, *thou hypocrite*: the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read in the plural, *hypocrites*; as do the Complutensian edition, and four ancient copies of Beza's, and the Alexandrian copy; but the Syriac and Persic versions read in the singular, *hypocrite*; as this man was, who covered his malice and envy at Christ, with a shew of zeal for the sabbath-day; and yet did that upon it, which must be allowed by themselves, and others, to be a much greater violation of the sabbath, than this cure could ever be thought to be: *doth not each one of you, on the sab-*

<sup>o</sup> T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 105. 1.

<sup>p</sup> Posikta in Jarchi in Isa. i. 21. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 20. 3. Ecca Rabbati, fol. 37. 4.

*bath-day, loose his ox, or his ass, from the stall; or rack, where he is fastened with a rope; and lead him away to watering?* to some place of water, where he may drink, after having filled himself at the rack: and that this was agreeably to their own canons and practice, that beasts may be led out on a sabbath-day, is certain; for they deliver various rules concerning leading them out, with what they might, and with what they might not be brought out; and particularly, among others, mention asses and heifers<sup>1</sup>; and they speak<sup>2</sup> of leading them to water, not only to drink of it, but to wash their chains in it, which, it seems, received pollution, and needed washing, and might be done on a sabbath-day; yea, they allow, that not only a beast may be led out to watering, but a man might fill a vessel of water, and pour it out into a trough for it, provided he did not directly set it before it: the rule is this<sup>3</sup>, “a man may not fill water (a vessel of it), and “put it on a sabbath-day before his beast, but he may “fill it, and pour it out, and it may drink of it.” And particularly on a feast-day, their rule is<sup>4</sup>, that “they “don’t water nor slay beasts of the desert, but they “water and slay domestic ones. Domestic ones are “such as lie in the city (*i. e.* as Maimonides says<sup>5</sup>, “within the sabbatical border, 2000 cubits from the “city), and those of the desert are such as lie in “pastures.” And therefore very justly does our Lord observe to the ruler of the synagogue their own practices towards a beast, in defence of his works of mercy to men.

Ver. 16. *And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, &c.*] Not only a woman, or rational creature, and much preferable, as such, to an irrational one; but a descendant of Abraham, of whom the Jews gloried, and in descent from him prided themselves, and trusted; and chose to call their women by this name<sup>6</sup>, which gave them a character above others: and who, besides all this, was doubtless a good woman, a spiritual worshipper of the God of Israel; who, in a spiritual sense, was a daughter of Abraham, that walked in the steps of his faith, and was now a believer in Christ, and appeared to be a chosen vessel of salvation: *whom Satan hath bound, lo these eighteen years;* with a bodily distemper that none could loose her from in so long a time. The Persic version, very wrongly, reads *twelve years;* though in ver. 11. it observes the right number. Should not such an one be loosed from this bond on the sabbath-day? the force of Christ’s reasoning is this, that if it was lawful, on a sabbath-day, to lead out a beast to watering, to quench its thirst, that so it may not suffer so much as one day for want of water, how much more reasonable must it be, that a rational creature, one of Abraham’s posterity, and a religious person, who had been for eighteen years under a sore affliction, through the power of Satan over her, by divine permission, should be freed from so long and sore an affliction on the sabbath-day? if mercy is to be shewn to beasts, much more to men and women.

Ver. 17. *And when he had said these things, &c.*] Had argued with them from their own practices, and in a way so strong and rational, that carried such evidence and conviction with it: *all his adversaries were ashamed;* not only the ruler of the synagogue, but the Scribes and Pharisees, that were present, who followed him wherever he went, and were his implacable enemies; these were confounded and silenced; shame appeared in their countenances; they could not lift up their heads, and look him in the face. *And all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him;* for the doctrines he taught, and the miracles he wrought, and his wise and close reasonings at this time, to the shame and confusion of all that opposed him: for his audience consisted of different sorts, and what he said, and did, had different effects upon them. Some were filled with joy, and others with wrath, malice, and envy. And this is true with respect to spiritual and eternal things. Glorious things have been done by Christ in eternity, by becoming the surety of his people, by entering into a covenant with his father on their account, and by taking the care and charge of their persons, and of all grace, blessings, and promises for them; and in time, by assuming their nature, fulfilling the law, bringing in an everlasting righteousness, making peace and reconciliation, procuring pardon, and finishing the work of redemption and salvation; and now in heaven, by entering as the forerunner for them, appearing in the presence of God on their account, presenting their prayers, and making intercession for them: and these are *glorious things;* they make for the glory of all the divine perfections; they issue in the glory of Christ himself; and in consequence of them, the saints enjoy eternal glory and happiness: these are things of the greatest importance, are wonderful and amazing, and for which saints and angels will glorify God both here and hereafter; and these occasion joy, and gladness in the Lord’s people now. For not carnal and profane persons, or hypocrites, and formal professors, or Pharisees, and self-righteous persons rejoice at these things; but such as are the Lord’s own people, who are openly his; who have passed under a work of the spirit of God, who have seen their need of these things, and are sensible of the value of them; who know Christ, and love him, and believe in him.

Ver. 18. *Then said he, unto what is the kingdom of God like? &c.*] The same with the kingdom of heaven, in Matt. xiii. 31. and so the Ethiopic version reads it here, *and whereunto shall I resemble it?* of this way of speaking, see the note on Mark iv. 30.

Ver. 19. *It is like a grain of mustard-seed, &c.*] Both for its smallness at first, and its after-increase; wherefore both the Evangelists Matthew and Mark observe, that *it is the least of all seed;* which is true of the ministry of the Gospel, of the Gospel church-state, and of the grace of God in the hearts of his people: *which a man took and cast into his garden;* the Ethiopic version renders it, *and sowed in his field,* as in Matt. xiii. 31.

<sup>1</sup> Misn. Sabbat, c. 5. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4. & 18. 2. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 51. 2. & 52. 1. & Piske Tosephot in ib. art. 226, 227, 228, 233.

<sup>2</sup> Bartenora in Misn. Sabbat, c. 5. sect. 1.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 20. 2.

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>4</sup> Misn. Betza, c. 5. sect. 7.

<sup>5</sup> In ib.

<sup>6</sup> T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 72. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 109. 1.

though mustard-used to be sowed in gardens as well as in fields. \* Says R. Simeon ben Chelphetha, I have one stalk of mustard-seed, בְּרֹחַי שֶׁלִי, *in my garden*; so † Buxtorf translates it. And by the place in the text, where this seed is cast, may be meant, either the *field* of the world, where the Gospel is preached, and churches are raised; or the *garden* of the church, where the word and ordinances are administered, and in the hearts of the members of it, the grace of God is implanted and increased; see Cant. iv. 12, 13. *and it grew and waxed a great tree* which may design the spread of the Gospel in the world, the flourishing state of the church of Christ, and the growth of grace in the hearts of believers. *And the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it*: the Syriac version reads in the singular number, *the fowl of the air*: not Satan, and his principalities and powers, which devour the seed sown by the way-side; nor the angels of heaven; but rather gracious men on earth, who sit under the shadow of a Gospel ministry with great delight; and *make their nests*, as the Persic version here renders the words, and take up their residence in Gospel churches; see the notes on Matt. xiii. 31, 32. and on Mark iv. 31, 32.

Ver. 20. *And again he said, &c.*] That is, Jesus, as the Syriac and Persic versions express it; besides the parable of the grain of mustard-seed, that also of the leaven hid in three measures of meal: *whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God*: either the Gospel of the kingdom, and the mysteries of it; or the church, which is Christ's kingdom; or the grace of God in the heart, which makes meet for the kingdom of glory; the first seems rather to be intended; see the note on Matt. xiii. 33.

Ver. 21. *It is like leaven, &c.*] Which is small in quantity, but is of a swelling, spreading quality; and fitly expresses the small beginnings of the Gospel ministry, and its increase, also the state and case of Gospel churches, and the nature of the grace of God; unless false doctrine should rather be meant, which privately, secretly, and by little and little, got into the churches of Christ, the kingdom of God, and spread itself all over them, as in the times of the papacy: *which a woman took*: Christ, and his ministers, Wisdom, and her maidens, understanding it of the Gospel; but if the leaven of error is intended, that woman, Jezebel, is meant, who calls herself a prophetess, and teaches, and seduces the servants of God, Rev. ii. 20. *and hid in three measures of meal*: among a few of God's people at first, both among Jews and Gentiles, *till the whole was leavened*; until all the elect of God are gathered in, and evangelized by it; even the whole fulness of the Gentiles, and all the people of the Jews, which shall be saved in the latter day; but if the parable is to be understood of the false doctrine and discipline of the Antichristian and apostate church of Rome, it may denote the small beginnings of the mystery of iniquity, which began to work in the apostle's time by the errors and heresies then propagated, and the manner in which the man of sin was privately introduced; whose coming is after the working of Satan, with signs and lying wonders, and with all deceiveable-

ness of unrighteousness, first among a few, and then more, until at length the whole world wondered after the beast, 2 Thess. ii. 7, 9, 10. Rev. xiii. 3.

Ver. 22. *And he went through the cities and villages, &c.*] Either of Galilee, or of Judea, or both; since he was upon his journey from Galilee, through Judea, to Jerusalem, as it follows: *teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem*; as he was journeying he taught in every place he came, where he could have an opportunity; his delight was to do good both to the bodies and souls of men; and he was constant and assiduous in it.

Ver. 23. *Then said one unto him, &c.*] Not one of his disciples, but one of the company, in some one of the cities or villages he passed through, or as he was in the road to Jerusalem: *are there few that be saved?* It is a received opinion among the Jews ‡, that all Israel shall have a part in the world to come; and this man might put the question to know whether Christ was of this sentiment or no. And by some things he had observed drop from him, and it may be the foregoing parables, which express the small beginnings of his kingdom, and seem to signify, that at first his Gospel should be received but by a few, though it should afterwards spread, he might collect, that his sense was, there would be but a few saved; or this might be a question of mere curiosity and speculation, as it seems to be, by Christ's treatment of it, who does not give a direct answer to it, but puts him and others upon shewing a concern for their own salvation. *And he said unto them*; not to the man only that put the question, but to the whole company; though the Persic and Ethiopic versions read, *he said unto him*, as follows.

Ver. 24. *Strive to enter in at the strait gate, &c.*] What is meant by the *strait gate*, and by *entering* in at it, see the note on Matt. vii. 13. To *strive*, is to be diligent in the use of means; to search the Scriptures with care; to attend on the preaching of the word with constancy, neglecting no opportunity; to pray earnestly for spiritual light, knowledge, and grace; to contend with every enemy that opposes the salvation of the soul, as sin, Satan, and the world; to bear all reproaches and persecutions, and press through all difficulties, for the prize of the incorruptible crown: the metaphor seems to be taken from the striving, wrestling, and combat in the Olympic games, for a corruptible crown: *for many I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able*: either when it is too late, when the door is shut; or else before, very faintly, in a superficial manner, from a mere natural affection, from a principle of self-love, which leads every one to desire happiness; and by very indirect and improper methods, by their own civility, morality, and righteousness; by works of the law, moral, or ceremonial; or by a profession of religion, and an outward compliance with the ordinances of the Gospel, and not by Christ, and faith in him.

Ver. 25. *When once the master of the house is risen up, &c.*] From table, or off of his couch, the entertainment being over: and so here, the Gospel feast,

\* T. Hieroe. Peah, fol. 20. 2.  
† Lex. Talmud. col. 823.

‡ Mian. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1.



or dispensation, being at an end, and all the guests come in, who were effectually called, and long patience and forbearance being used towards others; or *has entered in*, as the Vulgate Latin version reads, and so Beza's ancient copy, and one of Stephens's; is come from the wedding; see ch. xii. 36. Christ having espoused all his elect to himself, by the ministry of the word: for by *the master of the house* is meant, the bridegroom of the church, the head of the body, the King of saints, who is son over his own house, and high-priest there; of whom the whole family in heaven and earth, is named: *and hath shut to the door*; the door of mercy and of hope; the door of faith; the preaching of the word, and the administration of ordinances, when these shall be no more: *and ye begin to stand without*; or *do stand without*; without the holy city, where dogs are; having no admittance to the nuptial chamber, to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, and the joys of heaven: *and to knock at the door*; which shews how near some persons may come to heaven, and yet not enter there, even to the very door; and what an expectation, yea, an assurance they may have, of admission into it, not at all doubting of it; and therefore knock as if they were some of the family, and had a right to enter; but not finding the door opened to them, so soon as they imagined, they begin to call as well as knock: *saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us*; they acknowledge Christ to be Lord, as all will at the last day, to the glory of God the father, even professors and profane; they repeat the word, to shew the vehemency and earnestness of their entreaty; and according to the Syriac and Persic versions, they claim an interest in Christ, which read, *our Lord, our Lord*; and on account of which they doubted not, but the door would be opened: but alas! he was only their Lord in a professional way; they had only called him Lord, Lord, but had never truly and heartily yielded obedience to him; their hearts had never been opened to him, and he had never had a place there, nor his Gospel; wherefore though they knock, he'll not open; *and he shall answer and say unto you*. The Persic version adds, *nay, but be ye gone hence*, for the following reason, *I know you not, whence you are*: not but that Christ being the omniscient God, will know who they are, from whence they come, of what country and place they be, and to whom they belong; but the sense is, that he won't own them, and express any approbation of them, as his; but will treat them as strangers, that come, it is not known, from whence; he'll reject them, as not being born from above, as not being the sheep of his fold, or members of his true church: they did not come from heaven, they were not heaven-born souls, or partakers of the heavenly calling, and therefore shall not be received there; they belonged to the men of the world, and were of their father the devil, and shall be sent to him: so the foolish virgins, or formal professors of religion, and such as have been preachers of the Gospel, will entreat Christ at the last day, and shall have such an answer as this returned to

them, which will be very awful and startling; see the note on Matt. vii. 23. and xxv. 12.

Ver. 26. *Then shall ye begin to say, &c.*] Or *ye shall say*; in favour of themselves, and in order to be admitted within, the following pleas will be made by them: *we have eaten and drank in thy presence*; which may be understood both literally of many, who were miraculously fed by Christ, or at whose tables he had ate and drank, and they with him; as did not only publicans and sinners, but some of the Pharisees, who invited him to their houses; and in a religious sense, of many who eat of the legal sacrifices; and of others, who eat the bread, and drink the wine at the Lord's table; all which will be insufficient to introduce men into the kingdom and glory of Christ: natural relation to Christ, which the Jews may claim, being born of them, and personal acquaintance with him, and a bare profession of him, will be of no avail another day: *and thou hast taught in our streets*; in the streets of many cities in Galilee and Judea: it was customary with the Jewish doctors to teach in the streets: "says Rabba, behold I am as Ben Azzai, in the streets of Tiberias"; the gloss upon it is, "who was *דרוש בשוק* in the streets of Tiberias." And it is said<sup>b</sup> of Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai, "that he was sitting in the shade of the temple, and ex-pounding all the whole day;" the gloss on the place is, "the temple being an hundred cubits high, its shade went very far in the street, which is before the mountain of the house; and because the street was large, and held abundance of men, he was expounding there by reason of the heat, for no school could hold them:" and it is also said of R. Chija<sup>c</sup>, that "he went out and taught his brother's two sons, *בשוק, in the street.*" So that what our Lord did, was no other than what was usual with their doctors; nor is this contrary to what is said in Matt. xii. 19. see the note there: this is also a fruitless plea, and which will be of no service; it will signify nothing, to have heard Christ preached, or Christ himself preach, unless there is faith in him, which works by love; for not hearers of the word only, but doers of it are regarded.

Ver. 27. *But he shall say, &c.*] The Persic version adds, *be gone from my sight, and be far from my door*: expressing indignation at them, an abhorrence of them, as not being able to bear them in his sight, or near unto him: *I tell you, I know you not whence you are*; this is repeated, and with a strong asseveration, to denote the certainty of the truth expressed, and to cast off all hope in them, of ever succeeding by their entreaties and importunity: *depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; or of a lie*, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it: for they were deceitful workers, they professed what they did not from the heart believe; they said they were Christians, but were not, and now are found liars; they only attended on the word and ordinances in an hypocritical way, and trusted in, and depended upon, their outward profession of religion, and subjection to ordinances; and by so doing, instead of working righte-

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 29. 1.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 26. 1.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 16. 2.

ousness, wrought iniquity; and so as they did not submit to Christ and his righteousness, they are bid to depart from him, as wicked and unrighteous men, as they were: the word *all* is here used, which is not in Matt. vii. 23. which agrees with Psal. vi. 8. to which there seems to be a reference, though it is omitted here, in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions; see the note on Matt. vii. 23.

Ver. 28. *There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, &c.*] See the note on Matt. viii. 12. This will be upon hearing the above sentence and character, *depart from me, &c.* and will be increased, *when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*: whose offspring they were, and to whom they stood related according to the flesh; and of descent, from whom they boasted, and even trusted in it, thinking themselves the favourites of heaven, and expecting to be admitted into the kingdom of God on account of it: sad will be the disappointment of such persons; a being born of religious parents, will neither give right unto, nor meetness for eternal glory; regeneration is not of blood: *and all the prophets in the kingdom of God*; whose prophecies were transmitted to them, and whose books they had in their hands, and read; and who desired to see and hear what they did, and which they now plead, and yet they did not enjoy, but were nevertheless happy: *and you yourselves thrust out*: with indignation and contempt, with shame and *ignominy*, as the Persic version adds; not suffered to go in with them, though their sons and successors; but bid to depart, and ordered to be for ever separated from them, as only fit company for devils and damned spirits.

Ver. 29. *And they shall come, &c.*] From all parts of the world, from every nation under the heavens; meaning the Gentiles, and which will be a greater aggravation of the punishment of the Jews, and cause still more rage and madness: these shall come *from the east and from the west*; from the rising of the sun, to the going down of the same, Isa. xiv. 6. Mal. i. 11. *and from the north, and from the south*: from the most distant parts of the world inhabited by men; see Isa. xliii. 5, 6. God has his chosen ones, and Christ has a people in all parts of the world; and therefore his Gospel must be preached to all nations, for the gathering of them in, which will be done in the latter day; and in the resurrection-morn, as these will be raised in the several places where they will have been buried, they will come from thence, and make one body, and will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and will be for ever with him: *and shall sit down in the kingdom of God*: in Christ's kingdom, in the new heavens, and new earth, as persons that sit down at a table, to partake of a feast; see Luke xxii. 30. and in the ultimate glory, where they shall have rest, peace, and joy, for evermore. The Ethiopic version renders it, *they shall rejoice in the kingdom of God*; they shall partake of the joys of heaven; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away; and the Persic version, *and they shall take a repose, and sit and rest*: they shall rest from all their labour,

and be in perfect ease and peace; see the note on Matt. viii. 11.

Ver. 30. *And behold, there are last which shall be first, &c.*] The Gentiles, the most mean and abject, afar from God, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, called last of all; these shall be first, and sit down among patriarchs and prophets, men of the first rank here on earth, in the kingdom of heaven, and enjoy the same glory and happiness with them: *and there are first which shall be last*: the Jews, who were first the visible professing people of God, to whom the oracles of God, and outward privileges and ordinances were given; who had the Messiah first sent to them, and the Gospel first preached among them; these shall be last, be rejected and despised, and shut out of the kingdom of heaven, they thought themselves heirs of, and expected to enjoy; see Matt. xix. 30. and xx. 16.

Ver. 31. *The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, &c.*] Who dwelt in Galilee, for they were in all parts of the country: these being nettled and filled with indignation at Christ, because of the parables he had that day delivered, the miracles he had wrought, and the several awful and striking things which dropped from him, and which they knew respected them; contrived to get rid of him, by frightening him with a design of Herod's, to take away his life, should he continue there: for this seems to be rather a stratagem of theirs, than of Herod's; though it may be, that Herod might take this method, and make use of these men in this way, to terrify him; fearing to lay hold on him, and put him to death; partly because of the people, and partly because of the remaining uneasiness and terror of his mind, for taking off the head of John the Baptist: *saying, get thee out and depart hence*; in all haste, as soon as possible: *for Herod will kill thee*; he is resolved upon it, he has formed a design, and will quickly take methods to execute it. This was Herod the tetrarch, of Galilee; from whence we learn, that Christ was as yet in Galilee, though he was journeying towards Jerusalem, ver. 22. for Herod's jurisdiction reached no further than Galilee: this was either a device of Herod's, or of the Pharisees, or of both, to get rid of Christ in the easiest manner.

Ver. 32. *And he said unto them, go ye and tell that fox, &c.*] Herod, who it may be sent them, of which Christ was not ignorant, nor of his design in it; and who, as Nero, for his cruelty, is compared to a lion, so he for his subtlety in this instance, as well as in the whole of his conduct, to a fox; though some think Christ has a regard to the Pharisees, and their craftiness, in forming this story, pretending good will to him, by acquainting him of Herod's malicious designs, when their view was only to scare him out of their country; so the false prophets and teachers, are for their cunning, subtlety, and flattery, compared to foxes, Cant. ii. 15. Ezek. xiii. 4. as well as for their greediness and voraciousness: the word is used with the Jews, for a vain and empty man, in opposition to a good man; as in that saying<sup>d</sup> of R. Jannai, "be thou the tail of lions, and not the head of

<sup>d</sup> Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 15. & Jarchi in ib.

“foxes;” or *rain men*, as the gloss explains it: *behold, I cast out devils; or I will cast out devils*, as the Ethiopic version reads, in spite of him, let him do his worst: *and I do cures to-day and to-morrow*; and so for some time to come; and which was doing good, and was what Herod and the Pharisees, had they any humanity in them, would have rejoiced at, and have chose that he should have continued with them, and not have threatened him with his life, or have took any methods to send him from them: *and the third day I shall be perfected*; that is, in a little time after, I shall be made perfect by sufferings, my course will be finished, and I shall have done all the work completely, I came about; and till that time come, it is not in his power, nor yours, nor all the men on earth, or devils in hell, to take away my life, or hinder me doing what I am about.

Ver. 33. *Nevertheless, I must walk, &c.*] The Syriac version reads, *I must work*, and so the Arabic: as going about doing good, casting out devils, and healing diseases: *to-day and to-morrow, and the day following*: a few days more in Galilee, and towards Jerusalem: all the Oriental versions read, *the day following I shall depart*; either out of this world; or out of Galilee, and go to Jerusalem, and there suffer and die: *for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem*; because the great sanhedrim only sat at Jerusalem, to whom it belonged to try and judge a prophet; and if found false, to condemn him, and put him to death; the rule is this: “they don’t judge, neither a tribe, nor a false prophet, nor an high-priest, but by the sanhedrim of seventy and one.” Not but that prophets sometimes perished elsewhere, as John the Baptist in Galilee; but not according to a judicial process, in which way Christ the prophet was to be cut off, nor was it common; instances of this kind were rare, and always in a violent way; and even such as were sentenced to death by the lesser sanhedrim, were brought to Jerusalem, and publicly executed there, whose crimes were of another sort; for so runs the canon: “they don’t put any one to death by the sanhedrim, which is in his city, nor by the sanhedrim in Jabneh; but they bring him to the great sanhedrim in Jerusalem, and keep him till the feast, and put him to death on a feast-day, as it is said Deut. xvii. 13. and all the people shall hear and fear.” And since

Jerusalem was the place where the prophets were usually put to death, it follows,

Ver. 34. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, &c.*] These words, with what follow, as they stand in Matt. xxiii. 37, 38, 39. were delivered by Christ, when he was in the temple at Jerusalem; but here they were spoken by him when in Galilee, in Herod’s jurisdiction; so that it appears, that the same words were spoken by Christ at different times, in different places, and to different persons: unless it can be thought, that Luke transcribed them from Matthew, and inserts them here, on occasion of Christ’s having mentioned the perishing of a prophet in Jerusalem; where many had been killed and put to death, in one way or another, and particularly in the following: *and stonest them that are sent unto thee*: as Zechariah, 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21, 22. and others: *how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not?* and therefore ought not to have been condemned as a false prophet by their sanhedrim, as he suggests he should be, and as he afterwards was; see the note on Matt. xxiii. 37.

Ver. 35. *Behold, your house is left unto you desolate, &c.*] That is, would be in a little time, both city and temple; see the note on Matt. xxiii. 38. and verily I say unto you; affirm in the strongest manner: *ye shall not see me*; the Arabic version adds, *from henceforth*, and so some copies, as in Matt. xxiii. 39. and so the Ethiopic version, *from this time*; that he spoke these words, whether in Galilee, or in the temple: *until the time come*; or *until he shall come*, meaning himself, and his second coming: *when ye shall say, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*; not they themselves in person, but their posterity, who will be converted in the latter day: and shall acknowledge the Messiah, the blessed of the Lord, who will come in his name, to judge the world in righteousness: or else the meaning is, that when Christ shall come a second time, and every eye shall see him, these Jews, among the rest, shall behold him, whom they have pierced, and mourn; and wish themselves among those, that shall receive him with joyful acclamations; and however, will be obliged to own him as the Messiah, and to confess that he comes in the name, and with the authority of the Lord, and that he is blessed for evermore.

## C H A P. XIV.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass, &c.*] The Persic version adds, *on a certain day*; and it is afterwards said to be the sabbath-day. This seems to have been somewhere or other in Galilee; see ch. xvii. 11. *As he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees*; or rather, one of the rulers, and of the sect of the Pharisees: and he might be either a ruler of a synagogue, or a member of one of the lesser or greater sanhedrim; such another as Nicodemus, who was of the Pharisees, and a ruler of the Jews, John iii. 1. for that there was any distinction among the Pharisees as a sect, does not ap-

pear: to this man’s house Christ went, after he came out of the synagogue, being invited by him; *to eat bread on the sabbath-day*. The sabbath-day was a feasting-day with the Jews, in which they made very large and magnificent entertainments, for the honour of the sabbath; and he was reckoned the most praiseworthy, that exceeded this way; and no doubt, since this man was a Pharisee, one that was tenacious of the traditions of the elders, and was also a ruler, his table was well spread: the rules concerning this part of keeping the sabbath, are these: “what is this delight? the

\* Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 5. & T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 18. 2.

† Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 4.

‡ Maimon. Hilchot Sabbat, c. 30. sect. 7, 9.

“ wise men say, a man ought to prepare abundance of food and spiced liquors, for the sabbath, all according to a man's substance; and whoever multiplies in the expenses of the sabbath, and in preparing food, much and good, lo, he is praiseworthy; and if he is not able, though he only prepares boiled food, and such like, on account of the glory of the sabbath, lo, this is the delight of the sabbath: and he is not obliged to straiten himself, nor to ask of others, to increase the food of the sabbath: the ancient wise men said, make thy sabbath a common day, and don't make thyself necessitous to men; he who is delicate and rich, and lo, all his days are as a sabbath-day, ought to have food on a sabbath-day, different from that on a week-day; and if it is not possible to change, let him alter the time of eating; if he had been used to have it soon, let him have it late; and if late, let him have it sooner: a man is obliged to eat three meals, or feasts, on a sabbath-day; one in the evening, and one in the morning, and one at the time of the meat-offering; and he ought to take heed to those three feasts, that he does not diminish them at all; and even a poor man that is maintained by alms, must keep the three feasts.” And this last canon, or rule, is of the utmost importance with them; for they say, “ whoever keeps the three feasts on the sabbath-day, shall be delivered from three punishments, from the sorrows of the Messiah, from the judgment of hell, and from the war of Gog and Magog.” *That they watched him:* that is, those that sat down to meat with him, the lawyers and Pharisees: and it is very probable, that it was not out of pure respect to him, that he was asked to eat meat at this ruler's house; but with a design to observe whatever might be said, or done by him, they could take any advantage from, against him.

Ver. 2. *And behold, there was a certain man before him, &c.]* Who sat just before him, as he was at table; who either came there of himself, in order to receive a cure; or rather, since it was in a private house, and he at table too, was brought and set there on purpose by the Pharisees, to try whether Christ would heal him on the sabbath-day, that they might have somewhat against him; which they doubted not but he would do, knowing his compassionate and beneficent disposition to do good to creatures in distress, whenever he had an opportunity: *which had the dropsy:* or *gathered waters*, as the Syriac version renders it; was filled with water, which is the nature of that disease, and distinguishes it from what is called the dry dropsy: this disease is a preternatural collection of serum, or water in some part of the body; or a too great proportion thereof in the blood. The *dropsy* acquires different names, from the different parts it afflicts, or the different parts the waters are collected in; that of the *abdomen*, or lower belly, called simply and absolutely *dropsy*, is particularly denominated *ascites*; that of the whole habit of the body, *anasarca*, or *leucophlegmatia*; that of the head, *hydrocephalus*; that of the scrotum, *hydrocele*.—There is also a species of this disease, supposed to be caused instead of

water, by a collection of wind, called *tympanites*; and by Hippocrates, the *dry dropsy*: we also meet with dropsies of the breast, pericardium, uterus, ovaries, &c. The causes of dropsies in general, are whatever may obstruct the serous part of the blood, so as to make it stagnate in the vessels; or burst the vessels themselves, so as to let the blood out among the membranes; or weaken and relax the tone of the vessels; or thin the blood, and make it watery; or lessen perspiration. These causes are various, *viz.* sometimes acute diseases, scirrhus tumours of any of the more noble viscera, excessive evacuations, particularly hæmorrhages, hard drinking, &c. The *ascites*, or *water-dropsy of the abdomen*, is the most usual case, and what we particularly call the *dropsy*: its symptoms are tumours, first of the feet and legs, and afterwards of the *abdomen*, which keep continually growing; and if the belly be struck or shook, there is heard a quashing of water: add to this, three other attendants, *viz.* a dyspnoea, intense thirst, and sparing urine; with which may be numbered heaviness, listlessness, costiveness, a light fever, and an emaciation of the body. Such we must suppose to be the case of this man, and that he was now in such a condition, as to be thought incurable.

Ver. 3. *And Jesus answering, spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, &c.]* All the Oriental versions, for *lawyers*, read *Scribes*: these, with the Pharisees, were got together in a body, in their brother Pharisee's house, to watch the motions of Christ; who knew their designs upon him, and the thoughts of their hearts, and made answer to them, by putting the following question; *saying, is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-day?* The occasion of the question was the object before him, whom Christ had a compassionate regard to, and determined to cure; but knowing that these men were catching at every thing, to traduce him, was desirous of having their sentiments first; not but that he knew full well, what was agreeable to the law of God, and what was not; and what also were the traditions of their elders, which they held, and which allowed of healing on the sabbath-day, where life was in danger.

Ver. 4. *And they held their peace, &c.]* Or were silent, choosing to say nothing, which might countenance such an action; and yet knew not how to condemn it: *and he took him, and healed him, and let him go;* he took him by the hand, or laid his hands on him; he touched him, and, it may be, stroked the part affected, and in an instant the prodigious swelling of his body came down: for he who at his rebuke could dry up the sea, could by a touch dry up such a quantity of water, as was in this man's body; and then he dismissed him from the table and company, and he went home perfectly cured.

Ver. 5. *And answered them, saying, &c.]* Murmuring secretly at what he had done: *which of you shall have an ass, or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath-day?* being just ready to be drowned there; and therefore it must be much more right and necessary to cure a man, a reasonable creature, just drowning with a dropsy, as this man was. The Syriac and Persic versions, instead of *an*

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 118. 1. Kimchi in Isa. lviii. 13.

<sup>1</sup> Chambers's Cyclopædia on the word *Dropsy*.

ass, read a son, very wrongly: a like kind of reasoning is used by Christ, in Matt. xii. 11. Luke xiii. 15. see the notes there.

Ver. 6. *And they could not answer him again to these things, &c.*] The justice, equity, mercy, and humanity that appeared in our Lord's reasonings, and the cases he instanced in, being agreeable to their own tenets and practices, their mouths were shut up, and they could not return an answer to them, without being exposed.

Ver. 7. *And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, &c.*] To the dinner at the Pharisee's house, particularly the lawyers, or Scribes and Pharisees: *when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms: the uppermost places at the table, which these men loved, coveted, and sought after; see the note on Matt. xxiii. 6. saying unto them; as follows.*

Ver. 8. *When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, &c.*] To a wedding-dinner, or to any other; such an one as the present entertainment was, which was not a marriage-feast, for they might not marry on the sabbath-day; see the note on John ii. 1. but a common sabbat'-meal: *sit not down in the highest room: in the chief place at table, as soon as come in: lest a more honourable man; for age, office, dignity, wisdom, learning, or riches: than thou be bidden of him the master of the feast; and who may not yet be come, and for whom the chief place may be designed, and will be better suit him.*

Ver. 9. *And he that bade thee and him, &c.*] To the feast, and who is the master of it, and has a right to dispose of, and order his guests at his table, as he thinks fit: *come and say to thee, give this man place: pray rise up, and give this honourable man this seat, which is more suitable for a person of his rank and figure, and take another: and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room; or place, which must unavoidably fill a man with shame and confusion; because hereby his pride and vanity, in affecting the uppermost room, will be publicly exposed; and he who before sat in the chief place, will have the mortification, before all the guests, to be seated in the lowest.*

Ver. 10. *But when thou art bidden, &c.*] To an entertainment, and the time is come, *go and sit down in the lowest room: place thyself at the lower end of the table, or in the most inferior seat; which will shew humility and lowliness of mind, and prevent shame and mortification; since there can be no putting into a lower place, and there may be an advance to a higher: that when he that bade thee cometh; into the dining-room, and observe in what place thou art: he may say unto thee, friend, go up higher; to a more honourable seat at table, pointing to it, and saying, there's such a seat empty, go up and take it, it best becomes thee: then shalt thou have worship; or glory, as the word signifies; honour and esteem, instead of shame and blushing; not only from the master of the feast, but in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee; and from them, who will take notice of the honour done thee, and will entertain an high opinion of thee, and commend thee for thine hu-*

milty and modesty. Advice, like to this, is given by Solomon in Prov. xxv. 6, 7. and which is explained by the Jews in like manner as here<sup>k</sup>: "Ben Azzai used to say, descend from thy place two or three degrees, and sit; it is better that it should be said to thee, עלה, go up, than that it should be said to thee, descend, as it is said in Prov. xxv. 7." Which is elsewhere<sup>l</sup> thus expressed: "R. Akiba taught it (or expounded, Prov. xxv. 7.) in the name of R. Simeon ben Azzai, remove from thy place two or three seats, and sit until it is said to thee, עלה, go up; but do not go up, (i. e. first,) for it will be said to thee descend; it is better that it should be said to thee go up, go up, than that it should be said to thee go down, go down: and Ben Hillel used to say, my humiliation is my exaltation, and my exaltation is my humiliation."

Ver. 11. *For whosoever exalteth himself, &c.*] Either in the above way, or any other, shall be abased, humbled and mortified: *and he that humbleth himself: behaves in an humble and modest manner, shall be exalted; see the note on Matt. xxiii. 12.*

Ver. 12. *Then said he also to him that bade him, &c.*] As he had given advice and instructions to the guests, so he likewise thought fit to give some to the master of the house, that had given both him and them an invitation to the present meal; observing, very likely, that his guests consisted of such persons as are hereafter described. *When thou makest a dinner, or a supper; any entertainment for other persons, at what time of the day soever, whether sooner or later, at noon, or at night, on sabbath-days, or others: call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours: that is, do not invite thy rich friends, rich brethren, and rich kinsmen, as well as not rich neighbours: not that our Lord's meaning is, that such should not be invited at all; which would be to destroy friendship and sociable conversation among persons in such a relation, and of such rank and fortune: but his sense is, that not these only should be invited, to the neglect of poor friends, poor brethren, poor kinsmen, and poor neighbours; and who, comparatively speaking, should rather be invited than the former, as being what would be more serviceable to them, and of a greater advantage in the issue to the master of the feast himself. Lest they also bid thee again; and thee only, and not the poor, to as grand an entertainment, which is commonly done: and a recompense be made thee: one feasting-bout for another, so that there will be no obligation on either side; and this will be all the advantage that will be gained; the return is made here, and there will be no reward hereafter.*

Ver. 13. *But when thou makest a feast, &c.*] An entertainment for others, a dinner, or a supper: *call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind: that is, the poor maimed, the poor lame, and the poor blind; otherwise 'tis possible that rich men may be maimed, lame, and blind; whereas these are not intended, but such who are in indigent circumstances, that stand in need of a meal, and to whom it is welcome.*

Ver. 14. *And thou shalt be blessed, &c.*] By God,

<sup>k</sup> Abot R. Nathan, c. 25. fol. 6 4.

<sup>l</sup> Vajikra Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 146. 4. Vid. Shemot Rabba, sect. 45. fol. 142. 1.

with an increase of worldly substance, or with spiritual blessings, and with eternal glory and happiness; and by these poor objects, who will pray to God for a blessing upon such a kind benefactor: *for they cannot recompense thee*: by inviting again to a like entertainment, as rich guests can do, and when they have done that there's nothing else to be expected; but such that entertain the poor can have no return from them, and yet a retaliation will be made: *for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just*: when the just shall rise again, which will be the first resurrection; and happy is he that has part in it: for the righteous, or dead in Christ will rise first; and notice will be taken of the good works of the saints, particularly of their acts of beneficence to the poor members of Christ; and which they have done in faith, from a principle of love to Christ, and with a view to the glory of God, and the good of their fellow creatures and Christians.

Ver. 15. *And when one of them that sat at meat with him, &c.*] One of the Scribes, lawyers, or Pharisees, that were guests at this feast: *heard these things*: which were spoken by Christ, and was pleased and affected with them, though he was ignorant: *he said unto him, blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God*; in the world to come, in the kingdom of the Messiah; concerning feasting in which, the Jews had entertained very gross notions; and which this man was reminded of by Christ's making mention of the resurrection of the just, and of recompense at that time, which the Jews expected at the Messiah's coming. They suppose, that God will make a splendid feast, a sumptuous entertainment; in which, besides bread, which they call, *לחמיה של כלכות*, the bread of the kingdom, and the bread of the world to come<sup>m</sup>, there will be great variety of flesh, fish, and fowl, plenty of generous wine, and all sorts of delicious fruit: particularly they speak of a large ox, which they suppose to be the Behemoth in Job, that will then be prepared; and of Leviathan and his mate, which will then be dressed; and of a large fowl, called Ziz, of a monstrous bigness; and of old wine kept in the grape from the creation of the world, which will then be drank; and of the rich fruits of the garden of Eden, that will then be served up<sup>n</sup>: such gross and carnal notions have they entertained of the world to come; and which this man seemed to have imbibed, and placed happiness in.

Ver. 16. *Then said he unto him, &c.*] That is, Jesus, as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions express it; he said to the man that was so affected with the happiness of such that shall share in the provisions of the Messiah's kingdom; *a certain man made a great supper*: by which is meant not the Lord's supper, which was not as yet instituted; nor the supper of the Lamb, which will be at the end of the world; but the Gospel dispensation, which was now taking place, and the provisions of it in the word and ordinances: and which is called a *supper*; because made in the end of the world, in the last days: and a *great one*, because of the maker of it, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and the

matter of it, a variety of rich provisions, a feast of fat things, an entertainment consisting of the greatest dainties, and most delightful food; and on account of the number of the guests invited, all people, every creature, to whom the outward ministration of the Gospel comes; and those who are properly guests that come, are a great number which no man can number; as well as because of the cost and charges of it to the maker, though it is all free to the guests; and likewise because of the circumstances of exceeding great joy and pleasure that attend it; to which may be added, the long duration of it, even from the first to the second coming of Christ. *And bade many*. This first bidding more especially respects the Jews, who are said to be *many*, in reference to the promise made to Abraham, that his seed should be as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand of the sea; and to set off the magnificence of the feast; and in distinction from all the world, and every creature, which were afterwards put into the Gospel commission: a foundation was laid for this supper in eternity, in the purposes, counsel, and covenant of God; and many prophecies concerning it were given out from the beginning; and sacrifices and ordinances were instituted, as emblematical of it, and to lead on to it, and give notice of it.

Ver. 17. *And sent his servant at supper-time, &c.*] Either John the Baptist, the harbinger and forerunner of Christ, who declared that the kingdom of heaven, or the Gospel dispensation, was at hand; and exhorted the people to believe in Christ that should come after him; or Christ himself, who is God's servant as man, of his choosing and appointing, and whom he sent in the fulness of time in the form of a servant, as the minister of the circumcision, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and to call sinners to repentance; or servant may be put for servants, since in Matt. xxii. 3, 4. mention is made of more; and so the Persic version here; which parable bears some likeness to this, if it is not the same; and may design the apostles of Christ, who were the servants of the most high God, and the ministers of Christ, who were first sent by him to preach the Gospel to the Jews, and to them only for a while: *to say to them that were bidden, come*: this call, or invitation, was not the internal call, which is a fruit of love, and by grace, and of mighty power; to special blessings, grace, and glory; and is irresistible, effectual, and unchangeable: but external, to outward ordinances: and is often slighted and neglected; and is sometimes of persons who are neither chosen, nor sanctified, nor saved: *for all things are now ready*; the Syriac version adds, *for you*: righteousness, pardon of sin, peace, and reconciliation, sin put away by the sacrifice of Christ, redemption obtained, and life and salvation secured; which shews the perfection of the present dispensation, and the large provisions of the Gospel, to which nothing is, or can be brought to be added to them, or qualify for them.

Ver. 18. *And they all with one consent began to make excuse, &c.*] Or, *they all together*, as the Vulgate

<sup>m</sup> Midrash Ruth, fol. 33. 2. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 82. fol. 72. 4.

<sup>n</sup> See my Notes on the Targum in Cant. viii. 2

Latin version, *בְּאַחַד*, in one, or at once, in Jer. x. 8. is rendered *altogether*; and so the Ethiopic version, which adds, *with one voice*: but their words and language were not the same: their excuses are differently expressed. Some render *απο μιας*, from one hour: or the self-same hour; immediately, directly, as soon as ever they were bidden, they began to frame excuses; they at once agreed, as by common consent, to excuse themselves from coming. *The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, or a field, and I must needs go and see it*: he ought to have seen it before he bought it; and however, it was a very improper time, at evening, at supper-time, as this was, to go and see a piece of ground; and at least it might have been put off till next morning; so that it was a mere excuse indeed. *I pray thee have me excused*: coming to the supper: these were the principal men among the Jews, the Pharisees and rulers among the people; who were rich and covetous, worldly men; seeking their own worldly advantage more than their spiritual and eternal welfare, or the interest of God and religion.

Ver. 19. *And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, &c.*] To plough the field with, and *I go to prove them*: this also being at, or near evening, was an unsuitable time to go into the field with yokes of oxen to try them, how they would draw the plough, and work in the field; the morning would have been a much more proper time: *I pray thee have me excused*: to the master of the feast: this man represents also the carnal and worldly Jews, who preferred temporal things before spiritual.

Ver. 20. *And another said, I have married a wife, &c.*] And his pretence might be, that he had his own marriage-feast, and friends to attend, nor could he leave his wife directly; but his circumstances were such as made an invitation to a feast the more agreeable, and he might have brought his wife and friends along with him, who would have been as welcome as himself: *and therefore I cannot come*. The Arabic version renders it, *therefore I will not go*: this man is more rustic and rude than the former; he does not so much as desire to be excused; and represents such who are fond of their sensual lusts and pleasures, and are resolved to indulge them, and will not be taken off from them by any means whatever.

Ver. 21. *So that servant came and shewed his Lord these things, &c.*] The several excuses which those that were bidden to the supper made. So the ministers of the Gospel come to God and Christ, and give an account of the success of their ministry, which is often with grief, and not with joy: *then the master of the house being angry*; as well he might, at their ingratitude to him, their slighting of his kindness, and the contempt they poured upon his entertainment. Christ resented the impudence and unbelief of the Jews, who were favoured with his ministry and miracles; and looked upon them with anger, and was grieved because of the hardness of their hearts; and threatened them with a sorer punishment, a more aggravated condemnation, and more intolerable torments, than other men. *And said to his servants*: the apostles, when their commission was enlarged to preach to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem: *go out*

*quickly into the streets and lanes of the city*; to the Jews, who lived under a civil government, under the law of Moses; though the meaner sort of them, the poor, and such as knew not the law in such sort as the Scribes and Pharisees did, who rejected the counsel of God against themselves; and so are comparable to persons that lie about the streets, and live in lanes and alleys: and it may also regard the Jews that were scattered abroad in other places, and the proselytes to their religion among the Gentiles; to whom the Gospel was first preached, after it was rejected by the Jews at Jerusalem and in Judea: *and bring in hither the poor*; not in a literal, but in a mystical and spiritual sense; such as have no spiritual food to eat, but ashes, gravel, wind, and husks of carnal lusts and sins; nor any spiritual clothing, no righteousness, but what may be justly called filthy rags; nor money to buy either, but are in debt, owe ten thousand talents, and have nothing to pay; of which spiritual poverty some are sensible, and others are not. *And the maimed*: who are debilitated and enfeebled by sin; and so weak and strengthless, that they are not able to keep the law of God; to atone for sin; to redeem themselves, or others, from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law; to begin and carry on a work of grace and holiness in them; or to do any thing that is spiritually good: *and the halt*: which is sometimes a character of persons that are in suspense about matters in religion, and know not which side to take; or who halt in religion, and falter and fail in the exercise of it: but here, of such who are in an incapacity of going or walking in a spiritual sense; as unto Christ, for life and salvation, without the drawings and influences of the father's grace: *and the blind*: who are so, as to any saving knowledge of God in Christ; of Christ, and the way of righteousness, life, and salvation by him; of the plague of their own hearts, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the need of a Saviour; of the work of the spirit of God upon their souls, and the necessity of it; and of the truths of the Gospel, in a spiritual and experimental way. In short, under these characters are represented natural and unconverted men, and the most vile, profligate, and abandoned of them; which are sometimes under the power of divine grace accompanying the ministration of the Gospel brought to Christ, and into his church. *So the blind and the lame*, in 2 Sam. v. 6, 8. are by the Targum on the place, explained of, *דַּמְאִיָּא וְדַמְאִיָּא חַרְבִּיָּא*, sinners and wicked persons.

Ver. 22. *And the servant said, &c.*] After he had been and brought in a large number of such as are before described, and he was directed to, and succeeded to the gathering of them in: *Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded*: the apostles exactly observed the orders of their Lord and master; they began to preach the Gospel at Jerusalem; and being drove from thence, they went and preached to the Jews of the dispersion, and to the proselytes among the Gentiles: *and yet there is room*; that is, for the Gentiles, after God's elect, among the Jews, for that time were gathered in: there was room provided for them in the heart and love of God from everlasting, and in electing grace; in the suretyship-engagements of Christ, and in the covenant of his grace; and they had a place in the redeeming grace of Christ, in time; and in

the last commission he gave to his disciples; and there was now room for them in the church of God; and will be in the new Jerusalem, and in the heavenly glory.

Ver. 23. *And the Lord said unto the servant, &c.*] A second time; that since the Jews put away the word of eternal life from them, and judged themselves unworthy of it by their contradicting and blaspheming it, he commanded his apostles to turn from them to the Gentiles; see Acts xiii. 45, 46, 47. *go out into the highways and hedges*: the Persic version adds, *of the vineyards*; see 1 Chron. iv. 23. and may in general design the mean, base, vile, and sinful state of the Gentiles; who might be said to be *in the highways*, because they were without the commonwealth and church of the Jews; were not admitted to civil conversation, nor to religious worship with them; and were left to walk on in their own ways, of their own devising and choosing, in which they delighted: they were not in God's highway, which is a way of holiness, Isa. xxxv. 8. but in their own highways; either following the various sects of the philosophers, which were vain and foolish; or going into different practices of idolatry, and walking in very sinful and vicious courses; and so were in the broad road and highway to destruction: and their being in, and under the *hedges*, may denote their state of separation from God; being without him, alienated from the life of him, and afar off from him; being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, Eph. ii. 12. they were not in the gardens and enclosures, but under the hedges: *and compel them to come in*; to the house of God, and church of Christ; to come and hear the word, and quit their former course of living, and attend the word and worship of God; and upon an evidence of the truth of grace upon their souls, to come into a Gospel church-state, and partake of all privileges and ordinances in it; to which they are to be compelled, not by outward force, but by forcible words, by powerful arguments, and by the strength of persuasion; which expresses the nature of the Gospel ministry, which is to persuade Japhet to dwell in the tents of Shem; and the power that attends it by the divine spirit; the ease and condition of souls, who are generally bashful and backward, judging themselves unworthy; as also the earnest desire, and great liberality of Christ, the master of the feast, whose end in it is as follows: *that my house may be filled*; with men, like a flock, and these with gifts and grace; with such as shall be saved, as with elect Jews, so with the fulness of the Gentiles.

Ver. 24. *For I say unto you, &c.*] Most solemnly affirm it, and even swear to it, nothing is more certain, or will be found more true: *that none of those men that were bidden*: the impenitent and unbelieving Jews, the Scribes, and Pharisees, and the greater part of the nation; who first had the Gospel published to them, who are the many that were called, though few were chosen, and therefore came not; nor did, nor shall *taste of my supper*: nor had they so much as a superficial knowledge of the Gospel, of the truths, blessings, promises, and ordinances of it; being given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart; and from whom, in a little while, the Gospel was wholly taken;

and is not yet afforded to them as a body; nor will till the latter day, when the veil shall be taken away, and they shall turn to the Lord, and all Israel shall be saved; but as for the first disbelievers and rejecters of Christ among the Jews, they died in their sins, and perished eternally.

Ver. 25. *And there went great multitudes with him, &c.*] From Galilee, as he journeyed from thence to Jerusalem: some for one thing, and some another, and all perhaps were in expectation of his setting up a temporal kingdom when he came there; and hoped they should share, more or less, the worldly advantages of it; for the whole nation was big with such carnal notions of the Messiah. Jesus therefore, to draw off their minds from such views, and that they might not be disappointed; acquaints them, that if they would be his disciples, they must part with all that was near and dear to them; and prepare to suffer great hardships and difficulties for his name's sake: for it follows, *and he turned*: himself to the company that was behind: *and said unto them*: with a grave and stern countenance, looking wistly at them, and in the most solemn manner delivered what is hereafter related.

Ver. 26. *If any man come to me, &c.*] Not in a corporeal, but in a spiritual way; nor barely to hear him preach; but so come, as that he believes in him, applies to him for grace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation; professes to be his, submits to his ordinances, and desires to be a disciple of his; *and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple*: not that proper hatred of any, or all of these, is enjoined by Christ; for this would be contrary to the laws of God, to the first principles of nature, to all humanity, to the light of nature, to reason and divine revelation: but that these are not to be preferred to Christ, or loved more than he, as it is explained in Matt. x. 37. yea, these are to be neglected and forsaken, and turned from with indignation and resentment, when they stand in the way of the honour and interest of Christ, and dissuade from his service: such who would be accounted the disciples of Christ, should be ready to part with their dearest relations and friends, with the greatest enjoyment of life, and with life itself, when Christ calls for it; or otherwise they are not worthy to be called his disciples. The Ethiopic version inserts, *his house*, into the account.

Ver. 27. *Whoever doth not bear his cross, &c.*] All reproach, afflictions, persecutions, and death itself, cheerfully and patiently; the Ethiopic version renders it, *of his death the cross*: it signifies whatever is trying and disagreeable to flesh and blood: *and come after me*: bearing his cross; as Christ himself was about to do, and which doubtless he had in view; *cannot be my disciple*: he is not so in reality, nor does he deserve the name.

Ver. 28. *For which of you intending to build a tower, &c.*] Taking up a profession of Christ and his Gospel, is like building a tower; which, as a tower, must be laid on a good foundation; not on carnal descent and parentage; nor on a sober and religious education; nor on a civil, moral life and conversation; nor on a



bare knowledge of Gospel truths, and a flash of affection for them, and the people of God; but upon Christ the sure foundation; and on principles of grace formed by his spirit, in their hearts: and this, like a tower, is carried very high; not by professing high things, but by living on high amidst a profession; by having the affections set on things above; and by looking down with contempt on things below; and by looking to, and pressing after, the prize of the high calling of God in Christ: the profession of some persons is very low; it arises from low principles, and proceeds on low views, aims, and ends; but where it is right, and well founded, it is like a tower, firm and steady, and is a fortress and bulwark against apostacy. Now what person acting deliberately in such a case as this, and proceeding with intention and design, *sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?* as every wise man would, who has any thoughts of building a tower, or any other edifice: and so such that have an intention to take up a profession of religion, should sit down and well consider of it; which does not imply, that persons should delay making a profession, on whom it is incumbent; but that this should be done with thoughtfulness, care, and prudence: it should be considered on what foundation a man is going to build: whether the work of grace is truly wrought upon his soul; what be the nature and use of Gospel ordinances; with what views he takes up a profession, and submits to ordinances; what the church and minister are, he intends to walk with; and what the charge and cost of a profession; for such a work is chargeable and costly, and should be thought of and considered, whether he is able to bear it: for he will be called to self-denial; and must expect to suffer the loss of the favour of carnal relations and friends; and to be exposed to the scorn and rage of the world; a cross must be took up and bore; and great grace and strength are requisite to all this.

Ver. 29. *Lest haply after he hath laid the foundation, &c.]* Has begun to build, has taken up a profession, has submitted to ordinances, and got into a church-state: *and is not able to finish it;* a foundation may be laid, and the building may never be finished, because the foundation is not laid right; was it, it would continue, and the building go on, and at last be finished; though no man is able to finish it of himself, yet those hands which have laid the foundation, will raise up the superstructure, and complete the whole building, through the power and efficacy of divine grace: but where there is a beginning, and which at first looks well, and there is no progress, but the work is dropped and left unfinished, *all that behold it, begin to mock;* as follows;

Ver. 30. *Saying, this man began to build, &c.]* He set out well, he promised great things, and made a considerable bluster and stir, as if he would carry things at once to a very high pitch: *and was not able to finish;* it was all noise and talk, and nothing else: falling off from a profession of religion, exposes men to contempt and scorn; such are not only cast out of churches with disgrace, but are despised by men, by wicked men; and are a reproach, a proverb, and a taunt in all places; and even are mocked by devils too.

Ver. 31. *Or what king going to make war against another king, &c.]* Our Lord illustrates the same thing, the business of a profession, by another similitude, or parable; taking up a profession of religion, is like to two kings engaging in a war. The king on the one side, is the Christian professor; true believers are kings, they have the apparel of kings, the royal robe of Christ's righteousness; they live like kings, at the table of the King of kings; have the attendance of kings, angels ministering unto them; have crowns and thrones as kings have, and greater than theirs; and have a kingdom of grace now, and are heirs of the kingdom of glory. The king on the other side, is the devil; who is the king and prince of the rest of the devils, and over the men of the world; a kingdom is ascribed to him, which is a kingdom of darkness; and he is said to be a great king, and is represented as proud, cruel, and tyrannical: now the Christian professor's life is a warfare; he is engaged with many enemies; the corruptions of his own heart within, and the world without; and especially Satan, who is to be resisted, and by no means to be yielded to, though there is a great inequality between them: and therefore what man that engages in such a warfare, *sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand, to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?* and such a difference there is between the Christian professor and the devil; the one is flesh and blood, the other a spirit; the one is raw and undisciplined, the other a veteran soldier; the one a stripling, and the other the strong man armed: their numbers are unequal; the people of Christ are few, and their force and strength in themselves small; and they have a large number of devils, and of the men of the world, and of the lusts of their own hearts, to grapple with; wherefore it is necessary to sit down and consult, not with flesh and blood, but with other Christians; and chiefly, and above all, with God himself; what will be the charges of this warfare; the hardships to be endured; in whose name and strength they are to engage; what weapons to take, and how to use them; and how to get knowledge of the designs, methods, and strength of the enemy, and take every advantage of him.

Ver. 32. *Or else, while the other is a great way off, &c.]* Upon his march, with resolution to come up and give battle, though as yet at a distance: *he sendeth an embassy;* or men, with an embassy to him: *and desireth conditions of peace;* greatly to his disadvantage and reproach: so to give out, and leave off fighting with sin, Satan, and the world, and make peace with them, is shameful and scandalous; but on the other hand, such who have engaged in this war, should pursue it with vigour and courage; considering that God is on their side; that Christ is the captain of their salvation; that the spirit of God that is in them, is greater than he that is in the world; that angels encamp around them; that it is a good cause they are engaged in; that they have good weapons, the whole armour of God provided for them; are sure of victory, and shall at last enjoy the crown of life, righteousness and glory.

Ver. 33. *So likewise whosoever he be of you, &c.]* Let him be ever so forward to follow me, to make a

profession of me and of my Gospel, and to become a disciple of mine: *that forsaketh not all that he hath*; when called to it, relations, friends, possessions, estates, and what not, which is an explanation of ver. 26. *he cannot be my disciple*: he is not in fact one, and is not worthy to be called one.

Ver. 34. *Salt is good, &c.*] See the notes on Matt. v. 13. and Mark x. 50.

Ver. 35. *It is neither fit for the land, &c.*] For the manuring of it, when it has lost its savour and spirit; otherwise it makes land fruitful, if too much is not used, and especially fixt salts have this use; though Pliny says, "every place in which salt is found, it is barren and brings forth nothing." *Nor yet for*

*the dunghill*; to mix with dung, and help it, that it may be the more serviceable for the earth; and just such useless things, are a mere external profession of religion, and professors of it, and ministers of the word, without the grace of God; they are of no use, but hurtful to the church, and to the world; these phrases are left out in the Persic and Ethiopic versions: but *men cast it out*; into the streets, as entirely useless: and so such graceless professors and ministers, are to be cast out of the churches of Christ now, and will be excluded the kingdom of heaven hereafter: *he that hath ears to hear, let him hear*: this being a point of great importance and consequence; see the note on Matt. xi. 15.

### C H A P. XV.

Ver. 1. **T**HEN *drew near to him, &c.*] *To Jesus*, as the Persic and Ethiopic versions express it: this was on the sabbath-day, and either when he was in the Pharisee's house, where he was invited to dinner, ch. xiv. 1. or rather when he came out of it, when the multitude, who could not come near him whilst there, took the opportunity of gathering about him; even *all the publicans and sinners*; whom the Pharisee would not admit into his house, it being contrary to their traditions to eat, and drink, and converse with persons of such an infamous character; see the note on Matt. ix. 10, 11. The word *all* is omitted in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; but the Arabic version has it, and the Greek copies; and signifies that there were a very large number of them, even all that were in that place, and in the adjacent cities and towns, that got together *for to hear him*, or *from him*, as the Arabic version; or *doctrine from him*, as the Persic version adds: these having heard much of him; and it may be, might be under some remorse of conscience on account of their vicious lives, came to hear him preach.

Ver. 2. *And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, &c.*] When they saw the easy access these wicked men had to Christ; and that he stopped and staid with them, and very freely imparted instructions to them: *saying, this man receiveth sinners*. The Persic version reads, *publicans and sinners*, as in the preceding verse: the word *man* is not in the original text, 'tis only *this*; which is to be understood not by way of eminence, as this great person, this prophet, this master in Israel; but by way of diminution and reproach, this fellow; as it is sometimes supplied: the word *man* may be very rightly inserted, for they took him to be a mere man; though it is certain he was more than a man, even the true and mighty God; and therefore was able to save those sinners that came to him: and great condescension and grace did he shew in receiving them who were *sinners*, not only by nature, but by practice; and not merely guilty of common infirmities, but were notorious sinners, covetous, extortioners, oppressors of the poor, and very debauched persons; and such as these Christ receives: hence no

man should be discouraged from coming to Christ, on account of sin; all that do come to him, should come as sinners, for he receives them as such; nor does he receive any for any worthiness there is in them: these persons he received first at his father's hand, as he did all the elect, as his portion, and to be preserved and saved by him; with all gifts, grace, blessings, and promises for them; and in consequence of this, he receives them upon their coming to him as sinners, into his open love and affection, into his arms; which denotes communion and protection; into his house and family, and not only to hear him preach, or preached, but to converse and eat with him at his table, and even to live by faith upon him; and when he has freed them from all their sins, he'll receive them to himself in glory. And there is the greatest reason imaginable to believe, that Christ still does, and will receive sinners; since he came to save the chief of sinners; and has bore their sins, and died for them; and now makes intercession for transgressors; and by the ministers of the word calls sinners to repentance. *And eateth with them*; as he did in the houses of Matthew the publican, and of Zaccheus; see Matt. ix. 10. Luke xix. 7. each of which occasioned great murmurings among the Pharisees; and who therefore traduced him as a friend of publicans and sinners; and he is indeed so in the best sense: and not only did he eat with them corporally, but in a spiritual sense, as he still does; admitting them into his house to eat of the provisions of it, to live on him the bread of life, to sup with him, and he with them; and feeding and delighting himself in the exercise of those graces, which he himself is the donor and author of, in them.

Ver. 3. *And he spake this parable unto them, &c.*] To the Pharisees, for their conviction and confutation; and to the publicans and sinners for their encouragement; and in vindication of himself; and not only this, but the other two, concerning the lost piece of money, and the prodigal son, which were said at this time, and on the same occasion; *saying, as follows*.

Ver. 4. *What man of you having an hundred sheep, &c.*] A flock of sheep, consisting of such a number; see the note on Matt. xviii. 12. *if he lose one of them,*

by straying from the flock, *doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, upon the common where they were feeding, and go after that which is lost until he find it?* by which parable Christ vindicates his conduct in conversing with sinners, and neglecting the Scribes and Pharisees; for if it was right for an owner of an hundred sheep, when he had lost one of them, to leave all the rest, and go in search after that one till he had found it; then it was right in Christ to do what he did. The Jewish nation seems to be designed by the *hundred sheep*, who are frequently represented as a flock of sheep, Psal. lxxvii. 20. and xcv. 7. and c. 3. Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 3, 30, 31. which are divided into ninety-nine, and one: for by the *ninety-nine* left in the wilderness, cannot be meant angels, as some have thought; for angels are never called sheep; and besides, the one lost sheep is of the same kind with the ninety and nine; and, according to this sense, must design an angel, or angels likewise; whereas none of the fallen angels are sought up, recovered, and saved. Moreover, when Christ became incarnate, he did not leave the angels; they accompanied and attended him in his state of humiliation; and much less in a wilderness, and still less can heaven be so called; to which may be added, that the angels in heaven are distinguished from the ninety-nine as well as from the one lost sheep in ver. 7, 10. nor can elect men be designed by them, who are already called by grace, whether they be in heaven or on earth; for though they in heaven are the spirits of just men made perfect, and are in a state that need no repentance, yet it can't be said of them, that they went not astray, as in Matt. xviii. 13. for all God's people have been like sheep going astray, and were as such considered when Christ was here on earth, and bore their sins; and especially those could never be said to be left in a wilderness: nor the saints on earth: for though they are just persons, being justified by the righteousness of Christ, yet they daily need repentance; nor can it be said of them that they went not astray; nor are they left by Christ in the wilderness of this world; nor can there be more joy in heaven over one repenting sinner, than over these; but the self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees, that murmured at our Lord's receiving sinners, are meant. These were sheep, at least were in sheep's clothing; they were nominal professors, and belonged to the Jewish fold, or national church-state; their number was ninety-nine, to one; which is not to be taken strictly, as though only one in a hundred of them were saved; but it shews, that the greater part of the Jews were of this sort. The dividing of an hundred after this manner, into ninety-nine and one, was usual with the Jews; so in their traditions<sup>p</sup>, concerning distributing filberts to the poor, "R. Simeon says, if *ninety-nine* say *divide*, and *one* says spoil, or scatter, they hearken to him, because he speaks according to the constitution; but of a vine and date, it is not so: if *ninety and nine* say spoil, and *one* says *divide*, they hearken to him, for he speaks according to the constitution." And elsewhere<sup>q</sup> they say, "*ninety and nine* die by an (evil

eye, and *one* by the hand of heaven; R. Chanina and Samuel, both of them say, *ninety and nine* die by cold, and *one* by the hand of heaven.—R. Samuel bar Nachman, in the name of R. Jonathan says, *ninety and nine* die by heat, and *one* by the hand of heaven; and the Rabbans say, *ninety and nine* die by transgression, and *one* by the hand of heaven.—Says R. Eleazar, *ninety and nine* die by bitterness, and *one* by the hand of heaven." And in another place<sup>r</sup> it is said, "*ninety and nine* die by an evil eye, and *one* by the way of the earth;" in the common way: once more it is said<sup>s</sup>, "of the *hundred* cries which a woman cries, when she sits upon the stool (in travail), *ninety and nine* are for death, and *one* for life." And this way of speaking also prevailed in other eastern nations, as in Arabia; in the Alcoran of Mahomet<sup>t</sup> there is such an expression as this; "this my brother had *ninety-nine* sheep, and "I had only *one* ewe." The *one lost sheep* in this parable, though it may include all the elect of God, and be accommodated to a single elect sinner, yet chiefly respects the chosen of God among the Jews; which were very few, a remnant according to the election of grace: and which lay among the profane part of them, the publicans and sinners; who are particularly pointed out here, as appears from the context: these are called *sheep*, even before conversion; not because they had the agreeable properties of sheep, for they were all the reverse; nor could some things be said of them before as after, as, that they heard the voice of Christ, and followed him; nor because they were unprejudiced against, and predisposed to receive the Gospel: but they are so called by anticipation, because they would be so; or rather in virtue of electing grace, by which they were chosen, and separated from others, and made the care and charge of Christ the great shepherd, and were the sheep of his hand: these are represented as going astray from the shepherd, and from the fold, and out of the right way; and who being like sheep, stupid and insensible of their danger, wander about, and never return of themselves till they are returned to, and by the great shepherd and bishop of souls. And in their unregenerate estate they are lost sheep, not irretrievably and eternally lost, as the world's goats; for though they are lost in Adam, yet not in Christ; and though lost in themselves, so as there is no possibility of ever recovering and saving themselves; yet as they were preserved in Christ, they are recovered and saved by him; who is the owner and proprietor of the whole flock, of all the *hundred* sheep, of the whole body of the Jewish nation; who were his by creation, and by being chosen from, and above all other people; and were distinguished by peculiar favours, had the *Shekinah*, and presence of God among them, and his worship, word, and ordinances. Christ was peculiarly promised to them, and was born of them; and was a minister of the circumcision, being sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel: though the *ninety and nine* were not his sheep in the most peculiar sense,

<sup>p</sup> Misa. Prasch c. 4. sect. 1. 2.

<sup>q</sup> T. Hieros Sabbat, fol. 14. 3. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 16 fol. 159. 4.

<sup>r</sup> T. Bab. Bara Metzin, fol. 107. 2.

<sup>s</sup> Vajikra Rabba, sect. 27. fol. 168. 3.

<sup>t</sup> C. 98.

or in such sense as the *one* lost sheep, which were his by his father's gift, as all the elect are; hence he knows them, calls them, and receives them; and keeps them, and highly values them: he had them, they were put into his hands, he took the care and charge of them, he undertook to bring them in, to feed them, to die for them, and save them; and they are his by purchase, and he asserts his right to them, by calling them by his grace, and will distinguish them as his own, at the last day: and now, because of the different interest Christ has in the ninety and nine, and the one, different regards are had to them; the ninety and nine, the self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees, he *leaves in the wilderness*, in a state of unregeneracy; so called, because in those that are in such a state, nothing is sown or planted, what grows there is natural; there's no seed of grace, no plants of pleasure, no ingrafted word, no fruits of righteousness, nothing but thorns and briers, of sins and corruptions: and also because of the want of provisions; no bread of life, nor water of life; no sincere milk of the word, no breasts of consolation; nothing but husks, and bread of deceit: and it is like a wilderness, because of solitariness; such as are in this state, are alone, without God, and Christ, and the blessed Spirit; they are aliens from the people of God, and converse with none but wicked men, comparable to savage beasts of the desert: moreover, it may be so called, because of the various perplexing cross ways in it; the ways of sin are many, and crooked, and dark; and indeed, such are the religious ways of unregenerate men: to which may be added, that it bears this name, because of the danger of it; for such as are in it are exposed to beasts of prey; particularly to Satan, the red dragon, and roaring lion; and to pits, gins, and snares, to hell-fire, destruction, and misery. Christ's *leaving* persons in such a state, supposes they were in it, antecedent to their being left: man was originally placed in a garden, sinning against God, he forfeited his happy situation, and was drove out from it; and wandering from God he fell into this wilderness state. Christ does not lead any into it, but leaves them in it; which is done in consequence of his father's act of preterition, or passing them by when he chose others; and this he does, when he does not call them by his grace, as he does others; does not manure, till, and cultivate them as he does his own husbandry and vines; makes no provision of food and pasture for them; leaves them to themselves, and without the enjoyment of himself; to follow their own ways, without a guide, and to beasts of prey without a guard. Now the persons he thus leaves are such whom the father has left out in his choice and covenant; and who left Christ, rejected and despised him; and were persons that made great pretensions to religion, were righteous in their own eyes, and in their own account never were astray, nor needed repentance. On the other hand, the one lost sheep, the chosen of God among publicans and sinners, a special regard is had to them: Christ *goes after that which is lost until he find it*; not after all mankind; for though they are all lost, yet they are not all redeemed by Christ; nor are they made sensible of their lost condition; nor effectually called by grace; nor brought

home: nor does he go after the ninety-nine, for Christ came not to call the righteous; though these were lost, and irretrievably too, yet they were not sensible of their condition: but God's elect among the Jews are the persons here said to be lost; to shew their common condition with the rest of mankind; to express the love of Christ towards them the more; and to magnify the riches of his grace in their salvation: these he went after in redemption, he came forth from his father, and came down from heaven for their sakes; he died to gather them together, and represented them all in his sufferings and death; he bore all their sins, and made reconciliation for them, and procured the full pardon of them; he satisfied the law and justice of God, wrought out an everlasting righteousness, and obtained eternal redemption, and a complete salvation for them: and he went after them in effectual vocation; before conversion an elect sinner is without Christ, and goes astray from him; nor does he ever come to Christ till Christ comes after him, and lays hold upon him; he sends his ministers after such, and his spirit into them, and comes himself, and takes possession of them. To find his lost sheep by redeeming grace he came into this world, a world of wickedness, sorrow, and trouble, of cruelty, and barbarity; and the reason of his coming here was, because his sheep were here; he came after them, and on their account: and to find them by effectual calling, he still comes into the world by his word and spirit; God's elect are in the world, Christ sends his Gospel into it, and by his spirit and grace comes and separates them from the men of it. In Matt. xviii. 12. he is said to *go into the mountains* after his lost sheep; which, with respect to redemption, may denote the difficulties that lay in the way of it; such as his incarnation, obedience, sufferings and death, and the many enemies he had to grapple with and subdue; and with respect to calling-grace, may express the state and condition God's elect are in by nature, being on the mountains of sin, of Sinai, of the law, and of their own righteousness. Now Christ goes after them *till he finds* them; which denotes continuance, his indefatigable industry and diligence, his resolution and courage, and his success. The reasons why he thus goes after them are not their number, for they are the fewest of all; nor their nature, which is no better than others, nor any previous dispositions, or good characters, for those designed here were publicans and sinners; nor any future improvements and service by them, for they were the base and foolish things of this world; nor because near at hand, and so easily looked up, for they were afar off; but because of his love to them, and the relation between them as shepherd and sheep; and because of his father's will, and his own obligation by covenant; and because of his own interest and glory.

Ver. 5. *And when he hath found it, &c.*] In a sad plight and condition: so Christ finds his sheep in a most desolate one, in a pit, in the mire and clay of nature; in the paw of the roaring lion, Satan; helpless, hopeless, wretched, miserable, and naked; and not only starving, famishing, and dying, but even dead in trespasses and sins: and finding them with respect to redemption, designs his procuring eternal

salvation for them; and with regard to vocation, his laying hold upon them by his spirit and grace, and bringing them to a sense of themselves, and to the knowledge of himself. There are several things which Christ does to his sheep when he has found them, which are not here expressed, but understood: finding them dead in sin he speaks life into them; he calls them by name, and asserts his property in them; he takes them out of the pit of nature; he rescues them out of the hands of Satan; he washes them from their filthiness, and heals all their diseases; he feeds and refreshes them; he covers them with his robe of righteousness; he beautifies and adorns them, and brings them home in the manner after described: *he layeth it on his shoulders*; he does not put them on their own legs to go alone; nor does he lead them, and much less drive them before him; but he takes them up in his arms, and lays them on his shoulders: which shews the passiveness of men in conversion, and their weakness and impotency to any thing that is spiritually good of themselves; they can't think a good thought, nor do a good action, and still less begin and carry on the work of grace in their hearts; as also the strength of Christ in bearing and carrying them, as he does, through all afflictions, temptations, and difficulties, safe to glory; and likewise his great love and affection for them; he loved them before the world began, and he shewed it in dying for them, and manifests it to them, when he calls them by his grace; and this also expresses the safety of his sheep; for being on him, they are in no danger from the law and justice of God; nor from Satan, or any other enemy; nor of a final and total falling away: and moreover this signifies the spiritual ease and rest which such have in Christ: the manner in which Christ the shepherd carries them, having found them, and laid them on his shoulders, is *rejoicing*: not upbraiding them with going astray; nor complaining of, or groaning under the burden; but rejoicing in a kind of triumph, and carrying them as a trophy of victory, and a spoil obtained.

Ver. 6. *And when he cometh home, &c.*] The house, or home, to which Christ comes and brings thither his lost sheep on his shoulders when found, is either the church of God, which is Christ's house and home, and into which he himself comes; it is his by gift and purchase, and which he has built, and here comes and dwells as a son over it, as king in it, and as priest and prophet there, and as the master of it; and hither he brings his people when he has called them by his grace, where they have a good fold and green pastures, and where they delight to be; or else heaven is this home, which is an house of God's building, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; and which is Christ's father's house, and his own house and home, and also the saints' house and home, whither they are all brought by Christ; for they can't go there alone, and of themselves; they are brought by the power of divine grace as trophies of it, as to their own home; and such that Christ takes into his arms, and on his shoulders, he never drops them till he has brought them safe to heaven: *he calleth together his friends and neighbours*: the friends of Christ are the saints, so called, because of their share in his

friendship to them; shewn by his becoming a surety for them; by his assuming their nature, and dying in their room and stead; by his paying their debts, and redeeming their persons; by his intercession for them, and preparing a place for them in his father's house; by supplying all their wants, and by his kind and comfortable visits to them; by his free and familiar converse with them, and by unfolding his secrets, and giving wholesome advice and counsel to them: as also on account of their bearing and shewing friendship to him; as by their great affection to his person; by their attachment to his cause and interest; by their strict regard to his Gospel, and the truths of it; and by their diligent observance of his commands and ordinances; and by their regard to his people, and disregard to his enemies: and these are also Christ's neighbours, they dwell near to each other; he dwells in them, and they in him; they love each other as themselves, and perform every office cheerfully in love to one another: moreover, the angels may be meant by the friends and neighbours of Christ, as may be collected from ver. 10. these are his friends whom he has shewn himself friendly to, in the confirmation of them in the state in which they were created; in the choice of them to eternal happiness; and in being an head of protection to them, as well as of eminence over them: and these are friendly to him; as they were at his incarnation, and when tempted in the wilderness, and when in an agony in the garden, and at his resurrection and ascension; and will attend him at his second coming: and they are friendly to him; are ministering spirits to them, rejoice at their conversion, encamp about them in life, and at death carry their departed souls to heaven: and these are likewise his neighbours: their habitation is in heaven where he is, and they always behold the face of his father there, and will come along with him when he appears a second time. Now saints are called together to hear what great things Christ has done for poor sinners when he brings them to Zion; and angels are also made acquainted with their conversion; and both saints and angels will be called together, when the sheep of Christ shall be brought home to glory. *Saying unto them, rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost*: the joy of Christ, and his friends, is mutual on this occasion; Christ rejoices himself, and his friends with him: he rejoiced in his people from everlasting; they were the objects of his father's love, and of his own; and he took delight in them, as he saw them in the glass of his father's purposes, as they were chosen in him, and given to him; and this joy in them still continued, notwithstanding their fall in Adam, and their own actual sins and transgressions; but whereas they were lost in the fall, and by their own sins, there were some new expressions of joy upon Christ's finding them in redemption: it was with the utmost pleasure he engaged in that work; and with the greatest readiness did he come into the world to do it; and he went through it with great delight; he was, as it were, straitened until it was accomplished; the consideration of it made him easy under the apprehensions of what he was to endure, and supported him under his most dolorous sufferings; his rising again from the dead as the re-

presentative of his people, filled him with gladness, and he ascended to heaven in a triumph: but yet still these persons, though redeemed, are in a lost estate with respect to themselves; wherefore in conversion there are fresh breakings forth of joy in Christ; for that is the day of his open espousals to them, and so the day of the gladness of his heart; when he sees of the travail of his soul with satisfaction; and large expressions of love are made to him; and his people are brought to some conformity to him; and communion with him, but still they are not yet at home; wherefore with joy he brings them into his church, which is his house, and their home, where he rejoices over them to do them good; and will express still more joy in the new Jerusalem church-state, and still more when he shall have brought them to glory, and have presented them to himself, and to his father, which will be done with exceeding joy. Christ's friends and neighbours, his saints and people, also rejoice at the conversion of a sinner; because the glory of the Father, Son, and Spirit, is displayed therein; and because Satan has lost his prey, and Christ has got a new subject; and because of the grace of God bestowed upon the sinner, and the addition that is made to their number; particularly this is matter of joy to the ministers of the Gospel: and angels also rejoice at it, because of the glory of God that is advanced thereby.

Ver. 7. *I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven, &c.*] In the church below, and among the members of it; which is sometimes called heaven, especially in the book of the Revelations; or in heaven above, and among the angels there; see ver. 10. *Over one sinner that repenteth*; for the joy in heaven, is not over sinners as such; for as such, they are not grateful to God, nor to Christ, nor to the angels, nor to saints; only sinners delight in each other, as such; but as repenting sinners, who are truly so: and these are not such, who only legally and outwardly repent; nor all that declare a sense of sin; or that are externally sorry for it; or are terrified about it, and shed tears on account of it; or that cease from grosser sins of life, and outwardly reform: but such who repent in an evangelical way; who are turned to God, and are instructed by his spirit; who believe in Christ, and have views, at least hopes, of pardon through his blood; and have the love of God and Christ shed abroad in their hearts; from whence arise a true sight and sense of sin, a godly sorrow for it, an hearty loathing of it, shame on account of it, an ingenuous confession, and a real forsaking of it. Now the reason why there is joy in heaven over such persons is, because, without such a repentance, they must perish; and by this they appear to be openly in a state of grace; and become proper subjects of the ordinances of Christ; and this repentance is unto life and salvation; or these are inseparably connected with it; and this joy is abundantly more, than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance; by whom are meant, either such who are really righteous persons; not naturally and of themselves, nor legally by the deeds of the law, but by the imputation of Christ's righteousness to them: and who need no repentance to be added to their righteousness,

it being perfect of itself; nor the grace and principle of repentance, because they have it, and it can't be lost; or change of life and manners, which is not to be seen in such: and the more joy over repenting sinners, than over these is, because the salvation of the one is before certain to them, and the other is unexpected: but to this sense it may be objected, that saints, even righteous persons, need frequent conversions, and the continual exercise of the grace of repentance; nor does it seem feasible, that there should be more joy over a repenting sinner, than over one, whose life, through grace, is a series of righteousness: rather therefore, such who seem to be just, or are so in their own opinion, are here meant; for only such sort of righteous persons and repenting sinners, are opposed to each other, as in Matt. ix. 13. moreover, the occasion and scope of the parable, determines this to be the sense; the Scribes and Pharisees, that murmured at Christ's receiving sinners, are the ninety and nine just persons, who were only outwardly righteous before men, and trusted in themselves that they were righteous, perfectly righteous, and without sin, and so stood in no need of repentance for it; now there is more joy in heaven over one repenting sinner, than over all these: hence learn, that a self-righteous person, is an impenitent one; that a repenting sinner is more regarded in heaven than a self-righteous man: our Lord here seems to have regard to a conceit of the Jews, who distinguish between penitents that were allowed to be righteous, and such who never were guilty of any notorious crime, and so were perfectly righteous, and needed no repentance, and were preferred to penitent sinners: some of them say, that "the prophets did not prophesy (good things and comforts), but "לבעי תשובה, *to penitents*; but as for צדיקים נמרים, "the perfect righteous, to them belongs that, *eye hath not seen, O God, besides thee.*—But R. Abhu says, "the place in which penitents stand, the perfect righteous do not stand." Though Maimonides seems to understand this, as if it gave the preference to penitents; his words are these: "let not a penitent man imagine that he is afar off from the excellency, or degree of the righteous, because of the sins and iniquities he has committed, the thing is not so; but he is beloved and desired before the Creator, as if he had never sinned; for his reward is great; for lo, he hath tasted the taste of sin, and hath separated from it, and hath subdued his evil imagination: the wise men say, the place where penitents stand, the perfect righteous cannot stand; which is as if it was said, "their degree of excellency is greater, than those who never sinned, because they have subdued their imagination more than they." However, these instances, with others that might be produced, shew that the Jews had a notion of some men being perfectly righteous and without sin; which they oppose to penitent sinners, and which our Lord here designs, and seems to describe in their own language, and serves to confirm the sense given; see the note on Heb. xii. 23.

Ver. 8. *Either what woman, having ten pieces of silver, &c.*] Or *drachmas*; of a *drachma* was the fourth part of a shekel, and of the same value with a Roman

\* T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 34. 2. & Sanhedrim, fol. 99. 1.

\* Hilechot Teshuba, c. 7. sect. 4. Vid. Kimchi in Isa. lvii. 10 & Jarchi in Isa. xlv. 5. & Zohar in Lev. fol. 7. 2.

penny; and was worth of our money, sevenpence-halfpenny; so that the ten pieces amounted to six shillings; and three-pence: the Ethiopic version renders it, *ten rings*: this parable is delivered, with the same view as the former; the scope and design of them are alike, being occasioned by the same circumstance, only the passiveness of a sinner in conversion is here more fully signified; who can contribute no more to the first act of conversion, which is purely God's work, than a lost piece of silver to its being found: by the *ten pieces of silver* are designed, all the Jews, or the whole body of that people; as they were before signified, by the hundred sheep; they having been God's peculiar treasure, though they were now in general become reprobate silver: and by the *woman* the proprietor of them, is meant Christ; and in what sense he was the owner of them, has been shewn on ver. 4. The *nine pieces* design the Scribes and Pharisees; and the one lost piece, expressed in the next clause, *if she lose one piece*, intends the elect among the Jews, and who chiefly consisted of publicans and sinners; and the regard had to these, is signified by the following expressions, *doth not light a candle*: by which is meant, not the light of nature or reason in man: for though this is called a candle, and is of Christ's lighting, yet not that by which he looks up his lost people, for this is become very dim: and though by it men may know there is a God, and the difference between moral good and evil, by it they can't come at the knowledge of things spiritual; as of God in Christ, of the sin of nature, and of the plague of the heart; nor of the way of salvation by Christ, nor of the work of the spirit, and the nature and need of it; nor of the Scriptures of truth, and of the doctrines of the Gospel, nor of the things of another world: neither is the law of Moses intended; for though there was light by it into the knowledge of sin, yet not clear; and though the ceremonial law was a shadow of Christ, and did give some instructions about him, and the doctrines of the Gospel, and blessings of grace, yet but very obscure hints: but by this candle is meant, the Gospel itself; which, like a candle, is lighted up in the evening of the world; and may be removed, as it sometimes is, from place to place; and where it is set, and blessed, it gives light, and is useful both to work and walk by; it does not always burn alike clear, or is always held forth in the same purity: and it will give the greatest light at last, as a candle does, even at the end of the world: now Christ is the *lighter of this*, and from him it has all its light, who is the maker of it; he keeps it light, and by it he looks up and finds out his elect ones; though this is not a direction to him, who perfectly knows who they are, and where they be, but is rather a light to them, that they may know and find him: *and sweep the house*; which phrase sometimes designs outward reformation; as in Matt. xii. 44. and sometimes God's judgments upon a people, as in Isa. xiv. 23. but here the preaching of the Gospel, and the power that goes along with it, to the effectual vocation of the elect: the *house* in which Christ's lost piece of silver, or his chosen ones were, may design the nation of the Jews, who are often called the house of Israel; this was a house of God's building and choosing, and where he dwelt; and among these

people for a long time, God's elect lay, though all of them were not so; and about this time the Lord was about to break up house keeping with them; yet as there were some few among them, that were to be looked up and called, therefore this house must be swept, as it was by the ministry of John the Baptist, by Christ himself, and by his apostles: and this suggests, what must be the state and condition of God's elect, being in this house, before it was swept, and they found out; they were out of sight, in great obscurity and darkness, with a deal of rubbish and dirt upon them, and pollution in them; and impotent to that which is good, and to their own recovery, and yet capable of being recovered: and this phrase hints at the power and efficacy of divine grace, that goes along with the word, in looking up and finding lost sinners; in enlightening their dark minds, quickening them, being dead in sin, taking away their stony hearts, regenerating them, enstamping the divine image upon them, removing every thing from them they trusted in, and working faith in them, to look to, and believe in Christ: and as in sweeping of an house, a great stir is made, a dust raised, and things are moved out of their place; so by the preaching of the Gospel, an uproar is made in the sinner himself; in his conscience, which is filled with a horrible sight of sin; which is very loathsome, and causes uneasy reflections, fills with shame and confusion, and greatly burdens and distresses, and with the terrors of the law, and with dreadful apprehensions of hell and damnation; in his will there's a reluctancy to part with sinful lusts and pleasures, with sinful companions, and with his own righteousness, and to be saved by Christ alone, and to serve him, and bear his cross: and in his understanding, things appear in a different light than they before did: and great stir and opposition is made by Satan, to hinder the preaching of the Gospel, as much as in him lies, and persons from coming to hear it; and if they do, he endeavours to hinder, by catching it from them, or diverting them from that; by insinuating, 'tis either too soon or too late, to mind religion; or that sin is either so great that it can't be forgiven, or so trivial, that a few prayers, tears, alms-deeds, &c. will make amends for it; by distressing them about their election, or about the willingness of Christ to save them; or by stirring up others to dissuade and discourage them. Moreover, when the Gospel is preached in purity and with power, and souls are converted, there is a great stir and uproar in the world, and among the men of it; because the doctrines of it are foolishness, and strange things to them; and oppose their sense of things, and strip them of what is valuable; and men are hereby distinguished from them, and taken from among them: and there is also a stir and an uproar made by it, among carnal professors of religion, as there was at this time among the Scribes and Pharisees; and all this bustle is made, for the sake of a single piece of money: *and seek diligently till she find it?* not only a light is set up, an hand of power put forth in using the besom, but a quick sharp-eye looks out for the piece of silver: this diligent seeking and finding, are to be understood not of the grace of Christ in redemption; nor of his restoring backsliders;

but of his converting sinners, through the preaching of the Gospel, both in his own person, and by his ministers, his spirit making their ministrations effectual: the diligence, care, and circumspection of Christ, to find out lost sinners, while the Gospel is preaching, are here signified: 'tis not the preacher that looks out for them, though he that is a faithful minister of the word performs his office diligently and carefully, and he desires nothing more earnestly than the conversion of sinners; but then he knows not who are, and who are not the elect of God, and is ignorant of what Christ is doing, whilst he is preaching: Christ's eye is upon his lost piece; he perfectly knows the persons of the elect, as they are his father's choice, and his gift to him; he knew them in the counsel of peace, and covenant of grace, in the fall of Adam, and their natural estate; he knows the places where they all are, and the time when they are to be converted; and distinguishes them amidst all the filth that attends them, and the crowd among which they are; and he continues seeking, till he finds them; which shews the perpetuity of the Gospel ministry the indefatigableness of Christ, and his sure and certain success: the reasons of all this care and diligence, are his love to them, his propriety in them, his father's will, and his own engagement; and because they must be for ever lost, did he not seek after them.

Ver. 9. *And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends, &c.*] See the note on ver. 6. a parable somewhat like to this, the Jews\* have on those words in Prov. ii. 4. *If thou seekest her as silver, &c.* "it is like "to a man that has lost a *shekel*, (a piece of money,) "or beryl rings, within his house; he lights up "many lamps and many candles, until he lights up "them; and lo, these things much more: for if a "man for the things of the temporary life of this "world, lights many lamps and candles, until he "lights upon them and finds them; the words of the "law, since they are the life of this world, and the life "of the world to come, shouldst thou not search after "them as for hidden treasure?"

Ver. 10. *Likewise I say unto you, &c.*] As before, in ver. 7. *there is joy in the presence of the angels of God*; who are the friends and neighbours of Christ; see the note on ver. 6. *over one sinner that repenteth*; which they have knowledge of, either by immediate revelation from God, or by observation in the church where they attend: the reason of this joy is, because there is one rescued out of the hands of Satan and his angels, between whom and them, there is an implacable enmity; and because another subject is added to Christ's kingdom, and by which it is enlarged, the prosperity of which they greatly desire; and because another heir is born in that family, to which they belong, and they have another social worshipper with them: and this joy is said to be in the presence of them; and so may design the joy of others, as of Father, Son, and Spirit, which is in their sight and knowledge; and also the joy there is among themselves.

Ver. 11. *And he said, &c.*] The Syriac and Persic versions read, *and Jesus said again*; he added another

parable to the two former; at the same time, of the same import, with the same view, and on the same occasion; setting forth the different characters of the Scribes and Pharisees, and of the publicans and sinners; and what little reason the one had to murmur, at his conversation with the other: *a certain man had two sons*; by *the certain man* is meant, God the father: God indeed is not a man, nor is he to be represented by any human image; but inasmuch as man is the image of God, God is sometimes compared to man, and is called a man of war, an husbandman, &c. which no ways contradict his being a spirit; and true it is, that the second person only assumed human nature; and therefore, whenever a divine person is spoken of as man, Christ is commonly inteded: but though the father never appeared in an human form, yet he seems here to be designed; because the character of a father, and having sons, more properly belong to him; and the reception of sinners, and the forgiveness of them for Christ's sake, agree with him: and besides, Christ is distinguished from the father in this parable; and he and his blessings of grace, are signified by other things: by the *two sons* are meant, not angels and men, as that angels are the elder, and men the younger son; for though angels are called the sons of God, and may be said to be elder than men, with respect to creation; and good angels may be said to have been ever with God, and always serving him, and never sinned against him; yet they are never called the brethren of men, nor men their brethren; and besides, are never angry at the return and reception of repenting sinners; for this would be to represent them just the reverse of what they are said to be, in the preceding verse: nor are the Jews and Gentiles here intended, which is the more received and general sense of the parable: those who go this way, suppose the Jews to be the elder brother; and indeed they were so, with respect to external privileges; and were with God, being his household and family; all he had were theirs, that was external; and the character of the elder brother throughout the parable, agrees with the far greater part of that nation; and it is certain, that they did resent the calling of the Gentiles: and these suppose the Gentiles to be the younger brother, who indeed were brought into a church-state, later than the Jews; and might be said to be afar off, in a far country, and to have spent their substance in idolatry and wickedness; to have been in the utmost distress, and in the most deplorable condition: but to this sense it may be objected, that the Gospel was not as yet preached to the Gentiles; nor were they brought to repentance; nor were they openly received into the divine favour; nor as yet had the Jews murmured at, and resented the kindness of God to them: rather standing and fallen professors may be designed: since the former are very apt to carry it toward the latter, in like manner as the elder brother is represented in this parable, as carrying himself towards the younger: but the true sense, and which the context and occasion of the parable at once determine, is, that by the elder son are meant, the Scribes and Pharisees, and self-righteous persons, among the



Jews ; and by the younger, the publicans and sinners among the same people ; as it is easy to observe, the same are meant by the two sons in the parable in Matt. xxi. 28—32. Now these are called the sons of God, because the Jews in general were so by national adoption ; and the self-righteous Pharisees looked upon themselves as the children of God, and favourites of heaven, in a special sense ; and God's elect among them, even those that lay among publicans and sinners, were truly so, and that before conversion ; for they were not only predestinated to the adoption of children, but were really taken into the relation of children, in the covenant of grace ; and as such were given to Christ, and considered by him, when he assumed their nature, and died for them ; and are so antecedent to the spirit of adoption, who is sent to witness their sonship to them ; and which is consistent with their being children of wrath, as the descendants of Adam, and their being the children of God openly and manifestatively, by faith in Christ Jesus.

Ver. 12. *And the younger of them said to his father, &c.*] God's chosen ones among the publicans and sinners, are fitly signified by the *younger* son, since man, as a sinner, is younger than man as righteous ; and since there are instances of God's choice of the younger, before the elder, as Jacob before Esau, &c. and the characters and conduct of young men agree with God's elect, in a state of nature ; who are imprudent and ignorant, without any knowledge of divine and spiritual things, and of themselves, their state and condition, and of Christ, and salvation by him ; and yet are conceited of themselves, and fancy themselves very wise and knowing, and capable of acting for themselves, independent, and without any assistance or advice ; don't care to be under restraints, withdraw from all yokes, and break all bands asunder ; and so become children of disobedience, prone to every vice, and servants and slaves to every lust ; by which they are deceived, and in which they take a great deal of imaginary pleasure ; and are often envious and spiteful, and live in malice, hateful, and hating one another : the request made by this younger son, is to *his father* ; to God, who was his father by creation, by providential care, and by national adoption, and by special grace ; though as yet he knew it not, nor could he call him so in faith : many call God father, who should not, and many that should, do not : the request follows ; *father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me* : this portion may be considered, either as internal or external ; as internal, and such who think the Gentiles are meant by the younger son, understand it of the light of nature, and of natural gifts and talents. The ancients generally interpret it, of man's free will : it may intend natural knowledge in general, to which there is in man a natural desire, and in which he is self-sufficient : or rather as external, such as the outward blessings of life, food, raiment, health, &c. the honours, pleasures, and riches of the world : the good things of this world belonged to men by right of creation, and according to the laws and dues of it, but have been all forfeited by the sin of man ; and yet this is a portion, which in the apprehensions of men, of right belongs to them ; and which suits their nature, which is carnal and

worldly : *and he divided unto them his living* : natural gifts, external privileges, and worldly good things ; which of all men in the earth, the Jewish nation shared ; see Psal. cxv. 16. and cvi. 15.

Ver. 13. *And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, &c.*] That his father had divided to him, all his goods and substance : as soon as a man has any internal substance, any considerable degree of natural knowledge, he immediately sets out from God, and employs it against him, in reasoning against him, against his being, his works, his providence, his purposes, his revelation, and will ; as soon as a man has the exercise of his reason, as soon as he can think and speak, nay, as soon as he is born, he goes astray from God, speaking lies ; and as soon as a wicked man has of this world, what his carnal heart desires, he's for living independent of God, and his providence ; he's for gathering together all for himself, in order to spend it on his lusts, and at a distance from his father, the father of his mercies, of whom he is not mindful ; and to whom he says, depart from me, having no regard to his worship and service, to his honour and glory, to his cause and interest : *and took his journey into a far country* ; which sets forth the state of alienation a sinner is in, while unconverted ; he is afar off from God, from God the father ; from the presence of God, and communion with him : from the knowledge of God, and desire after it ; from love to him, or fear of him ; and from the life of God, or a living soberly, righteously, and godly ; and from Christ, from the knowledge of him, from faith in him, love to him, fellowship with him, and subjection to his ordinances ; and from the spirit of God, and every thing that is spiritual ; and from all that is good, from the law of God, and from the righteousness of it, and from righteous men : *and there wasted his substance in riotous living* ; his internal substance, his knowledge and understanding, even in natural things, and became brutish, and even like the beasts that perish ; and his worldly substance in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness, with harlots, as in ver. 30. whereby he was brought to a piece of bread, and to the want of it.

Ver. 14. *And when he had spent all, &c.*] Sin strips a man of all that is good and valuable ; of the image of God, of the knowledge of divine things, of natural holiness, of moral righteousness, and of strength to perform moral good ; hence man is in a wretched and miserable condition, he's poor, and blind, and naked : and if man has spent all, and sin has stripped him of all, where's his free-will ? there's no good thing in man, but what comes from the grace of God ; nor has he any thing to recommend him to God, or to offer to his creditor, to compound his debts with ; nor can he prepare himself for conversion, or any good work : *there arose a mighty famine in that land* ; sin brings men into a starving and famishing condition ; for in the far country, the land of sin, there's a famine of the word : though the Gospel is preached, it is only food to spiritual persons ; unregenerate men have no desire to it, but neglect and despise it ; and if they attend it, it has no place in them : they that are in this land, are aliens from the ordinances of God, the breasts of consolation, the goodness and fatness of his house ; they are in a pit, wherein is no water ; their

taste is vitiated to every thing that is spiritually good; they live on bread of deceit, and labour after that which satisfies not; wherefore they look like skeletons, and are as the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision: *and he began to be in want*; or was in want: when the above is the case, the sinner may be truly said to be in want; an unregenerate man is in want of every thing that is good; of wisdom and knowledge, of grace and holiness, of righteousness or clothing, of food, and of all the necessaries of life: and he may be said to *begin* to be in want, because man was not originally so, but was possessed of a natural fulness; and because sin is the beginning of want, as soon as one takes place, the other does: moreover, this man now began to see and feel himself to be in want, though as yet he was not rightly and truly sensible of his wants, at least of the way to redress them.

Ver. 15. *And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, &c.*] Not to any one of the saints, for they are not citizens of the far country, but of the church of God below, and of heaven above; besides, carnal men don't like the company of such citizens: nor is the devil intended, for though he dwells in this country, he is more than a citizen, than an inhabitant; he's king and governor, the prince of the world, and the god of it; nor is it feasible, that a man under conviction, and beginning to be sensible of his want, should go and join himself to the devil: but an unregenerate, *pharisaical*, legal preacher, is designed; a man may be a preacher, and yet in the far country of sin and unregeneracy; there may be large gifts, where there is no grace; and a man may have a form of religion and godliness, and know nothing of the power of it; and a great stir and bluster may be made about good works, as were by the Pharisees, when few or none are done: now 'tis common for persons under legal convictions, to seek after such a preacher, and such a ministry, and to such an one this man *went*; he went not out of the land of sin, nor to his father's house, but to one in the same country, where the famine was, and he was starving: *he went*; it was his own choice, he took his own way; he went and told him his case, how he had spent all he had, and in what manner, and what condition he now was in; and he asked his advice and assistance: and he *joined himself* to him; he sat under his ministry, and became a member with him, and stuck close to him, as the word signifies; and was a stickler for him, and his principles: *and he sent him into his field to feed swine*; he did not give him the least bit of bread to satisfy his hunger; nor did he say one word to him of Christ, the bread of life; nor did he advise him to go to his father's house, where there was bread enough, and to spare: but he *sent him into his fields*: to work, to cleanse his heart, to reform his life, to fulfil the law, to perform the conditions of the covenant, to make his peace with God, and get an interest in his love and favour; and go through a round of duties continually, and all would be well: he sent him to *feed swine* there; to converse with self-righteous persons, who may be compared to swine, because of their selfishness; doing all they do for themselves, and not for God and his

glory; because they prefer dung before pearls, their own righteousness before Christ, the pearl of great price; and live upon the husks of their own duties: and never look upwards to heaven, as this creature does not, but always downwards on the earth; and though they were outwardly reformed, yet inwardly filthy, and often return to wallowing in the mire again: he sent him there also to gratify the selfish principles of nature; to please himself with his wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and other excellencies he fancied he had attained unto. In short, the expression shews the base employment of a self-justiciary amidst all his pretensions to religion and virtue: for feeding of swine was very disagreeable to the Jews, and with them scandalous; to whom the eating of swine's flesh was forbidden by the law of God, and the breeding of swine by their traditions; and this is said to be done in a far country, out of Judea.

Ver. 16. *And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks, &c.*] *הררוב*, the fruit of the *Charub* tree, as the Syriac version interprets it; and which the Jews<sup>2</sup> say is *מאכל בהמה*, the *food of beasts*: though, according to what is elsewhere said of it, it should be the food of men also. It is said<sup>2</sup> of R. Simeon ben Jochai, and his son, that they hid themselves in a cave for fear of the king, and a miracle was wrought for them, *איברי ליהוה הררוב*, a *Charub* tree was created for them, and a fountain of water; the one, as the gloss observes, was to eat the fruit of, and the other to drink of: but be they what they will, by them are meant, not worldly riches and honours, and carnal lusts and pleasures; though these are the principal things of the far country, of this world, or an unregenerate estate; and are greatly desired by carnal minds, and are but swine's meat, very mean food, yea, pernicious, empty, unsatisfying, and perishing; but these were the things this man had been desirous of, and lived upon before, and had ran through them, and had spent all his substance in the pursuit and enjoyment of them; and now he felt the grips of a natural conscience for them, and found himself in want of something else: wherefore by these *husks* are meant works of righteousness done by men; which are like husks, external things, done only before men; empty things that have nothing within them; mere trash, and not food; and which can give no satisfaction; mere sordid food, fit only to be cast to dogs or swine; of an ill savour, hard to eat, and difficult of digestion, and which affords no real nourishment; these this man greatly desired to fill his belly with: he found himself empty, and in want; as yet he had no thought of, at least not any desire after the bread in his father's house; but would fain have satisfied himself with his own doings, and have quieted his mind and conscience with a few external performances, a negative holiness, a legal repentance, and outward reformation: he laboured hard to make his own righteousness do; which was but striving to fill his belly with the east wind; and is what can never satisfy, because it is not answerable to the law and justice of God; and was no other than *that the swine did eat*, self-righteous persons, like himself; for such an one was now the publican and sinner become, though he did not continue so. Christ's lambs

<sup>1</sup> T. Hieros. Maaserot, fol. 50. 2.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 33. 2.

and sheep don't eat such food, nor will, nor can they, only swinish, selfish persons; this is suitable to their nature, they eat it, and live upon it; which shews them to be unrenewed, and that their taste is not changed. *And no man gave unto him*; not the husks, though this is the sense of the Arabic version, which renders it, *neither did he obtain them*; and so it seems to be ours and others: but these were at hand, which he might have taken himself, and did; nor is it reasonable to think he should wait to have them given him by another; or that he should be restrained from them; but it is to be understood of bread, or proper food, and that no man gave that unto him: and the words, as Calvin observes, may be read causally, *for no man gave to him*; and so are a reason why he craved husks, because no man gave him any bread: the citizen, or legal preacher, to whom he joined himself, gave him none; nor the swine, the self-righteous persons, to whom he was sent, and with whom he conversed, gave him none; he had nothing under the ministry, nor in conversation, that was proper food to him; there were nothing but these husks that presented, and he tried to satisfy himself with them; and indeed none but Christ can give the true bread, the bread of life, to those that are hungry, and in want.

Ver. 17. *And when he came to himself, &c.*] An unregenerate man, whether while a voluptuous man, or a self-righteous man, is not himself; he's beside himself, and is no other than a madman. The man that pursues his worldly lusts and pleasures, promises himself liberty, while he is a slave; he ruins himself, his soul, body, and estate, and chooses to do it rather than part with his lusts; he takes delight in doing mischief himself, and in seeing it done by others; he proclaims his folly publicly, declares his sin, and glories in it; all which a man in his right mind would never do. The self-righteous person trusts in his own heart, which is the greatest madness and folly in the world; he compasses himself about with sparks of his own kindling, and sacrifices to his own net; he dresses himself in his rags, and pleases and prides himself with them, when a robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation, are provided; which no man in his senses would ever do. But when the spirit of God comes to work upon a sinner's heart in conversion, he brings him to himself; which a man may be said to be, when he is brought to true evangelical repentance for sin; and that is, when he has a true sense of it, as committed against God, and a godly sorrow for it, and makes an hearty and ingenuous acknowledgment of it, and forsakes it; and when he is brought to a sense of the insufficiency of his own righteousness, and is made willing to part with it, and desires to be found in Christ, and in his righteousness alone, which he is encouraged to lay hold on, and receive by faith, trust to, and rejoice in; when he has his spiritual senses exercised on Christ, and to discern between good and evil; and is brought to the feet of Jesus, as to submit to his righteousness, so to serve him; when he is all this, then, like the man in the Gospel, he is clothed, and in his right mind: *he said, how many hired servants of my father's*; who, according to some, were the Scribes and

Pharisees, men of a servile disposition, and of mercenary views; and were, by profession, the servants of God, and had plenty of bread, because they had all the external means and ordinances: but these are designed by the elder brother in the parable; and besides, this man had endeavoured to live as they did in this far country. It may be queried, whether the ministers of the Gospel are not intended, since these are the servants of the most high God; are labourers hired by him, and are worthy of their hire, and abound with Gospel provisions for the service of others. But to this it may be objected, the desire of this man to be made as one of them, ver. 19. which petition expresses his humility; whereas to be a servant, in this sense, is to have the highest place and office in his father's house. Rather therefore the meanest of the saints, and household of God, are here meant, who have the least degree of evangelical light, whose faith is weak, and their consolation small; and who, though they are sons, yet by reason of that legality and mercenariness that appear in their frames and services, differ little from servants; and yet these, in comparison of him, who was in a hungry and starving condition, *have bread enough, and to spare*; as the doctrines, promises, and ordinances of the Gospel, the fulness of grace that is in Christ, and Christ himself the bread of life; which are more than enough for them, and sufficient for the whole family in heaven, and in earth; and even the meanest and weakest believer may be said to have enough and to spare, because he has an interest in all these; though by reason of the weakness of his faith, 'tis but now and then he has a full and comfortable meal; but this is infinitely better than to be starving, as this man was: *and I perish with hunger*. The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions add, *here*; in this far country, in the citizen's fields, among his swine, and their husks: all mankind are in a lost and perishing condition; for having sinned against God, they have exposed themselves to the curses of the law, and are destitute of a justifying righteousness, and are in the way to ruin and destruction; but all are not sensible of it, being ignorant of God, and his righteousness, of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and of the insufficiency of their own righteousness; but some are sensible of it, and in their own apprehensions are ready to perish: these see sin in its true light, without a view of pardon; an angry God without a smile; injured justice without a righteousness; and a broken law without a satisfaction for the violation of it; and such was this man's case. The Jewish writers say, "a sinner is like to a son that runs away from his father, and turns his back upon him, who yet afterwards repents, and has a mind to return to his father's house:" so it was now with the publicans and sinners, signified by this man.

Ver. 18. *I will arise, &c.*] This is the resolution which at last, through divine grace, he came into: he determines to quit the country, and his companions; he had left his harlots, and his old course of living before, but was in the same country still; for this a man may do, and yet remain unregenerate: but he is now for leaving the country itself, and his new acquaintance; he is now determined to drop his legal preacher, to be

gone out of his fields, and from under his ministry, and to leave his swine and husks; *and go to my father*: not to his old companions in debauchery and sin; nor to his elder brother, the Pharisees; he had made trial of both these to his cost already; nor to his father's servants, but to his father himself; to which he was moved and encouraged, from his being ready to perish, from the fulness of bread in his father's house, and from the relation he stood in to him; notwithstanding all that had passed, he was his father, and a kind and merciful one: this shews, that he knew him as his father, having now the spirit of adoption sent down into him; and the way unto him, which lies through Christ the mediator: *and will say unto him, father*; or, *my father*, as the Syriac and Persic versions read: *I have sinned against heaven*: by preferring earthly things to heavenly ones; and have sinned openly in the face of the heavens, who were witnesses against him; and against God, who dwells in heaven. It was usual with the Jews to call God, שמים, *heaven*: see the note on Matt. xxi. 25. They have this very phrase; "there is a man, (say <sup>o</sup> they), who sins against earth, and he does not <sup>o</sup> שמים, *sin against heaven*: against heaven, and he does not sin against earth: but he that speaks with an ill tongue sins against heaven and earth, as it is said, Psal. lxxiii. 9. *they set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.*" And so the sense is, that he had sinned against God himself, and not merely against men, and human laws. All sin is a transgression of the law of God; and the thought of sin being committed against a God of infinite holiness, justice, goodness, grace, and mercy, is cutting to a sensible sinner: and this being the case, this man determined to go to God his father, and him only, for the pardon of his sin, against whom it was committed. 'Tis added, *and before thee*; for he was now convinced of his omniscience. Sin may be committed against a man, and not before him, or he not know it; but whatever is committed against God, is before him, 'tis in his sight, he knows it: he is God omniscient, though sinners take no notice of this perfection of his, but go on in sin, as if it was not seen, known, and observed by God. But when God works powerfully and effectually upon the heart of a sinner, he convinces him of his omniscience, as this man was convinced: hence he determined to go to God, and acknowledge his sin before him; and that it was committed before him, and was in his sight; and that he could not be justified in his sight by any righteousness of his own; and therefore humbly desires pardon at his hands. This man's sense of sin and sorrow for it, and confession of it, appear very right and genuine, which he determined to express; they appear to be the convictions of the spirit of God: it was not a sense of sin, and sorrow for it, as done before men, but God; and the concern was not so much for the mischief that comes by sin, as for the evil that was in it; and this did not drive him to despair, as in the cases of Cain and Judas, but brought him home to his father; and his confession appears to be hearty, sincere, and without excuse.

Ver. 19. *And am no more worthy to be called thy son,*

&c.] As all the Jews were; not only by creation, and providential care, as all men are; but by national adoption: and however worthy this man might think himself to be called a son of God before, and value himself upon it; he now sees, and was ready to own his unworthiness to be called so in any sense; and much more to be called and accounted a son of God by special adoption; *make me as one of thy hired servants*: this is said not from a servile spirit, but to express the mean thoughts he had of himself, and the great desire he had to be fed from his father's table, in the meanest way; and what an happiness and honour it would be to him, could he be the meanest in his family, a doorkeeper in his house; which was more eligible to him, than to dwell in the tents of sin, or continue in this hungry and starving condition.

Ver. 20. *And he arose, &c.]* This shews that his resolution to arise was not of nature, but of grace, by its being put into execution; for it was made and executed, not in his own strength, but in another's. he did not confer with flesh and blood; nor listen to discouragements which might present; as the distance of the way, the danger in it, the cold reception, if not rejection, he might expect from his father: but he arose immediately; he arose and stood upon his feet, in obedience to the heavenly call, being assisted by divine grace; he arose, and quitted the far country, the citizen, swine, and husks, and denied both sinful and righteous self; *and came to his father*: his own father; *the father of himself*, as in the Greek text, who was so before he came to him; a sense of which he had, and was what encouraged him the rather to go to him: and this coming to him denotes a progression towards him; for as yet he was not come to him, but was at some distance, as the next clause expresses; and means not so much attendance on ordinances, as some inward secret desires after God: *but when he was yet a great way off*. This is not to be understood of his state of alienation from God, which is before signified by his being in a far country; but the distance he observed, as conscious of his vileness, and unworthiness; and the humility he expressed on a view of himself; and a sense he had of his need of divine grace: and which is grateful to God; he looks to such that are of an humble, and of a contrite spirit, and dwells among them, and gives more grace to them: *his father saw him*: he saw him when in the far country, spending his substance with harlots, and in riotous living; he saw him when among the swine and husks; he saw him when he came to himself, and all the motions and determinations of his heart; he saw him in his progress towards him, and looked upon him with an eye of love, pity, and compassion, as it follows, *and had compassion*: God is full of compassion, and pities him, as a father does his children; yea, as a woman's bowels of compassion yearn after the son of her womb: he had compassion on him, and his bowels of pity moved towards him, he being as one grieved in spirit for his sins, and wounded with a sense of them, and wanting a view of pardon, as starving and famishing, and as naked, and without clothing. *And ran*; to him, which shows the quick notice God

takes of the first motions of his own grace in the hearts of sensible sinners; the speedy relief he gives to distressed ones; and this points out his preventing grace and goodness. *And fell on his neck*; expressive of the strength of his affection to him, Gen. xiv. 14. and xlv. 29. Acts xx. 37. and of his great condescension and grace to fall on that neck which had been like an iron sinew, so stiff and rebellious; though now, through divine grace, was made flexible and pliable, and subject to him, and willing to bear the yoke, and to do whatever he would have him; and this was grateful to his father: *and kissed him*; as a token of love; and as owning the relation he stood in to him; as a sign of reconciliation and friendship; and was an admission of him to great nearness to his person; and an application and manifestation of great love indeed to him; and a strong incentive of love in the son to him again; see 1 John iv. 19.

Ver. 21. *And the son said unto him, father, &c.*] Or *my father*, as the Syriac version reads; and the Persic version adds, *pardon me*: sin lay heavy on him, and he wanted a view and application of pardoning grace, though he seems to be prevented making this request by the kiss he received from his father: *I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight*; this is what he determined to say, and was allowed to say, having a deep sense of his sin and vileness, and which was increased by the love and kindness his father had shewn him. The phrase is Jewish; see the note on ver. 18. to which may be added, what is elsewhere said<sup>c</sup>, "what is the sense of that passage, Psal. xii. 4. *who have said, with our tongues we will prevail?* &c. it designs all the transgressions a man sins against<sup>d</sup> earth; and if *הוֹמִיִּין בְּשָׁמַיִם*, they sin against heaven, and earth; what is the sense of that in Psal. lxxiii. 9?" *and am no more worthy to be called thy son*: so much he was suffered to say, which fully expresses his sense of his vileness and unworthiness: but he was not allowed to say, *make me as one of thy hired servants*: because this could not be granted; for a son is always a son, and cannot become a servant; see Gal. iv. 6. 7.

Ver. 22. *But the father said to his servants, &c.*] The word *but*, with which those words begin, is expressive of much grace, as it often is; see 1 Cor. vi. 11. Eph. ii. 4. 1 Tim. i. 13. Tit. iii. 4. and signifies, that though the son had behaved so badly, and was now so sensible of it himself, as that he desired to be a hired servant, being unworthy to be called a son; but the father, against whom he had sinned, would hear nothing of it: but *said to his servants*; not the angels, but the ministers of the Gospel; who are the servants of the most high God; and whose business it is to set forth, in the ministry of the word, the righteousness of Christ, and the everlasting love of God; and to direct souls to a life and conversation becoming the Gospel of Christ; and to set before them the rich provisions of the Gospel for their nourishment, joy, and comfort. These servants, the father of the son ordered, not to take him away from his presence, as one whose person he could not endure in his sight; nor to terrify and affright him with the curse and condemnation of the law, and to fill his mind with wrath and terror; nor even to

chastise and correct him for his former course of living, and to upbraid him with it; but to confer upon him all the honour, and high favours, and blessings that could be expressed in the following language: *bring forth the best robe*; out of the wardrobe, that it is in. The Vulgate Latin version adds, *quickly*; which increases the father's regard to him, and shews that he was in haste to have his son appear in a better condition: the Arabic version adds it in the next clause, *and put it on him quickly*; which expresses the same thing; and the Ethiopic version renders it, *hasten ye, bring, &c.* By the *best robe* is meant, not water-baptism; nor an holy life and conversation; nor any particular grace, as faith, or hope, or charity; or the whole of sanctification; nor Adam's robe of innocence; but the righteousness of Christ, which is often compared to a robe, or garment, Isa. lxi. 10. Zech. iii. 4. Rev. xix. 8. because it is not any thing in believers, but what is unto them, and upon them, and is put there by an act of God's grace in imputation; and is what covers their naked souls, and hides their sins from the avenging eye of divine justice; protects them from all injuries, and saves them from wrath to come; as well as beautifies and adorns them, and renders them acceptable in the sight of God; and keeps them warm and alive; and gives them a right and title to eternal life. This is as in the Greek text, the *first robe*; and so it is rendered by the Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions; because it was first in God's designation and counsel, and in Christ the head of his people, in whom they are blessed with all spiritual blessings before the foundation of the world, and so with this blessing; and it was also provided and secured in the everlasting covenant of grace, long before Adam's robe of innocence and righteousness was made and wore by him: the reference is not to the first that should be come at in the wardrobe; or to that which the son wore before he went into the far country; but to the *טלית*, *Talith*, which was the first and uppermost garment wore by the Jews, and answers to the Greek word *στολή*, the *stole*, here used: so the Babylonish garment is called, *אֵיצְמֵלָה דְמִלִּיתָא*<sup>d</sup>, which the gloss interprets a *Talith*, made of pure wool. The Ethiopic version renders the phrase, *fragrant garments*; and such are Christ's garments of salvation, and robe of righteousness; see Psal. xlv. 8. the Persic version renders it, *the splendid robe*; and the Syriac, as ours, the *chief, or best robe*; and such is Christ's righteousness: it is a better righteousness, not only than that of a self-righteous Pharisee; but better than the outward conversation-garment of a real good man, which, at best, is imperfect; or than the inward sanctification of the spirit of God, which, though pure, is not yet perfect: it is better than the robe of innocence wore by Adam in his sinless state; for that was but a natural righteousness, and the righteousness of a creature, and was loseable, as the event has shewn; and had he kept it, would not have given him a title to eternal life: yea, it is better than the righteousness of the angels in heaven; for what is said of Adam's, may be said of theirs, that it is natural, the righteousness of a creature; and had it not been for confirming grace, a lose-

<sup>c</sup> T. Micros. Peah, fol. 16. 1.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Saphedin, fol. 44. 1. Vid. Targum in Jos. vii. 21.

able one: but Christ's righteousness is pure and perfect; the righteousness of God, and an everlasting one: and when the servants of God, the ministers of the Gospel, are ordered to bring it out, *and put it on him*: this is done, not by the imputation of it to men, for that is the father's act; nor by application of it to them, that is the spirit's work; but by a declaration of it, setting it forth in a ministerial way before them; declaring it to be a justifying one, and encouraging their faith to lay hold upon it as such: *and put a ring on his hand*: on one of the fingers of his hand: by which is intended not the grace of faith; that is, rather the hand on which the ring is put; and though this grace is both precious and ornamental, as will be allowed, yet it does not unite to Christ, this must be denied; it being a grace which flows from union, as all grace does; and by which souls have communion with Christ: nor are good works designed; such indeed who are called by grace, are to be set to work from a right principle, to a right end; and true grace does shew itself by works; and good works are the seal and token of grace to the world; but then, as before, these are rather meant by the hand; since that is the instrument of action: nor is the seal and earnest of the spirit meant by the ring. The spirit of God is certainly the seal of grace, and the earnest of glory; and to have this is a high favour, and a precious benefit indeed, and what will never be taken away; but as faith, so not the spirit is the bond of union between God and his people, but the fruit of it: by the *ring* is meant the everlasting love of God; and which, as a ring, is round, and has neither beginning nor end; it does not begin with the obedience of his people, nor with their love to him; nor with their conversion; nor with the mission, sufferings, and death of Christ; but was from all eternity; nor will it have any end, nor can there be any separation from it: this is the bond of union, that can never be dissolved; and this being manifested to the soul, is a token of freedom; it sets a man free from the bondage of corruption, and from the slavery of Satan, and introduces into the liberty of the children of God: it is a mark of great honour, a sign of riches, both of grace and glory; it is a declaration of sonship, and heirship; and is a seal and pledge of everlasting happiness: now the putting on of this ring does not design the shedding abroad of this love in the heart by the spirit of God; but the declaration of it by his servants in a ministerial way; setting it forth in its nature and effects, to the great joy and comfort of souls; when believers receive it by the hand of faith, and which constrains them, and makes them active, and puts them upon doing good works to the glory of God. *And shoes on his feet*: by *feet* are meant the outward walk and conversation; which in persons called by grace should be different from what it was before, and from that of others: it should not be loose and naked, as those that walk barefoot, but should be upright, straight, and regular; not carnal and earthly, but spiritual and heavenly; and should be with prudence, care, and circumspection, and worthy of their vocation, and as becomes the Gospel of Christ: and

by the *shoes* may be meant, the preparation of the Gospel of peace, Eph. vi. 15. The Gospel is as shoes to the feet; it beautifies and adorns, Cant. vii. 1. it keeps the feet tight and straight, the conversation regular and upright; preserves from slipping and falling; strengthens and makes more fit for walking; directs, guides, and influences in walking, and protects, from the stones, thorns, and scorpions of the world's reproaches; and the doctrines of it are shoes that will never wear out: and to walk according to the Gospel of Christ, is what Gospel ministers direct and exhort unto, and may be meant by their putting on those shoes; they pressing a good life and conversation from, and by the doctrines of grace. A person with all these things on him was reckoned, among the Jews, as one thoroughly dressed: a canon of theirs, relating to the defilement of leprosy, runs thus<sup>c</sup>; "a man of Israel that goes into a house infected with the plague of leprosy, לבוש בבגדיו וסנדליו ברנגליו ובבעתיו בידיו, clothed with his garments, and his sandals on his feet, and his rings on his hands, lo, that man is immediately defiled."

Ver. 23. *And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, &c.*] By which Christ is designed, in allusion to the calves offered in sacrifice, which were offered for sin-offerings, and for peace-offerings, and for burnt-offerings; and were one of the sacrifices on the day of atonement: so Christ has offered up himself in soul and body, freely and voluntarily, in the room and stead of his people, an offering and sacrifice to God, of a sweet-smelling savour; which is well-pleasing to him, and effectual to the purposes for which it was offered, and therefore will never be repeated; and has hereby satisfied law and justice, procured peace and reconciliation, and made full atonement and expiation for all their sins and transgressions; or else in allusion to the feasts and liberal entertainments of friends, when the fatted calf made a considerable part, Gen. xviii. 7, 8. 1 Sam. xviii. 24, 25. Amos vi. 4. Mal. iv. 2. Christ is the best provision that can be set before a believer, or he can feed upon; yea, the best that God can give, or saints desire: he is true and real food, spiritual, savoury, satisfying, and durable; what both gives and preserves life; nourishes, strengthens, refreshes, delights, and fattens. Now by *bringing it hither*, is meant preaching Christ; opening the Scriptures concerning him; setting him before believers, as their only proper food, both in the ministry of the word, and in the Lord's supper: and *killing* him does not design either the slaying of him in purpose, promise, and type, from the foundation of the world; nor the actual crucifixion of him by the Jews; but the setting him forth in the Gospel in a ministerial way, as crucified and slain, for saints by faith to feed and live upon: *and let us eat and be merry*: for as the Jews<sup>f</sup> say, "there is no mirth without eating and drinking:" this is a mutual invitation or encouragement to eat of the fatted calf: the parties called upon to eat of it are the father, the servants, and the returned son. The father, to whom the salvation of his people, by the death of Christ, is as a feast; his heart was set upon this from

<sup>c</sup> Maimon Hilch. Tumaot Tzaraath, c. 16. sect. 6. T. Bab. Cholin, fol 71. 2.

<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 9. 1.

everlasting; and he was infinitely well pleased with Christ, as the surety of his people from all eternity; his eye was upon him as such throughout the several dispensations before his coming; he sent him forth with great pleasure in the fulness of time; and not only did not spare him, but it even pleased him to bruise him; and he accepted of his sacrifice with delight; and takes pleasure in seeing his people fed upon their crucified Saviour; and this is expressive of that communion which God admits his people to with himself, and which, as it is signified by walking and talking, and sitting and dwelling, so by eating together; and is in consequence of union to him; and is only enjoyed by true believers; and is the greatest blessing on earth, and what is next to heaven. The servants, the ministers of the Gospel, they are among the *us*, who are to eat; and it is but reasonable they should, and it is even necessary that they do eat, and live upon a crucified Christ themselves, whose business it is to set him forth as such to others: and especially the returned son makes a principal guest at this entertainment; for whom it is made, and for whose sake chiefly the invitation to eat is given: by which is meant not corporeal eating, but eating by faith; which supposes food to eat, of which there is plenty in the Gospel provision; a principle of life infused, for a dead man can't eat; and spiritual hunger and thirst, otherwise there will be no appetite; and the grace of faith; which is the hand that takes, and the mouth that receives, and eats spiritual food: and believers have full and free liberty to eat of it; nor should they object their own unworthiness, but consider the suitability of the food unto them; that it is on purpose prepared for them; that they are in their father's house, and at his table; and the invitation to eat is hearty and cordial; and both the Father and Christ give this food, and bid welcome to it; and there is a necessity of eating it, for without this there can be no living in a spiritual sense: 'tis hereby that life is supported and maintained; without this the saints must be starving; 'tis this which preserves from hunger, and satisfies it, and nourishes up unto eternal life. The manner of eating, or the circumstance attending it, is *mirth*, both in father, son, and servants; and as corporeal, so spiritual eating should be with joy, and with a merry heart, Eccl. ix. 7. and indeed is the most proper means of stirring and increasing spiritual joy and pleasure; see the note on the latter part of the following verse.

Ver. 24. *For this my son was dead, &c.*] These words contain the reasons of the above entertainment, and of all that spiritual joy and mirth; in which the father acknowledges the returning penitent as his son; though he had behaved so wickedly before, and though he judged himself unworthy of the relation; and this he did, by sending the spirit of adoption into his heart, to witness his sonship to him; and takes notice of his past state and condition, to shew the great reason there was for joy, at his present one: for before he was *dead*, dead in Adam, in whom all died; dead in law, being under a sentence of condemnation and death; and dead in trespasses and sins, which is a spiritual or moral death:

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

in which all mankind by nature are: and which lies in a separation from God, Father, Son, and Spirit; in an alienation from the life of God; in a deformation of the image of God; in a loss of original righteousness; in the darkness of the understanding; in the inordinateness of the affections; in the pollution of the mind and conscience; in the stubbornness of the will; and in an impotency to that which is spiritually good; and in a privation of spiritual sense and motion: this had been the case, but now it was otherwise: *and is alive again*: the spirit of life from Christ had entered into him, and Christ was formed in his heart; and a principle of life was infused into him; a divine image was entamped upon his soul; the understanding was enlightened in divine things; the affections were set upon them; the will was subjected to God, to his will and law, and to Christ and his righteousness, and the way of salvation by him, and to his commands and ordinances; and principles of grace and holiness were wrought in him, to do as well as to will; a spiritual sense of things were given him; a spiritual sight, hearing, tasting, and feeling, and savouring; he lived a life of holiness from Christ, of faith upon him, and of communion with him, and to his glory: and he came to be so, not of himself, nor by any creature; for no man can quicken himself, nor can any creature do it for him; it was entirely owing to the power and grace of God: and great reason here was for joy and mirth, as there is for every one that is quickened by the spirit of God; for such shall never enter into condemnation, nor die again, but shall live and reign with Christ for ever: *he was lost*; lost in Adam, and in himself; so he was when in the far country, and when among the swine and husks; so as that he knew not where he was, nor what a condition he was in; nor did he know how to get out of it, nor could he help himself, nor could any other creature; though not irretrievably and irrecoverably lost; not to the love of God, his knowledge of him, care and provision for him in Christ, in his counsel and covenant: hence the following mercy, *and is found*; not only by Christ in redemption, but by the spirit of Christ in effectual vocation; when he was brought and came to himself, and saw his lost state and condition by nature; and when he was directed and brought home to his father's house, and entertained with all the provisions of it; and such have reason to rejoice and be glad, for they shall be found in Christ at death and at judgment, and shall be with him to all eternity: *and they began to be merry*: all parties. The father expressed his joy, and the gladness of his heart, upon the return of his son to him; he exhorted to be merry on this account, ver. 23. and enforces it with reasons in this verse, taken from the relation he stood in to him, and the wonderful change that had passed upon him, and the finding of him; and he rejoices himself at his conversion, in the exercise of that grace which he himself implanted, and in the performance of duty by his assistance: not that any new joy arises in God's heart at such a time; for he always rejoiced in the persons of his elect, as they were the objects of his love, as chosen in Christ, and given to him, and as interested in the covenant

of grace; and he rejoiced in the accomplishment of their salvation, by his son: but in conversion, there are new expressions of joy; he rejoices over them to do them good, and rejoices in the good he does them; and this is the open beginning of his joy, and but the beginning of it; for it will continue, it is not all over, not all expressed, but will be in the fullest manner hereafter, to all eternity: the returned son began to be merry, as he had good reason for it; as that he was come back from the far country, where a mighty famine had been; and from the citizen of that country, his fields, and swine; that he was come to his father, and his father's house, where was bread enough and to spare; an house well furnished with all suitable provisions; a family made up of saints, where ministers of the Gospel are stewards, and angels guards, and where Christ is son, priest, and master; and that he was received here, and owned as a son; not only was one secretly, but was owned as such openly; and was not only called so by the servants, but by the father himself; and that after he had behaved so vilely, and in his own conscience knew he was unworthy of the relation; and that he was received immediately, as soon as ever he came, and that in the most tender manner; and was entertained in the most free, generous, and sumptuous way; though he went away from his father of himself, and had spent his substance in a scandalous manner; and was in a most filthy, ragged, and piteous condition; and that he should be clothed with the best robe, the robe of Christ's righteousness; and so had nothing to fear from law and justice; nor was he in any danger of wrath to come because of his sins; nor had he any reason to doubt of his right and admission to the heavenly glory; and that he had the ring of love on the hand of faith, and could believe his interest in it, which is better than life, and will continue for ever; and that his feet were shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; that he understood the Gospel, and was brought to a submission to Gospel ordinances, and had his conversation agreeably to it; and that the fatted calf was killed, and set before him to eat of, and feed upon; and now he began to live and fare sumptuously, and to have spiritual joy and pleasure, which he never knew before; and this was but the beginning of joy to him: spiritual joy is not all over at once, it continues and increases; nor is it full and perfect in this life, but in heaven it will be complete, and without interruption; the servants also, the ministers of the Gospel, began to be merry on this occasion; who express their joy at the conversion of sinners, because of the glory of Father, Son, and Spirit, concerned in it; because of the grace bestowed then on sinners themselves; and because the interest of Christ is strengthened, and his churches increased, and Satan's kingdom weakened; and because their own ministry is blessed; and which strengthens their hands and hearts, and encourages them to go on in their work: and this is but the beginning of their joy; for they continue to rejoice at the growth of grace in believers, and when they are in a thriving and flourishing condition; when they walk becoming the Gospel of Christ, and live in peace among them-

selves; and persevere in faith and holiness to the end; and these will be their joy and crown of rejoicing, at the coming of Christ Jesus.

Ver. 25. *Now his elder son was in the field, &c.*] By the *elder son* is meant, not angels, as has been observed on ver. 11. nor truly converted persons, of some standing in the church; for though these may be said to be elder than young converts, and are more solid and settled, yet they are not ignorant of spiritual mirth; nor of the Gospel sound; nor are they angry at the conversion of sinners; nor will they ever speak in such commendation of themselves; or say that they never had a kid, much less a fatted calf, as this elder brother does: nor the Jews in general, in distinction from the Gentiles, as has been remarked in the above place: the Scribes and Pharisees in particular are meant, in opposition to the publicans and sinners: now these are said to be *in the field*; in the world, which is comparable to an uncultivated field; being overrun with the briars and thorns of sin, and sinful men; where beasts of prey inhabit, and who are fitly signified by lions, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword; and out of which the garden of the church is taken and separated, and fenced by distinguishing grace: now this elder brother, the Scribe and Pharisee, notwithstanding all his sobriety and morality, was in a state of nature and unregeneracy, in the same condition he came into the world; and was under the influence of the god of the world; and was taken up with the things of the world, the honours, riches, and profits of it; and though he was in the Jewish church-state, yet was in the field of the world; the ceremonies of that state, were the rudiments of the world; and the sanctuary in it, was a worldly sanctuary; and the chief men in it, were the princes of the world: and this elder son was in the field at work, working for life: to work is right, when men work from a principle of grace, in the name, faith, and strength of Christ, to the glory of God and religion, and their own and others good; and ascribe all they do to the grace of God, and acknowledge their own unworthiness; but to work, in order to obtain righteousness, life, and salvation, proceeds from wretched ignorance, and is an instance of the pride and vanity of human nature; and is not only a vain and fruitless attempt, but a piece of wickedness, it being a denial of Christ, as God's salvation: now while the younger son, the publicans and sinners, were received and entertained in the house and kingdom of God their father, the elder son, the Scribe and Pharisee, were without in the field, labouring to obtain life by doing; and as he came and drew nigh to the house. The Ethiopic version reads, *to the border of the city*: he came out of the field, the world; not that he was come out from the world, and had left the company of the men of it, or parted with the sins and lusts of it; but he came from his labour, having done his day's work, and the task of duty he had set himself; and was now going for his hire, for what he imagined he had merited, and drew nigh to the house; for he did not go in, ver. 28. he only made some advances to it, and took some steps towards entrance into it; namely, into a visible church; he came to hear the word, as



the Scribes and Pharisees did; and to attend on ordinances, particularly at the administration of the ordinance of baptism, and seemed desirous of submitting to it in John's time; but never came to Christ in a spiritual way; nor entered into the kingdom of heaven, the Gospel dispensation; and did all that could be, to hinder others, especially publicans and sinners; *he heard music and dancing*. The Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, leave out *dancing*; the former only reads, *the voice of the singing of many*, and the next, *the voice of singing*; and the last, *pipes and songs*; by *music* is meant not the instrumental music used in the Old-Testament church; nor vocal singing in the new; but the preaching of the Gospel by the ministers of it, the servants, in ver. 22, 23. setting forth the love of God, the righteousness of Christ, peace, pardon, and salvation by him; in which, as in music, there is a distinction of sounds, the voice of Christ in the Gospel, and the several doctrines of it, are distinctly pronounced, discerned, and understood: and there is also, as in music, an harmony and agreement; the Gospel does not give an uncertain sound, nor contradict itself; it is not yea and nay: and, like music, 'tis delightful and charming; it is a sound of love in all the three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit; of free grace, and rich mercy; of liberty, reconciliation, forgiveness, righteousness, and eternal life: and as music, has a powerful and attractive virtue in it; so the Gospel is mighty and efficacious in the hand of the spirit of God to quicken even dead sinners, to draw them to Christ, to allure, charm, and comfort them: *dancing* may design those expressions of joy, which are delivered by young converts at hearing the Gospel, as by the three thousand, in Acts ii. 41. by the inhabitants of Samaria, Acts viii. 6, 8. and by the jailor and his household, Acts xvi. 34. and by many others: now all this the elder brother, the Scribes and Pharisees, *heard*; not so as to know the true meaning of it, as appears from the following verse; nor as to approve of it; or so as to feel the power, and enjoy the sweetness of it; nor as to practise what was heard; only externally hearing, they heard, but understood not, their eyes were blinded, and their hearts were hardened.

Ver. 26. *And he called one of the servants, &c.* One of the ministers of the word, one of the disciples of Christ, as the Scribes and Pharisees sometimes did: choosing rather to speak to one of the disciples, than to Christ himself, when they were offended; see Mark ii. 16. *And asked what these things meant*; for self-righteous persons, as these Scribes and Pharisees were, are ignorant of the truths of the Gospel; they don't understand them, nor conceive what is meant by them: they can't take in the doctrine of God's everlasting love, that it should be so early; be towards some, and not others; that it should be independent of men's works, both in the rise and continuance of it; that it should be exercised towards sinners, and yet be no licentious doctrine: and as much at a loss are they about the doctrine of election: as that it should be eternal, personal, discriminating, irrespective of works, and yet give no liberty to sin: they know nothing of the covenant of grace, nor have any other notion but of a covenant of works; and if of any other, yet a conditional one, made with them upon their conversion;

or rather, one of their own making, and which depends on their good behaviour: they are ignorant of salvation by Christ; of justification by his righteousness: of peace and pardon by his blood; of the doctrine of regeneration, and of living by faith on Christ; and of eternal life as God's free gift; and so likewise of spiritual joy, and mirth: they are strangers to themselves, their lost state and condition, and a deliverance out of it; to the kingdom of God, or an internal work of grace, the fruits of which are peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; and to the person, offices, and grace of Christ; to justification and atonement by him; to the promises of the Gospel, and to that itself which is the joyful sound; all which produce spiritual joy, delight, and pleasure in sensible souls: the rejoicing of such persons is only in themselves, and in their own works and duties; but as for true solid spiritual joy, they intermeddle not with it, nor know they what it means.

Ver. 27. *And he said unto him, &c.*] The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, leave out the copulative *and*, and the latter reads, *they said unto him*: the servants, one or other of them: *thy brother is come*; for in the relation of a brother, the younger son stood to him; being of the same nature and species, of the same nation, and both sons by national adoption: who *was come* to his father, and to his father's house; not as a righteous and worthy person in himself, but as a sinner, a sensible and penitent one; as hungry, naked, and ready to perish; and as unworthy, in his own opinion, of the least mercy and favour, and especially to be called a son: *and thy father*: who was so by creation, by national adoption, and by profession: *hath killed the fatted calf*, by which Christ is meant: see the note on ver. 23. and designs either the concern the father had in the death of Christ; or rather, his orders to his ministering servants, to preach a crucified Christ, to the comfort of poor sinners; and in general; expresses the large and rich entertainment God makes for souls, when they are brought home to him by repentance: and the Persic version adds, *and hath made a feast*; the reason of which is given in the next clause: *because he hath received him safe and sound; or in good health*. This is left out in the Persic version, but rightly retained in all others: the word translated *received*, signifies the recovery, or enjoyment of any thing before had, but since lost, and the taking it at the hands of another: the elect of God, signified by the younger son, were his in a peculiar sense, being chosen by him; but through the fall of Adam, and their own transgressions, were in some sense lost unto him; but in consequence of redemption by Christ, and through efficacious grace in vocation, are found, received, and enjoyed again: and so the Ethiopic version reads it, *because he found him alive*; and so took him again, as he did, at the hands of his son: all the elect of God were put into the hands of Christ, as the surety of them; and being redeemed by his blood in effectual vocation, they are brought by him to the father, and come to God by him: as they are also received by the father from the hands of his spirit, who convinces them of sin, causes them to believe in Christ, witnesses their adoption to them; in a view of which, they come to God, and are received by him;

and even from their own hands too, for under the power of divine grace, they are made willing to give up themselves to the Lord, and do so; who kindly and graciously receives them into his arms; into his heart's love, and affection, into the open enjoyment of it; into his care and protection, into his family, and into communion with himself, and will afterwards receive them to glory: the case and condition in which he was received is, *safe and sound*; there is but one word in the original; and some translate it *safe*, as the Arabic version; and others *sound*, as the Syriac; and ours both: he was received *safe*, though he had been in a far country, and in a mighty famine, and almost starved: God's elect fell in Adam, as others; their nature is corrupted by sin, and they are guilty of actual transgressions, which deserve death; yet they were preserved in Christ, and being redeemed by him, are safe; so that the law cannot lay hold on them, nor sin, nor any thing else condemn them, nor Satan destroy them: and he was received *sound*; in his right mind, being come to himself, and brought to true repentance for his sin; and willing to part with his own righteousness, and to be clothed with the best robe; and having his spiritual senses exercised, to discern between good and evil, and upon the person and grace of Christ; or he was received *sound*, being in good health, and as opposed to being sick or diseased: sins are diseases, and as all men, so God's elect, are attended with them; but being made sensible of them, they come to Christ for healing; and they are perfectly cured by him; by his stripes and wounds, all their iniquities are forgiven; so that they have no reason to say any more, they are sick: and hence the father receives them safe and sound; and which is matter of joy, and was the occasion of all this music, dancing, and feasting.

Ver. 28. *And he was angry, &c.*] Particularly that the fattened calf was killed, ver. 27, 30. the preaching of a crucified Christ, and of free and full salvation by him, is highly displeasing and provoking to self-righteous persons; they are angry at it, that it should be free, that election to salvation should be of grace, that justification should be freely by the grace of God, and that pardon of sin should be according to the riches of God's grace, and salvation be by grace, and not by works; and that it should be discriminating, that God should appoint some, and not all unto salvation; that Christ should redeem some, and not all; and that all men are not called unto it, by his spirit and grace; and that it should be full and complete, so as nothing can be added to it; and that it should be for sinners, and alone by Christ, and by him as crucified: it would be agreeable, was it taught that salvation was by Christ in a doctrinal way, by giving laws and rules to men, whereby to save themselves; or that Christ saves by example, and not by his sacrifice, in a way of satisfaction for sin. Now, though no grievous words were used, nor any thing said that might justly provoke, yet such was the pride of his heart, that he could not bear that his brother should be taken so much notice of, who had acted and lived so scandalously; and besides, his own character as a righteous person, was neglected by this doctrine; and his own righteousness laid aside, in the business of justification and salvation, which was intolerable by him:

*and would not go in*: into his father's house, nor to the feast, nor into the kingdom of heaven, or Gospel dispensation; the Scribes and Pharisees shut it up to themselves, and others; would neither go in themselves, nor suffer others; they did not believe Jesus to be the Messiah, nor did they receive, but reject him; nor did they give any credit to the doctrines, nor submit to the ordinances of that dispensation: *therefore came his father out*: not in a way of wrath and judgment, but in the ministry of the word; for though the Jews rejected it, it was not at once taken away from them, but was continued time after time, and for some considerable time: the Jews of old had the ministry of the word, both by angels and men; God frequently went forth to them by his prophets, and at last by his son; and though they were angry with him, and rejected him, yet still the ministry of the word, by the disciples of Christ, were continued a good while to them; which shews the condescending goodness and grace of God, and his patience and long-suffering towards them: *and entreated him*; the Persic version reads, *and said unto him, why dost thou not go in?* this regards the external call by the ministry of the word, to the outward duties of religion, to means of grace; to give credit to the doctrines, and to attend the ordinances of the Gospel.

Ver. 29. *And he answering, said to his father, &c.*] Commending himself, and reflecting on his father: *to, these many years do I serve thee*; for though he was called a son, yet differed little from a servant; he was of a servile disposition, and under a spirit of bondage; he served his father, not in the Gospel, but in the law, moral and ceremonial; in the letter of it, and not in the newness of the spirit; externally, and not internally; from fear, and not from love; with mercenary views, and not freely; with trust in, and dependence on his service, seeking justification and eternal life by it, and not with a view to the glory of God; and this he had done *many years*; from his youth upwards, as the Pharisee in Matt. xix. 20. whereas his younger brother had never served him, but his own lusts; and yet as soon as ever he was come home, before he could enter upon service, this entertainment was made for him, and which he therefore resented: moreover, he does not say I have served thee, but *I do*; denoting the continuance and constancy of his service; and intimating that his life had been, and was one continued series of obedience: *neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment*; which though true of the elect angels, can never be said of any of the sons of men; and which shews, that he had never been under a work of the spirit of God, who convinces of sin; and had never seen himself in a true light, in the glass of that law, he pretended to serve God in; that he was a stranger to the plague of his own heart, and was a self-deceiver, and the truth of grace was not in him: he could not be a good man, for so to say, is contrary to the experience of all good men; to their groans, complaints, and confessions; to their prayers, for fresh application of pardoning grace; and to the observation of all wise and good men in all ages; and most fully proves him to be a Pharisee: *and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends*; some by a *kid*, or *goat*, as Theophylact, understand a persecutor, as Saul

was of David, and Ahab of Elijah; and so means that God had not delivered up such an one into his hands; or took him away by death, that he might have some peace and rest, amidst his labours and service; and others understand this of the Jews, desiring Barabbas, a goat, and not Jesus, the Lamb of God; but his meaning seems to be, that he had never received any favour in proportion to the services he had done; and so charges his father with ingratitude.

Ver. 30. *But as soon as this thy son was come, &c.*] He won't own him in the relation of a brother, though the father had owned him in that of a son; and the offence he took was, that the fatted calf should be killed, or that a crucified Christ should be preached; that he should be preached at all, and much less that he should be preached to sinners; and still less that he should be preached so soon to them, as soon as ever they became sensible of their sin, as it was the will of his father it should be: for such are not to be sent away to cleanse themselves from sin by any thing they do, and then apply to Christ; or to heal themselves, and then come to him for a cure; or to get peace by doing so, and then come to him for rest; or to do any thing to fit themselves for him, for their case requires present help: now at this the self-righteous man is displeased. The elder brother would have had another method taken with this younger son: he would have had him soundly whipped with the rod of the law, for his former sins; and sent into the fields along with him to work out his salvation; and not to have a rag put upon him, or a shoe on his foot, or a morsel of bread given him, till he had earned them; but instead of this, to be received and entertained in the manner he was, and so soon, highly provoked him: for he thought such a conduct was unbecoming God, and his moral perfections; and what his brother was undeserving of; and opened a door to licentiousness; and highly reflected on his services, as of no value and regard. *Which hath decounted thy living:* given to his son; that part of his goods he had divided to him, ver. 12, 13. *with harlots;* in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness, in gluttony and debauchery: *thou hast killed for him the fatted calf;* see the note on ver. 23.

Ver. 31. *And he said to him, son, &c.*] For so he

was, as before observed, by creation, national adoption, and profession: *thou art ever with me;* not in such a sense as Christ the son of God was: nor can it design the gracious presence of God, or communion with him; for this man did not walk with God; and besides, this is more frequently expressed by God's being with his people, than by their being with him; nor are good men always with God, or God with them, in this sense; sometimes the phrase designs the saints being with God, or Christ, in heaven; but here it intends only attendance on public worship, in the place where the symbol of God's presence was, the temple; and the *ever* denotes the term of the legal dispensation, which in many branches of it, as circumcision, the passover, and other ordinances and statutes, is said to be for ever. *And all that I have is thine:* which must be understood with a limitation; for it can't mean, that he had all the perfections of God, as Christ the son of God has; nor all spiritual blessings, as the adopted sons of God have; nor indeed any of them, but all the outward ordinances of the legal dispensation, which belonged to the Jews; particularly those that are enumerated in Rom. ix. 4, 5. as the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, the promises, their descent from the fathers, and the Messiah's descent from them; they had him in person among them, and his personal ministry, the word and ordinances of the Gospel; and had as much as they could have, or desire to have, in an external way.

Ver. 32. *It was meet that we should make merry, &c.*] Both father, son, and servants; see the notes on ver. 23, 24. and this elder brother also, because of the relation he stood in to him: and if he had had the same spiritual affection the apostle had for his brethren and kinsmen, according to the flesh, Rom. ix. 3. and x. 1. he would have rejoiced at the conversion and return of sinners by repentance: and *be glad;* as his father was, and the angels in heaven be; see ver. 10. *for this thy brother,* though he would not own him as such, *was dead, and is alive again, and was lost, and is found:* see the note on ver. 24. and so the parable is concluded, the elder brother being silenced, and having nothing to say against such strong reasoning.

## CH A P. XVI.

Ver. 1. *AND he said also to his disciples, &c.*] The Syriac version adds, *a parable,* as the following is; and which is directed to the disciples, as those in the preceding chapter are to the Pharisees; and who also are designed in this; though it is particularly spoken to the disciples, because it might be of some use to them, with respect to the stewardship they were in. The Persic and Ethiopic versions read, *Jesus, or the Lord Jesus said:* and which is to be understood, though not expressed; for the parable was delivered by him, and is as follows: *there was a certain rich man:* by whom God is meant, who is rich in the perfections of his nature, in the works of his hands, in his government, and the administration of it, in providential

goodness, and in the large revenues of glory due to him from his creatures; for all temporal riches are from him; and so are all the riches of mercy, grace, and glory: *which had a steward:* by whom is designed, not all mankind; for though all men are, in a sense, stewards under God, and are entrusted with the good things of life, the gifts of nature, endowments of mind, health, strength of body, time, &c. yet all can't be meant, because some are distinguished from this steward, ver. 5, 8. nor are the disciples intended, though the parable is directed to them; and they were stewards of the mysteries and manifold grace of God; and one among them was an unfaithful one, and was turned out of his stewardship; but the character of an

unjust man will not suit with them: and besides, this steward was of the children of this world, ver. 8. but the Pharisees are meant; for these are taken notice of as gravelled at this parable, ver. 14, 15. and to them agrees the character of the men of this world, who were worldly wise men; as also that of a steward; these are the tutors and governors mentioned in Gal. iv. 2. who had the care of the house of Israel, the family of God, under the legal dispensation; and to whom were committed the oracles of God, the writings of Moses, and the prophets; and whose business it was to open and explain them to the people. *And the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods;* put false glosses upon the Scriptures; fed the family with bad and unwholesome food, the traditions of the elders, called the leaven of the Pharisees; made havoc of the souls of men; and made the hearts of the righteous sad; and hardened sinners in their wicked ways; and fed themselves, and not the flock; and plundered persons of their temporal substance; of all which they were accused by Moses, in whom they trusted; by his law which they violated; and by their own consciences, which witnessed against them; and by the cries of those whom they abused, which came into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

Ver. 2. *And he called him, &c.* By the prophets, sent one after another; by John the Baptist, by Christ himself, and by his apostles: *and said unto him, how is it that I hear this of thee?* of thy corrupting the word; of thy covetousness, rapine, and theft; of thy adultery and idolatry, and sad violation of the law; see Rom. ii. 21, 22, 23. *give an account of thy stewardship:* what improvement is made of thy gifts; what care has been taken of my vineyard, the Jewish church; and where are the fruits that might be expected to have been received at your hands: *for thou mayest be no longer steward.* This was foretold by the prophets, that God would write a *Loammi* upon the people of the Jews; that he would cut off three shepherds in one month, and particularly lay aside the idol-shepherd, by whom the Pharisees may be meant, Zech. xi. 8, 17. and by John the Baptist, who declared the axe was laid to the root of the tree, and it was just ready to be cut down, Matt. iii. 11, 12. and by Christ, that the kingdom of God should be taken from them, Matt. xxi. 43. and by the apostles, who turned from them to the Gentiles, Acts xiii. 46.

Ver. 3. *Then the steward said within himself, &c.* As the Scribes and Pharisees were wont to do, Matt. iii. 9. and ix. 2. Luke vii. 39, 49. *what shall I do?* he does not say, what will become of me? I am undone, and what shall I do to be saved? or what shall I do for my Lord and Master I have so much injured? or what shall I do to make up matters with him? or what account shall I give? but what shall I do for a maintenance? how shall I live? what shall I do to please men, and gain their opinion and good will, and so be provided for by them? of this cast were the Pharisees, men-pleasers, and self-seekers: *for my Lord taketh away from me the stewardship:* the priesthood was changed, and there was a change also of the law; the ceremonial law was abrogated, and

the ordinances of the former dispensation were shaken and removed; so that these men must of course turn out of their places and offices: *I cannot dig; or plough,* as the Arabic version renders it; or do any part of husbandry, particularly that which lies in manuring and cultivating the earth; not but that he was able to do it; but he could not tell how to submit to such a mean, as well as laborious way of life; for nothing was meaner among the Jews than husbandry; they have a saying, that און לך אומנות פחותה מן הקרנע, *you have no trade, or business, lesser, or meaner than husbandry:* and to beg I am ashamed; for nothing could be more disagreeable to one who had lived so well in his master's house, and in so much fulness and luxury, as the Scribes and Pharisees did. The Jews have a saying, that בורב משהלרנ, *is better than begging:* (and says one) I have tasted "the bitterness of all things, and I have not found "any thing more bitter than begging:" and which was literally true of the Jews, after the destruction of Jerusalem; when multitudes of them were condemned to work in the mines; and vast numbers were scattered about every where as vagabonds, begging their bread; both which were very irksome to that people: though both these phrases may be mystically understood: and *digging* may intend a laborious searching into the Scriptures, and a diligent performance of good works: neither of which the Pharisees much cared for, though they made large pretensions to both; nor did they dig deep to lay a good foundation whereon to build eternal life and happiness; nor could they attain to the law of righteousness by all their toil and labour, they would be thought to have taken: and as for *begging*, they were above that; read the Pharisee's prayer in Luke xviii. 11, 12. and you won't find one petition in it. To ask any thing at the throne of grace, in a way of mere grace and favour, and not merit; or to beg any thing at the hands of Christ, as life, righteousness, pardon, cleansing, healing, food, &c. they were ashamed of, and cared not for.

Ver. 4. *I am resolved what to do, &c.* Or *I know what to do;* I have a scheme in my head, and I am determined to execute it, which will provide for me, and secure me a maintenance: *that when I am put out of the stewardship:* drove from Jerusalem, and from the temple and the synagogues: *they may receive me into their houses;* either Jews or Gentiles, after their dispersion.

Ver. 5. *So he called every one of his Lord's debtors, &c.* Either the Gentiles, who were greatly indebted to God, having sinned against him, and the law, and light of nature, at a great rate; into whose afflictions, houses, and palaces, the Jews found ways and means to introduce themselves; and, in process of time, got leave to have synagogues built, and their worship set up again: or else the Jews, their countrymen; since these were under those stewards, tutors, and governors, and were debtors to do the whole law; and had, by breaking the law, contracted large debts; and against whom the ceremonial law stood as an hand-writing: these the steward called *unto him, and said unto the first, how much owest thou unto my Lord?* and it is

\* T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 63. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Mischar Hapeniim apud Buxtorf. Florileg. Heb. p. 692.

observable, that the debts of these men, of the first, lay in oil, and of the other in wheat; things much used in the ceremonial law, in the observance of which they had been greatly deficient; see Exod. xxix. 40, 41. Numb. xv. 4—12. Ezek. xlv. 13, 14.

Ver. 6. *And he said an hundred measures of oil, &c.*] Or *baths of oil*, the same quantity as in Ezra vii. 22. where Aben Ezra<sup>1</sup> calls them, *בדות*, *measures*, as we do here; and Jarchi<sup>2</sup> observes, that they were, *לבלול*, *מנדחות*, *to mingle with the meal, or flour offerings*; which illustrates the above observation, that they were for the temple service; and the bath was the measure of oil, as the ephah was of wheat<sup>3</sup>; and they were both of the same quantity, Ezek. xlv. 11. According to Godwin<sup>4</sup> it held four gallons and a half; so that a hundred of them contained four hundred and fifty gallons; though some make the measure much larger. Some say the *bath* held six gallons, one pottle, and half a pint; and others, seven gallons, two quarts, and half a pint; and others, nine gallons, and three quarts. *Take thy bill, or writing*; which shewed the bargain made for so many measures; and which acknowledged the receipt of them, and promised payment: *and sit down quickly*; for his case required haste; *and write fifty*; just half; that it might appear he had bought but fifty, and was accountable for no more.

Ver. 7. *Then said he to another, and how much owest thou? &c.*] To my Lord, as before: *and he said, an hundred measures of wheat, or cors of wheat*; the same with *homers*, Ezek. xlv. 14. the same quantity as in Ezra vii. 22. where, as here, they are called an hundred measures of wheat; and were, as Jarchi in the place observes, *למנרות*, *for the meal, or flour offerings*: according to the above writer<sup>5</sup>, this measure held five bushels, and five gallons; so that the whole was five hundred, sixty bushels, and a half: some make the measure to hold eight bushels and a half; and others, fourteen bushels and a pottle, which greatly increases the quantity. *And he said unto him, take thy bill and write fourscore*. The Persian version reads *seventy*. Inasmuch now as oil and wheat were things expended in the observance of the ceremonial law, and these men's debts lay in them, it may have regard to the deficiency of the Jews in those things: wherefore by *the bill* may be meant the law; and which is sometimes called by the same name as here, *הכתובה*, the *writing, or letter*, 2 Cor. iii. 6. Rom. vi. 29. and vii. 6. and is so called, not merely because it was written in letters; but because it is a mere letter, shewing only what is to be done and avoided, without giving strength to perform, or pointing where it is to be had; and it is so, as obeyed by an unregenerate man; and as abstracted from the spirituality of it; and as weak, and without efficacy, to quicken, justify, or sanctify: and whereas the steward, the Scribes and Pharisees, ordered the debtors to write a lesser sum; this may regard the lessening, and even laying aside of many things in the law, after the destruction of the temple; as particularly the daily sacrifice, and other things; see Dan. ix. 27. Hos. iii. 4.

and the doctrine of the Pharisees was always a curtailment of the law, and making less of it than it was; as appears from the glosses they put upon it, refuted by our Lord in Matt. v. They compounded the matter with the people, as some men do now, and taught them, that an imperfect righteousness would do in the room of a perfect one: a doctrine very pleasing to men, and which never fails of gaining an access into the hearts and houses of carnal men; though very injurious to God, and to his divine perfections, particularly his justice and holiness; as the methods this steward took were unjust to his Lord, though very agreeable to his debtors, and were well calculated to answer the end he proposed, an after-provision for himself. I am much indebted to a learned writer<sup>6</sup>, whose name is in the margin, &c. several thoughts and hints in the explanation of this parable; and also of that of the rich man and Lazarus, in the latter part of this chapter.

Ver. 8. *And the Lord commended the unjust steward, &c.*] Not the Lord Jesus Christ, who delivered this parable, as the Syriac version seems to suggest, rendering it, *our Lord*; but the Lord of the steward, or *God*, as the Ethiopic version reads: not that he commended him for the fact he did, or the injustice of it; for this is contrary to his nature and perfections; but for his craft and cunning in providing himself a maintenance for time to come: for he is on that account branded as an *unjust steward*, as he was, in wasting his Lord's goods; putting false glosses on the Scriptures; doing damage both to the souls and worldly estates of men: and in neglecting and despising lawful and honest ways of living, by digging or begging, asking favours at the hand of God, and doing good works; and in falsifying accounts; breaking the least of the commandments, and teaching men so to do; and in corrupting others, making proselytes two-fold more the children of hell than himself; and in being liberal with another's property, to wrong objects, and for a wrong end. It was not therefore because he had done justly to his Lord, or right to others, that he is commended; but *because he had done wisely for himself*: the wit, and not the goodness of the man is commended; which, in the language and sense of the Jews, may be thus expressed<sup>7</sup>: “because a man, עושה טובה לעצמו, *does good for himself with mammon* which is not his own.” *For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light*: by the *children of this world* may be meant the Israelites, who belonged to the Jewish nation and church, called *the world*, and *this world*, 1 Cor. x. 11. and ii. 6, 8. especially the princes of it, the ecclesiastical doctors and rulers: and who also were the men of this present world; in general they were such who were, as they were born into the world; in their sins, in the pollution, and under the guilt of them; were carnal, in the flesh, or unregenerate, and in darkness and blindness: they were such as were not only in the world, but of it; they belonged to it, having never been called out of it; and were under the influence of the God of it; and were

<sup>1</sup> In Ezr. vii. 22.

<sup>2</sup> In ib.

<sup>3</sup> Kimchi in Ezek. xlv. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Moses & Aaron, l. 6. c. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Moses & Aaron, l. 6. c. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Teelmanni Specimen Explicat. Parabolarum.

<sup>7</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 121. 1.

taken with the things of it, its riches, honours, and pleasures; and had their portion in it, and were of worldly spirits; all which agrees with the Scribes and Pharisees; see Psal. xvii. 14. and Aben Ezra on it, who has the very phrase here used: *אִישׁ דְּעֵלְמָא*, *a man of the world*, is sometimes<sup>1</sup> distinguished from a scholar, or a wise man; but *בְּנֵי עֵלְמָא*, *the children of the world*, as they frequently intend the inhabitants of the world<sup>2</sup>, are sometimes distinguished from *בְּנֵי עֵלְמָא דְּאֵתֵי*, *a son of the world to come*<sup>3</sup>; and from *the children of faith*<sup>4</sup>, the same as *the children of light* here; by whom are meant the children of the Gospel dispensation; or persons enlightened by the spirit and grace of God, to see the sinfulness of sin, and their wretched state by nature; the insufficiency of their own righteousness to justify them before God; the way of life, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; who see that the several parts of salvation, and the whole, are of grace; have some light into the Scriptures of truth, and doctrines of the Gospel; and some glimpse of heaven, and the unseen glories of another world, though attended with much darkness in the present state; and who shall enjoy the light of glory. Now, the men of the world, or carnal men, are, generally speaking, wiser than these; not in things spiritual, but in things natural, in the affairs of life, in worldly matters. The phrase seems to answer to *דְּגֵלְדֵי*, *generations*, used in Gen. vi. 9. and xxxvii. 2. *these are the generations of Noah*, &c. and *the generations of Jacob*; by which are meant, not the genealogies of them, but their affairs; what befell them in life: and so the Jewish writers<sup>5</sup> explain the phrase by *דְּקִוְרֵי*, *the things which happened* unto them in this world, in the course of their pilgrimage: or they are wise, *וְיָסֵדוּ לְבָנֵיהֶם וְלְבָנֵי בָנֵיהֶם*, *for their own generation*; for the temporal good of their posterity, than saints are for the spiritual good of theirs: or they are wiser for the time that is to come in this life, than good men are concerning themselves for the time to come in the other world: or they are wiser, and more prudent in disposing of their worldly substance for their own secular good, and that of their offspring, than men of spiritual light and knowledge are, in disposing of their worldly substance for the glory of God, the interest of Christ, the honour of religion, their own spiritual good, and that of their posterity.

Ver. 9. *And I say unto you, &c.*] These are the words of Christ, as are also the latter part of the preceding verse, accommodating and applying the parable to his disciples, and for their instruction: *make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness*: by *mammon* are designed riches, wealth, and substance; see the note on Matt. vi. 24. and is called *mammon of unrighteousness*, because such wealth is often unrighteously detained, and is not made use of to right and good purposes, by the owners of it; or because, generally speaking, it is possessed by unrighteous men; and, for the most part, used in an unrighteous manner, in luxury, pride, and intemperance, and is the root,

instrument, and means of much unrighteousness: or it may be rendered *mammon of hurt*, or *hurtful mammon*; as it often is to those who are over-anxious and desirous of it, or either disuse or misuse it: or, as best of all, *mammon of falsehood*, or *deceitful mammon*: so in the Targum<sup>6</sup>, frequent mention is made of *מַמְוֹן דְּשִׁקְרָא*, *mammon of falsity*; and stands opposed to *truc riches*, in ver. 11. for worldly riches are very empty and fallacious; wherefore deceitfulness is ascribed to them; and they are called uncertain riches, which are not to be depended upon, Matt. xiii. 22. 1 Tim. vi. 17. unless it should be rather thought that it is so called, because gotten in an unrighteous way; as it was by Zaccheus, and might be by Matthew, one of the disciples, Christ now speaks to, and the publicans and sinners, who were lately become his followers, and whom he advises, as the highest piece of wisdom and prudence, to dispose of in such a manner, as of it to *make themselves friends*; not God, Father, Son, and Spirit. These indeed are friends to the saints, but they are not made so by money; reconciliation and redemption are not procured this way; nor is the favour of the judge to be got by such means; the only means of reconciliation, are the blood and death of Christ; though indeed acts of beneficence, rightly performed, are well pleasing to God: nor are the angels meant, who are very friendly to all good men; nor rich men, to whom riches are not to be given, Prov. xxii. 16. but rather riches themselves, which, if not rightly used, and so made friends of, will cry, and be a witness against the owners of them, Jam. v. 1, 2, 3. though it may be the poor saints are intended; who by their prayers are capable of doing either a great deal of hurt, or a great deal of good; and it is the interest of rich men to make them their friends: *that when ye fail*; of money; or *that fails*, as the Ethiopic version reads; or rather, when ye leave that, that is, when ye die: so in Jer. xlii. 22. *know certainly that ye shall die*: the Septuagint renders it, *ἐπισημαίνετε, ye shall fail by the sword, &c. they may receive you into everlasting habitations*: the mansions of glory, which are many, and of an eternal duration: this is to be understood of their being received thither, not by the poor, to whom they have been benefactors; for though these may now pray for their reception to glory when they die, and will hereafter rejoice at their reception thither; yet they themselves will not be receivers of them, or their introducers into the everlasting tents, or tabernacles: nor are the angels intended, who carry the souls of the righteous into Abraham's bosom, and will gather the elect together at the last day; for not they, but God and Christ, receive the saints to glory: the words may be rendered impersonally, *you may be received*: in a way of well-doing, though not for it: mention is made of *the everlasting tabernacles*, in 2 Esdras ii. 11. and so the phrase may be rendered here, as opposed to the earthly and perishable tabernacles of the body, 2 Cor. v. 1. 2 Pet. i. 13, 14.

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 27. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 26. 2. & 58. 3, 4. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 99. 3. & 101. 2. & 102. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 59. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Zohar in Num. fol. 50. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Aben Ezra in Gen. vi. 9. & xxxvii. 2. Sol. Urbin Ohel Moed, fol. 85. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Targum in Job xxvii. 8. & in Isa v. 23. & xxxiii. 15. & in Ezek. xxii. 27. & in Hos. v. 11.

Ver. 10. *He that is faithful in that which is least, &c.*] In quantity and quality, especially the latter; in that which is of little value and worth, at least when compared with other things: *is faithful also in much*; in matters of greater consequence and importance: the sense of the proverb is, that, generally speaking, a man that acts a faithful part in a small trust committed to him, does so likewise in a much larger; and being tried, and found faithful in things of less moment, he is intrusted with things of greater importance; though this is not always the case: for sometimes a man may behave with great integrity in lesser matters, on purpose that he might gain greater confidence, which, when he has obtained, he abuses in the vilest manner; but because it is usually otherwise, our Lord uses the common proverb; and of like sense is the following; *and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much*: that man that acts the unfaithful part in a small matter, and of little worth, generally does the same, if a greater trust is committed to him.

Ver. 11. *If therefore ye have not been faithful, &c.*] This is the application of the above proverbial expressions, and seems to be directed to the disciples of Christ, though not without a view to the covetous Scribes and Pharisees, who were in hearing of it, and were disturbed at it, ver. 14. and the meaning is, that whereas some of them might have been unfaithful, and have acted the unjust part of gathering of riches, as Matthew, and other publicans, that were now become the followers of Christ; if therefore they should be unfaithful in the *unrighteous mammon*; in the disposing of it to improper uses, which was either unrighteously gotten, and therefore called, as it sometimes was, *מכון דרשע*, *mammon of ungodliness*, or *ungodly mammon*<sup>x</sup>; or, which was fallacious, deceitful, vain, and transitory: *who will commit to your trust the true riches*; or *mammon*? that is, how should you expect to be intrusted with the riches of grace, as the blessings and promises of the covenant of grace, the graces of the spirit of God, which truly enrich persons, and are solid and durable? or the riches of glory, the better and more enduring substance in heaven, signified by a kingdom, and an inheritance that fadeth not away? so the Jews call the good things of another world, and say  $\gamma$ , that "all the good things of this world are not *אמתיות טובות*, *true good things*, in comparison of the good things of the world to come." And they use the same distinction with respect to *mammon*, as here: "the holy, blessed God, they say<sup>z</sup>, gives him, *מכון של אמת*, *mammon of truth*, or true *mammon*; and he makes it *שקר*, "false, or deceitful." or rather the rich treasure of the Gospel is meant, called a treasure in earthen vessels, and the unsearchable riches of Christ; and is comparable to, and of more worth than gold, silver, and precious stones. And so the Syriac version renders it, *who will trust you with the truth?* with the truth of the Gospel.

Ver. 12. *And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, &c.*] Which is not a man's own, but what is committed to him by another; *במכון אחרים*, *with the mammon of others*<sup>a</sup>; to speak in the language of the Jews; and of mammon, our Lord is speaking, and here of another man's, of which they were only stewards, as he in the preceding parable was: hence we read<sup>b</sup> of *שומרי מכון*, *keepers of mammon*, who were intrusted with another's substance; and such are here supposed, which, if unfaithful in, *who shall give you that which is your own?* that is, should you unjustly detain, or make an ill use of another man's substance lodged in your hands, how can you expect but that you will be dealt with in like manner by others, who will not pay you yours, they have in their possession, but convert it to their own use? A like distinction of another's, and a man's own, may be observed among the Jews: "there are (say they<sup>c</sup>), "four sorts of men in respect of giving alms; he that would give, but would not have others give, his eye is evil, *בשל אחרים*, *in that which is other men's* (*i. e.* "as the commentator observes<sup>d</sup>, lest the goods of others should be increased, and they get a good name); he that would that others should give, but he will not give himself, his eye is evil, *בשלו*, *in that which is his own*; he that gives, and would have others give, he is a good man; he that neither gives, nor would have others give, he is an *ungodly man*;" see Rom. v. 7, 8. Interpreters generally understand by that *which is another man's*, in the first clause, the things of this world, which men are possessed of, because these are not of themselves, but from another, from God; and they are but stewards, rather than proprietors of them; and they are for the good of others, and not for themselves; and are not lasting, but in a little while will pass from them to others: and by that *which is your own*, they understand the good things of grace and glory, which, when once bestowed on a man, are his own property, and for his own use, and will never be alienated from him, but will always abide with him: but if he is unfaithful in the former, how should he expect the latter to be given to him?

Ver. 13. *No servant can serve two masters, &c.*] See the note on Matt. vi. 24.

Ver. 14. *And the Pharisees also who were covetous, &c.*] Or lovers of money, the love of which is the root of all evil; and that they were, is evident from their devouring widows' houses, under a pretence of making long prayers for them, Matt. xxiii. 14. *heard all these things*; as well as the disciples, being in company with them, ch. xv. 2. even the parable concerning the unjust steward, and the application of it; and the directions given about using the things of this world, and the distributing of them to the poor, and shewing a greater concern for riches of an higher nature: *and they derided him*: lift up their nose, or drew it out to him, as the word signifies, in a sneering way; they rejected and despised what he said about their injustice, in their stewardship; the calling of them to an account for it,

<sup>x</sup> Targum in Hab. ii. 9.

<sup>y</sup> Tzeror Mamnor, fol. 23. 2.

<sup>z</sup> Shemot Rabbah, sect. 31. fol. 134. 4.

<sup>a</sup> Jarchi in Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 13.

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>b</sup> T. Hieros. Succa, fol. 53. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 13.

<sup>d</sup> Jarchi in ib.

and the turning of them out of it; and concerning the true use of worldly riches, and the contempt of them; they looked upon themselves safe and secure in the good opinion of the people, and happy in the enjoyment of worldly things; and looked upon him as a weak man, to talk in the manner he did.

Ver. 15. *And he said unto them, &c.*] That is, Jesus said unto them, as the Syriac and Persic versions express it: *ye are they which justify yourselves before men: from the sins of injustice, unfaithfulness, covetousness, and all others; and would be thought, and appear to be righteous; but 'tis only in the sight of men, who can only see the outside of things, and judge thereby: but God knoweth your hearts; and what is in them, the deceitfulness, hypocrisy, covetousness, and cruelty of them, which are hid from the eyes of men: for that which is highly esteemed among men; or what is high in the account and esteem of men, as the outward appearance of these men for morality, religion, and holiness; their zeal for the ceremonies of the law, and the traditions of the elders: is abomination in the sight of God: who knew full well from what principles, and with what views they acted, to gain popular applause, and amass riches to themselves, without any concern for the glory of God, and the good of men: see Isa. lxxv. 5.*

Ver. 16. *The law and the prophets were until John, &c.*] Till the time that John the Baptist began his ministry; for till then, the law and the prophets, with the Hagiographa, or holy writings, for into these three parts the Jews divided the books of the Old Testament, were the only writings they had; and which contained the whole of the revelation granted to them; and which they wrested, and put false glosses on; and therefore it was no wonder that they derided Christ, and despised his ministry: and whereas spiritual things were promised in these writings, under the notion of temporal ones; which they not understanding, might imagine the doctrine of Christ, concerning the contempt of worldly riches, was contrary to: and since they valued themselves on having the law and the prophets, Christ observes, that *since that time, the kingdom of God is preached; the Gospel, and the mysteries of it, relating to the kingdom of the Messiah, his person, office, and grace; and to the kingdom of grace, which lies not in outward, but in inward and spiritual things; and to the kingdom of heaven, or glory hereafter; and which is a superior dispensation to that of the law and the prophets, and sets things in a clearer, plainer, and better light: and every man presseth into it; the Gospel dispensation, the kingdom of the Messiah; that he may enter into it, as the Syriac and Persic versions add; which the Scribes and Pharisees did all they could to hinder; see Matt. xxiii. 13. large multitudes crowded the ministry of John, of Christ, and of his apostles; the people flocked in great numbers to hear the word, and seemed disposed to embrace the doctrines of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; they pressed on one another to hear it, and through many difficulties, discouragements, and obstacles, the Pharisees threw in their way; there was scarce a man but seemed very desirous of attending upon the preaching of it, and pressed hard for it; and with much force and violence, with great eagerness and endeavour broke his way to*

it; though a different sense is given by others reading the words, and every one suffers violence to himself for it, as the Arabic version; or is oppressed for it, as the Ethiopic; that is, suffers reproach, contradiction, and persecution, for the sake of hearing it.

Ver. 17. *And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, &c.*] This is said by Christ, lest it should be thought by his saying, that the law and the prophets were until John, that they were no longer, nor of any more use; but were now abrogated and laid aside; whereas heaven and earth might sooner pass away, and the whole frame of nature be dissolved: *than one tittle of the law to fail; which, and the prophets, in all the precepts, promises, types, figures, prophecies, &c. thereof, had their full accomplishment in the person, miracles, obedience, sufferings, and death of Christ; see Matt. v. 18.*

Ver. 18. *Whosoever putteth away his wife, &c.*] For any other cause than for adultery, as the Jews used to do upon every trifling occasion, and for every little disgust: by which instance our Lord shews, how the Jews abused and depraved the law, and as much as in them lay, caused it to fail; and how he, on the other hand, was so far from destroying and making it of none effect, that he maintained the purity and spirituality of it; putting them in mind of what he had formerly said, and of many other things of the like kind along with it; how that if a man divorces his wife, for any thing else but the defiling his bed, and marrieth another, committeth adultery, with her that he marries: because his marriage with the former still continues, and cannot be made void by such a divorce: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband; the phrase *from her husband*, is omitted in the Syriac and Persic versions: *committeth adultery; with her that he marries, because notwithstanding her husband's divorce of her, and his after-marriage with her, she still remains his lawful and proper wife; see the note on Matt. v. 32. The Ethiopic version reads this last clause, quite different from all others, thus, and whosoever puts away her husband, and joins to another, commits adultery, agreeably to Mark x. 12. see the note there.*

Ver. 19. *There was a certain rich man, &c.*] In Beza's most ancient copy, and in another manuscript of his 'tis read by way of preface, *he said also another parable: which shews, that this is not a history of matter of fact, or an historical account of two such persons, as the rich man and the beggar, who had lately lived at Jerusalem; though the Papists pretend, to this day, to point out the very spot of ground in Jerusalem, where this rich man's house stood: nor is it to be understood parabolically of any particular rich man, or prince; as Saul the first king of Israel; or Herod, who now was reigning, and was clothed in purple, and lived in a sumptuous manner: nor of rich men in general, though it greatly describes the characters of such, at least of many of them; who only take care of their bodies, and neglect their souls; adorn and pamper them, live in pleasure, and grow wanton, and have no regard to the poor saints; and when they die go to hell; for their riches will not profit them in a day of wrath, nor deliver from it, or be regarded by the judge, any more than hills and mountains will hide them from his face: but by the rich man are meant, the Jews in*



general; for that this man is represented, and to be considered as a Jew, is evident from Abraham being his father, and his calling him so, and Abraham again calling him his son, ver. 24, 25. of which relation the Jews much boasted and gloried in; and from his brethren having Moses and the prophets, ver. 29. which were peculiar to the Jewish people; and from that invincible and incurable infidelity in them, that they would not believe, though one rose from the dead, ver. 31. as the Jews would not believe in Christ though he himself rose from the dead, which was the sign he gave them of his being the Messiah: and the general design of the parable, is to expose the wickedness and unbelief of the Jews, and to shew their danger and misery, for their contempt and rejection of the Messiah; and particularly the Pharisees are designed, who being covetous, had derided Christ for what he had before said; and, who though high in the esteem of men, were an abomination to God, ver. 14, 15. These more especially boasted of Abraham being their father; and of their being the disciples of Moses, and trusted in him, and in his law; and thought they should have eternal life through having and reading the books of Moses and the prophets: these may be called a *man*, because this was the name by which the Jews style themselves, in distinction from the Gentiles, whom they compare to beasts; see the note on Matt. xv. 26. and this they ground on a passage in Ezek. xxxiv. 31. and *ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men*: upon which their note is, "ye are called, אֲנָשִׁים, *men*, but the nations of the "earth are not called men." And they may be called a *certain man*, a famous man, a man of note, as the Jews, and especially the Pharisees, thought themselves to be; and therefore coveted the chief places in the synagogues, and at feasts, and loved salutations and greetings in market-places, and to be called of men Rabbi, and master: as also a *rich man*; for the Jews in general were a wealthy people, lived in a very fruitful country, and were greatly indulged with the riches of providential goodness; and particularly the Pharisees, many of whom were of the great sanhedrim, and rulers of synagogues, and elders of the people; and who by various methods, amassed to themselves great riches, and even devoured widows' houses; see Luke vi. 24. and xviii. 18, 23. and they were also rich in outward means and ordinances, having the oracles of God, his word, worship, and service; and as to their spiritual and eternal estate, in their own esteem; though they were not truly rich in grace, not in faith, nor in spiritual knowledge, nor even in good works, of which they so much boasted; but in appearance, and in their own conceit, they were rich in the knowledge of the law, and in righteousness, which they imagined was perfect, and so stood in need of nothing; no, not of repentance, and especially of Christ, or of any thing from him: *which was clothed in purple and fine linen*: or *byssus*, which is said to grow on a tree, in height equal to a poplar, and in leaves like a willow, and was brought out of India into Egypt, and much used there, as it also was among the Jews: hence we often read <sup>5</sup> of בִּגְדֵי בַיִשָּׁשׁ, or לבושין דבשן, *garments of byssus*, or fine linen:

the Jews in general dressed well; their common apparel were fine linen and silk; see Ezek. xvi. 10, 13. and so the Arabic version here renders it, *silk and purple*: and the Persic version, *silks and bombycines*: and the priests particularly, were arrayed in such a habit; and the robe of the ephod, and also its curious girdle, were of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen, and at the hem of it were pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet, Exod. xxviii. 6, 8, 33. And as for the Pharisees, they loved to go in long robes, and to make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, which were fringes of blue, joined unto them; and which may figuratively express the fine outside shew of holiness and righteousness, they made; and *farèd sumptuously every day*. The Jews in common lived well, being in a land that flowed with milk and honey; see Ezek. xvi. 13. and especially the priests, who offered up lambs every day, besides other offerings, of which they had their part; as also the Pharisees, who were often at feasts, where they loved the chief places: and this may signify the easy and jocund life they lived; knowing no sorrow upon spiritual accounts, having no sense of sin, nor sight of the spirituality of the law, nor view of danger; but at perfect ease, and not emptied from vessel to vessel.

Ver. 20. *And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, &c.*] By whom is designed, not any particular beggar in the times of Christ, that went by this name; though there were such persons in Israel, and in the times of our Lord; as blind Bartimeus, and others: nor David, in the times of Saul, who was poor and needy; and who sometimes wanted bread, and at a certain time went to Abimelech for some: nor the godly poor in common, though the heirs of the heavenly kingdom are, generally speaking, the poor of this world; these receive Christ and his Gospel, and have their evil things here, and their good things hereafter; they are now slighted and neglected by men, but shall hereafter have a place in Abraham's bosom, and be for ever with the Lord: nor are the Gentiles intended; though they may be said to be poor and helpless, as they were without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, and without hope and God in the world; and were despised and rejected by the Jews, and not suffered to come into their temple, and were called and treated as dogs; though, as the Syrophœnician woman pleaded, the dogs might eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table; and who, upon the breaking down of the middle wall of partition, were called by grace, and drawn to Christ, and were blessed with faithful Abraham, and made to sit down with him in the kingdom of heaven: but our Lord Jesus Christ himself is here meant; as appears from the cause and occasion of this parable, which was the derision of Christ by the covetous Pharisees, who, though high in the esteem of men, were an abomination to God; and from the scope and design of it, which is to represent the mean and despicable condition of Christ in this world, whilst the Pharisees, his enemies, lived in great pomp and

<sup>5</sup> T. Bab. Bera Metzia, fol. 114. 2. & Kinchi in loc.

<sup>6</sup> P. Astruc. in Pollon. l. 2. c. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Targum in Gen. xli. 42. in 2 Chron. v. 12. & in Ezek. xlv. 17.

splendour; and the exaltation of Christ hereafter, when they would be in the utmost distress; and also the infidelity of that people, who continued in their unbelief, notwithstanding the resurrection of Christ from the dead: the name Lazarus well agrees with him. The Syriac version calls him *Loozar*, as if it signified one that was helpless, that had no help, but wanted it, and so a fit name for a beggar; and well suits with Christ, who looked, and there was none to help, Isa. lxiii. 5. nor did he receive any help from men; though rather, the word is the contraction of Eleazar, and so the Ethiopic version reads it here; and it is easy to observe, that he who is called R. Eleazar in the Babylonian Talmud, is in the Jerusalem called, times without number, ר' לעזר, *R. Lazar*<sup>b</sup>; and R. Liezer, is put for R. Eliezer: it is a rule given by one of the Jewish writers<sup>i</sup>, that "in the Jerusalem Talmud, wherever R. Eleazar is written "without an *aleph*, R. Lazar ben Azariah is intended." And Christ may very well be called by this name; since this was the name of one of his types, Eleazar the son of Aaron, and one of his ancestors, who is mentioned in his genealogy, Matt. i. 15. and especially as the name signifies, that the Lord was his helper: see Exod. xviii. 4. Help was promised him by God, and he expected it, and firmly believed he should have it, and accordingly he had it: God did help him in a day of salvation: and which was no indication of weakness in him, who is the mighty God, and mighty to save; but of the father's regard to him as man, and mediator; and of the concern that each of the divine persons had for, and in man's salvation: and on account of his circumstances of life, he might be called *πτωχος*, a *poor man*, as he is in 2 Cor. viii. 9. and frequently in prophecy; see Psal. xxxiv. 6. and xl. 17. and xli. 1. and lxix. 29. Eccl. ix. 14. Isa. lxvi. 2. Zech. ix. 9. and though by assuming human nature, he did not cease to be God, or to lose the riches of his divine nature and perfections, yet his divine perfections, and the glory of them, were much hid and covered in his state of humiliation; and he was much the reverse of many of them in his human nature; in which he was exposed to much outward poverty and meanness: he was born of poor parents; had no liberal education; was brought up to a trade: had not a foot of ground to call his own, nor where to lay his head: and lived upon the ministrations of others to him; and when he died, had nothing to bequeath his mother, but left her to the care of a disciple: and he is further described, by his posture and situation, *which was laid at his gate*: that is, at the *rich man's*, as is expressed in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions: this was the place where beggars stood, or were laid, and asked alms; hence is that rule with the Jews<sup>k</sup>, and in many other places the following phrase; "if a man dies and leaves sons and daughters—if he leaves but a small substance, the daughters shall be taken care of, and the sons, **שאלו על הפתח**, *shall beg at the gates*." This denotes

the rejection of Christ by the Jews; he came to them, and they received him not; he had no entrance into their hearts, and was admitted but into few of their houses; they put those that confessed him out of their synagogues; and caused him himself to depart out of some of their cities; they delivered him up unto the Gentiles that were without; and at last led him without the gate of Jerusalem, where he suffered: *full of sores*; so Nahum Ganzu<sup>l</sup> is said to have his whole body, כלא שדון, *full of ulcers*: sometimes the Jewish phrase, which answers to the word here used, is כוונה שדון, *one plagued with ulcers*<sup>m</sup>; and this by the commentators<sup>n</sup>, is explained of a *leprous* person; so one of the names of the Messiah is with the Jews<sup>o</sup>, ריוורה, which signifies *leprous*: in proof of which, they produce Isa. liii. 4. *Surely he hath borne our griefs, &c.* By these *sores* may be meant, sins; see Psal. xxxviii. 5, 7. Isa. i. 6. Christ was holy and righteous in himself, in his nature, life, and conversation; he was without both original, and actual sins, yet he was in the likeness of sinful flesh, and was reproached and calumniated by men as a sinner; and had really and actually all the sins of his people on him, by imputation; and was made even sin itself, for them; so that in this sense he might be said to be full of them, though in himself he was free from them: they may also intend the temptations of Satan, those fiery darts which were flung at him, and by which he suffered; as also the reproaches and persecutions of men, which attended him more or less, from the cradle to the cross; together with all his other sorrows and sufferings, being scourged, buffeted, and beaten, and wounded for our sins, and bruised for our transgressions; of which wounds and bruises he might be said to be full.

Ver. 21. *And desiring to be fed with the crumbs, &c.* The offal food, broken bread, fragments of meat: that food which falls from the knife, or plate, in eating, and from thence on the ground; and literally understood, may express the low condition Christ was in, in his human nature: he assumed a true body, like to ours, and partook of the same flesh and blood with us, and was liable to the same infirmities as ours, which are sinless; and among the rest, was subject to hunger and thirst, and was obliged to the ministrations of others for a subsistence: and it may also express his contentment in such a condition; he never murmured at the providence of God, but was entirely resigned to his will; he did not desire to live in fulness and affluence, but avoided and shunned every step that led unto it; nor did he envy the plenty of others, and was fully satisfied with his meanness; nor did he ever work a miracle for the sake of feeding himself. Moreover, the words being understood mystically, may design the elect of God among the Jews, who, like crumbs, were few in number, a seed, a remnant, according to the election of grace; there were but few among them that were chosen of God, and effectually called by his grace; and but a little flock to whom he gave the kingdom; and a small number, who entered in at the strait gate, and were

<sup>b</sup> T. Hieros. Biccirim, fol. 63. 3, 4. & 64. 1. & 66. 3, 4. & Sheviith, fol. 36. 3. & passim.

<sup>i</sup> Juchasin, fol. 81. 1.

<sup>k</sup> Misn. Bava Bathra, c. 9. sect. 1. & T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 140. 2. Piske Tosaph. in Cetubot, art. 138, 372.

<sup>l</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 21. 1.

<sup>m</sup> Misn. Cetubot, c. 3. sect. 5. & 7. 10.

<sup>n</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>o</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2.

saved; and these few were very mean and despicable for their outward poverty; for the poor had the Gospel preached to them, and they received it, when the rich, and the rulers of the people, rejected it: and they were like crumbs for their small degree of worldly wisdom and knowledge, being babes, simple, and foolish, who followed Christ, while the learned, wise, and prudent despised him; and for their sinfulness and vileness, being, generally speaking, notorious sinners, publicans and harlots; and of these it may be said what follows, *which fell from the rich man's table*; being originally of the Jews, but separated from them by the grace of God, and rejected by them with scorn and contempt. These Christ desired; see Cant. vii. 10. his desire was towards them from everlasting, when he asked them of his father, and they were given to him; and it was not only after their persons, but after their salvation, and that both in eternity and in time; and which he signified by various words and actions; and it is towards them, while in a state of unregeneracy, that they may be converted, and believe in him; and when they are called, he delights in the grace he puts in them, and in the righteousness he puts upon them; he takes pleasure in their company; he desires them for his habitation; he stands at the door and knocks for admission to them; and nothing is he more earnestly solicitous for, and eager after, than their being with him in glory to all eternity; and his end in all, is to be fed or satisfied with them; see Isa. liii. 11. he came into the world to gather these scattered crumbs and fragments together; it was his meat and drink, to work out their salvation; and it will be his highest joy and pleasure to present them to his father, and himself, complete and perfect, and introduce them into his kingdom and glory: he will be fully satisfied in them, and they in him, when they shall awake in his likeness. Then will all Christ's desires, prayers, and intercessions, have their full accomplishment. The Vulgate Latin adds, *and no man gave to him*; which seems to be transcribed from ch. xv. 16. and is not supported by any copy or version. *Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores*: by the dogs are meant not the Jews, though they are sometimes so called, and especially the Scribes and Pharisees, Psal. xxii. 16, 20. Isa. lvi. 10, 11. Phil. iii. 2. for these made his sores and wounds, or were the authors of his sorrows and sufferings; but rather the Gentiles, who were so called by the Jews; see the note on Matt. xv. 26. because these creatures were unclean by the law, and had in the greatest contempt by the Jews; and for their barbarity, malice, and cruelty, Deut. xxiii. 18. 1 Sam. xxiv. 14. 2 Kings viii. 12, 13. as the Gentiles were by the Jews esteemed unclean and unfit, either for civil or religious conversation; and were treated as aliens by them; and were indeed in their Heathenish state, barbarous and inhuman, and lived in malice, hateful, and hating one another: these, some of them came to Christ in person, as the centurion, and Syro-phenician woman, many of the Samaritans, who, with the Jews, were all one as Heathens, and several

Grecians at the feast; and many of them also came to him by faith, through the ministry of his servants, under the influence of divine grace, and that according to various prophecies in the Old Testament, concerning the calling and gathering of the Gentiles to him: these embraced a crucified Christ; and fed upon the slain Lamb of God; eat his flesh, and drank his blood; stretched forth the hand of faith, and thrust it into his bleeding wounds; and lived by faith on him, who was wounded and bruised for their sins, and whose blood was shed for the remission of them.

Ver. 22. *And it came to pass that the beggar died, &c.*] The death of Christ was not a casual thing, a fortuitous event; it was agreed unto, and settled in the covenant of grace; it was spoken of by the prophets of the Old Testament; it was typified by the sacrifices of the law, and other things; it was foretold by Christ himself, and was the end of his coming into this world, wherein the great love, both of him and of his father, is expressed; and is the main article of the Christian faith; so that this came to pass according to the decrees of God, the counsel, and covenant of peace, the will of Christ, and his predictions, and as the accomplishment of the law, and prophets: it was not a natural, but violent death which Christ died; and yet it was both voluntary and necessary; it was but once, and is of an eternal efficacy, and is a sacrifice acceptable to God; it was not for himself, or any sin of his, who knew none, nor for the angels, and their redemption, whose nature he did not assume; but for men, and for their sins. Christ died not merely as an example to them, or only to confirm his doctrines; but as a substitute, in the room and stead of his people; to atone for their sins, and satisfy divine justice; to procure the pardon of them in a way of justice; to take them away, and utterly abolish them; to bring in an everlasting righteousness; to obtain eternal redemption, and bring such nigh to God who were afar off, and that men might live through him now, and have eternal life by him hereafter: *and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom*: by Abraham's bosom is meant heaven; a phrase well known to the Jews, by which they commonly expressed the happiness of the future state: of Abraham's happy state they had no doubt; and when they spake of the happiness of another's, they sometimes signified it by going to Abraham; as when the mother of the seven sons, slain by Cæsar, saw her youngest going to be sacrificed<sup>p</sup>, "she fell upon him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and said unto him, my son, לך אנכי אברהם אביים, go to Abraham, your father, and tell him, thus saith my mother, &c." and sometimes, as here, by being in his bosom. So it is said<sup>q</sup>, that Eliezer his servant (Abraham's, the same name with Lazarus) מונה בזיקו, is laid in his bosom: and which may refer to the account in the Talmud<sup>r</sup>, that when R. Benaah, the painter of caves, came to the cave of Abraham, he found Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, דקאי קמיה, standing before him. And it is also said<sup>s</sup> of Rabbi, when he died, היום יושב בזיקו של אברהם, this day he

<sup>p</sup> Echa Rabbati, fol. 19. 4.

<sup>q</sup> In Sepher Emana, c. 1. p. 20.

<sup>r</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 58. 1.

<sup>s</sup> T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 72. 2. Juchasin, fol. 75. 2.

sits in the bosom of Abraham; for as it was usual with them to represent the joys of heaven by a feast, so the partaking of them, by sitting down at a table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; see Matt. viii. 12. and as their manner at meals was by lying along on couches at eating; he that lay next another might be said to lie, or lean, in his bosom: hence Abraham's bosom came to signify the near and intimate enjoyment of happiness with him in the other world. The ascension of Christ is expressed by a being *carried up into heaven*, Luke xxiv. 51. and here he is entered, and has been received, and will be retained, until the time of the restitution of all things; here he is glorified in human nature, sits at the right hand of God, and appears in his presence, on the behalf of his people; and indeed, the ends of his going there, were to receive gifts for them, to be their advocate and intercessor, to take possession of heaven in their name, and prepare that for them, and them for that; and hither he was *carried by angels*: these were the chariots in which he rode; and these the guard that attended him, when he was seen, looked upon, and gazed at by them with adoration, faith, and wonder; which shews the ministration of angels to him, and seems to set forth the glory and magnificence in which he ascended; and this agrees with the notions of the Jews, that when good men die, their souls are immediately received by angels, and taken under their care, and carried to heaven. So one of their paraphrasts<sup>1</sup>, having mentioned the garden of Eden, which is but another name for heaven with them, adds, "into which no man can enter but the righteous, whose souls are carried thither, בְּרִד מַלְאָכִים, *in the hand, or by the means of angels.*" And elsewhere they say, "with the Shekinah come three ministering angels to receive the soul of a righteous man." Particularly it is said of Moses, at the time of his death<sup>2</sup>, that "the holy blessed God descended from the highest heavens, to take the soul of Moses, and three ministering angels with him." And sometimes they say<sup>3</sup>, not only three angels, but three companies of angels attend at such a time: their words are these; "when a righteous man departs out of the world, three companies of ministering angels meet him; one says to him, *come in peace*; and another says, *walking in his uprightness*" and the other says, *he shall enter into peace, &c.*" No mention is made in this parable of the burial of this man, nor any words used expressive of it, or that in the least hint it. The reason is, because Christ lay so short a time in the grave, and he was not left there, nor did he see corruption; but in a very little while was raised from the dead, and delivered from the power of the grave; when, after some stay on earth, he was attended by angels to the highest heavens: for this is to be understood, not of his soul being had to paradise immediately upon his separation from the body; but of his ascension to heaven after his resurrection, when he was escorted by angels thither. *The rich man also died.* This may be understood both of the natural death of the Scribes and Pharisees; who, though they were dignified persons, were as gods, yet were mortal,

and died like men; see Psal. lxxxii. 6, 7. compared with John x. 34, 35. and they died in their sins, in their unbelief of the Messiah, and so were damned; in their impunctance and hardness of heart, for as they thought they needed no repentance, they were not called unto it; and in the sin against the Holy Ghost, blaspheming the miracles of Christ done by him, and which was a sin unto death; and under the power and guilt of all their other sins, and so were lost and perished. And it may also be understood of the political and ecclesiastical death of the Jewish people; which lay in the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, and of the temple, and in the abolition of the temple-worship, and of the whole ceremonial law; a *Lo-ammi* was written upon their church-state, and the covenant between God and them was broken; the Gospel was removed from them, which was as death, as the return of it, and their call by it, will be as life from the dead; as well as their place and nation, their civil power and authority were taken away from them by the Romans; and a death of afflictions, by captivity and calamities, of every kind, have attended them ever since. And it is to be observed, that Lazarus died before the rich man, as Christ died before the destruction of the Jewish polity and church-state: the city and sanctuary were not destroyed, nor the daily sacrifice made to cease, nor the consummation, and that determined, poured upon the desolate, until some time after the Messiah was cut off, according to the prophecy in Dan. vii. 26, 27. Moreover, no mention is made of the rich man being carried by angels, as Lazarus was; and if he was, he was carried, not by the good, but by the evil angels, and not into Abraham's bosom, but to hell. So the Jews<sup>4</sup> say, "if a soul is worthy, how many holy troops, or companies, are ready to join it, and bring it up into paradise? but if not worthy, how many strange troops are ready to bring it in the way of hell? these are the troops of the destroying angels." However, this is said of him, as is not of Lazarus, and was buried: as wicked men are, when sometimes the saints are not; see Eccl. viii. 10. Psal. lxxix. 2, 3. The Scribes and Pharisees, who were so diligent to build and garnish the sepulchres of the prophets, among their other instances of pride and vanity, took care, no doubt, to provide and erect stately monuments for themselves; and who were buried in great pomp and splendour. Though this may respect their church-state, service, and ceremonies, which received their death-blow at the crucifixion of Christ, but remained for some time unburied, it being with difficulty that these things were got under the feet of the church; and may also refer to the political state of the Jews, who, as a nation, are represented as in their graves, where they are to this day, and will be until they shall be turned unto the Lord, when they shall be brought out of their graves, and shall live and return to their own land, Ezek. xxxvii. 12, 13, 14. The Vulgate Latin adds, *in hell*; but this belongs to the following verse.

Ver. 23. *And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, &c.*] Which may design the place of torment, and the miserable state the Scribes and Pharisees, as

<sup>1</sup> Targum in Cant. iv. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Midrash Haneclam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 65. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Debarim Rabba, sect. 11. fol. 245. 4.

<sup>4</sup> T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 104. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 89. 3.

all wicked men, enter immediately into upon death, Psal. ix. 17. who in their lifetime were blind, and are called blind guides, blind watchmen, blind leaders of the blind, and who were given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart; but in hell their eyes are opened, and they see their mistakes about the Messiah, and find themselves in torments, under dreadful gnawings, and remorse of conscience; and having a terrible sensation of divine wrath, their worm dies not, and their fire is not quenched: or this may regard the vengeance of God on the Jews, at the destruction of Jerusalem; when a fire was kindled against their land, and burned to the lowest hell; and consumed the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains; and the whole land became brimstone, salt, and burning; and they were rooted out of it in anger, wrath, and great indignation; see Deut. xxix. 23, 27, 28, and xxxii. 22. or rather, the dreadful calamities which came upon them in the times of Adrian at Bithur; when their false Messiah Bar Cochab was taken and slain, and such multitudes of them were destroyed in the most miserable manner, when that people, who before had their eyes darkened, and a spirit of slumber and stupidity fallen upon them, in those calamities began to be under some convictions: and seeth Abraham afar off: the 'covenant of circumcision given to him, and to them his natural seed, now of no use to them; their descent from him, of which they boasted, and in which they trusted, now of no avail; and him in the kingdom of heaven, and themselves thrust out; see Luke xiii. 28. And Lazarus in his bosom; they now found the Messiah was come, and was gone to heaven, whither they could not come, John vii. 33, 34. The Jews are convinced that the Messiah is born, though not revealed; and they sometimes confess, that he was born the same day Jerusalem was destroyed; and sometimes they say, he sits at the gates of Rome among the lepers, and at other times, that he is in the walks of paradise.<sup>a</sup> This is said in agreement with the notions of the Jews, that wicked men will see the righteous in happiness, and themselves in torment; by which the latter will be aggravated, to which the allusion is; for they say<sup>b</sup>, "the gates of paradise are fixed over against the gates of hell, so that they can see the righteous in rest, and themselves in distress."

Ver. 24. *And he cried and said, father Abraham, &c.* The Jews used to call Abraham their father, and were proud of their descent from him, Matt. iii. 9. John viii. 33, 39, and so persons are after death represented by them, as speaking to, and discoursing with him; as in the passage cited in the note on ver. 22. to which the following may be added<sup>c</sup>; "says R. Jonathan, "from whence does it appear that the dead discourse "with each other? it is said, Deut. xxxiv. 4. *And the Lord said unto him, this is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, &c.* "what is the meaning of the word saying? the holy "blessed God said to Moses, *go say to Abraham, &c.*" And here the Jews, in their distress, are represented as applying to him, saying, *have mercy on me, and send*

*Lazarus*; which seems to have respect to the mercy promised to Abraham, the covenant made with him, and the oath sworn unto him, to send the Messiah, Luke i. 72, 73, and which now, too late, these wretched Jews plead, the Messiah being sent already: *that he may dip the tip of his finger in water*, in allusion to the washings and purifications among the Jews, and the sprinkling of blood by the finger of the high-priest; which were typical of cleansing, pardon, comfort, and refreshment, by the grace and blood of Christ: *and cool my tongue*; which had spoken so many scurrilous and blasphemous things of Christ; saying that he was a sinner, a glutton, and a wine-bibber, a Samaritan, and had a devil; that he cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils; and that he was a seditious person, and guilty of blasphemy: so the Jews represent persons in hell, desirous of cooling water, and as sometimes favoured with it, and sometimes not: they say<sup>d</sup>, he that reads *Keriat Shema*, (i. e. *hear, O Israel, &c.*) and very accurately examines the letters of it, מַצְנִיחַ, *they cool hell for him*, as it is said, Psal. lxxviii. 14. And elsewhere<sup>e</sup>, they speak of a disciple, or good man, that was seen after death amidst gardens, and orchards, and fountains of water; and of a publican, or wicked man, seen standing by the bank of a river, seeking "מִיָּא רֵא מֵיָּא לֵא מֵיָּא, *to come to the water, but could not come at it.* So Mahomet<sup>f</sup> has a passage that is somewhat like to this text; "the inhabitants of hell-fire, "shall call to the inhabitants of paradise, saying, pour "upon us some water, or of those refreshments God "hath bestowed on you." This man could not so much as get a drop of water to cool his tongue, nor the least refreshment, nor mitigation of the anguish of his conscience, for the sins of his tongue: *for I am tormented in this flame*; in the destruction of Jerusalem, and calamities at Bithur, and other afflictions; together with the wrath of God poured into the conscience, and the bitter remorses of that for speaking against the Messiah; and which are still greater in hell, where the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.

Ver. 25. *But Abraham said, son, &c.* He calls him *son*, not in a spiritual sense; he was not one of Abraham's spiritual seed, that trod in the steps of his faith; but because he was so according to the flesh; and in return to his calling him father: good men have not always good children, nor is any trust to be put in birth and parentage: *remember, that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things*; temporal good things; a land flowing with milk and honey; all the outward blessings of life that could be wished for, the Jews had, whilst they were in their own land; and also ecclesiastical good things, as the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, the fathers, and the Messiah according to the flesh, even all external privileges and ordinances, Rom. ix. 4, 5. *And likewise Lazarus evil things*; Christ was surrounded with the infirmities of human nature, he assumed; was attended with much outward meanness and poverty; was loaded with ca-

<sup>a</sup> Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud. col. 372.

<sup>b</sup> Synagog. Jud. c. 50. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 1. Aben Ezra in Cant. vii. 5. T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 5. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Tzeror Haamor, fol. 125. 3.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 18. 2.

<sup>e</sup> Ib. fol. 15. 2.

<sup>f</sup> T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 23. 3. & Chagiga, fol. 77. 4.

<sup>g</sup> Koran, s. 7. p. 121.

lummies and reproaches; and followed with the wrath, hatred, and persecution of men; and suffered many evil things, as buffetings, scourging, spitting, and cruel mockings, and at last death itself: *but now he is comforted*; see Psal. xvi. 9, 10, 11. compared with Acts ii. 25—28. Christ being raised from the dead, and set in human nature at the right hand of God, is comforted with the presence of God, which for a while he was deprived of, when on the cross; and is delighted with the glory that it put upon him as man; and with pleasure sees the travail of his soul continually, his elect and redeemed ones, called and gathered by the grace of God, who are his jewels, his portion, and goodly heritage: *and thou art tormented*: as were many of the Jews, his implacable enemies and persecutors in hell, and others in captivity, bondage, and distress.

Ver. 26. *And besides all this, &c.*] The different circumstances of each, both past and present, which should be observed and considered: *between us and you there is a great gulf fixed*: as this may regard the state of the Pharisees after death, it intends not the natural distance between heaven and hell; though there may be an allusion to the notions of the Jews concerning that, who on those words in Eccl. vii. 14. *God hath set the one over-against the other*, say<sup>f</sup>, “this is hell” and paradise, what space is there between them? “an hand’s breadth; R. Jochanan says a wall, but “the Rabbans say, they are both of them even, so “that they may look out of one into another.” Which passage is cited a little differently<sup>g</sup>, thus: “wherefore did the holy blessed God create hell and paradise? that they might be one against another; what space is there between them? R. Jochanan says, a wall, and R. Acha says an hand’s breadth: but the “Rabbans say, two fingers.” And elsewhere it<sup>h</sup> is said, “know that hell and paradise are near to one another, and one house separates between them; “and paradise is on the north-east side—and hell “on the north-west.” Mahomet seems to have borrowed this notion from them, who says<sup>i</sup>, “between “the blessed and the damned, there shall be a vail; “and men shall stand on *Al Araf*, (the name of the “wall or partition, that shall separate paradise from “hell,) who shall know every one of them by their “mouths” But not this natural space, be it what it will, but the immutable decree of God is intended here, which has unalterably fixed the state of the damned, and of the blessed: *so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence*: not that those in heaven can desire to go to those in hell; though those in hell, may wish to be in heaven; but the sense is, that by this irrevocable decree of God, the saints in heaven are eternally happy, and the wicked in hell eternally miserable: and this also agrees with the notions of the Jews<sup>k</sup>, who represent it impossible for a man, after he has descended into hell, to come up from thence any more: but as this may regard the Jews state of captivity and affliction, since the destruc-

tion of their city and temple, upon, and for their rejection of the Messiah; it may denote the impossibility of Christ’s coming again upon the same errand he came on before, to be a Saviour of sinners, and a sacrifice for sin; and of the Jews believing in him, so long as they lie under the spirit of slumber, and are given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart.

Ver. 27. *Then he said, I pray thee therefore father, &c.*] The Cambridge copy of Beza’s, and the Ethiopic version read, *father Abraham*; finding he could have no redress of his misery, nor any relief for himself, he applies for others: *that thou wouldst send him to my father’s house*; the house of Israel and Jacob, the surviving Jews: and this agrees also with a notion of theirs, that the dead seek for mercy for them<sup>l</sup>. The Persic and Ethiopic versions read, *that thou wouldst send Lazarus, &c.* whom the one calls Gazarus, and the other Eleazar.

Ver. 28. *For I have five brethren, &c.*] Meaning his brethren and countrymen, according to the flesh; who when he was alive, stood in such a relation to him; said to be *five*, in allusion it may be to the children of Israel coming out of Egypt, חמשים, *by fives*, or five in a rank, Exod. xiii. 18. as a learned man<sup>m</sup> conjectures, to whom I am beholden for several hints, in the explanation of this parable; and certain it is, that these five brethren were Jews, since they had the writings of Moses and the prophets with them, ver. 29. Wherefore I shall venture to propose another conjecture, though it may be liable to exception, as all conjectures usually are: it is plain that there were *six* brethren in all; let it be observed then, that the Jewish nation were usually divided into *three* parts, *priests, Levites, and Israelites*; of these three the great sanhedrim usually consisted<sup>n</sup>; and these read the law every sabbath-day; first a priest, then a Levite, and then *five Israelites*<sup>o</sup>; (let that number also be remarked;) now these were again divided into *three* sects, *Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes*. The former of these are represented in this parable; this I only propose, I lay no stress on it: it may be, that the twice five, or ten tribes of Israel, which were not known where they were, nor are they to this day, may be designed by a *synecdoche*, of a part for the whole; whose return the Jews are yet expecting, and for whose welfare they are greatly concerned. *That he may testify unto them*: that is, preach unto them, as the word is used in Acts ii. 40. and x. 42. and xx. 21, 24. Christ, when here on earth, did testify to that people of their sins, shewed them the heinousness of them, inveighed against them, and reproved for them; and of their righteousness, and shewed the hypocrisy, deficiency, and insufficiency of it to justify them; of himself as the Messiah; of truth in general; and of their ruin, temporal and eternal; but he had now finished his testimony, and which, though faithful, was not heard nor received by them; the reason of this request is, *lest they also come into this place of torment*: as hell is, and which these brethren of his, he left behind, were

<sup>f</sup> Midrash Kohelet, fol. 76. 1.

<sup>g</sup> Nishmat Chayim Orat. 1. sect. 12. fol. 31. 1.

<sup>h</sup> Raziel, fol. 15. 1.

<sup>i</sup> Koran, c. 7. p. 120.

<sup>k</sup> Caphtor, fol. 70. 2.

<sup>l</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 16. 1.

<sup>m</sup> Teelusannus.

<sup>n</sup> Maimon Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 2.

<sup>o</sup> Ib. Hilchot Topilla, c. 12. sect. 16.

deserving of, and in danger of coming into; and his concern for them did not arise from any regard to Christ, and the enlargement of his interest; nor from any love to his testimony, the Gospel; nor from any real notion or desire of converting grace for his brethren; nor from true love to them; but from a selfish principle, lest his own torments should be aggravated by their coming: this, as it may regard the Jews in their affliction, and if the ten tribes should be meant by the five brethren, may design the very passionate concern the Jews had, and still have for them, who yet, to this day, hope for the return of them; see Manasseh ben Israel's book, called, *Spes Israelis*.

Ver. 29. *Abraham said unto him, &c.*] In reply to this his request: *they have Moses and the prophets*; that is, their writings; which shews this man, and his five brethren, to be Jews; for to them were the oracles of God committed; and these had the writings of Moses and the prophets read to them every sabbath-day; and is true, whether the cotemporaries and immediate successors of the Pharisees are meant, or the ten tribes: and also shews, that one view of the parable, is to establish the authority of these writings; see ver. 16, 17. and that it is a peculiar privilege to have them; and that they ought to be attended to and regarded; *let them hear them*; for they testified concerning Christ, and concerning the sins of the Jews, and the calamities, both temporal and eternal, that should come upon them; and which testimony was sufficient to leave them without excuse: and indeed, the word of God, read, explained, and heard, is the ordinary means of conversion, or of bringing men to faith and repentance.

Ver. 30. *And he said, nay, father Abraham, &c.*]

He contradicts his father Abraham, or at least desires it might not be so; this way he suggests, was not so right, and would not succeed; for he knew his brethren were a rebellious and stiff-necked people, and would not hear Moses and the prophets, notwithstanding all their outward boast of them, and pretensions of regard to them: *but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent*: but alas! repentance is not of man's will, but a gift of God's grace; nor could these men repent, because in a judicial way their eyes were shut, their ears were stopped, and their hearts were hardened; and though Christ came in person to them, and preached, as never man did, with power and authority, and confirmed his doctrine with miracles, yet they repented not, nor did they when he arose from the dead.

Ver. 31. *And he said unto him, &c.*] That is, Abraham said unto him, as the Syriac, Persian, and Ethiopic versions express it: *if they hear not Moses and the prophets*; as they did not, nor regarded what they said of Christ, but disbelieved both him and them: *neither will they be persuaded*: or brought to repent and believe; *though one rose from the dead*: as Christ did; whose resurrection, the truth of it they endeavoured to baffle, stifle, and suppress: this was the sign Christ gave them, of the truth of his Messiahship; and yet they repented not of what they had done to him, that they might believe in him; but remained still in their impentence and infidelity, and so died. This shews the regard that ought to be had to the written word, as read, or preached; and that it is a sad sign of a desperate condition, when men reject divine revelation. Beza's ancient copy adds, *and should go unto them*.

## C H A P. XVII.

Ver. 1. *THEN said he unto his disciples, &c.*] In the Alexandrian copy, and in three of Beza's exemplars it is read, *his disciples*; and so read the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; that is, Jesus said to his disciples what follows, as the Syriac and Persian versions express, and the latter reads, he said *again*. About the time that he delivered the above parable concerning the rich man and Lazarus, he repeated to his disciples what he had before said to them on another occasion, Matt. xviii. 7. *it is impossible but that offences will come*; considering the decree of God, the malice of Satan, the wickedness of men, the corruption both of their principles and practices. The Ethiopic version renders it, *temptation will come*; that which will be trying to the faith of the saints, and a stumbling-block to weak minds, as reproach and persecution, errors, and heresies, and the evil lives of professors: *but woe unto him through whom they come*; see the note on Matt. xviii. 7.

Ver. 2. *It were better for him that a millstone, &c.*] See the notes on Matt. xviii. 6. and on Mark ix. 42.

Ver. 3. *Take heed to yourselves, &c.*] Or to one another, that ye neither give, nor take offence. Take

heed to your spirits, to your doctrines, walk, and conversation, that you give no offence to any, and that you are not stumbled by what you shall see in, and meet with from others: *if thy brother trespass against thee*; see the note on Matt. xviii. 15. *rebuke him*; privately, and proceed according to the rules there directed to; lay his sin before him; endeavour not only to convince him of the fact, but of the evil of it; how contrary to the will of God; how unbecoming the Gospel of Christ, and the profession he makes; how hurtful to himself, as well as injurious to his brother; and how such evils give the enemy occasion to reproach the saints, to speak evil of the ways of God, and blaspheme the name and doctrines of Christ, and harden sinners in their sins, as well as stumble weak Christians, and sadden the hearts of the righteous. *And if he repent*; if he is made sensible of his evil, and is truly sorry for it, and ingenuously acknowledges it: *forgive him*; the injury committed against a man's self; and pray to God for him, for an application of his pardoning grace and mercy to him; and comfort him with the hope of forgiveness with God, by the gracious promises and declarations of

pardon made to such persons; drop all resentment and anger, and behave towards him with all sweetness of temper, and affability, and respect: and this is to be done immediately, as soon as a man repents: and so say the Jews<sup>†</sup>; “says R. Chanina bar Papa, whoever commits a thing, and repents of it, they forgive him directly; as it is said, Mal. iii. 5. *and fear not me; lo, they that fear me, forgive immediately:*” such were reckoned good men, men fearing God.

Ver. 4. *And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, &c.*] For good men are frequently apt to fall into sin, and offend both God and man; see Prov. xxiv. 16. *and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent;* as often as he sins, and appears to be truly sensible of it, and humble for it, and makes acknowledgments of it; and not only barely in words professes his concern for it, but there is reason to believe that he is heartily grieved for it, and to hope that he will behave better for the future: *thou shalt forgive him;* this seems to be occasioned by Peter's putting such a question to Christ, how often a brother might sin against him, and he forgive him; see Matt. xviii. 21, 22. The Jews plead for great tenderness and readiness to forgive penitents, when they ask for forgiveness; which they insist upon should be done: they say<sup>‡</sup>, “it is forbidden an injured person to be cruel, and not forgive; this is not the way of the seed of Israel: but when he that has done the injury asks of him, and prays him once and again, and he knows that he has returned from his sin, and hath repented of his evil, he ought to forgive him; and whoever makes haste to forgive, is praise-worthy.” But then, they say<sup>§</sup>, “if he brings all the rams of Nebaioth that are in the world, he is not to have pardon, unless he asks it of him.” And they seem also to have set times for it, as well as restrain the frequent repetition of it: they observe<sup>¶</sup>; “if a man returns by repentance, in the intermediate time, (i. e. as the gloss explains it, between the beginning of the year, or New-Year's Day, and the day of atonement,) they pardon him; but if he does not return in the intermediate time, though he brings all the rams of Nebaioth in the world, they do not pardon him.” A man that was always forgiving, was reckoned by them an extraordinary man: it is said<sup>¶</sup> of Mar Zutra bar Nachman, that he was מוריד בכל יום, *forgiving every day;* but yet they don't seem to care to carry it to so great a length, and to repeat it so often as our Lord directs; they allow a man to forgive three times, but not a fourth; see the note on Matt. xviii. 22.

Ver. 5. *And the apostles said unto the Lord, &c.*] Either on account of what was now said by Christ concerning offences, and forgiving injuries; being conscious to themselves of their own weakness to withstand temptations; and fearful lest they should be stumbled and offended with what they should meet with; or that they should give offence to others: and being also sensible of what spirits they were of, and of the difficulties of conquering them, and master-

ing the resentment of their minds, when injured and provoked; and also the necessity of divine assistance, of having fresh supplies of grace, and of having their graces, and particularly faith, strengthened, and drawn into a lively exercise; or on account of their not being able to cast out a devil from one that was possessed, Matt. xvii. 19, 20. when words, to the same purpose, were spoken by Christ, as in the following verse; on occasion of one or other of these, though more likely the former, the apostles addressed Christ in this manner, *increase our faith;* both the faith of working miracles, and the grace of believing in him: by which, as they express their sense of the weakness, and imperfection of their faith; and their great desire to have it increased, which might be for their comfort, and his glory; so they acknowledge his divine power, and that he is the author and finisher of faith; and that as the beginning, so the increase of it is from him: wherefore faith is not of a man's self, or the produce of man's free will and power, but is the gift of God; and even where it is, it is not in man to increase it, or add to it, or to draw it forth into exercise; this also is the operation of God. And if the apostles had need to put up such a petition to Christ, much more reason have other men.

Ver. 6. *And the Lord said, &c.*] In answer to the disciples. The Syriac version leaves out the word *Lord;* and the Persic version, in the room of it reads, *Jesus: if ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed;* see the note on Matt. xvii. 20. *ye might say unto this sycamine-tree;* which was near at hand; for in Galilee, where Christ now was, such trees grew, especially in lower Galilee: hence those words<sup>†</sup>; “from Caphar-Hananiah, and upwards, all the land which does not bear שקמין, *sycamines,* is upper Galilee, and from Caphar-Hananiah, and downwards, all which does bear *sycamines,* is lower Galilee.” This, by Maimonides<sup>‡</sup>, is said to be a wild fig-tree; but the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it, the *mulberry-tree:* and that the sycamine and mulberry-tree are the same, Beza shews from Dioscorides, Atheneus, and Galen; though whether it is the same with the sycamore in chap. xix. 4. is not certain. The first of these writers makes them to be the same; and the last asserts they are different, and so they should seem by their different names. *Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea, and it should obey you:* for such a tree to be plucked up by the root at a word speaking, is very wonderful and miraculous, and beyond the power of nature; and much more for it to remove into the sea, and plant itself there, where trees grow not; and to believe this should be done, and such a word of command obeyed, one should think required very great faith; and yet, if it was but as a grain of mustard-seed, which is very small, it might be done. The design is to shew, what great things are done by faith, and what an increase of it they should have.

Ver. 7. *But which of you having a servant ploughing, &c.*] In order to keep the disciples humble in the

<sup>†</sup> T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 5. 1.

<sup>‡</sup> Maimon. Hilchot Chobel Umezik, c. 5. sect. 10.

<sup>§</sup> T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 93. 1.

<sup>¶</sup> T. Bab. Rosh Hashama, fol. 17. 2.

<sup>†</sup> Juchasin, fol. 90. 2.

<sup>‡</sup> Misna Shewiith, c. 9. sect. 2.

<sup>§</sup> In Misna Demai, c. 1. sect. 1. & in Bava Bathra, c. 2. sect. 11.



performance of such miraculous works; and that they might not imagine they could have any thing at the hands of God by merit; and to excite them to go on from one duty to another; and never think what is here done, or done enough, or more than what is their duty, Christ delivers the following parable. *Which of you having a servant ploughing, or feeding cattle; or sheep, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it; or a ploughman, or a shepherd, as the Ethiopic version; which are both servile works, and done in the field: not that the disciples had any such servants under them, though the words are directed to them, for they had left all, and followed Christ; nor were they brought up to husbandry, but most of them in the fishing trade; Christ only puts this for instance, and supposes such a case: will say unto him by and by; or straightway, immediately, directly, when he is come from the field; and has done ploughing, and feeding his cattle, sheep, or cows, or whatever they are; as soon as ever he comes home; or first, as the Persic version; the first thing he shall say to him, upon his return from thence, go; to the other side of the room, and to the table there ready spread, and furnished; or go up, as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it; go up to the upper room where they used to dine or sup; see Luke xxii. 12. or come in, as the Persic version renders it; and which some learned men observe, is the sense of the Greek word here used; come into the house, and sit down to meat? or fall, and lie down on the couch, as was the custom in those countries at eating.*

Ver. 8. *And will not rather say to him, &c.] Or, will he not say to him? it is very likely, it is more agreeable to the language of a master, and the condition of a servant, that he should say to him, make ready wherewith I may sup; by dressing the food, spreading the table, and putting the food on it; for it was the business of servants to prepare, as at the passover, see the note on Matt. xxvi. 17. so at ordinary suppers: and gird thyself and serve me; by giving him drink, or whatsoever he called for: and as they used to wear long garments in those countries, servants girded them up about their loins, that they might be fit for service, expedite in it, and perform it more readily, and with greater ease and dispatch: till I have eaten and drunken: finished his meal: and afterward thou shalt eat and drink: the Persic and Ethiopic versions read in the imperative, then eat thou and drink. If he was an Hebrew servant, he ate and drank the same as his master did: for so one of the Jewish canons runs\*; "every Hebrew servant, or handmaid, their master is obliged to make them equal to himself in food and in drink, in clothing, and in dwelling, as it is said, Deut. xv. 16. because he is well with thee: wherefore, thou shalt not eat fine bread, and he eat coarse bread, nor drink old wine, and he drink new wine, &c." And even a Canaanitish servant was to be provided with proper food and drink: they say indeed, "it is lawful to cause a Canaanitish servant to serve with rigour: but though the law is such, the property of mercy, and the ways of wisdom are, that a man should be merciful, and not make his yoke heavy on his*

servant, nor oppress him; but cause him to eat and drink of all sorts of food and drink; and the former wise men used to give their servants of all sorts of food that they themselves ate of;" which was using them as they did their Hebrew servants: yea, 'tis added; "and they gave their beasts, and their servants, food, before they ate their own meal;" but this was not commonly done: it does not appear to have been the practice in Christ's time; nor was it necessary.

Ver. 9. *Doth he thank that servant, &c.]* As if he had done him a favour, and what he was not obliged to; because he did the things that were commanded him? for, as a servant, he ought to do them, and in so doing does but his duty: he may indeed be commended for it, but not thanked: *I trow not; or I think not; it don't seem so to me, as if he would, or as though it was proper and necessary he should.* The Ethiopic version leaves out this last clause.

Ver. 10. *So likewise ye, &c.]* This is the accommodation and application of the parable to the disciples of Christ, who whether ministers or private believers, are as servants, and should be as laborious as the ploughman, and the shepherd; and as their condition is, so their conduct should be like theirs: the employment of the ministers of the word lies in reading, prayer, meditation, and study; in preaching the word, and administering the ordinances; and in performing other duties of their office: and every private believer has business to do, which lies in the exercise of grace, as the work of faith, the labour of love and patience, of hope: and in the discharge of duty with regard to themselves, in their families, the church, and the world; and these servants should be continually employed; and when one work is done, another is to be taken in hand: saints should be always believing, hoping, waiting, loving, and doing one good work or another; as preaching or praying, reading, hearing, and doing acts of benevolence and charity; and God and Christ are to be served by them in the first place, and then themselves: but some that would be called the servants of Christ, mind their own bellies, and not the service of Christ at all; others in the service of Christ, seek nothing but themselves; others are for the serving themselves first, and then Christ; but the true servants of Christ, serve him in the first place, and seek first his righteousness, and his kingdom, and the honour of it, believing that all other things shall be added to them: and when these have done all that are commanded them, they are not to think their service thank worthy: as for instance, if the service be preaching the word, a man so employed ought to be thankful to God, that has bestowed ministerial gifts upon him, and makes his labours useful, and uses him as an instrument, to do much good to the souls of men, and for his glory, and has put such an honour upon him; but he is not to expect thanks from God, for his most diligent and faithful performance of his work, or imagine that he merits any thing at his hand thereby: or if the business be hearing the word, a man should be thankful to God, for the word, ordinances, and ministers; for liberty of waiting upon God in such a way; for health of body,

\* Maimon. Hilch. Abadim, c. 1. sect. 9. Vid. T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 22. 1.

† Maimon. ib. c. 9. sect. 8.

and inclination of mind, for such service; and for all the good, profit, and advantage, he gains hereby; but he is not to think that he lays God under any obligation to him by so doing, or deserves thanks, or a favour from him, on account of it: or if the employment be prayer, a man should be greatly thankful to the God of all grace, that there is a throne of grace for him to come to; and for a mediator, who is the way of access to God; and for the assistance of the spirit in prayer; and for all the blessings which are given, as an answer of prayer; but he is never to entertain such a thought, that God is obliged to him for his prayers, or should thank him for them: or if the work be doing of good with worldly substance, such should be thankful to God for their substance he has given them, and for hearts to make use of it; but ought not to conclude, that they hereby merit his favour, or that this is any gain to him: but on the other hand, Christ directs his disciples, saying, *when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you*; as preaching, or hearing, or reading, or praying, and every other act of divine and religious worship; or all acts of justice and benevolence among men; every duty both for matter and manner, as it should be, according to the will of God, from right principles, and to right ends, and by the assistance of the spirit and grace of God: *say we are unprofitable servants*; not in such sense as unregenerate men are, who are disobedient, and to every good work reprobate and unfit, Rom. iii. 12. Tit. i. 16. or as the slothful servant, who did not what his Lord commanded, Matt. xxv. 30. Nor is this the sense, that they are unprofitable to men; for they may be, and are, very useful and serviceable to men, and to the saints; but that they are so to God, by whose grace and strength they are what they are, and do what they do; and can give nothing to him but what is his own, and his due; and so can lay him under no obligation to them, nor merit any thing from him; no, not even thanks, and much less heaven and eternal life. The Persian version, quite contrary to the sense of the words reads, *we are pure or clean servants, for we have done, &c.* and the Ethiopic version leaves out the word *unprofitable*, and reads, *we are servants*; we acknowledge ourselves to be servants: *we have done that which is our duty to do*; wherefore, as diligence is highly proper, and reasonable in doing the work of the Lord, humility is necessary, that a man may not arrogate that to himself, which don't belong to him; or boast of his performances; or place any dependence on them: or have his expectations raised on account of them; since when he has done the most and best, he has done but what he should, and what he was obliged to, and in that is greatly deficient: a saying somewhat like this, is used by R. Jochanan ben Zaccai<sup>a</sup>; "if thou hast learned the law much, do not ascribe the good to thyself; for, for this wast thou created."

Ver. 11. *And it came to pass as he went to Jerusalem, &c.*] That is, Jesus, as the Persian version expresses it; though the Ethiopic version reads in the plural, *they going to Jerusalem passed, &c.* that is, the disciples, or Christ with his disciples; who was now going thither to eat his last passover, and suffer and die for his people: *that he passed through the midst of Samaria*

and Galilee; or between Samaria and Galilee; as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; he steered his course through the borders of both these countries; and as he passed, Samaria was on his right hand, and Galilee on the left.

Ver. 12. *And as he entered into a certain village, &c.*] Whether in Samaria or Galilee, is not certain; perhaps it bordered on both, since there were both Jews and Samaritans in it, as appears by what follows; and since Christ was passing between both places: *there met him ten men that were lepers*; who either were confined to this place, this village, for they might not be in the larger cities, and walled towns; see the note on Matt. viii. 2. or else having heard that Jesus of Nazareth was going to such a place, got together, and met him as he entered in it, in hope of being cured by him: *which stood afar off*; from Christ, by reason of their uncleanness, as they were obliged to by the law, in Levit. xiii. 46.

Ver. 13. *And they lifted up their voices, &c.*] Together, and cried aloud, being at a distance, that they might be heard; as well as to express their vehement desire, and great impatience to be cleansed; see Judges ix. 9, 7. *And said, Jesus, Master; or Rabbi, Jesus, thou great Master in Israel; who art a teacher come from God, and who dost surprising miracles, and art able to cure us: have mercy on us; and cleanse us from our leprosy; we believe thou art able, if thou wilt; shew compassion to us, miserable objects, as they were; their faith was the same with that of the other leper, in Matt. viii. 2.*

Ver. 14. *And when he saw them, he said unto them, &c.*] When upon their loud cry he looked up, and towards them, and saw what a condition they were in, his compassion moved towards them, and he ordered them to do as follows; *go shew yourselves unto the priests*. The Ethiopic version reads in the singular number, *to the priest*, as in Matt. viii. 4. whose business it was to inspect into this matter, to see whether a person was healed, or no; and if he was, to pronounce him clean, when a gift was offered according to the law, in Levit. xiv. 2, 3, 4. So careful was Christ that the ceremonial law, which was as yet in force, might be strictly observed: though these ten lepers could not be viewed and examined by the priest together, but one after another; for so is the tradition of the Jews; "two leprosy are not looked upon together, whether they be in one man, or in two men; but he views one, and either shuts him up, or declares or dismisses him, and then goes to a second." *And it came to pass that as they went, they were cleansed*; before they came to the priests, whilst they were in the way, they at once found themselves entirely healed of their disease; as Christ very likely gave them reason to believe they should; whereby his power was seen in it; and it was a clear case, that it was owing to him, and not the priests, that they had their cleansing. Of the nature of the disease of leprosy, and of the likeness there is between that and sin, and of the agreement between the cleansing of a leper, and the cleansing of a sinner by the blood of Christ, see the note on Luke v. 12. Here it may be observed, that as these lepers had a cure while they were in the way of their duty, going, as Christ ordered them; so generally speaking, it is in

<sup>a</sup> Pirke Abot. c. 2. sect. 8.

<sup>a</sup> Misn. Negaim, c. 3. sect. 1.

the way of means, in an attendance on ordinances, that souls receive a spiritual cure from Christ: the man at Bethesda's pool waited long, and had healing at last; it is good to watch at Wisdom's gates, and wait at the posts of her door; faith in Christ, whereby the heart is purified, comes by hearing the word of God.

Ver. 15. *And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, &c.*] When he felt perfect soundness in his body, and perceived that he was restored to his health, and saw with his eyes that the leprosy was gone from him, which must be visible enough: *turned back*; either immediately, before he went to the priests; or afterwards, came back to Jesus, when he had been with them: *and with a loud voice glorified God*; Jesus Christ, who is truly God, and whose proper divinity might be seen in this miracle; see 2 Kings v. 7. or God the father, through Christ, and for his sake, by ascribing his cure to his power, and by returning thanks for it, and acknowledging with gratitude, Christ to be the author of it; which he did, with as loud a voice, as he cried to him for mercy; that all might know the miracle that was wrought, and join in giving glory to Christ: and it was but one of them that did so; gratitude is a rare thing, it is found but in few; unthankfulness cleaves to most persons; it is the general character of men to be unthankful and unholy; multitudes, even all men, share in the providential goodness of God, yet few take notice of, and are thankful for it; God is therefore said to be good, to the unthankful and to the evil, Luke vi. 35. Few there are who are of Jacob's spirit, that judge themselves unworthy of the least of mercies, and are heartily thankful for every favour: and this the leper did, when he was sensible that he was healed; no man will seek after a cure, till he sees, or is sensible of his sickness and his wound; and when he does, he will inquire after, and make use of the proper means of healing; and when he has got a cure, he is, or at least ought to be, thankful for it: and so it is in spiritual things, the whole need not a physician, or see no need of the physician, Christ; but those who are sick, and sensible of the sickness of sin, do; and when they perceive that their diseases are healed, and their sins forgiven, then they call upon their souls, and all within them, to bless the Lord, who has done this for them: and it becomes such who are cured of the leprosy of sin, to glorify God; not only with their mouths, by bringing their offering and sacrifice of praise to him, as the leper by the law was obliged to bring his offering, at the time of his cleansing; but by deeds also, with their bodies, and with their spirits; by a holy, humble, and spiritual conversation before men, signified by the leper's washing himself, and clothes, and shaving off all his hair; and by attending on the word and ordinances, by a professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ, signified by the blood being put upon the tip of the right ear of the leper, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the great toe of his right foot, Levit. xiv.

Ver. 16. *And he fell down on his face at his feet, &c.*] For being cleansed, he might draw nigh unto Jesus; and which he did, with the most profound respect unto him, and reverence of him; and having a deep sense of the favour he had received from him, he prostrated himself in this manner before him:

*giving him thanks*; who had shewn compassion to him, had exerted his power on him, and had favoured him with such a singular mercy, as restoring him to health: *and he was a Samaritan*; this is particularly remarked by the evangelist, because the Samaritans were reckoned by the Jews, to be ignorant and irreligious persons, and no better than Heathens; and yet this man behaved as a religious good man, who had a sense of his mercy, knew his duty, and his obligations, and performed them; when the other nine, who very likely were all Jews, acted a very stupid and ungrateful part.

Ver. 17. *And Jesus answering, said, &c.*] After the Samaritan had paid his respects to him, and made his acknowledgments in this grateful way: *were there not ten cleansed?* so many applied for a cure, and so many had it: *but where are the nine?* or nine of them; here was one, but where were the rest? they went and shewed themselves to the priests, and then returned to their several places of abode, and took no notice of their physician and Saviour, to make any returns to him. They are many, that are cleansed by the blood of Christ; his blood was shed for many; for the remission of sins; and by his righteousness, he justifies many; at least there are many who profess themselves to be cleansed by him, and yet there are but few that glorify him, by keeping close to the rule of his word, by giving up themselves to the churches of Christ, and by walking with them in the ordinances of the Gospel: Christ's flock, which is separated from the world, and walks in Gospel order, within the inclosures of it, is but a little flock; they are but a few names in Sardis, who have not defiled themselves, with corruptions in doctrine and discipline; and these few are often such, who have been the worst of men, the vilest of sinners, from whom it has been least expected, they should glorify Christ: publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven, the Gospel church-state, embrace its doctrines, and submit to its ordinances, when the Scribes and Pharisees, self-righteous persons, do not: ingratitude is a crime many are guilty of, and it is highly resented by Christ; instances of gratitude are few, but as one in ten; now and then a single Samaritan, a stranger, one that has been a vile sinner, comes and acknowledges the grace of Christ in cleansing him; comes to the ministers of Christ, and to the churches, and tells them what God has done for his soul: but where are the rest, the many others, who have received spiritual advantages, and never come to relate them, and express by words and deeds, thankfulness for them?

Ver. 18. *There are not found that returned, &c.*] Or it don't appear, that any have returned: *to give glory to God*; for inasmuch as they did not return to give thanks to Christ, and acknowledge him the author of their cure and cleansing, they did not give glory to God: *save this stranger*; for so the Samaritans were reckoned by the Jews, even as the Gentiles, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise. Christ speaks in the language and dialect of the nation, and yet we find sometimes, that, כּוּרִי, a *Cuthite*, or a Samaritan, is distinguished from, כּוּרִי, a *stranger*; or a Gentile: they might set up their beasts in the inns of the Samaritans, but not in the inns of *strangers*; and a man might let out his bath

to a Samaritan, but not to a *stranger*<sup>b</sup>; but this must be understood of them in times past, before they were found out to be idolaters; when, as Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel says<sup>c</sup>, they were as Israelites in all things, and kept the law and the precepts of it, and even more exactly than the Israelites themselves did<sup>d</sup>; but afterwards a Samaritan was reckoned a Gentile, and so he was in the times of Christ; and therefore he calls a Samaritan a stranger: that tradition of the Jews, requires some notice and consideration<sup>e</sup>; all are defiled "with leprosy, except הַנְּכָרִים, *strangers*, and the "proselyte of the gate." And yet here's a stranger among the Jews, and reckoned unclean, on account of leprosy, and sent with them to shew himself to the priest.

Ver. 19. *And he said unto him, arise, &c.*] For, as yet, he lay at his feet upon his face, adoring and praising him; nor did he attempt to rise till Jesus bid him: adding, *go thy way*: to thine own country, town, or city, and to thy friends and relations, and about thy business: *thy faith hath made thee whole*: or *saved thee*, in soul, as well as body; that is, Christ, the object of faith, had saved him; for his salvation is ascribed to his faith, not as the efficient cause of it, but as that was wrought in him, and drawn forth from him, and exercised by him, in receiving this blessing from Christ, the author of it, even both corporeal and spiritual salvation.

Ver. 20. *And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, &c.*] Or *asked* by them; who expected the Messiah, and that when he was come he would set up a temporal kingdom, and deliver them from the Roman yoke; when they should enjoy great liberty, peace, and prosperity; so that they might put the following question to Christ in a serious manner, agreeably to these expectations: or it may be occasioned by the frequent mention that had been made of the kingdom of God by John, and Christ, and his disciples in their ministry, and so be put in a way of derision: or, as most of their questions were, with a view to ensnare or puzzle: *when the kingdom of God should come*: either the kingdom that God had promised, or the kingdom of the Messiah, who is truly God, that had been so often spoken of by John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles. The Ethiopic version reads, *the kingdom of heaven*, which is the same with the kingdom of God; for these phrases are promiscuously used. This question they need not have asked, had they carefully attended to the writings of the Old Testament they had in their hands; and had they diligently observed the signs of the times, in which they lived; and had they seriously regarded the ministry and miracles of Christ among them; from these things, they might have concluded, not only that the time was at hand, when the kingdom of God should be set up, but that it was already come: they might have observed, that not only the harbinger of the Messiah was come, who was John the Baptist; but that the Messiah himself was among them, by the many wonderful things which he wrought among them, and by the many Scripture prophecies which were fulfilled in him; they might have

seen that the sceptre was manifestly departing from Judah; that all power and authority were falling into the hands of the Romans; and that only a mere shadow and appearance of it were among them; they might have known, by calculation, that the time fixed in Daniel's prophecy, for the coming of the Messiah, was now up, and therefore he must be come; and they had very good reason to believe that Jesus was he. *He answered them and said, the kingdom of God cometh not with observation*: or so as to be observed by the eye, or to be distinguished when it comes as the kingdoms of this world, by outward pomp and splendour, by temporal riches, external honours, and worldly power and grandeur; though it so far came with observation, that had they had eyes to see, they might have observed that it was come, by what they saw done by Christ, particularly the power that he shewed in the dispossessing devils out of the bodies of men; see Matt. xii. 28. The Syriac version reads, *with observations*: and some understand the words of the observances of the ceremonies of the law, of days, months, and years, and the difference of meats, and the like, which the kingdom of God is not in, and which were to cease upon its coming; but the former sense is best.

Ver. 21. *Neither shall they say, &c.*] Or *shall it be said* by any, making their observations, and pointing to this, or that place: *lo here, or lo there*: in this, or that place, country or city, the kingdom of God is set up; the throne of the Messiah is there; and there are the *regalia*, or ensigns of his regal power; no such thing will fall under the observations of man, not but that this would be said, and was said by some persons, as it is suggested it should, ver. 23. and it appears from Matt. xxiv. 26. that some would say he was in such a wilderness, and others, that he was in some private retirement in a house, or that he was in such a town or city; as particularly it was said in Adrian's time, that he was in a place called Bither, where Bar Cochab set up himself for the Messiah: but the sense of the words is, that no such thing ought to be said; and if it was said, it would not be true; nor should it be credited: and the Cambridge copy of Beza's adds, *believe not*: as in Matt. xxiv. 26. *for behold the kingdom of God is within you*: in the elect of God among the Jews, in their hearts; it being of a spiritual nature, and lying in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; in the dispossession of Satan, the strong man armed; in the putting down of the old man, sin, with its deceitful lusts, from the throne; and in setting up a principle of grace, as a governing one; and so escapes the observation of natural men, and can't be pointed at as here, or there: hence it appears, that the work of grace is an internal thing; it is wrought in the hearts of men; it has its seat in the inward parts, and is therefore called the inner, and the hidden man: it does not lie in words, in an outward profession of religion: it is oil in the vessel of the heart, and is distinct from the lamp of a visible profession; it does not lie in external works and duties, but it is an inward principle of holiness in the soul, or spirit of man, pro-

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Avoḏa Zara, fol. 15. 2. & 21. 2.

<sup>c</sup> T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 46. 2.

<sup>d</sup> Maimon. in Misn. Beracot, c. 8. sect. 8 & Bartenora in ib. c. 7. sect. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Misn. Negaim, c. 3. sect. 1. Maimon. Tumaot Tzaraot, c. 9. sect. 1.

duced there by the spirit of God, and is therefore called by his name, John iii. 6. and it also appears to be a very glorious thing, since it is signified by a kingdom: it is a rich treasure; it is gold tried in the fire, which makes rich; it is an estate, that good part, and portion, which can never be taken away; it is preferable to the greatest portion on earth men can enjoy; even the largest and richest kingdom in the world is not to be compared with it; it is a kingdom which cannot be moved; and as it is glorious in itself, it makes such glorious who are partakers of it: *the king's daughter is all glorious within*, Psal. xlv. 13. and it is high in the esteem of God; it is the hidden man of the heart, but it is in his sight; it is in his view, and is in his sight of great price: it is likewise evident from hence, that it has great power and authority in the soul; it has the government in it; it reigns, through righteousness, unto eternal life; and by it, Christ, as king of saints, dwells and reigns in his people. Now this is not to be understood of the Scribes and Pharisees, as if they had any such internal principle in them, who were as painted sepulchres, and had nothing but rottenness and corruption in them: but the sense is, that there were some of the people of the Jews, of whom the Pharisees were a part, who had been powerfully wrought upon under the ministry of John, Christ, and his apostles; and were so many instances of efficacious grace, and of the kingdom of God, and of his Gospel coming with power to them. Though the words may be rendered, *the kingdom of God is among you*: and the meaning be, that the king Messiah was already come, and was among them, and his kingdom was already set up, of which the miracles of Christ were a full proof; and if they could not discern these signs of the times, and evident appearances of the kingdom of God among them, they would never be able to make any observation of it, hereafter, or elsewhere.

Ver. 22. *And he said unto his disciples, &c.*] Who also were expecting a worldly kingdom, and external honours, and temporal emoluments, and riches; and therefore to take off their minds from these things, and that they might not have their expectations raised this way, but, on the other hand, look for afflictions and persecutions, he observes to them, *the days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the son of man*; יְמֵי הַמְּשִׁיחַ, *the days of the Messiah*, a phrase frequently used in Jewish writings; that is, when they should be glad to enjoy one such a day in the personal presence of Christ, as they now did; and instead of looking forward for happy days, in a temporal sense, they would look back upon the days they have enjoyed with Christ, when he was in person among them, and wish they had one of those days again; when besides his corporeal presence, and spiritual communion with him, and the advantage of his ministry and miracles, they had much outward peace and comfort: whereas in those days nothing but afflictions and persecutions abode them, wherever they went; so that by these words Christ would have them to understand, that they were not to expect better times, but worse, and that they would be glad of one of the days they now had, and in vain wish for it: *and ye shall not see it, or enjoy it*. Moreover, days and

opportunities of public worship, of praying to the Lord, of singing his praise, of hearing his word, and of attending on his ordinances, may be called days of the son of man, or Lord's days; see Rev. i. 10. even the first days of weeks, on which days the apostles, and primitive churches, met together for religious worship: and these may very well be called days of the son of man, since, on those days, he first appeared to his disciples, after his resurrection, John xx. 19. 26. and on the same days his disciples and followers met together to preach in his name, to hear his Gospel, and to commemorate his sufferings and death, Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. and still continue to do so; and seeing he often meets with his people at such seasons and opportunities, fills them with his spirit, communicates his grace, and indulges them with fellowship with himself, which make those days desirable ones: but sometimes so violent has been the persecution of the saints, that they have not been able, for a long time, to enjoy one of those days openly, and with freedom, though greatly desired by them; which may be considered as a fulfilment, at least in part, of this prediction of our Lord's: and therefore, whenever this is the case, it should not be thought strange; it is no other than what Christ has foretold should be: and it may teach us to prize, make use of, and improve such days and opportunities, whilst we have them, we know not how soon our teachers may be removed into corners, when we shall wish in vain for them; and seasons of hearing them, as is here suggested: sad it is to know the worth of Gospel opportunities, by the want of them!

Ver. 23. *And they shall say unto you, see here, or see there, &c.*] That is, there is Christ; and in two of Beza's exemplars, the word Christ is added, as in Matt. xxiv. 23. from whence it seems to be transcribed: and the sense is, it shall be said by one or another; Christ is in such a place, or he is in such a place, and he will quickly appear, and deliver the people of the Jews out of all their distresses and calamities by the Romans, *Go not after them, nor follow them*: the last clause, *nor follow them*, is left out in the Syriac and Persic versions; the meaning is, give no credit to them; as if Christ was come again in person, and was in such a place, don't go along with them, where they direct, as into the desert, or into the secret chambers; for to follow them will be very dangerous, of bad consequence, as well as vain and fruitless; see Acts v. 36, 37.

Ver. 24. *For as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, &c.*] The Syriac version reads, *out of heaven*, and the Arabic version, *in heaven*; which is the seat of lightning, and from whence it arises: *and shineth unto the other part under heaven*; enlightens the earth, which is under the heaven: though the sense of the words, as they lie in the original text, seems to be, that as the lightning lightens at one end of the heavens, and shines to the other; which is done at once, in a moment, in a twinkling of the eye, and to which agrees the Ethiopic version: *so shall also the son of man be in his day*: which is not to be understood of the swift progress of the Gospel, after his resurrection and ascension, and the pouring forth of his spirit; but of his sudden coming, first to

take vengeance on the Jewish nation for their rejection of him, and then at the last day, to judge both quick and dead. By *his day*, is meant his kingdom and glory, or his appearance with power, and great glory: Thus we read of Solomon, בְּשָׁעוֹ, *in his hour*, that is, in his glory, in the time of his kingdom, when he was in his greatest magnificence.

Ver. 25. *But first must he suffer many things, &c.*] By cruel mockings, spitting, buffeting, scourging, and, at last, death itself; all which must be, and were before his day came, or he entered into his glory, or came in it: *and be rejected of this generation*; as the Messiah, and be treated with the utmost scorn and contempt, and in the most base and ignominious manner: being put to the death of the cross, and hanged upon the accursed tree: all which were necessary, *must be*; on account of the purposes and decrees of God; the covenant engagements of Christ; the predictions of the prophets of the Old Testament, and his own; and the salvation of his people.

Ver. 26. *And as it was in the days of Noe, &c.*] Whilst he was building the ark, and before he went into it; for this respects the days of Noah before the flood, and not after it; for he lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years, Gen. ix. 28. *so shall it be also in the days of the son of man*; some time before, and at his coming in power, and great glory, to destroy the Jews, their nation, city, and temple; and as then, so it will be when he shall come in person, at the last day, to destroy the world: the times of Noah's flood, of Jerusalem's destruction, and of the end of the world, bear a great resemblance to each other: and when the son of man comes in either of these senses, then will the kingdom of God come; or then will it appear that the Messiah is come, and has took to himself his great power, and reigns.

Ver. 27. *They did eat, they drank, &c.*] That is, the inhabitants of the old world ate and drank, not merely in a common way, with moderation, and for the support and comfort of life, which is not blameworthy, nor inconsistent with religious exercises; but they lived in an extravagant and luxurious manner; they indulged their sensual appetites, and put away the evil day far from them, that Noah told them of: *they married wives, they were given in marriage*; not as should have been done by professors of religion among themselves; but the sons of God, or professors of the true religion, the posterity of Seth took them wives of the daughters of men, of the wicked, of the seed of Cain; and very likely gave their daughters in marriage to the sons of men; see Gen. vi. 2, 4. and so they went on in a secure manner, notwithstanding all the remonstrances, warnings, and threatenings of God, by his servant: *until the day that Noe entered into the ark*; which he had built by divine direction, for the saving of himself and family, and the creatures that were with him, from the waters of the flood; and this was in the six hundredth year of his life, in the second month, the month of October, and in the seventeenth day of that month; Gen. vii. 11, 13. *and*

*the flood came and destroyed them all*; all the inhabitants of the earth, every living substance, men, cattle, creeping things, and fowls of the heaven; all but Noah, and his wife, and his three sons, and their wives, and the creatures that were with him in the ark: the flood came not of itself, or by chance, or through the influence, or by the concurrence of second causes merely; though these were used, ordered, and directed by the first cause of all things; but it came by the power of God, according to his will; he brought it on the world of the ungodly; see 2 Pet. ii. 5. The mode of expression is Jewish; it is said of Cain, who is supposed by the Jews to have lived till the flood, בְּאִמְבֹּר וְשִׁטְפוֹ, *the flood came*, and washed him away.<sup>g</sup>

Ver. 28. *Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot, &c.*] When he lived in Sodom, and before, and at the time of the destruction of that city with other neighbouring ones: *they did eat, they drank*; see the note in the preceding verse, and Ezek. xvi. 49. This is to be understood of the inhabitants of Sodom, and the other cities that perished with it: *they bought, they sold*; they traded among themselves, and with their neighbours; and, as it appears from the text referred to, they had no regard to the poor and needy; they made no conscience of defrauding and oppressing them: *they planted*: vineyards, and fruit-trees; living in a very fruitful soil, like the garden of God, Gen. xiii. 10. *they builded*; houses for themselves and posterity; and thus, as a Jewish writer<sup>h</sup> observes of them, in agreement with our Lord's design in all this, being filled with the increase of the earth, they lived in security, peace, and tranquillity.

Ver. 29. *But the same day Lot went out of Sodom, &c.*] Being plucked and brought from thence by the angels early in the morning; and a fine morning it was; the sun was risen, and shone out upon the earth, as Lot got into Zoar, Gen. xix. 15, 16, 23. *The Jews*<sup>i</sup> say it was the sixteenth day of Nisan: *it rained fire and brimstone from heaven*; the Syriac version reads, *the Lord rained*; so it is said in Gen. xix. 24. *the Lord rained from the Lord*: Jehovah the Son, rained from Jehovah the Father; or the word of the Lord, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem render it; and which is no inconsiderable proof of the deity of Christ: and the Persian version here reads, *God rained*; and so this amazing shower of fire and brimstone, and which was a violent storm of thunder and lightning, is ascribed to God in 2 Pet. ii. 6. see the note there. The Hebrew word, נִפְרִית, used in Gen. xix. 24. though it is rendered in the Targum of Jonathan, כְּבָרִיתָא, and by the Septuagint, ῥοσός; both which words signify *sulphur*, or *brimstone*; and which last word is used here, following the Greek version; yet it is observed, by some learned men, that it rather signifies *pitch*, or *rosin*, which proceeds from some sort of trees; and indeed, by its derivation, it seems to signify something belonging to or that comes out of the wood of Gopher, of which the ark was made, Gen. vi. 14. which some think to be the pine-tree, from whence comes pitch:

<sup>f</sup> Misna Bava Metzia, c. 7. sect. 1. & Jarchi & Bartenora in ib. Vid. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 15. 4. & 16. 1.

<sup>g</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 32. fol. 27. 2. & Schemot Rabba, sect. 31. fol. 134. 4.

<sup>h</sup> Pirke Eliezer, c. 25.

<sup>i</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 50. fol. 45. 3.

and this, though it comes from the inside of a tree, may as well be said to be rained from heaven, as brimstone, which is taken out of the bowels of the earth; and the rather, since pitch is sometimes fluid; and especially it being combustible, may be joined with fire, as well as sulphur, or brimstone; though a shower of neither, can be accounted for in an ordinary way, but must be extraordinary and miraculous: the destruction of this city, with others, by fire from heaven, and the lake Asphaltites, being a bituminous and sulphureous one, into which the tract of land they stood upon was converted, are confirmed by the testimonies of Heathen writers; as Tacitus<sup>k</sup>, Solinus<sup>l</sup>, Strabo<sup>m</sup>, Justin<sup>n</sup>, and Pliny<sup>o</sup>; as well as by Josephus<sup>p</sup>, and Philo the Jew<sup>q</sup>. *And destroyed them all*; all the inhabitants of Sodom, and all of Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim; and which was an ensample of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the land of Judea. Deut. xxix. 23. and of the burning of the world, and of the perdition of the wicked in hell, 2 Pet. ii. 6. Jude 7.

Ver. 30. *Even thus shall it be in the day when the son of man is revealed.*] In his power, when he comes to avenge himself on the Jews; and when he is revealed from heaven in flaming fire, at the last day. As in the days of Noah and Lot, men lived in great carnality and security, thoughtless and fearless of danger, so were the Jews before the destruction of their city and temple, buoying themselves up with deliverance to the last; and such will be the times of indolence and supineness, before the coming of the day of the Lord to judgment: and as the destruction of the old world, and men of Sodom, and the adjacent parts, was sudden and unexpected, so was the destruction of Jerusalem, and so will be the burning of the world; that day will come, as a thief in the night: and as in the above calamities, there was a remnant saved, who were taken care of; as Noah and his family in the ark, and as Lot, and his wife and daughters were snatched out of Sodom, when the rest were destroyed; so when the Christians removed from Jerusalem, and went to Pella, being directed by a divine oracle, then came on the siege of Jerusalem<sup>r</sup>; and when all the elect will be gathered in, and brought to faith and repentance, then shall the earth, and the works in it be burnt up: and as these judgments were universal, so was that upon the people of the Jews: and such will be the general desolation in the last day.

Ver. 31. *In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, &c.*] Either for diversion or devotion, when he shall hear that the Roman armies are approaching to Jerusalem, to besiege it: *and his stuff in the house*: or his vessels, his goods and furniture; or his utensils, and instruments of trade and business: *let him not come down*; the inner way of the house, from the top: to

take it away; with him in his flight, but let him descend by the steps, or ladder, on the outside of the house, and make his escape directly to Pella, or the mountains: *and he that is in the field*; at work, and has laid down his clothes in some certain part of the field, or at home: *let him likewise not return back*: to fetch them, but make the best of his way as he is; see the notes on Matt. xxiv. 17, 18.

Ver. 32. *Remember Lot's wife.*] Whose name by the Jews, is said to be Adith, as some<sup>s</sup>; or Irith, as others<sup>t</sup>: and who, they also say, was a native of Sodom; and that the reason of her looking, was either to see what would be the end of her father's house and family<sup>u</sup>; or as others<sup>v</sup>, because her heart yearned after her daughters, and she looked back to see if they followed her; upon which she became a pillar of salt, Gen. ix. 26. They say<sup>x</sup>, that her bones were burnt with the brimstone, and along with which was salt, into which she was turned, according to Deut. xxix. 23. They often speak of מלח סודומית, salt of Sodom<sup>y</sup>; where the gloss says, it is thick and hard, as a stone; and to which they sometimes<sup>z</sup> ascribe this virtue, that it blinds the eyes: and there is a sort of salt, which they call<sup>a</sup> Galilean salt, of like hardness; and Pliny<sup>b</sup> speaks of salt in the Indies, which they cut out, as stones out of quarries; and that, at Carruis, a town in Arabia, is salt with which they build houses and walls: of a very durable nature<sup>c</sup> 'tis certain, was this pillar of salt, Lot's wife became; for Josephus reports<sup>d</sup>, that he saw this pillar of salt in his time; and Irenæus asserts<sup>e</sup>, that it was in being when he lived; and modern writers, as Burchardus and Adrichomius, speak of it as still existing; and the Jerusalem paraphrast on Gen. ix. 26. says it shall endure till the time the resurrection comes, in which the dead shall live: the reason of her becoming a pillar of salt, the Jews say, is, that she sinned by salt, and so was punished by salt: and which is differently related, and in a very fanciful way: one writer<sup>f</sup> reports, that when the angels came, Lot said to her, give me a little salt for these travellers; she replied to him, truly this is a bad custom, which thou bringest to be used in this place; and elsewhere<sup>g</sup> 'tis said, that upon their coming, she went to all her neighbours, and said to them, give me some salt, for we have travellers; but her intention was, that the men of the city might know them: but leaving those things, our Lord's design in these words, is to instruct his followers by this instance, not to look back in their flight, or to turn back to their houses, to save their goods, when the desolation of Jerusalem was coming on, lest they should suffer in it; and to warn all professors of religion, in all ages, against looking back to things that are behind, or turning their backs on him, in a time of distress and persecution; since such are not fit for the

<sup>k</sup> Hist. l. 5.

<sup>l</sup> Polyhistor. c. 48.

<sup>m</sup> Geograph. l. 16.

<sup>n</sup> Histor. l. 36. c. 3.

<sup>o</sup> Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 16.

<sup>p</sup> Antiqu. l. 1. c. 11. sect. 4. & de Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 21.

<sup>q</sup> De Vita Mosis, l. 2. p. 662.

<sup>r</sup> Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 5.

<sup>s</sup> Pirke Eliezer, c. 25.

<sup>t</sup> Baal Hatturin in Gen. xix. 26.

<sup>u</sup> Targum Jon. & Hieros. in ib.

<sup>v</sup> Pirke Eliezer ib.

<sup>x</sup> Aben Ezra in Gen. xix. 26.

<sup>y</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 20. 2. & Menachot, fol. 21. 1.

<sup>z</sup> Bartenora in Misna Erubin, c. 1. sect. 10.

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 62. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Nat. Hist. l. 31. c. 7.

<sup>c</sup> Antiqu. l. 1. c. 12.

<sup>d</sup> Adv. Hæres. l. 4. c. 51.

<sup>e</sup> Jarchi in Gen. xix. 26.

<sup>f</sup> Breshit Rabba, sect. 51. fol. 46. 1.

kingdom of God; and in these God has no delight and pleasure.

Ver. 33. *Whosoever shall seek to save his life, &c.*] By fleeing to some strong hold, or by continuing in the metropolis, and strongest city in the nation, Jerusalem: *shall lose it*. there he'll be in the greatest danger: *and whosoever shall lose his life*; or expose it to danger, by fleeing to the mountains, or going to Pella, a small town beyond Jordan, of no strength, and where there might be thought no security; *shall preserve it*; he shall be safe; see the note on Matt. xvi. 25.

Ver. 34. *I tell you, in that night, &c.*] Of affliction and calamity, that shall be upon the Jewish nation, and which is before called that day, ver. 36. and therefore is not to be understood literally of the night: *there shall be two men in one bed*; this is said agreeably to the time, the night before-mentioned, that being the time to be in bed, at rest and asleep; for they that sleep, sleep in the night; and still suggests the security the people of the Jews would be in, at the time of their destruction. The word *men* is not in the text, it is only, *there shall be two in one bed*; and may as well be understood of a man and his wife, since it is not so usual for two men to lie in one bed; and this the rather more strongly expresses the distinguishing providence of God in saving one, and suffering the other to be taken and lost: the words may be rendered, *there shall be two upon one couch*: that is, sitting together at supper; which was also in the night season: it was the custom of the ancients to sit upon beds, or couches, at meals; and they had a bed, or couch, which held two persons only, and was called *Biclinium*<sup>b</sup>: and so this likewise intimates, that the destruction of the Jews would be at a time when they were thoughtless of it, and were eating and drinking, as in the days of Noah and of Lot, ver. 27, 28. *The one shall be taken*: by the Roman soldiers: *and the other shall be left*: being, by one providence or another preserved; which is mentioned, to shew the distinction God will make in his providence, and to encourage believers to trust in it.

Ver. 35. *Two women shall be grinding together, &c.*] In Matt. xxiv. 41. it is added, *in the mill*: in the house where the mill was, and at one and the same mill; and so the Ethiopic version here, *two shall grind in one mill*: and it was common for two women to grind at one hand-mill; and though the word *women* is not in the text, it is rightly put into the translation; since the word used is of the feminine gender, and since grinding was the business of women; and so the Persic version here supplies it, as we do; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 41. *The one shall be taken and the other left*: the Roman soldiers entering the mill, will lay hold on the one, and carry her away with them, and leave the other; and for which no other reason can be given, but the sovereign will and providence of God, which should overrule and dispose the minds of these men, to act in such a manner.

Ver. 36. *Two men shall be in the field, &c.*] At work there, tilling the ground, or sowing the seed in it, or reaping the corn; which of them soever was the work of the field, at the time of Jerusalem's destruction: *the one shall be taken, and the other left*: the circumstances

attending these several instances shew, that they can't be considered as expressive of the use and effect of the preaching of the Gospel, that being the savour of life unto life to some, and the savour of death unto death to others, some being effectually called by it, and others being left to die in their sins; since these men and women are said to be either in a bed asleep, or on a couch feasting, or grinding in a mill, or at work in the field, and so not in proper places, and at leisure to hear the Gospel preached. The whole verse is left out in the Ethiopic version, and in some Greek copies; though it is in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, and in the Complutensian edition, and in some ancient copies, as Beza observes.

Ver. 37. *And they answered and said unto him, where, Lord? &c.*] That is, either the Pharisees put this question to Christ, who demanded of him when the kingdom of God would come, ver. 20. or rather the disciples, to whom Christ more especially directed his discourse, ver. 22. who hearing of the distinction that would be made of persons in these dismal times, ask where it should be; not where the persons would be left, but whether the others would be taken, and by whom: *and he said unto them, wheresoever the body is*; the carcass of the Jewish nation, as at Jerusalem chiefly, and in whatsoever place: *thither will the eagles be gathered together*; the Roman army, whose ensign was the eagle; these will come, seize upon them, and take them and devour them, as they did: the Persic version renders it, *vultures*; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 28. These words can by no means be understood of sinners fleeing to Christ for eternal life and salvation; nor of the gathering of saints to him, at the last day; for how fitly soever such persons may be compared to *eagles*, the word *body*, or *carcass*, as in Matt. xxiv. 28. and which is so read in some copies here, is not so suitable to Christ; and especially at his glorious appearing; and besides, the words are an answer to a question, where such persons would be, who would be taken and destroyed, when others would be left, or preserved; and manifestly refer to the body, or carcass of the Jewish people at Jerusalem, and other fortified places; where they should think themselves safe, but should not be so, the Roman armies gathering about them, and seizing them as their prey: it is yet a more strange interpretation, which is proposed by a very learned man<sup>1</sup>; that by the *eagle* is meant, Christ; and by the *body*, or *carcass*, the church in the times of antichrist; and by *gathering* to it, the coming of Christ: for though Christ may be said to bear and carry his people, as the eagle bears and carries its young upon its wings, which he observes from Exod. xix. 4. Deut. xxxii. 11. Isa. lxiii. 9. yet not a single eagle, but *eagles*, in the plural number, are here mentioned; which shews, that not a single person, as Christ, but many are here intended, even legions of Roman soldiers: nor can the church of Christ be compared to a dead and filthy carcass, in the worst of times, even in the times of antichrist; for however forlorn, distressed, and afflicted her condition is, she is kept alive, and in some measure pure from antichristian pollutions; and is represented by a woman, to whom two wings of a great eagle are

<sup>b</sup> Vid. Alstorph. de Lectis Veter. c. 15. p. 90, 91.

<sup>1</sup> Teelinanus.



given (wherefore she should rather be designed by the eagles) to fly with into the wilderness, where she is preserved and nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, Rev. xii. 14. Nor is Christ's coming ever

expressed by the gathering of him to his people; but on the other hand, they are always said to be gathered unto him; see 2 Thess. ii. 1.

## C H A P. XVIII.

Ver. 1. *AND he spake a parable unto them, &c.*] To his own disciples, as the Ethiopic version reads, in order to encourage them to prayer, with perseverance in it; since such sore times of trial and affliction were coming upon the Jews, of which he had spoken in the preceding chapter; and such times more especially call for prayer; see Psal. l. 15. to this end, *that men ought always to pray.* This is opposed to them, who pray not at all, or have left off prayer before God, or who pray only in distress; and suggests, that a man should pray as often as he has an opportunity; should be constant and assiduous at the throne of grace, and continue putting up his requests to God, though he does not presently return an answer: *and not to faint*; by reason of afflictions, temptations, desertions, and delays in answering prayer; and prayer itself is an admirable antidote against fainting under afflictive providences: 'tis with the Jews an affirmative precept that a man should pray, *בכל יום, every day*<sup>k</sup>; it was usual with them to pray three times a day; see Psal. lv. 17. Dan. vi. 10. there is no set time fixed by Christ; men should be always praying. This is not to be understood, that a man should be always actually engaged in the work of prayer; that he should be continually either in his closet, in private devotion to God, or attending exercises of more public prayer, with the saints; for there are other religious exercises to be performed, besides prayer; and besides, there are many civil affairs of life, it is every man's indispensable duty to regard: nor does our Lord mean in the least to break in upon, or interrupt the natural and civil duties of life; but his meaning is, that a man should persevere in prayer, and not leave off, or be dejected, because he has not an immediate answer; and this is clear from the following case.

Ver. 2. *Saying, there was in a city a judge, &c.*] In every city in the land of Israel, there was a sanhedrim, or court of judicature; in Jerusalem was the great sanhedrim, consisting of seventy-one; and in every city where there were an hundred and twenty men, or more, there was a lesser sanhedrim, consisting of twenty-three; and in a city in which there were not an hundred and twenty men, were three judges; for there was no sanhedrim, or court of judicature, that consisted of less than three<sup>l</sup>: but "although there is no judicature less than three, *כּוֹרֵת לְאֶחָד לְרֵוּן, it is law-ful for one to judge, according to the law, as it is* said, Levit. xix. 15. *In righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour*; but according to the words of the Scribes, (only,) when there are three, and two that judge, their judgment is no judgment:

"one who is publicly approved or authorized, or who has taken a licence from the sanhedrim, it is lawful for him to judge alone, but it is not accounted a judicature; and though it is lawful, it is the command of the wise men, that he set others with him; for lo, they say, don't judge alone, for there is none that judgeth alone, but one." It may be, this judge was, *בּוֹרֵר*, an authorized and approved one; however, we have instances of single judges, or of persons that have judged alone, at least by the consent of parties. "R. Abhu was sitting judge, in a synagogue in Casarea, by himself; his disciples said to him, did not Rabbi so teach us, do not judge alone? he replied to them, when ye see me sit judge by myself, and ye come to me, as those that have taken upon themselves (or agreed to be judged by me); for the tradition is, of things in which they do not take upon them; but if they take upon them, (or agree to be judged,) one may judge, though alone." And again, elsewhere<sup>o</sup>; "if he is publicly authorized or approved, he judges, though alone; says R. Nachman, as I judge pecuniary causes alone; and so says R. Chijah, as I judge pecuniary judgments alone.—Mar Zutra, the son of R. Nachman, judged a cause, and erred; he came to R. Joseph, who said to him, if they have received thee upon them (agreed to be judged by thee) thou needst not finish; but if not, go and finish." The qualifications of one to be a judge, even of the bench of three, were these<sup>p</sup>; "wisdom, meekness (or modesty), and fear, (*i. e.* of God,) and hatred of mammon, (or money,) love of truth, and to have the love of men, and to be masters of a good name (or to be of good report)." But the judge in the text, came greatly short of these qualifications: his character follows, *which feared not God, neither regarded man*; and therefore, according to the canon, was disqualified from being a judge, since he was destitute of the fear of God; and seeing he regarded not men, he could neither have any love to men, nor any share in the affections of men, and such an one is very unfit to be a judge, for he cannot be thought to have any regard to his conscience, or his credit, and so not to justice and equity. The former of these characters, is what belongs to every man in a state of uregeneracy; there's no true fear of God before the eyes, or in the heart of any unconverted man; wherever it is, it is put there by the grace of God: this is one of the first things which appears in conversion, and shews itself in an hatred of sin, and in the performance of duties; and is increased by the

<sup>k</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 1. sect. 1.

<sup>l</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 3, 4.

<sup>m</sup> Ib. c. 2. sect. 10, 11.

<sup>o</sup> T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 18. 1.

<sup>p</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 6. 1.

<sup>q</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 7.

discoveries of the grace and goodness of God; but the want of this is more visible in some than in others: some, though they have not the grace of fear, yet are under some awe of the Divine Being, and pay a regard to the word of God; and what through the force of education, and the dictates of a natural conscience, dare not go such lengths in sin, as some do: but there are others, who even say there is no God, and at least live as if there was none; they endeavour to work themselves, and others, into a disbelief of the being of God; and set their mouths against heaven, deny his providence, and despise his word; stretch out their hands, and strengthen themselves against the Almighty; and in a fearless manner, run upon the thick bosses of his bucklers; they declare their sin as Sodom, and hide it not, yea, glory in it; they promise themselves impunity, and laugh at a future judgment; and of such a cast was this judge, and therefore a very improper person for such an office; for civil magistrates, and rulers of every sort, ought to be just, ruling in the fear of God: and as for the other part of his character, it is not to be wondered at; for such that fear not God, will have little regard to men; no otherwise, or further, than they are obliged to it: indeed, judges ought not to regard men in judgment; that is, to respect the persons of men, and through affection, or flattery, or bribes, wrest judgment: but this is not the sense of the phrase here, since this agrees not with the other part of the character, and since he is called an unjust judge; but the meaning is, that he had no regard to the laws of men, any more than the laws of God; but made his own will the rule of his actions, and had no regard to doing justice between man and man; nor did he care what any man said of him; he had no concern about his reputation and character, having none to lose.

Ver. 3. *And there was a widow in that city, &c.* Poor and helpless, and none among men to counsel, direct, and assist her, and take her part: now as in the accommodation of this parable, the elect of God answer to this widow; such an one is rather pitched upon to represent the helpless, desolate, and forlorn condition they are in among men in this world, though they are espoused to one husband, Christ; and especially to signify the state and condition of God's elect among the Jews in those sad times, before the destruction of Jerusalem, this parable has respect unto. Christ is the bridegroom of his church and people; he is their husband, the Lord of hosts is his name; and they are espoused as a chaste virgin to him; and whilst he was here on earth, his disciples, who were the children of the bridegroom, could not fast and mourn, for which they had no reason; but upon the death of Christ, when he was removed from them, they had great sorrow of heart; they were left like widows and orphans; hence those words of Christ, John xiv. 18. and were persecuted by the Jews in their own land; and wherever they went, they stirred up the Gentiles against them; and so things continued till near the destruction of Jerusalem; during which time many a request was made to God, the judge of the widows and fatherless, to the following purport: *and she came unto him, saying, avenge me of my adversary;*

or do me justice in the cause depending between me, and him that has wronged me; hear the cause, and do right; vindicate, and deliver me. Many are the adversaries of God's people, as the sins and corruptions of their own hearts, Satan, and his angels, wicked oppressors, and persecutors; the last seem, in the mystical sense, to be designed here: 'tis lawful to pray for vengeance on them; 'tis right to apply to God, and leave it with him, to whom it belongs; and it has been the suit and cry of the best of men; see Rev. vi. 9, 10. It does not become the people of God to avenge themselves, even when it is in the power of their hands; nor should they desire it for their own sakes, so much as for the glory of God; they should ask it, not to gratify a revengeful spirit in them, but for the honour of divine justice; and this should be always with submission to the will of God, leaving it to his own time and way, to whom vengeance belongs, and who has said it is mine, and I will repay it; as he certainly will sooner or later: the purity of his nature, his abhorrence of sin, and sinful men, and his love to his own people engage him to it.

Ver. 4. *And he would not for a while, &c.* He would give no ear to her cries, nor take her cause in hand, nor right her wrongs, and clear her of her adversary: *but afterward he said within himself;* as he was considering the matter in his own mind, and reflecting on this woman's case, and the frequent application she had made to him: *though I fear not God, nor regard man;* a monster in iniquity he was, to say so of himself; for though the character belongs to many, there are few that are so impudent in sin, as to take it to themselves, and glory in it.

Ver. 5. *Yet because this widow troubleth me, &c.* By often knocking at his door, by loud cries and earnest entreaties, with strong arguments, and floods of tears, and could not easily be removed from his presence, or got out of his house: *I will avenge her;* I will hear her cause, do her justice, and deliver her from her troublesome adversary: *lest by her continual coming she weary me;* so that it was not from a conscience of duty in him, as a judge, or from a commiseration of the poor widow's case; but from a selfish end, for his own ease, in perfect agreement to his character, that his house might not be disturbed, and his ears stuned with her noise and cry, and he be pestered with her company day after day. The character of this judge, his reasoning with himself upon it, his principles from which he acted, and the ends he had in view, are wholly to be left out in the accommodation of this parable; and no farther to be considered than as the argument from the lesser to the greater may be strengthened by them; the intention of the parable being only to shew the force, efficacy, and usefulness of importunity in prayer, as appears by the application of it, by our Lord, in the verses following.

Ver. 6. *And the Lord said, &c.* The Lord Jesus Christ, who delivered out this parable to his disciples: *hear what the unjust judge saith;* and take encouragement from hence to be frequent and importunate in prayer with God; for if such a cruel, merciless, and unjust judge is to be wrought upon by

importunity to do justice, who has no principle to influence him, how much more will not God, who is a just judge, the judge of widows, and of the oppressed, a God of great mercy and compassion, who delights in the prayers of his people, knows their cases, and is able to help them, and who has an interest in them, and they in him? how much more will not he regard their importunate requests, and arise, and save them? much such like reasoning as this is used by the Jews: "says R. Simeon ben Chelphetha, an impudent man overcomes a good man, or a modest man, (by his importunity,) how much more the goodness of the world itself?" that is, how much more will a man, by his continual prayer, prevail with God, who is goodness itself? And they have another saying<sup>1</sup>, that agrees with this: "says R. Nachman, impudence (*i. e.* importunity) even against God is profitable." The application of this parable follows:

Ver. 7. *And shall not God avenge his own elect, &c.*] Who are a select number, a special people, whom he has loved with an everlasting love, so as of his own sovereign good will and pleasure to choose in his son Jesus Christ unto everlasting life and salvation, through certain ways and means of his own appointing, hence they are peculiarly his: and these he will avenge and vindicate, right their wrongs, do them justice, and deliver them from their adversaries, and take vengeance on them; as may be concluded from his hatred of sin, his justice, and his holiness, from his promises, and from his power, and from the efficacy of prayer, and the regard he has to it: for it follows, *which cry unto him day and night*; whose prayers he always hears; whose tears he puts up in his bottle; and whose importunity must surely be thought to have more regard with him, than that of the poor widow with the unjust judge: *though he bear long with them?* either with their adversaries, their oppressors, and persecutors, who are vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, whom he endures with much long-suffering, till the sufferings of his people are accomplished, and the iniquities of these men are full; or rather with the elect, for the words may be rendered, *and is long-suffering towards them*: delays his coming, and the execution of his vengeance, as on the Jewish nation, so upon the whole world of the ungodly, till his elect are gathered in from among them; see 2 Pet. iii. 9.

Ver. 8. *I tell you that he will avenge them speedily, &c.*] As he did in a few years after the death of Christ, when God's elect among the Jews were singled out, and gathered in from them, and were delivered from their persecutors, and saved from temporal ruin and destruction, whilst the Roman army made sad havoc of their enemies; and so will he do in the end of the world. *Nevertheless, when the son of man cometh*: either to destroy Jerusalem, or to judge the world: *shall he find faith on the earth?* either in the land of Judea, the believers being removed from thence, and scattered among the Gentiles, and not a man, at least in Jerusalem, that had any faith in Jesus, as the Messiah; or in the world at the last day: there will then

be little of the doctrine of faith, and less of the grace of faith, and still less of the exercise of faith, particularly in prayer, and especially about the coming of Christ; it will be little thought of, and expected, or faith little exercised about it. With this agree some expressions in the Jewish writings<sup>2</sup>: "says R. Jose, the holy, blessed God, will not be revealed to Israel, but in the time, דלם אשתכח מדימותא, *that faith is not found among them.*" And elsewhere<sup>3</sup>, speaking of the times of the Messiah, and of a star that shall then appear, it is said, "when that star shall be seen in the world, at that time mighty wars shall be stirred up in the world, on all the four sides, ומדימותא לא ישתכח, *and faith will not be found among them.*" They seem to regard the first coming of the Messiah: and which was true with respect to the majority of their nation; and the same holds good with regard to his second coming; see 2 Esdras v. 1.

Ver. 9. *And he spake this parable unto certain, &c.*] Or with respect to certain men; having a view to them, in order to expose their pride, vanity, arrogance, and self-confidence: *which trusted in themselves that they were righteous*; or, as if they were righteous; or because they were so in their own eyes, and in the esteem of others: the ground of their trust and confidence were themselves, their hearts, and the supposed goodness of them, their outward holiness, their moral behaviour, their duties, and good works, their alms-deeds, and religious exercises, their ceremonial observances, and fleshly privileges; on account of which they thought themselves very righteous persons, such as could not fail of being accepted with God, and justified in his sight; whereas there are none righteous in, and of themselves, no, not one. All the descendants of Adam, as such, are sinners, destitute of a righteousness, and filled with all unrighteousness, and are enemies to true righteousness: no man is naturally righteous, nor is he capable of making himself so, by any thing he can do: none are righteous by their obedience to the law of works, for that is imperfect, and can't justify before God, in whose sight no flesh living can be justified on this account, however righteous they may appear before men, or may be in their own eyes: for this is contrary to God's way of making men righteous, and would disannul the death of Christ, and encourage boasting in man. Such trust and confidence must be very vain, and arise from ignorance; from ignorance of God, of the perfection of his justice, and of the nature of his righteous law; and of themselves, of the impurity of their hearts, and the imperfection of their obedience. These were of the *pharisaical* sort, and of which complexion were the generality of the Jews; and many of these were now standing by Christ, and within the hearing of this parable, and for whose sake it was delivered: *and despised others*; or, *every man*, as the Syriac and Persic versions read; all the rest of mankind, all but themselves; they made nothing of them, had them in no account; treated them as persons unworthy of the regard of God, and not fit to stand near them, or to be named with them.

<sup>1</sup> T. Hieros. Taanot, fol. 65. 2.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 105. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 118. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ib. in Num. fol. 86. 1.

Ver. 10. *Two men went up into the temple to pray, &c.*] Which is called an house of prayer, Isa. lvi. 7. the Jews had a mighty notion of praying in a place of religious worship, as in the temple, or in a synagogue; imagining that their prayers were more acceptable to God, and sooner heard by him in such a place than in private: "the prayers of the congregation, they say", are heard always; and though there are sinners among them, the holy, blessed God, does not despise the prayer of many; wherefore, a man ought to join himself with the congregation, and not pray alone, whenever he can pray with that; and let a man go always, morning and evening, to the synagogue; for there is no prayer heard at all times but in the synagogue; and whoever has a synagogue in his city, and does not pray in it with the congregation, is called an ill neighbour.—A divinity-school is greater than a synagogue; and the great wise men, though they had many synagogues in their cities, did not pray but where they studied in the law." And they say, that "he that prays (in the synagogue) is as if he offered a pure offering." —Says R. Abhu, in the name of R. Abhu, *seek the Lord where he may be found*: where is he to be found? in the synagogues, and in the schools." These two men had, doubtless, both of them a notion of the sanctity of the place, and acted according to the prevailing sense of the people. They went up hither, not by consultation, agreement, and appointment; for they were of a different cast from each other; but so it happened. Had they went by consent, there was a rule for them: "two men that go to a synagogue to pray, and one has finished his prayer before his neighbour, if he stays for him, his reward is double; and if he does not stay for him, his prayer is not heard." And they had rules also for the manner of their going to, and from the place of prayer: when they went thither, they were to go nimbly, in haste, and even run; but when they came back, they were to go very slowly and gently. "The commandment (they say) is to run to a synagogue; for it is said, Hos. vi. 3. *we shall know, we shall follow on to know the Lord*: but when a man comes out of the synagogue, let him not take large steps; but let him walk, little by little, or take short steps." How far these rules were complied with by these men, is of no great moment to know; who they were follows: *the one a Pharisee*: one of those that trusted in themselves, as righteous, and despised all others, especially publicans and sinners; of these see the note on Matt. iii. 7. This was the strictest sect among the Jews; they were men that prayed, and fasted much, and were great sticklers for the ceremonies of the law, and the traditions of the elders, and did all they did to be seen of men: *and the other a publican*; a gatherer of the Roman tax, though by nation a Jew; and therefore such were had in great contempt by the Jews in general; nor would they eat and drink and converse with them; see the notes on Matt. ix. 10, 11.

Ver. 11. *The Pharisee stood, &c.*] Standing was a

praying posture; see the note on Matt. vi. 5. nor is this observed, as if it was something amiss; but the sense is, either that he stood in some place of eminence, that he might be seen of others; or he stood in a set, fixed posture, in a very grave and solemn manner, shewing great devotion and seriousness; or he stood with great boldness and confidence: *and prayed thus with himself*; the phrase, *with himself*, may be read either with the word *stood*, as it is in the Syriac version; and then the sense is that he stood alone, apart from the publican, at a distance from him, as despising him; and lest he should be polluted by him; see Isa. lxxv. 4. or with the word *prayed*, and does not design internal prayer, which was what the Pharisees did not use; for all they did was to be seen, and heard of men: but the meaning is, that he prayed only with respect to himself; he was wholly intent upon himself; his own self, and the commendation of himself, were the subject of his prayer: his whole dependence in it was on himself; and he was only seeking by it his own glory: he had no regard to the people of God, to all the saints, nor did he put up one petition for them; nor had he any respect to Christ, the mediator, through whom access is had to God, and acceptance with him; nor to the Holy Spirit for his assistance; and though he addressed himself to God, yet in praise of himself, saying, *God I thank thee*: there is no petition in this prayer of his for pardoning grace and mercy; nor for larger measures of grace; nor for strength to perform duties, and to hold on to the end; nor for any favour whatever; nor is there any confession of sin in it. So that it scarce deserves the name of a prayer, for in it is only a thanksgiving: indeed, thanksgiving in prayer is right; and had he been a man that had received the grace of God, it would have been right in him to have given thanks to God for it, by which he was made to differ from others: nor would he have been blame-worthy, had he thanked God for the good things which he had received from him, or which by his assistance he had done; but nothing of this kind is said by him: he thanks God, in order to exalt himself, and places his righteousness in his own works, and treats all other men in a censorious and disdainful manner; thanking God, or rather blessing himself, saying, *that I am not as other men are*: and yet he was as other men, and no better: he was a sinner in Adam, as other men; and a sinner by nature, as others are; and had the same iniquities and corruptions in his heart, as others; and had no more goodness in him than other men, and as far from true real righteousness. Perhaps he means the Gentiles, whom the Jews looked upon as sinners, and the worst of men; and yet they were in no wise better than the Gentiles, as to their state and condition by nature: it was usual to call the Gentiles אֲחֵרִים, *other men*: which phrase is sometimes explained by the *nations of the world*; and sometimes by the *Cuthites, or Samaritans*; see the note on Luke v. 29.—He goes on, *extortioners, unjust, adulterers*; and yet all these characters belonged to the men of his sect: the Pharisees were oppressors of the poor, de-

<sup>1</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 8. sect. 1, 3. Piske Harosh Beracot, c. 1. art. 7.

<sup>2</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 8. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Piske Harosh, ib.

<sup>4</sup> Piske Harosh, & T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 9. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Maimon. ib. sect. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 111. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 59. 2.

voured widows' houses, and extorted money from them, under a pretence of long prayers: they are aptly represented by the unjust steward, in ch. xvi. 1, 8. and they were an unclean, unchaste, and an adulterous generation of men, Matt. xii. 39. John viii. 8, 9. or even as this publican: pointing to him at some distance, with great scorn and disdain. This was his prayer, or thanksgiving. It may gratify the curiosity of some to have some other prayers of the Pharisees; and it may be worth while to compare them with this, between which there will appear a pretty deal of likeness. "R. Nechunia ben Hakkana used to pray, "when he went into the school, and when he came out, a short prayer: they said unto him, what is the goodness (or the excellency) of this prayer? he replied to them, when I go in, I pray, that no offence might come by means of me; and when I go out, I give thanks for my portion: when I go in, this is what I say, let it be thy good pleasure before thee, O Lord, my God, the God of my fathers, that I may not be angry with my colleagues, nor my colleagues be angry with me; that I may not pronounce that which is pure defiled, and that which is defiled, pure; that I may not forbid that which is lawful, nor pronounce lawful that which is forbidden; and that I may not be found ashamed in this world, and in the world to come: and when I come out, this is what I say; I confess before thee, (or I thank thee) O Lord God, and the God of my fathers, that thou hast given me my portion among those that sit in the schools, and synagogues, and hast not given me my portion in the theatres and shows: for I labour, and they labour; I watch, and they watch; I labour to inherit paradise, and they labour for the pit of corruption." And these two prayers the Jews were obliged to recite at their going in, and coming out of the synagogue. "It is a tradition of R. Juda, saying, three things a man ought to say every day; blessed be thou, שלא עשני גוי, that thou hast not made me a Gentile; blessed art thou, that thou hast not made me an unlearned man (or one that is vain and foolish, uncivil and uncultivated); blessed art thou, that hast not made me a woman." In their prayer-books, these thanksgivings stand thus: "blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, that thou hast made me an Israelite; (in some books it is, as before, that thou hast not made me a Gentile;) blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, that thou hast not made me a servant; blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, that thou hast not made me a woman:" when the women, instead of this last, say: "blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who has made me as he pleases." And very agreeable to one of these benedictions does the Ethiopic version render the

prayer of the Pharisee here; *I thank thee, O Lord that thou hast not made me as other men.*

Ver. 12. *I fast twice in the week, &c.*] Not on the sabbath, as the words may be literally rendered, and as they are in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; for the sabbath was not a fasting, but a feasting-day with the Jews; for they were obliged to eat three meals, or feasts, on a sabbath-day, one in the morning, another at evening, and another at the time of the meat-offering: even the poorest man in Israel, who was maintained by alms, was obliged to keep these three feasts. It was forbidden a man to fast, until the sixth hour, on a sabbath-day; that is, till noon: wherefore, 'tis a great mistake in Justin<sup>h</sup>, and Suetonius<sup>i</sup>, that the sabbath was kept by the Jews as a fast. But the word is rightly rendered, *in the week*: the whole seven days, or week, were by the Jews commonly called the sabbath; hence, ארבעה בשבת, the first of the sabbath, and the second of the sabbath, and the third of the sabbath<sup>k</sup>; that is, the first, second, and third days of the week. Now the two days in the week on which they fasted were Monday and Thursday, the second and fifth days; on which days the law of Moses, and the book of Esther were read, by the order of Ezra<sup>l</sup>; and fasts for the congregation were appointed on those days<sup>m</sup>; and so a private person, or a single man, as in this instance, took upon him, or chose to fast on the same<sup>n</sup>: the reason of this is, by some, said to be, because Moses went up to Mount Sinai on a Thursday, and came down on a Monday<sup>o</sup>. But though these men fasted so often, they took care not to hurt themselves; for they allowed themselves to eat in the night till break of day. 'Tis asked<sup>p</sup>, "how long may a man eat and drink, *i. e.* on a fast-day? until the pillar of the morning ascends (day breaks); these are the words of Rabbi (Judah): R. Eliezer ben Simeon says, until "cock-crowing." So that they had not so much reason to boast of these performances: he adds, *I give tithes of all that I possess*: not only of what was titheable by the law of Moses, as the produce of his ground; and by the traditions of the elders, as the herbs in his garden, Matt. xxiii. 23. but of every thing he had, which was not required by either of them; upon which he thought himself a very righteous person, and more than a common man: 'tis asked<sup>q</sup>, "who is a plebeian?" (one of the people of the earth, or the common people) whoever does not eat his common food with purity "with hands washed"; these are the words of R. Meir; "but the wise mensay, whoever does not tithe his fruit." This man would not be thought to be such an one.

Ver. 13. *And the publican standing afar off, &c.*] Not at the outermost porch, or at the door: for "a man might not fix his place at the door of the synagogue, but, רחוק, he must go afar off, the space of two doors, and then pray<sup>r</sup>;" it may be in the court of

<sup>h</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 7. 4. Vid. Misna Beracot, c. 4. sect. 2. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>i</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 13. 2.

<sup>j</sup> Seder Tophillot, ed. Basil fol. 2. 2. ed. Amst. fol. 4. 1.

<sup>k</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat, c. 30. sect. 9.

<sup>l</sup> T. Hieros. Nedarium, fol. 40. 4.

<sup>m</sup> L. 56. c. 2.

<sup>n</sup> Octav. Aug. c. 76.

<sup>o</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Mechosre Caphara, c. 2. sect. 8.

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 92. 1. Megilla, fol. 21. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Maimon. Hilchot Taanot, c. 1. sect. 5.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 12. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Godwin Moses & Aaron, l. 1. c. 10. Vid. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 28. 1.

<sup>5</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 12. 1.

<sup>6</sup> T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 61. 1.

<sup>7</sup> First Hieros. Beracot, c. 1. art. 7. Vid. T. Hieros. Beracot. fol. 9. 1.

the Gentiles, when the Pharisee was in the court of the Israelites; at least he was afar off from him: and indeed, those who came to humble themselves before the Lord, and confess their sins, were obliged to stand at the distance of four cubits one from another, that one might not hear the prayers and confessions of the other: and it might be, that this poor man might stand at a greater distance than was required, that he might not displease the Pharisee, who, he knew, would resent it, should he stand near him; or rather this was done, to testify the sense he had of his state and condition, and of his unworthiness; as that he was afar off from God, and unworthy to draw nigh unto him, and deserved to be kept at a distance from him for ever. So it is said of the Israelites, that they trembled at Mount Sinai, and stood afar off, להוררת ענותותם, to shew their humility: and under a work of the law, and under such a like dispensation was this publican; and therefore would not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven: and which, as it was an humble posture he stood in, agrees with the rules the Jews give; "the order (or posture) of the body, how is it? when a man stands in prayer he ought to set his feet one by the side of the other, and fix his eyes, למטה, below, as if he looked to the earth; and his heart must be open above, as if he stood in the heavens; and lay his hands upon his heart, putting the right hand over the left; and must stand as a servant before his master, with trembling, and fear, and dread, and may not put his hands upon his loins." And agreeably to this, 'tis elsewhere said, "he that prays, ought to fix his eyes below, and his heart above." And the Jews used to look downward, or shut their eyes, for the sake of attention in prayer; and it was even forbidden them to open their eyes to look upon the wall<sup>2</sup>. This shewed in the publican, that the guilt of his sins lay heavy on him; that he could not look up; that shame filled him with blushing; that sorrow caused his countenance to fall; and that fear of divine wrath, and displeasure, possessed him; and that he looked upon himself as unworthy of the smiles of heaven, but smote upon his breast: pointing at the fountain of his sin; expressing by this action, his sorrow, and repentance for it; and an aversion and abhorrence of himself on account of it, joined with indignation and revenge; and he did this to arouse and stir up all the powers and faculties of his soul, to call upon God. The Persian version renders it, *he fell on his knees, and beat the earth with his head*; taking a sort of revenge on himself for sin: saying, *God be merciful to me a sinner*. This is his prayer; a short, but a very full one, and greatly different from that of the Pharisee: in which is a confession that he was a sinner; a sinner in Adam, who had derived a sinful nature from him, being conceived and born in sin; and a sinner by practice, having committed many actual transgressions, attended with aggravating circumstances; a guilty and filthy sinner, a notorious one, deserving of the wrath of God, and the lowest hell: he speaks of himself, as if he was the

only sinner in the world; at least, as if there was none like him: and there is in this prayer also a petition; and the object it is put up to, is God, against whom he had sinned; with whom there is mercy and forgiveness; and who only can forgive sin; and who has promised that he will: and has proclaimed his name, a God, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin; and has given instances of his forgiving-grace and mercy; and therefore the publican was right in addressing him by confession: the petition he makes to him is, to be merciful, or propitious to him; that is, to shew mercy to him, through the propitiary sacrifice of the Messiah, which was typified by the sacrifices under the law: the first thing a sensible sinner wants, is an application of pardoning grace and mercy; and forgiveness springs from mercy; and because the mercy of God is free and abundant, therefore pardon is so: but this is not to be expected from an absolute God, or God out of Christ. God is only propitious in Christ: hence it may be observed, that God pardons none but those to whom he is propitious in his son; and that he forgives sin upon the foot of a reconciliation, and satisfaction made to his law, and justice, and so pardon is an act of justice, as well as of mercy; and that there is no pardoning mercy but through Christ. The Arabic version renders it, *spare me, because I am a sinner*; see Psal. xxv. 11.

Ver. 14. *I tell you that this man, &c.*] The publican that so freely owned himself to be a sinner, and by his carriage acknowledged he was unworthy of any favour; and who was treated with so much contempt by the Pharisee: *went down to his house*; from the temple which was built on a mountain, justified, rather than the other: accounted as a righteous person in the sight of God; justified from all his sins, and accepted by him, when the other was abhorred and neglected. The Syriac and Persian versions, and so Beza's most ancient copy, read, *than the Pharisee*, who had such an high opinion of himself, and despised others: not that the Pharisee was justified at all, when the publican really was; but the sense is, that if judgment had been to have been made, and sentence passed according to the then conduct and behaviour of both parties, the publican had greatly the advantage, in the sight of God; an humble demeanour being well-pleasing and acceptable to him, when pride, and arrogance, boasting of, and trusting in a man's own righteousness, are abhorred by him; *for every one that exalteth himself, shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted*. This was a proverbial expression, often mentioned by Christ on different occasions, and frequently used by the Jews; see the note on Matt. xxiii. 12. to which may be added the following passages; "whoever is of a haughty spirit, at last shall be made low." And again, "whosoever humbleth himself, the holy blessed God will lift him up."

Ver. 15. *And they brought unto him also infants, &c.*] As well as grown persons, that were sick, to be healed by him: *that he would touch them*; in order, as some

<sup>2</sup> Jarchi & Bartenora in Pirke Abot. c. 5. sect. 5.

<sup>1</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 80. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 5. sect. 4. & Moses Kotsensis Mizvot Tora, pr. affirm. 19.

<sup>4</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 106. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 25. 3.

<sup>6</sup> T. Bab. Sota, fol. 5. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Zohar in Lev. fol. 39. 1.

learned men think, to cure them of diseases that attended them; for one of the ways by which Christ healed persons, was by touching them; nor do we read of his touching in common for any other purpose, or of persons desiring him to touch them, or theirs, but for this end; in Matthew it is read, *that he should put his hands on them*; and so the Arabic and Persic versions here read, in order to pray over them, and bless them: but neither in one place, nor the other, is any mention of their baptism, or of their being brought for such a purpose; nor can it be concluded from hence; *but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them*; the persons that brought the infants; see the note on Matt. xix. 13.

Ver. 16. *But Jesus called them unto him, &c.*] Not the disciples, as the Ethiopic version reads, nor the persons that brought the children, but the children themselves; for the antecedent to the relative *autra*, *them*, can be no other; which shews, that these infants were not new-born babes, or children at the breast, but such as were more grown up, since they were capable of being called to, and of coming to Christ: *and said*; that is, to the disciples; so the Persic version expresses it: *suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not*; see the note on Matt. xix. 14. *for of such is the kingdom of God*; or of heaven, as the Syriac version reads, and as in Matt. xix. 14. that is, the kingdom of God belongs to such, *who are as these*; or, *like to these*: as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render the words; see the note as before.

Ver. 17. *Verily I say unto you, &c.*] Christ takes an occasion from hence to teach his disciples humility, and guard them against pride and vanity: *whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God*; the King Messiah, the doctrines of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, even the whole Gospel dispensation; *as a little child*: without prejudice, pride, ambition, and vanity, with meekness, and humility: *shall in no wise enter therein*: he is a very unfit and improper person to be a professor of the Gospel; or to be admitted to Gospel ordinances: or be a member of a Gospel church; or be reckoned a subject of the Messiah's kingdom, which is of a spiritual nature; and as he has not a meekness for, and a right unto the kingdom of glory, he shall never see it, and enjoy it.

Ver. 18. *And a certain ruler asked him, &c.*] A young man, Matt. xix. 20. a ruler among the Jews, a civil magistrate, and a very rich man; he ran after Jesus, and overtook him in the way, as he was going towards Jericho, Mark x. 17. *saying, good master; Rabbi*; or doctor, *what shall I do to inherit eternal life?* see the note on Matt. xix. 16.

Ver. 19. *And Jesus said unto him, &c.*] In answer to his question, beginning with the character he gave him: *why callest thou me good?* it being unusual to address men, even their Rabbins, under such a title: *none is good, save one*, that is, *God*: or *but God alone*; as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it; or, *but the one God*, as read the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; see the note on Matt. xix. 17.

Ver. 20. *Thou knowest the commandments, &c.*] The ten commandments given to Moses, and delivered to the people; and which they were careful to teach their

children; though five are only here mentioned, and not in the order in which they stand: suggesting hereby that these must be kept, or the law must be fulfilled, and satisfaction made for the violation of it, or there can be no inheriting eternal life. The five commandments mentioned are, the seventh, sixth, eighth, ninth, and fifth: *do not commit adultery*; *do not kill*. *do not steal*; *do not bear false witness*; *honour thy father and thy mother*; see the notes on Matt. xix. 17. and Mark x. 19.

Ver. 21. *And he said, &c.*] That is, the ruler said to him, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions add; *to Jesus*, as the Persic version expresses it; *all these have I kept from my youth up*; see the note on Matt. xix. 20. where it is added, *what lack I yet?*

Ver. 22. *Now when Jesus heard these things, &c.*] That he had kept all these commandments, and that ever since he was a child, and to that very time: *he said unto him, yet lackest thou one thing*; not but that he lacked many other things, and even every thing: for he had performed no one thing as it should be: but Christ said, partly in answer to his pert question, *what lack I yet?* and partly by an ironical concession, granting he had kept them all, as he had said, yet one thing was wanting; and chiefly with a view to mortify his pride and vanity: *sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me*; see the note on Matt. xix. 21.

Ver. 23. *And when he heard this, &c.*] That one thing was wanting, and what that was, which was to part with all his worldly substance, and follow Christ; *he was very sorrowful, for he was very rich*; see the note on Matt. xix. 22.

Ver. 24. *And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, &c.*] As he might, by his looks and gestures; and perceived that he was determined not to part with his possessions, and follow him: *he said*, to his disciples, *how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!* embrace the Gospel, and submit to the ordinances of it; deny themselves, part with their worldly substance for the cause of Christ, and interest of religion. Riches, which should be a reason for, are often a bar unto a profession of Christ, and his Gospel. This is delivered as an affirmation, or by way of assertion, in Matt. xix. 23. see the note there.

Ver. 25. *For it is easier for a camel, &c.*] These words were spoken to the disciples again, and were a second address to them, after they had shewn astonishment at the former; see the notes on Matt. xix. 24. and Mark x. 24, 25.

Ver. 26. *And they that heard it, said, who then can be saved?*] These were the disciples of Christ, who so said; see Matt. xix. 25.

Ver. 27. *And he said, &c.*] That is, Jesus, as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions express it: *the things which are impossible with men, are possible with God*; see the note on Matt. xix. 26.

Ver. 28. *Then Peter said, &c.*] *To him*, as the Syriac and Arabic versions add; that is, to the Lord Jesus, as the Ethiopic version expresses it; who was always the most forward to speak on any occasion: he observing what was required of the young man, and how unwilling he was to comply with it, and the

difficulty in every rich man's way of entrance into the kingdom of God, spoke as follows; *lo, we have left all: the Arabic version reads, all ours; all we had, our friends, trades, and worldly substance; and followed thee: in Matt. xix. 27. 'tis added, what shall we have therefore; referring to the promise of Christ, to the young man, that should he sell all he had, and give it to the poor, he should have treasure in heaven; see one note there.*

Ver. 29. *And he said unto them, &c.]* To his disciples, as the Ethiopic version reads; though the Syriac and Persic versions read, *and Jesus said to him; that is, to Peter; he particularly replied to him: verily I say unto you, there is no man; not only you shall have peculiar honour done you, as to sit on thrones, and judge the twelve tribes of Israel; but there is not a single person of a more private character, that hath left house, or houses, as read the Syriac and Persic versions; or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake; that is, for Christ's sake, and for the sake of his Gospel, as the other evangelists have it; and which teaches us how to understand the kingdom of God here, and elsewhere.*

Ver. 30. *Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, &c.]* Not more houses, parents, brethren, &c. but that which is abundantly preferable to them; such comfort, peace, satisfaction, and pleasure, as are not to be found in such enjoyments: *and in the world to come life everlasting; which was what the young man was desirous of inheriting, ver. 18. See the note on Matt. xix. 29.*

Ver. 31. *Then he took unto him the twelve, &c.]* His twelve disciples, as the Ethiopic version expresses it; he took them aside from the rest of the company, as they were travelling on the road, and privately delivered to them, what follows; see Matt. xx. 17. *and said unto them, behold, we go up to Jerusalem; to the feast of the passover, which was drawing near, and the last Christ was to eat with his disciples, the time of his sufferings, and death, being now at hand; and of which he thought fit to give his disciples notice: and therefore he called them aside, and, in a private manner, told them, that all things that are written by the prophets, concerning the son of man, shall be accomplished; particularly, Psal. ii. 1, 2, and xxii. 6, 7, 8. Isa. l. 6. Micah v. 1. Isa. liii. 5, 6, 12. Psal. xxii. 15, and xvi. 10. Hos. vi. 2. for to these the following things have respect.*

Ver. 32. *For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, &c.]* As he was by the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, to Pilate, the Roman governor, and by him to the soldiers: *and shall be mocked; as he was by the latter, when they crowned him with thorns, arrayed him in a purple robe, and put a reed into his hand, and bowed the knee to him, saying, hail king of the Jews; and likewise by the Jews when he hung upon the cross: and spitefully entreated.* The Syriac and Persic versions leave out this clause here, and read it in the next verse. It may regard the injuries done him, the abuses and affronts he received, both by words and blows: *and spitted on; as he was both by the officers in the high-priest's palace, and by the Roman soldiers in Pilate's hall; see Isa. l. 6.*

Ver. 33. *And they shall scourge him, &c.]* As he

was by Pilate's order, before he was crucified: *and put him to death; a shameful, and a painful one, the death of the cross: and the third day he shall rise again; as he accordingly did.*

Ver. 34. *And they understood none of these things, &c.]* Not one of them, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it; every article of his sufferings and death were unintelligible by them; they knew not how to understand him in any one point: or how to reconcile these things to the notions they had entertained of the temporal grandeur, and glory, of the Messiah, and his kingdom; and which shews their great ignorance of the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning these things. *And this saying, or thing; for it answers to the Hebrew word דבר, which signifies any affair, or matter, as well as a word, or saying: and so here, the whole of this affair was hid from them; unless it should have a peculiar regard to that part of it, which expresses his resurrection from the dead; see Mark ix. 10. or the delivery of him to the Gentiles, Luke ix. 44, 45. neither knew they the things which were spoken; the meaning of them.* The Ethiopic version leaves out this, and puts the former clause, by way of question, *and he said unto them, and is this saying hid from you?*

Ver. 35. *And it came to pass that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, &c.]* Which lay in his way to Jerusalem; *a certain blind man sat by the way-side begging; this was not blind Bartimeus, nor his companion, for they were cured by Christ as he went out of Jericho; but this man before he came to it; for we afterwards read of his entrance into, and passing through Jericho, ch. xix. 1. though much the same things are related in this account, as in that of the other two blind men; see the note on Matt. xx. 30.*

Ver. 36. *And hearing the multitude pass by, &c.]* Their voice, as the Syriac version expresses it; the noise of their feet, and especially of their tongues; *he asked what it meant? what was the meaning of this concourse of people, and of this clamorous noise; or, as the Syriac version reads, who it should be? what person of note was passing by, that there was such a multitude after him? to which the answer best agrees.*

Ver. 37. *And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.]* Some of the company answered him, that Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth, so much talked of, and said to be the Messiah, who was become so famous for his doctrines and miracles, for healing diseases, and dispossessing devils, was just then passing by; and this occasioned the noise and clamour.

Ver. 38. *And he cried, saying, Jesus thou son of David, &c.]* Believing him, at once, to be the Messiah; whence he calls him the son of David, which was a character and title of the Messiah, well known to the Jews; see the note on Matt. i. 1. and therefore immediately called out unto him, being willing to take that opportunity as he passed, and whilst he was within hearing, to make his suit to him for his sight: *saying, have mercy on me: a poor, blind, and miserable creature, and restore me to my sight, which will be an act of singular mercy, and goodness, and will always be gratefully owned as such.*

Ver. 39. *And they that went before, &c.]* In the company that preceded Christ; for he, as yet, was not come right over-against the blind man: *rebuked him*



that he should hold his peace; being not well pleased that he should call him the son of David, which was acknowledging him to be the Messiah; or that he might not be troublesome to Christ, and retard his journey: but he cried so much the more, thou son of David, have mercy on me; he neither dropped the character of Christ, nor his request to him; but called out more loudly, and with greater vehemence, earnestness, and importunity: so persons sensible of their need of Christ, and of his worth, excellency, and ability, are not to be discouraged from an application to him, by whatsoever they meet with from men, or devils.

Ver. 40. *And Jesus stood, &c.*] He stood still; he made a full stop, and went no further, when, it is very likely, he was just over-against him: and commanded him to be brought unto him; either by the disciples, or by some of the multitude: and when he was come near he asked him: the following question.

Ver. 41. *Saying, what wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? &c.*] Is it alms thou askest? or is it thy sight thou wouldst have restored? and he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight; this he chose, this was his request, and what he cried so vehemently for; and which he believed Christ, the son of David, was able to do for him.

Ver. 42. *And Jesus said unto him, receive thy sight, &c.*] Be it to thee as thou desirest, look up and

see: thus by a word speaking, and power going along with it, without making use of any means, he fulfilled his desire. *Thy faith hath saved thee*; or has obtained salvation for thee, a temporal salvation; and it may be also a spiritual and an eternal one: for that is the concern faith has in salvation; it is the means of obtaining and enjoying it: Christ, the object of faith, is the author of it.

Ver. 43. *And immediately he received his sight, &c.*] As soon as ever the word was gone out of Christ's mouth, virtue went forth from him, and cured the man of his blindness; his eyes were at once opened, and he saw as other men; and followed him; his kind benefactor, with a grateful sense of his goodness, with strong affection for him, and faith in him; glorifying God, who had sent such a Saviour to him; who had wrought such a wonderful miracle for him: for he was sensible that none but God could do this. *And all the people, when they saw it*; what was done, how that the man they just before saw was blind, and begging by the way-side, now had his sight restored to him, in an instant, and was following Jesus, in the crowd, along with them: gave praise unto God; or, as Beza's most ancient copy reads, glory; they ascribed the glory to God, and praised his name, that he had raised up the Messiah among them; of which this was a clear proof, inasmuch as the eyes of the blind were opened, according to Isa. xxxv. 5.

## C H A P. XIX.

Ver. 1. *AND Jesus entered, and passed through Jericho.*] Though the word *Jesus* is not in the original text, 'tis rightly supplied in our version; as it is also in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; for of him the words are manifestly spoken: after he had healed the blind man he met with near to Jericho, he entered into it, but made no stay in it, passed through it at once without stopping, though a very populous city; but here he had no work, either to perform miracles, or to convert sinners; though both, before he entered, and after he passed through it.

Ver. 2. *And behold there was a man named Zaccheus, &c.*] Or זַכַּי, *Zaccai*, a name in use among the Jews; see Ezra ii. 9. We often read of רַבִּי זַכַּי, *Rabbi Zaccai*, or *Zaccheus*<sup>a</sup>, and very frequently of R. Jochanan ben Zaccai, a famous doctor that lived in the times of Christ, and even till after the destruction of Jerusalem. The Jews also make mention of one R. Zaccai, a prince of the seed of David the king, in later times<sup>b</sup>. So that this man, as appears by his name, was a Jew, though some have thought him to have been a Gentile<sup>c</sup>, perhaps because of his employment: but it does not follow from thence; for there were Jews that were publicans, as Levi, or Matthew, afterwards one of Christ's disciples; and also in Jewish writings, mention is made, as of זַכַּי נָכְרִי, a stranger, or a Gentile publican<sup>d</sup>, so likewise of זַכַּי יִשְׂרָאֵל, an Israelite publican<sup>e</sup>; and

such an one was Zaccheus, as follows: which was chief among the publicans; the head of them in that place, to whom the rest brought the tax, tribute, or toll; he was the receiver-general of the tax: at the toll-booths, at bridges, for people's going over the water, there was זַכַּי גָּדוֹל, the greater publican, and זַכַּי קָטָן, the lesser publican<sup>f</sup>, who was deputy to the other. What sort of tax Zaccheus was concerned in collecting, is not certain; however, he was a principal man in this employ, and had got great riches by it. *And he was rich*; was a person of figure among the publicans, and of substance, which he had gained in his post. And though the instances of rich men being called by grace are few, yet there have been some; and the rather this circumstance is mentioned, because it had been observed in the preceding chapter, how difficult, but not impossible, as this instance proves, it was for rich men to enter into the kingdom of God.

Ver. 3. *And he sought to see Jesus who he was, &c.*] What sort of a person he was for complexion, stature, and age: having heard much of him, he was very desirous of indulging his curiosity with a sight of him; having, as yet, nothing else that induced him to desire to see him: his desire to see Jesus was not of the same kind with the kings and prophets, Matt. xiii. 16. but rather like that of Herod, Luke xxiii. 8. and could not for the press; the multitude of people that were flocking

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 27. 2. & Yehannot, fol. 77. 2. Nazir, fol. 38. 1. & Nidda, fol. 41. 2. & Juchasin, fol. 90. 2.

<sup>b</sup> R. Benjamin Itinerar. p. 61, 94.

<sup>c</sup> Tertull. contr. Marcion. l. 4. c. 37.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 113. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Bava Kama, c. 10. sect. 1.

<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 78. 2.

to meet Jesus, or who came before him, or were about him; for one part of the multitude went before him, and the other followed after him; so that he was in the crowd, and therefore could not easily be seen; *because he was little of stature.* The Syriac and Persic versions read, *because Zaccheus was little of stature,* lest it should be thought that this is said of Jesus; for the reason why Zaccheus could not see him for the crowd, was not because Christ was little of stature, and so was hid among them, but because Zaccheus was little of stature, and could not see over their heads.

Ver. 4. *And he ran before, &c.*] Jesus, and the company that was with him; so very desirous was he of seeing him: *and climbed up into a sycamore-tree to see him:* which sort of trees were very common about Jericho: hence we read of, קריות של שקמה, *beams of sycamore* in Jericho, which those that were strong took up in their arms, and the owners stood and devoted them to God<sup>1</sup>; and among the things which the men of Jericho did, this was one, that they permitted the branches of trees devoted to sacred uses, and of the *charub* tree, and of the *sycamore*, to be cut down and used<sup>2</sup>. This sort of trees used to grow in plains and valleys, as appears from some passages of Scripture, 1 Kings x. 27. 2 Chron. ix. 27. and from Jewish writings<sup>3</sup>; and certain it is, that Jericho was in such a situation. Josephus<sup>4</sup> says, it was seated in a plain; and Strabo says<sup>5</sup>, that Jericho is a plain surrounded with mountains; to which agrees the account that Justin gives of it. There is a valley, which is enclosed by mountains on all sides, as with a wall, like a castle; the space of the place is two hundred acres, and it is called Jericho. Hence we read of the plains and valley of Jericho in Scripture, Deut. xxxiv. 3. 2 Kings xxv. 5. so that it is very probable sycamore-trees grew there in great plenty; though the place was more famous for palm-trees: hence it is called the city of the palm-trees, Deut. xxxiv. 3. Judg. iii. 13. which the Targumist, in both places, interprets, the city of Jericho: to which agree the accounts given of it by Pliny<sup>6</sup>, Strabo<sup>7</sup>, and Justin<sup>8</sup>, who all affirm, that it abounded with palm-trees; and the latter says also with balsam-trees, from the sweet smell of which it might have its name: so the Jews say<sup>9</sup>, the ointment of balsam is called the ointment of our land, because it grows in Jericho, and because of the smell of it, it is called Jericho; though some think it has its name from the plain, being in the form of a half-moon; the moon, in the Hebrew language, being called ירח<sup>10</sup>. This tree seems to have been without the city: and indeed, according to the Jewish canon, it ought to be, which runs thus<sup>11</sup>; "they set a tree at a distance from a city, twenty and five cubits, but a *charub* tree, and a *sycamore*, fifty cubits." The reason of the greater distance of the latter is, as one of their commentators says<sup>12</sup>, because their branches were large; and this is the reason why Zaccheus went up into one of these

trees, because it was large and able to bear him, and tall, from whence he could have a full view of Christ: *for he was to pass that way; or rather, pass by that;* for the word *way* is not in the text; and the sense is, he was to pass by that tree; or *under it*, as the Arabic version renders it. The tree stood by the road-side, in which Jesus came, for which reason Zaccheus made choice of it, as fit for his purpose.

Ver. 5. *And when Jesus came to the place, &c.*] Where the tree stood, in which Zaccheus was. Christ knows where his people are, and where to find them, where they commonly dwell, or where at any time they are, he being God omniscient: besides, the bounds of their habitations are fixed by the determination and appointment of God, and were foreknown by Christ, who, before the world began, was *rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth*, where he knew his saints would dwell, who are the *sons of men*, with whom his *delights were*; and he knows where they are, when the time is come to call them: he knew Zaccheus was in the sycamore-tree, as he saw Nathanael under the fig-tree, before Philip called him, John i. 48. and Christ comes to the very place where his people are, either in person, as here; and so he came to Galilee, and to the sea there, and walked by it, and on the very spot, where he knew he should meet with Peter, and Andrew, and James, and John, whom he called to follow him, Matt. iv. 13, 18, 21. He came to his own city Capernaum, and to the place of receipt of custom near unto it, where Matthew was, and called him, Matt. ix. 1, 9. and he came to Samaria, and to Jacob's well, where he knew the woman of Samaria would be at such a time, in order to call her: or, though he comes not in person to others, where they are, yet by his word, and by his spirit; and he comes to them before they come to him; and is found of them, and finds them, who sought him not; and is made manifest to them, who asked not for him; and in this he acts the part of the good shepherd, that leaves the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and goes after that which is lost till he finds it; and agreeably to his character as a Saviour, and to the end of his coming into the world, which was to call sinners to repentance, and to seek, and save that which is lost, ver. 10. *He looked up and saw him;* he knew him, he being one of those the father had given to him, and he had loved and undertook for, and was come into the world to seek, and to save, and now, at this time, was come hither to call by his grace. He had seen him before in the glass of his father's purposes and decrees, he being chosen in him to grace and glory, and being a vessel of mercy, afore prepared for glory: he had seen him when he was brought into the bond of the covenant; and passed under the rod of him, that telleth all the covenant ones, as they were put into it, and given to him the Mediator of it: he had seen him among them that were lost in Adani, whom he came to recover out of the ruins of their fall in him; and now

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 57. 1. & Juchasin, fol. 60. 1.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Meusachot, fol. 71. 1. & Pesachim, fol. 50. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Misn. Sheviith, c. 9. sect. 2.

<sup>4</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 27.

<sup>5</sup> Geograph. l. 16.

<sup>6</sup> Hist. l. 36. c. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 14.

<sup>8</sup> Ut supra.

<sup>9</sup> Ib.

<sup>10</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Beraicot, fol. 43. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Vid. Masium in Josh. c. 2. p. 37.

<sup>12</sup> Misna Bava Bathra, c. 2. sect. 7.

<sup>13</sup> Eartuora in ib.

he saw him in his state of nature and unregeneracy; he saw him in his blood, and said unto him, live: this look was a look of love, grace, and mercy; he looked upon him, and loved him, and was gracious to him, and had compassion on him; and it was a distinguishing look, he looked on him, and not on others. There was a great crowd both before and behind him, and all about him; but he looked not on these, but he looked up to Zaccheus. *And he said unto him, Zaccheus; he knew him, and could call him by his name, as he did Saul, when he called him, and revealed himself to him. His name was written in the Lamb's book of life, and so must be known to Christ, who was present at the making of that book, and was concerned in setting down the names in it, and has it in his keeping; he was one of the sheep the father had given him, he came to lay down his life for, and of whom he had such perfect knowledge, as to call them by name, as he does all the chosen and redeemed ones; see Isa. xliii. 1. John x. 3. It must be very surprising to Zaccheus to hear Christ call him by his name, who was an utter stranger to him, and whom he had never seen before; and it is a very considerable instance of the omniscience of Christ, as well as of the great condescension and affectionate regard he has to his own, and the familiar way in which he uses them. Make haste, and come down: from the tree. The dangerous estate and condition of a sinner requires haste; it is like that of Lot in Sodom, when it was just going to be destroyed; and like that of the manslayer, when pursued by the avenger of blood; both whom it became to escape for their lives, and flee for refuge as fast as they could: and so it became Zaccheus to come down with all speed to Christ, who was come hither to call and save him; and the enjoyment of Christ, and his grace, calls for haste; see John xi. 28, 29. Such who come to Christ must quit all their exalted thoughts of themselves, of their riches, fulness, and self-sufficiency, and come to him as poor and needy, for such only he fills with his good things; and of their health and soundness, and come to him the great physician, as sick and diseased; and of their purity and goodness, holiness and righteousness, and come to him as sinners: but it must be mighty grace to cast down imaginations, and high things, that exalt themselves against Christ, and the knowledge of him, and to humble a proud sinner, and bring him to the feet of Jesus. For this day I must abide at thy house; for a little while; not so much for the sake of refreshment for himself, and his disciples, as for Zaccheus's good; to make known the great salvation to him, and to bestow his grace upon him, and converse with him in a spiritual way.*

*Ver. 6. And he made haste, &c.]* Such power went along with the words of Christ, that they immediately reached his heart, awakened his conscience, affected his mind, and drew his soul to Christ, and knit him to him, that he made all imaginable haste to be with him. So souls sensible of their dangerous state and condition by nature, and apprehensive of impending ruin and destruction, and having some intimation of safety and happiness in Christ, and being filled with love to him, and a liking of him, flee with all haste to him for refuge, for righteousness, peace, pardon, life, and salvation: *and came down; from the tree he had climbed, merely*

*to indulge his curiosity, little thinking that he should be called by name by him; that he should have him a guest at his house, and have such a knowledge of him, and familiar acquaintance with him: so souls, when called by Christ, and made sensible of their need of him, and the worth there is in him, quit their former post and place, part with their carnal lusts and sinful companions, and renounce their own righteousness and works, and come as sinners, humble and lowly, and venture upon Christ: and received him joyfully; not only into his house, but into his arms and heart: Christ was a welcome guest to him, as he is to every sensible sinner, who by faith receives him, as the father's free gift; as the alone Saviour and Redeemer; as the great Mediator, in all his offices, of prophet, priest, and king; and in every relation and character he bears; and embraces his doctrines, and submits to his ordinances, and that with the greatest joy; as there is reason for it, since with him, he receives the free and full forgiveness of his sins, a justifying righteousness, an abundance of grace, and a right unto, and meetness for heaven.*

*Ver. 7. And when they saw it, &c.]* The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions read, *when they all saw this*; that is, as the Persic version, rather paraphrasing than translating, says, *the men and the multitude that were with him; the pharisaical sort, the priests and Levites, of which there were great numbers in Jericho; see the note on ch. x. 31. They all murmured; as the Scribes and Pharisees did, at his eating with publicans and sinners, ch. xv. 2. Saying, that he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner; a notorious one, an abandoned profligate creature; one of the worst of sinners, as being a publican, and the chief of them; who had amassed vast riches to himself, by extortion and oppression; and they thought it was not agreeable to the character of an holy man, and a venerable prophet, which Christ bore, to go into such a man's house, eat at his table; and have familiar conversation with him; see Matt. ix. 10.*

*Ver. 8. And Zaccheus stood, &c.]* Before Christ, in respect to him, and reverence of him; and in the presence of others, to make a public confession before them, and that they might all hear it, when come to his own house: *and said unto the Lord; that is, to Jesus, as the Syriac and Persic versions, and some copies read; he addressed himself to Christ, and made his confession to him, as the Israelite, when he brought the basket of the first-fruits to the priest, confessed before the Lord his God, Deut. xxvi. 5. And the rather Zaccheus directed his speech to Christ, being, as he was now convinced, the discernor of the thoughts, and intents of the heart; who knew the genuineness of his repentance, that it was hearty and real; and the sincerity of his expressions and resolutions, and upon what principles he acted, and proposed to do as follows: behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give unto the poor; not to make satisfaction for the sins he had committed, but to testify his sense of them, and his repentance for them, and as willing to do good with what he had gotten; which shews, that the disposition of his mind was altered, and of a covetous oppressor, he was become tender, kind, and liberal. According to an order made by the Jews in Usha, a man might not give*

away more than a fifth part of his estate, unless in some extraordinary cases"; and we read of one, that gave a *third* part of his goods to the poor"; and of another, that gave, as here, half of his mammon, or wealth"; and another, half of his food to the poor"; and of another, that gave away all his goods to them"; see 1 Cor. xiii. 3. to give a tenth part, was reckoned a medium": and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation; or by extorting any thing from him on any pretence, by making an unjust demand upon him; or in any oppressive way, by defrauding and tricking, and by doing him any injury, in any form or manner: I restore him fourfold: the same that was done in case of sheep-stealing, Exod. xxii. 1. but in such a case as this, the law only required the principal, with the fifth part added to it; see Levit. vi. 5. Numb. v. 7. but Zaccheus proposes as much as in the case of theft, and which was rarely used. The Jews<sup>b</sup> say, "that the manner of paying double, was more used than the manner of paying fourfold, or fivefold; for the manner of paying double was used, both in things animate and inanimate; but the manner of paying fourfold and fivefold, was used but with respect to an ox, and a sheep only." This was done by Zaccheus, to shew the truth and reality of his repentance; for with that nation, "the repentance of shepherds, and of collectors, and of publicans, is said<sup>c</sup> to be very difficult:" the reason given by the gloss is, because they rob many, and don't know who to return to.

Ver. 9. *And Jesus said unto him, &c.*] The Persic version reads, *Jesus said to the multitude, and to his disciples*; to which well enough agree the following words: *this day is salvation come to this house*; to the master of it, and it may be to others in it; the Arabic version reads, *to the inhabitants of this house*. The Persic version reads, *great salvation*; by which may be meant, the Gospel, as in Heb. ii. 3. so called, because it brings the account of salvation by Christ, which is not discoverable by the light of nature, nor made known by the law of Moses; but the Gospel publishes and proclaims it; the ministers of it shew unto men the way of salvation, and direct them, and encourage to go to Christ for it; likewise the Gospel is the means of bringing near this salvation, and of applying it to them; and when it comes with the demonstration of the spirit, it is the power of God unto salvation: and this might be truly said to come to Zaccheus's house; inasmuch as Christ the great preacher of it, and by whom it first began to be spoken, and was spoken by him, as it never was by any one besides, was now in his house, preaching it; the sum and substance of which lie in the words delivered by him in the following verse; and the Gospel came to him to purpose, and was effectual: sometimes it comes to a people, city, town, or family, and it is rejected, and becomes of no effect; but here it came to Zaccheus, and into him; and wrought effectually in him, as his words in the preceding verse declare: moreover, the blessing of salvation itself, which is wrought out by Christ, and pub-

lished in the Gospel, was brought home to him; he was not only made sensible that he stood in need of salvation, but this was brought near unto him, and set before him, and applied to him; he had not only hopes of it, but faith of interest in it; it was made known unto him, that Christ was his salvation; and it was revealed and applied to the rest of the family, as well as to him: sometimes the Lord takes one of a city, and two of a family; and sometimes whole families, as Lydia's and the jailor's, and here Zaccheus's, as seems probable; for by his house may be meant, his family: though this may be understood of Christ, the author of salvation; who came into his house in a literal sense, as well as in a spiritual sense; and was made known to Zaccheus, as his Saviour and Redeemer. The Alexandrian copy reads, *in this house*: it follows, *forasmuch as he also is the son of Abraham*. These words are to be considered, either as a reason, or evidence, of salvation being come to his house; and therefore can't be understood of him as a son of Abraham, by natural descent: he was indeed a Jew, as appears by his name, and by his knowledge of the Jewish law, concerning restoration; and which may be confirmed by the silence of the Pharisees, who murmured at Christ's going along with him; who, had he been a Gentile, would not have failed to have mentioned it; but then, though this might be a reason justifying Christ in going to his house, who did not exceed the bounds of his office, as the minister of the circumcision, and as sent, and that only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; yet this could be no reason of spiritual salvation coming to him, which was not confined to Abraham's natural seed, nor was it necessary to them, more than others, and much less general; and indeed, very few of them then in being, partook of it; for though salvation was of them, and Christ the Saviour came unto them, yet they rejected him, and died in their sins: nor is this a reason of salvation coming to his family; for though by virtue of the covenant of circumcision made with Abraham and his natural seed, there were many outward privileges bestowed upon them, yet spiritual salvation was not ensured by it to them; and with regard to that, natural descent from Abraham, and circumcision, were of no avail: but this is to be understood of him, as a son of Abraham in a spiritual sense, he being now a believer in Christ, and so one that walked in the steps of the faith of Abraham; and this was an evidence of his interest in salvation by Christ, the blessing with which he was blessed, with faithful Abraham: and also his being a son of Abraham, which is no other than to be a child of the promise, Rom. ix. 8. or in other words, one of God's elect, a chosen vessel of salvation, was a reason why Christ, the author of salvation, came to him, why the Gospel of salvation was made known to him, and why the blessing of salvation was applied to him. The Jews use this phrase, not only of one whose natural descent is from Abraham, but whose knowledge in divine things is considerable: so when R. Eliezer ben Arach taught the Mercava, (the mystery of Ezekiel's visions,) "R. Jochanan ben Zaccai stood and kissed his head,

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 50. 1. & Maimon. in Misa. Peah, c. 1. sect. 1.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 44. 1.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 67. 2.

<sup>d</sup> Juchasin, fol. 105. 2.

<sup>2</sup> T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 15. 2.

<sup>a</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Mattanot Anayim, c. 7. sect. 5.

<sup>b</sup> Misa. Bava Kama, c. 7. sect. 1.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 94. 2.

“and said, blessed art thou, O God of Israel, that has given לאברהם בן, a son to Abraham, who has knowledge to understand, and to search out, and to explain the work of Mercava.” For Abraham is said<sup>c</sup> to be a father in this sort of knowledge, for which reason, this man was genealogized a son of Abraham.

Ver. 10. *For the son of man, &c.*] Meaning himself, who was truly man, and the Messiah, and which was one of his names in the Old Testament: *is come*: from heaven, into this world, being sent by the father, and with the full consent and good will of his own: *to seek and save that which was lost*; as all his elect were in Adam, and by their own actual transgressions; and are considered as such, whilst in a state of unregeneracy: and particularly the lost sheep of the house of Israel are meant, one of which Zaccheus was; and so the words are a reason of Christ's looking him up, and calling him by his grace, and making a discovery of himself, and an application of salvation to him; see Matt. xviii. 11.

Ver. 11. *And as they heard these things, &c.*] What Zaccheus said to Christ, and what Christ said to Zaccheus; particularly, that salvation, or the Saviour was then come to his house, and that he was come to save lost persons: *he added, and spake a parable*; that is, as the Syriac version renders it, *he added a parable to the word*, or to what he had said: *because he was nigh to Jerusalem*; within ten *parasas*, or large miles; for at such a distance was Jerusalem from Jericho<sup>d</sup>, where Christ now was, according to the Jewish writers; but according to Josephus<sup>e</sup>, it was a hundred and fifty furlongs, which must be eighteen or twenty miles, and this may be said to be nigh; and not long after this, we hear of Christ at the Mount of Olives, which was about a mile from Jerusalem, ver. 29. *And because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear*; or be revealed, or made manifest: the phrase is Jewish; so Cant. ii. 12. *the time of the singing of birds is come*, is interpreted<sup>f</sup>, the time that *the kingdom of heaven*, שתגלה, *shall be revealed*, is come, and elsewhere<sup>g</sup>, “say to the cities of the house of Judah, אתגליאת כלכותאת דארהבון, *the kingdom of your God is revealed*,” meaning in both places, as here, the kingdom of the Messiah: what induced the disciples of Christ, or the multitude, or both, to imagine that the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, which they were expecting, would quickly be set up, might be what he had said to Zaccheus, that salvation was that day come to his house, he being a son of Abraham; which they understanding of a temporal salvation, took it as a hint, that the outward prosperity of the seed of Abraham was at hand; as also what he had said, concerning his coming to seek and save that which is lost; which they were willing to interpret, of the civil state of Judea, and that he was come to restore its lost liberties and privileges; and partly, because he was now not a great way from Jerusalem, and was on his journey thither, in order to make his entrance in a very public manner; which was the metropolis of their nation, and the ancient seat of their kings, David, Solomon,

and others: now the scope and design of the following parable, is to refute the notion of a temporal kingdom, and its near approach; by shewing, that his kingdom lay a great way off, and was not of this world; and that his servants and disciples had a great deal of business to transact for him, and must not think of pomp and grandeur, but of labour and service; and that the Jews were so far from receiving any advantages by his kingdom, that they would not submit to his government, and would be treated as enemies, and utterly destroyed; even their nation, city, and temple.

Ver. 12. *He said therefore, &c.*] The following parable, with the abovesaid design and view: *a certain nobleman*: the son of a great family, as the Syriac version renders it; of noble descent, of an illustrious extract; by whom is meant Jesus Christ, who was a *man*, as he agreed to be, and was prophesied of as such; and who frequently appeared in a human form before his incarnation; and was now actually become man, though not a mere man: and he may truly be said to be *noble*: not only as the word may signify, as it sometimes does, a person of great authority and power, and of great generosity and goodness, but one of a noble birth; for Christ, as man, descended from the kings of the house of Judah, and was the son of David; and from the Jewish fathers and ancestors of the greatest renown, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and he may be so called as man, because of the union of the human nature to the son of God; or because of his divine relation, as the son of God: this illustrious person, *went into a far country*; by which, heaven is meant; so called, not only because of its distance from the earth, but in comparison of the earth, as a place of pilgrimage; and because that it is out of sight, and the views which are had of it, are very distant ones: hither Christ went at his ascension; he came from heaven at his incarnation, by the assumption of human nature; he staid here awhile, till he had done his work he came about, and then went up to heaven; where he is received, and from whence he is expected again: the end of his going there is, *to receive for himself a kingdom*; by which is intended, not the kingdom of nature and providence; for that he had, and did not receive from another; it was his of right, and by nature; nor the kingdom of grace, set up in the hearts of his people, and which was already within many of them; nor the kingdom of glory, prepared for them from the foundation of the world; though into this he entered at his ascension, and took possession of it for himself and them: but a more visible display of his mediatorial kingdom, he received from his father; and which, upon his ascension, became more manifest, by the dispossessing of Satan, and casting him out of the Gentile world; by converting large numbers of his people, both among Jews and Gentiles; and by ruling in their hearts, subduing their enemies, and protecting and defending them; and by thus reigning till he has gathered them all in, either in Judea, or in the whole world, and then he'll come again: *and return*: either to destroy the Jews; the doing of which fully proved he had received

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 14. 2.

<sup>e</sup> Caphtor. fol. 99. 1.

<sup>f</sup> Bartenora in Misn. Tamid, c. 3. sect. 8.

<sup>g</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 27.

<sup>h</sup> Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 11. 4.

<sup>i</sup> Targum in Isa. xl. 9.

his kingdom, was vested with power and authority, and was made, or declared Lord and Christ; or at the end of the world, to judge both quick and dead: and this is said, to shew that his personal glorious kingdom on earth, or his kingdom in its greatest glory here, will not be till he comes a second time; and to engage diligence in his servants in the mean while; and to keep up the faith, hope, and expectation of his coming again.

Ver. 13. *And he called his ten servants, &c.*] By whom are meant, not all mankind; for though these are all his servants of right, yet not in fact; nor the elect of God, who are called by grace; for though these are the servants of Christ, and are peculiarly his, yet all that received the pound were not such, for one of them was a wicked man; but the ministers of the Gospel, who are eminently, and in a special manner, the servants of the most high God: but as for the number *ten*, this can't regard the apostles, for they were twelve; and though they are sometimes called the eleven, after the apostacy and death of Judas, yet not the ten; and besides, there was another chose in his room; but this number being a large and perfect one, a round number, it is sometimes made use of as a certain number, for an uncertain one; see Matt. xxv. 1. The call of these by their Lord, is not to be understood of the call of them by his grace, but of a call of them to the office and work of the ministry: *and delivered them ten pounds*; every one a pound: the כֶּנֶס, *Maneh*, or pound of the Hebrews, if of gold, which contained an hundred drachmas, was of the value of our money, *seventy-five pounds*; if of silver, the old *Maneh*, or pound, which contained sixty shekels, Ezek. xlv. 12. amounted to *seven pounds ten shillings*: but the *Maneh*, or pound, mentioned in the Misna<sup>h</sup>, and which was in use in our Lord's time, contained an hundred pence, and was of the value of our money, *three pounds two shillings and six-pence*: and by these pounds are designed, not special grace; for they intend not any thing wrought in these servants, but something delivered to them, and what might be taken away again, which can't be said of special grace; and besides, it is certain, that one of these servants that had the pound, was destitute of that: but gifts are meant, and these not merely natural, or the gifts of providence, as health, riches, wisdom, &c. nor only the outward means of grace, as the word and ordinances, but ministerial gifts, which are the greatest in the church, and are therefore signified by pounds; and are what may be improved or neglected, and be lost or taken away; and for which those that have them, are accountable: but though each of these servants are represented, as having every man a pound delivered to him, this must not be understood, as if the gifts of ministers were equal and alike, any more than the inequality of their rewards proves degrees in glory; for which sometimes this parable is produced: *and said unto him, occupy*; negotiate, or trade, that is, with the pounds; make use of the ministerial gifts, exercise them, lay them out, and trade with them: the ministry is a trade and merchandise, to be carried on, not in the name of the ministers of Christ, nor on their own stock, nor for themselves, but for

Christ, and for the good of souls; which shews that they must not be slothful, but laborious and diligent: *till I come*; which suggests the certainty of Christ's coming, the continuance of the Gospel ministry to that time; and that there's no rest nor ease for Christ's ministers, but a continued series of labour and service, until then; when, for their encouragement, they shall receive their reward.

Ver. 14. *But his citizens hated him, &c.*] Not those who are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; whose citizenship is in heaven, and who are seeking the better country, and heavenly city; but the Jews, who were his own people and nation, among whom he was born, to whom he was sent and came, and had an undoubted right to the government of them: these hated him with a mortal hatred, as appeared by their traducing his person in the most opprobrious manner; vilifying his doctrine as false; ascribing his miracles to a diabolical influence; and by persecuting his disciples and followers: *and sent a message after him*; this seems to have respect to their outrage against the disciples of Christ, after his ascension; when they not only mocked them, as on the day of Pentecost, but laid hold on them, and put them in hold, even in the common prison, and persecuted them from place to place; and so virtually, *saying, we will not have this man to reign over us*: they would neither receive his Gospel, nor submit to his ordinances; but put them away from them, and judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life: and this is the language of every graceless soul; and is to be observed in their opposition to, and neglect of the truths of Christ, and his divine institutions; which are a yoke they don't care to take upon them, though so mild and easy, and are cords which they cast away from them.

Ver. 15. *And it came to pass that when he was returned, &c.*] Which return was either in power to Jerusalem, in the destruction of that city; or which will be in person to this earth, at the end of the world; and will be local and visible, and in great glory, attended with the holy angels, and with all the saints: the time is fixed and certain, though unknown, and will be sudden and unexpected; but will not be till after the Gospel has had a general spread all over the world, and the Jews are converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in, and then will Christ come: *having received the kingdom*; not only having been set down at the right hand of God, and crowned with glory and honour, and received gifts for men, which he bestowed on them; and which proved him to be Lord and Christ; all which was done at his ascension, after which his kingdom came, or he returned in power and glory, to take vengeance on the Jews; but also having received the kingdom of glory for all his saints, and particularly having received the kingdom of priests, or all the elect of God, these being all called by grace, and gathered to him, as they will every one of them before his second coming; when this kingdom will be delivered to the father complete and perfect; and this will be a reckoning time, as follows: *then he commanded those*

<sup>h</sup> Peab, c. 9. sect. 5. & Majmon. & Bartenora in ib.

*servants to be called, to whom he had given the money.* The *servants* are the ministers of the word, who must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; and give an account of themselves to God, the Judge of all; and of their gifts and talents, and ministrations, and the souls under their care: the persons who are *commanded* to call them are the angels, and who shall be employed in gathering all the elect together; the thing that will be inquired about, and must be accounted for, is the *money* given them; that is, the Gospel they are intrusted with, and the gifts to preach it bestowed on them: the end of this summons is, *that he might know how much every man had gained by trading*: not but that Christ, who is the omniscient God, the searcher of the heart, and a discernor of the thoughts and intents of it, knows full well the use that is made of every man's gift, and the benefits and advantages arising from it, both for his own glory, and the good of souls; but these summons will be given, this account taken, and inquiry made, that these things which are known to him, might be made manifest to all, and every man have praise of God; whose will it is that he should have it, and sloth and negligence be justly punished.

Ver. 16. *Then came the first, &c.*] Who were set in the first place in the church, the apostles of Christ, and who had the greatest gifts, and laboured more abundantly, and were eminently useful; such an one was the Apostle Paul: *saying, Lord; acknowledging the sovereignty and dominion of Christ over them, owning they were accountable to him, and that he had a right to inquire, what use they had made of their gifts, and what advantages these had produced; thy pound hath gained ten pounds; it had been increased tenfold; or it has turned to a tenfold account, in the conversion of sinners, in the edification of the saints, and in the advancement of the kingdom, and interest of Christ. This servant owns, that the gifts he had were Christ's; he calls them, thy pound; and therefore did not glory in them as his own attainments, or, as if he had received them not; and ascribes the great increase not to himself, but to the pound itself; to the gifts of Christ, as they were his, and as used by his grace and strength, and as blessed, and owned by him, to these purposes.*

Ver. 17. *And he said unto him, well, thou good servant, &c.*] Signifying he had well done, and had approved himself to be an honest, diligent, and laborious servant; who, having the grace of God, which made him a good man, and gifts and abilities, which made him a good minister of Christ, he made a good use of them, freely communicated the good things of the Gospel, and being employed in a good work, he performed it well: *because thou hast been faithful in a very little*; had preached the pure Gospel of Christ, and the whole of it, and sought not to please men, but the Lord only; not his own glory, but Christ's; and abode by him, and his interest, notwithstanding all reproaches and persecutions, and so acted a faithful part to Christ: *in a very little*; not that the Gospel is in itself little, or of small account; 'tis a treasure in earthen vessels; and contains the unsearchable

riches of Christ: nor are gifts to preach it little things; they are instances of rich and amazing grace; but they are little, or, rather, the use and exercise of them are little, in comparison of the glory and happiness such faithful servants shall enjoy: from whence it appears, that since there is no proportion between what they do, and what they shall have, that therefore it is not of merit but of grace; and which is expressed in the following clause: *have thou authority over ten cities*; which is to be understood, not in a literal sense, as if the apostles should have the jurisdiction over so many cities, or churches in so many cities among the Gentiles, after the destruction of Jerusalem, which were planted by their means and ministry; for nothing of this kind appears in the word of God: and much less after the second coming of Christ, shall faithful ministers of the word have power over so many cities, literally taken; for both in the kingdom-state and in the ultimate glory, there will be but one beloved city, the holy city, the new Jerusalem: nor is any thing in particular, in a metaphorical sense, intended; only in general, that the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of it, will be given unto them; and they shall reign with Christ on earth a thousand years; and shall also have a crown of glory, life, and righteousness bestowed on them, and shall sit on the throne with Christ; and besides all this, the persons they have been instrumental to, will be their joy, and crown of rejoicing. A learned writer explains these ten cities, by the ten horns of the dragon, and beast in Rev. xii. 3. and xiii. 1. by which are meant ten kings, or kingdoms. Rev. xvii. 12. Dan. vii. 24. These indeed will be overcome by Christ, and they that are with him, and will hate the Romish antichrist, and destroy him; so that, it seems, there will be revolutions in these kingdoms; and large conversions to the faith of Christ, which seems to be what this writer means by authority over them.

Ver. 18. *And the second came, &c.*] He who was next, though less useful, yet equally diligent and active: *saying, Lord; acknowledging also the power and authority of Christ over him: thy pound hath gained five pounds*; is increased fivefold, or is turned to a fivefold account, to the interest of Christ, and good of immortal souls: the usefulness of the ministers of the Gospel is not alike; as they have gifts different one from another, so their improvements are different, and their labours, though faithful, don't turn to the same account.

Ver. 19. *And he said likewise to him, &c.*] He commended him as a good and faithful servant, though this is not expressed; and added, *be thou also over five cities*; which does not denote any inequality of glory in Christ's ministers, who will all shine as the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever; at least, there will be no inequality in the ultimate state of happiness, when all the saints shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their father, whatever there may be in the kingdom-state, or in Christ's personal reign with his saints on earth. The above learned writer would have this passage compared with Isa. xix. 18.

Ver. 20. *And another came, &c.*] Who was one of the servants; had a gift, but did not use, and

<sup>1</sup> Teilmanni Specimen Explic. Parabol. p. 51.

improve it, nor did it turn to any account: *saying, Lord; owning also the lordship and dominion of Christ, as all will confess at the last day, even those who have no interest in him, and cannot call him their Lord; behold, here is thy pound; he owns his gifts were the Lord's, and that he had received them from him, and now returns them: which I have kept; he had kept that which was committed to him, and that even till his Lord came; he had not lost it, though it was not increased, or was of any advantage to Christ, or the souls of men, it being neglected by him; for it was laid up in a napkin: the Greek word, here used for a napkin, is adopted by the Jews into their language, and is used for a veil and for a linen cloth: this puts me in mind of what the Jews call, קני סדר, possession by a napkin, or linen cloth: their custom is this; when they buy, or sell any thing, to use a piece of cloth they call *sudar*, the word in the text, which the contractors lay hold upon, whereby they ratify and confirm the bargain<sup>m</sup>: but this man made no use of his *sudar*, or napkin, in buying and selling; he traded not at all; he wrapped up his money in it, and both lay useless; his gift lay dormant and unexercised, which was given him to profit withal.*

Ver. 21. *For I feared thee, &c.*] Not with a right fear, with a fear of his goodness, who had bestowed such an excellent gift on him; for this would have taught him to have departed from evil, and have put him on doing his master's will, and making use of his gift to his glory: his fear was not of the right kind, and was ill-grounded, as appears by what follows: *because thou art an austere man; cruel and uncompassionate to his servants, and hard to be pleased; than which nothing is more false, since it is evident, that Christ is compassionate both to the bodies and souls of men; is a merciful high-priest, and is one that has compassion on the ignorant, and them that are out of the way, and cannot but be touched with the feeling of his people's infirmities; and is mild and gentle in his whole deportment, and in all his administrations: thou takest up that thou layest not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow; suggesting, that he was covetous of that which did not belong to him, and withheld what was due to his servants, and rigorously exacted service that could not be performed; a most iniquitous charge, since none so liberal as he, giving gifts, grace and glory, freely; imposing no grievous commands on men; his yoke being easy, and his burden light; never sending a man to a warfare at his own charge; but always giving grace and strength proportionable to the service he calls to, and rewarding his servants in a most bountiful manner, infinitely beyond their deserts.*

Ver. 22. *And he saith unto him, &c.*] *I* of reply to his vile slander, and unrighteous charge; *out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant; as he might be justly called: he was not only a wicked man, as all men are, even enemies by wicked works, and lie in wickedness; and a wicked professor of religion, as there be some; but a wicked minister, and that not on account of his bad principles, and sinful life and conversation, but for his sloth and negligence, and the wrong thoughts he entertained of, and*

*the false charges he brought against Christ; and Christ turns his own argument upon him, and by his own words condemns him: thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow; not allowing this, but supposing it was as he said; then Christ argues as follows, for his conviction.*

Ver. 23. *Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, &c.*] *Or on the table, at which the bankers sat, and received and delivered money on interest. The Complutensian edition reads, to the tables, or bankers: had Christ been such a person as he represents him, he ought to have been the more diligent, and made the greater use of his gifts, since he knew that he would, in a rigid manner, as he suggests, demand an account of them: that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? not that Christ approves of usury in an unlawful way, by extortion, but reproves hereby the sloth of this man, and exposes his folly and wickedness upon his own principles.*

Ver. 24. *And he said unto them that stood by, &c.*] The angels, it may be; though this may not be strictly taken, as if any persons, angels, or men, will be employed in what follows, only that it will be done, or may be expected: *take from him the pound; which shews, that it was not special grace, for that is a good part that shall never be taken away, but gifts which may be taken away from men, or they from them; and give it to him that hath ten pounds; not that, strictly speaking, the gifts of some men are taken from them and bestowed on others; but the design of the expression is to shew, that to diligent and laborious ministers, there is an increase of gifts; their knowledge enlarges, and their light shimes more and more to the perfect day, and they become more useful; and they appear brighter, and more illustrious, through the sloth of others, or when compared with indolent, negligent, and useless ministers.*

Ver. 25. *And they said unto him, &c.*] The bystanders; *Lord, he hath ten pounds; which they say either through envy, at his superior gifts, and usefulness; for it is generally the lot of the most eminent and useful servants of Christ to be envied by others; or in surprise, as wondering at the conduct of Christ in giving more to such, who had so much already. The Ethiopic version reads the words by way of interrogation, hath he not ten pounds? is not that enough? why should he have more? This verse is left out in Beza's most ancient copy. However, it is rightly put into a parenthesis in our version; for the following verse is strictly connected with ver. 24. and contains a reason of what is there ordered.*

Ver. 26. *For I say unto you, &c.*] *And it may be depended on as truth, and what will be found matter of fact: that unto every one that hath, shall be given; greater and larger gifts, fitting him for greater usefulness: he that has gifts, and makes use of them, increases in them; they enlarge with their use, and become brighter, and he more useful. The Vulgate Latin version adds, and he shall abound, or shall have abundance, as in Matt. xxv. 29. and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him; that is, that which he seemed to have, or thought he*

<sup>m</sup> Elise in Tishbi in voce ירד.



had, as in ch. viii. 18. for from him that has really nothing, nothing can be taken away: though the sense may be, that he that does not use the talent, or exercise the gift bestowed on him, but lays it up in a napkin, which is all one as if he had it not, even the gift itself shall be taken away from him; and as others receive no benefit by it, he shall receive no honour from it; see the notes on Matt. xiii. 12. and xxv. 29.

Ver. 27. *But those mine enemies, &c.*] Meaning particularly the Jews, who were enemies to the person of Christ, and hated and rejected him, as the King Messiah; and rebelled against him, and would not submit to his government; and were enemies to his people, and were exceeding mad against them, and persecuted them; and to his Gospel, and the distinguishing truths of it, and to his ordinances, which they rejected against themselves: *which would not that I should reign over them*; see ver. 14. *bring hither, and slay them before me*; which had its accomplishment in the destruction of Jerusalem, when multitudes of them were slain with the sword, both with their own, and with their enemies; and to this the parable has a special respect, and of which Christ more largely discourses in this chapter; see ver. 41, 42, 43, 44. though it is true of all natural men, that they are enemies to Christ; and so of all negligent and slothful professors, and ministers of the word, who, when Christ shall come a second time, of which his coming to destroy the Jewish nation was an emblem and pledge, will be punished with everlasting destruction by him; and then all other enemies will be slain and destroyed, sin, Satan, the world, and death: of the first of these the Jews say, "in the time to come the holy, blessed God, will bring forth the evil imagination (or corruption of nature), *וְשִׂרְיָוִן*, and slay it before the righteous, and the wicked."

Ver. 28. *And when he had thus spoken, &c.*] When he had delivered the above parable, in order to remove the prejudices of his disciples, and the multitude, concerning a temporal kingdom, and to give them true notions of his own kingdom, and the case of the Jewish nation: *he went before*; his disciples: he was the foremost of them in the journey; he proceeded at the head of them, with great cheerfulness and eagerness: *ascending up to Jerusalem*; through the lower lands of Judea, to the city of Jerusalem, which was built on higher ground; where he was to eat his last passover, and suffer, and die, in the room, and stead, of his people; and this shews how willing, and greatly desirous he was to finish the work of redemption he came about.

Ver. 29. *And it came to pass when he was come nigh, &c.*] The other evangelists, Matthew and Mark, add *unto Jerusalem*; but this Luke designs afterwards, ver. 37. and therefore here means, as is expressed, that he was come nigh to *Bethphage and Bethany*; two tracts of land which reached from Mount Olivet to Jerusalem; so that when he was there, he was nigh unto the city: *at the mount, called the Mount of Olives*; or *Elaiou*, as the Ethiopic version, which retains the Greek word for it; and which has its name from the great number of olive-trees that grew upon it: *he sent two of his disciples*; their names are not mentioned by

any of the evangelists, but it is very probable they were Peter and John; of the places here mentioned, see the note on Matt. xxi. 1.

Ver. 30. *Saying, go ye into the village over-against you, &c.*] What village this was, is not said by any of the evangelists; it seems to be either Bethany, or Nob; and rather the latter, since the village of Bethany was fifteen furlongs, or near two miles from Jerusalem, John xi. 18. and therefore must have been passed by Christ; whereas the tract called Bethany, at the Mount of Olives where Christ now was, was but a sabbath-day's journey, or about a mile, Luke xxiv. 50. compared with Acts i. 12. see the note on Matt. xxi. 2. *in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied*: in Matthew it is said, an ass, and a colt with her; which agrees with the prophecy in Zach. ix. 9. and which, no doubt, was matter of fact: nor does Mark and Luke contradict it, though they do not express it: *whereon yet never man sat, loose him, and bring him hither*; for it seems that Christ staid at the above place, until the disciples went and fetched it.

Ver. 31. *And if any man ask you, why do ye loose him? &c.*] As our Lord, being God omniscient, knew this question would be asked by the owners, and therefore prepares his disciples with an answer to it: *thus shall ye say unto him, because the Lord hath need of him*. The Syriac and Persic versions read *our Lord, yours, and ours*; probably the owners of the colt might be such as knew the Lord Jesus Christ, and by this way of speaking of him, knew, at once, who was meant, and so made no scruple of sending him, as Christ told them they would not, and so they found it; see the notes on Matt. xxi. 3. and Mark xi. 3.

Ver. 32. *And they that were sent went their way, &c.*] The two disciples that were sent by Christ, were obedient to him, and went, as he directed them, and did as he ordered them; *and found, even as he had said unto them*. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, and so some copies, add, *the colt standing*; that is, in the place, and manner which he had described to them; see the note on Mark xi. 4.

Ver. 33. *And as they were loosing the colt, &c.*] In order to bring it away, as Christ bid them: *the owners thereof said unto them, why loose ye the colt?* Mark takes notice of this, but does not tell us who they were, only that they were persons that stood there; but this evangelist informs us who they were: and it seems by this, that there were more owners of the colt than one, which might have made the taking away of the colt the more difficult; since, though one might agree to it, another might not; but Christ, who is God, and has the hearts of all men in his hands, could, as he did, dispose the minds of these men to let the colt go freely, and quietly, with his disciples; see the note on Mark xi. 5.

Ver. 34. *And they said, the Lord hath need of him.*] Or, *our Lord*, as the above versions in ver. 31. They used the words Christ directed them to, and it had the effect he said it would; for the owners both let them go, and the colt with them directly; see the notes on Matt. xxi. 6. and Mark xi. 6.

Ver. 35. *And they brought him to Jesus, &c.*] That

is, the colt: *and they cast their garments upon the colt*: that is, the disciples, who brought him to Jesus; the Persian version here, as in Matt. xxi. 7. renders it very wrongly, *Jesus put his own garment on its back, and sat on it*; it follows, *and they set Jesus thereon*: in order to ride upon him, as he did to Jerusalem.

Ver. 36. *And as he went, &c.*] Riding on the colt towards Jerusalem: *they spread their clothes in the way*: not the disciples, for they had put their garments upon the colt; but the multitude, which either came with him from Jericho, and other parts, or that met him from Jerusalem, or both; see Matt. xxi. 8. and Mark xi. 8. and so the Persian version here; *men put off their clothes and cast them in the way, that he might pass over them*; see the note on Matt. xxi. 8.

Ver. 37. *And when he was come nigh, &c.*] To the city of Jerusalem, and which was then in sight, *even now at the descent of the Mount of Olives*: being come to the foot of that mount, which lay to the east of Jerusalem, and was about five furlongs from it, or a little more than half a mile<sup>o</sup>: *the whole multitude of the disciples*: not only the twelve, but the large company that followed Christ out of Galilee, and were joined by more in Judea, as they came along, some going before him, and others behind him. The Arabic and Persian versions divide these words, and read, *the multitude, and the disciples*; not only the apostles, but the whole body of the people that were with Christ: *began to rejoice, and praise God, with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen*; calling to mind the many miracles he had wrought in Galilee, at Cana, Capernaum, and other places, and now, as he passed through Judea, particularly about Jericho, where he had restored sight to two or three blind men; and especially the miracle he had lately wrought at Bethany, in raising Lazarus from the dead; from all which they might strongly conclude, that he must be the Messiah; and being filled with joy and gladness, at the remembrance of these things, and with thankfulness to God, that he had raised up the glorious Saviour and Redeemer, they lifted up their voices together, and exerted them to the uttermost, and made the air ring with their shouts, and acclamations of praise to God, on this occasion.

Ver. 38. *Saying, blessed be the King, &c.*] The King Messiah, the King of Israel, the son of David, the Christ of God; so the Ethiopic version adds, *blessed be the King of Israel*: they sung their *Hosannas* to him, as the other evangelists say: *that cometh in the name of the Lord*; see the note on Matt. xxi. 9. *peace in heaven*: all heavenly peace and prosperity attend him; or let peace be made with God in heaven, by the Prince of Peace on earth, for sinful men: *and glory in the highest*: glory be given to God for peace, life, and salvation by his son; and that in the highest heavens, by the angels there, as well as by men on earth, and in the highest notes and strains.

Ver. 39. *And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude, &c.*] Who had placed themselves there, to watch and observe what was said, and done, that they might have something to reproach Christ with,

expose him for, or bring as a charge against him: *said unto him, master, rebuke thy disciples*: not being able to bear such high encomiums of Jesus, and such open and public declarations of his being the Messiah; and would insinuate, that it was blasphemy in them to say what they did, and pride and vanity in him to allow of it; and that the consequence might be sedition, and tumult; and therefore it became him to check such a disorderly, noisy, evil, and dangerous practice.

Ver. 40. *And he answered and said unto them, I tell you, &c.*] As a truth, which may be depended on, and you may be assured of; this he spake with great earnestness, fervour, and courage: *that if these should hold their peace*; be silent, and not sing the praises of God, and ascribe glory to him, and profess the Messiah, and make this public acknowledgment of him: *the stones would immediately cry out*; either against them, or in a declaration of the Messiah: by which expression our Lord means, that it was impossible it should be otherwise; it would be intolerable if it was not; and rather than it should not be, God, who is able out of stones to raise up children to Abraham, would make the stones speak, or turn stones into men, who should rise up and praise the Lord, and confess the Messiah; hereby commending his disciples, and tacitly reflecting upon the Pharisees, for their stupidity; and also giving a hint of the conversion of the Gentiles, who might be compared to stones, especially in the opinion of the Jews.

Ver. 41. *And when he was come near, he beheld the city, &c.*] Of Jerusalem; being now nearer, and in a situation to take a full view of it, he lift up his eyes, and looking wistly on it, and beholding the grandeur and magnificence of it, the number of the houses, and the stately structures in it, and knowing what calamities, in a few years, would come upon it; with which being affected, as man, he looked upon it, *and wept over it*; touched with a tender concern for it, his natural passions moved, and tears fell plentifully from his eyes. This must be understood of Christ merely as man, and is a proof of the truth of his human nature, which had all the natural properties, and even the infirmities of it; and as affected with the temporal ruin of Jerusalem, and as concerned for its temporal welfare; and is not to be improved either against his proper deity, or the doctrines of distinguishing grace, relating to the spiritual and eternal salvation of God's elect; things that are foreign from the sense of this passage: some ancient Christians, and orthodox too, thinking that this was not so agreeable to Christ, but reflected some weakness and dishonour upon him, expunged this clause concerning his weeping; but we have another instance besides this; see Job xi. 35. and even the Jews themselves can't think this to be unsuitable to the Messiah, when they represent the Shekinah, and God himself weeping over the destruction of the temple<sup>p</sup>; and it is particularly<sup>q</sup> said by them of the Messiah, that he shall weep over the wicked among the Jews, according to Isa. liii. 5. and they encourage persons to mourn over Jerusalem: they say<sup>r</sup>, whoever does any business on the ninth of Ab, (the

<sup>o</sup> Joseph. Antiqu. l. 20 c. 6.

<sup>p</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 114. 4. & in Exod. fol. 76. 4. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 3. 2. Praet. Echa Rabbati, fol. 39. 4.

<sup>q</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 85. 2.

<sup>r</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 30. 2.

day that city was destroyed,) and does not mourn over Jerusalem, shall not see its joy; but whoever does mourn over it, shall see its joy, according to Isa. lxxvi. 10<sup>2</sup>.

Ver. 42. *Saying, if thou hadst known, even thou, &c.*] As well as other cities; or who had been so long a flourishing city, the metropolis of the nation, the seat of the ancient kings of Judah; yea, the city of the great God, the place of divine worship, whither the tribes came up, time after time, to serve the Lord; a city so highly honoured of God and man: or, who had despised the messages of the servants of God, mocked and misused the prophets in time past, beat one, killed another, and stoned another: if such a city, after all this, had but known its true interest, at least in this thy day; the day of thy visitation, the last day thou art to have, though it is so late: *the things* which belong unto thy peace; meaning, not peace with God, and the things belonging, or conducing to that, which are not men's works of righteousness, nor tears of repentance, nor even faith itself, but the obedience and righteousness, the blood, sacrifice, and death of Christ; nor spiritual peace, or internal peace of conscience, which comes in a Gospel way, through believing, in a course of obedience, and all from Christ, the peacemaker, and peace-giver; nor eternal peace hereafter, which the grace of God gives a meetness for, and the righteousness of Christ a right unto; the knowledge of all which is not natural to men, or to be obtained of themselves, but is the gift of God's grace, and the operation of his spirit: but supposing such a peace, and such things relating to it, were intended, nothing more can be inferred from hence, than that if the Jews had known these things, they had been happy; and since they had the means of knowing them, they were, of all men, inexcusable; and that Christ, as man, and one of their nation, and as a minister of the circumcision, had a passionate concern for their welfare: but not that these Jews, or any men, can of themselves, and without the unfrustrable grace of God working upon their hearts, and enlightening their understanding, know these things; or that Christ acted any insincere part in wishing for these things for them, as man, and a minister of the word, when he knew, as God, it was not consistent with the will of God that they should have them; since Christ, as man, sometimes earnestly prayed for that, which he, as God, knew could not be, as in the case of his own sufferings and death; nor is this irreconcilable to his dying intentionally only for those who are actually saved: but after all, these words are only spoken of Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of that city, and not of all mankind, and regard only their temporal peace and welfare, whose destruction Christ knew was near at hand; and of which he afterwards speaks in the following verses: *but now they are hid from thine eyes*: their eyes were blinded; they were given up to a judicial blindness, and hardness of heart; a spirit of slumber and stupidity had seized them; they could not discern the signs of the times, and so disbelieved Jesus as the Messiah, and rejected him as such; whom, had they received only in a notional way, though they had not believed in him spiritually, to the saving of their souls, they would

have been secured from outward calamities, and would have enjoyed peace and prosperity, and the things belonging to it our Lord speaks of. Christ alludes to the name of Jerusalem, which signifies the vision of peace; or they shall see peace; but her name and case now did not agree. His wish is the same the Psalmist encourages in Psal. cxxii. 6. which, in the Septuagint version, is rendered, *pray for the things that belong to the peace of Jerusalem.*

Ver. 43. *For the days shall come upon thee, &c.*] Suddenly, and very quickly, as they did within forty years after this: *that thine enemies*: the Romans, and such the Jews took them to be, and might easily understand who our Lord meant: *shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side*: which was not only verified in the Roman armies closely besieging them; but particularly in this, as Josephus relates<sup>1</sup>, that Titus built a wall about the city, of thirty-nine furlongs long, and thirteen forts in it which reached ten furlongs, and all done in three days time; by which means they were pent up, starved, and famished, and reduced to inexpressible distress.

Ver. 44. *And shall lay thee even with the ground, &c.*] Beat down all the houses in it, the stately edifices, and even the temple itself; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 2. *and thy children within thee*; that is, the inhabitants of the place should be slain with the sword of the enemy, and so fall to the ground, and lie upon it; *and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another*: such a consummate, and entire desolation shall be made, as was foretold by Daniel, ch. ix. 27. *because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation*; in which the day-spring from on high had visited them with his personal presence, preaching among them, and working miracles; and yet they knew him not, but despised and rejected him; yea, after that they had put him to death, and he was risen again, he ordered his disciples to begin their ministry, and preach the Gospel, at Jerusalem; and they continued for some time only preaching to them, or at least rarely elsewhere, till they put away the Gospel from them. The time of the ministry of John the Baptist, of Christ, and his apostles in Judea, was the time of Jerusalem's visitation in a way of mercy; which not being taken notice of, and observed, brought another kind of visitation upon them, even in a way of wrath and vengeance. The Jews pretend to assign other causes of Jerusalem's destruction; but the true cause was their rejection of Jesus, as the Messiah. "Says Abai, Jerusalem was not destroyed, but because they profaned the sabbath, as it is said, Ezek. xxii. 26. *and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, &c.*" Says R. Abhu, Jerusalem was not destroyed, but because they ceased reading the *Shema* (*hear, O Israel, &c.*) morning and evening, as it is said, Isa. v. 11, 12, 13. *woe to them that rise up early, &c.*" Says Rab. Hamnuna, Jerusalem was not destroyed, but because there ceased in it the children of the school of Rabban, (children were not put to school,) as it is said Jer. vi. 11. *I will pour it out upon the children, &c.*" Says Ula, Jerusalem was not destroyed, but because there was no shame among them, as it is said, Jer. vi. 15. *were they ashamed, &c.* Says R.

<sup>1</sup> *Eab. Bava Bathra, fol. 69. 2. & Caphtor, fol. 118. 2.*

<sup>2</sup> *De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 8.*

“ Isaac, Jerusalem was not destroyed, but because small and great were put upon a level, as it is said, Isa. xxiv. 2, 3. *as with the people, so with the priest,* &c. Says R. Amram, the son of R. Simeon bar Aba, R. Chanina said, Jerusalem was not destroyed, but because they did not reprove one another, as it is said, Lam. i. 6. *her princes are become like harts,* &c. Says R. Judah, Jerusalem was not destroyed, but because they despised the disciples of the wise men, as it is said, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. *but they mocked the messengers of God, &c.*” Thus they shifted off the true cause of their ruin, and ascribed it to other things.

Ver. 45. *And he went into the temple, &c.*] Being come into the city, he alighted from the colt he rode on, and having committed it to the care of a proper person to return it to the owner, he went up directly to the temple, of which he was the Lord and proprietor, and where he had some work to do the few days he had to live. *And began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought;* that traded in sheep, and oxen, and doves; see John ii. 15. and Matt. xxi. 12. The Ethiopic version adds here, as there, *and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves.*

Ver. 46. *Saying unto them, it is written, &c.*] In Isa. lvi. 7. *my house is the house of prayer;* built and devoted for that service: *but ye have made it a den of thieves;* which clause is not written in the above prophecy, but are the words of Christ referring to Jer. vii. 11. The Ethiopic version adds, *and robbers;* and the Persic version adds, *and a place of cut-purses;* see the note on Matt. xxi. 13.

Ver. 47. *And he taught daily in the temple, &c.*] Every day till the passover came, and only in the day; for at night he went out of the city to Bethany, or to the Mount of Olives: some of his discourses in the temple, the parables he delivered, and his disputations with the doctors, are recorded in Matt. xxi. 23. to the end of the 23d chapter, and in Mark xi. 27. to the end of the 12th chapter: *but the chief priests, and the Scribes, and the chief of the people;* or, *the elders of the people,* as the Syriac version renders it; that is, the whole sanhedrim: *sought to destroy him;* met and consulted together how to get him into their hands, and what charges to bring against him, in order to put him to death.

Ver. 48. *And could not find what they might do, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, and so Beza's most ancient copy, add, *to him;* they could not find an opportunity of seizing him, nor any advantage against him; they knew not what steps to take, nor how to bring about their wicked design of destroying him. *For all the people were very attentive to hear him;* there were great crowds always about him, that hung upon him, as the word rendered *attentive* signifies; they heard him with great eagerness and diligence, and were ready to catch every word that dropped from his lips; and were exceedingly taken with him, having never heard any man speak like him: wherefore having so many followers, and being so high in the opinion and affection of the people, the sanhedrim were at a loss what method to make use of to gain their point; and they feared the people, should they seize him publicly, lest they should rise and rescue him, and cause a tumult and disturbance.

## CH A P. XX.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, that on one of those days, &c.*] According to the account of the Evangelist Mark, it must be the second day, or two days after his public entrance into Jerusalem; for on the evening of the day he made his entry, he went out to Bethany with his disciples; the next morning, as he returned from thence, he cursed the barren fig-tree; and when he came to the temple cast out the buyers and sellers; at evening he went out again, either to Bethany, or the Mount of Olives; and the next morning, as he and his disciples returned, the fig-tree was observed to be dried up; and when they were come to Jerusalem, as he was walking in the temple, he was attacked by the sanhedrim, and had the following discourse with them: *as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the Gospel;* for he taught them by preaching that, and which he did most clearly, faithfully, and publicly, being abundantly anointed and qualified for it, and sent to do it. *The chief priests, and the Scribes, came upon him, with the elders.* The whole sanhedrim being purposely convened together, came upon him in a body; and it may be suddenly, and at an unawares, and came open-mouthed against him, and attacked him with great warmth and vehemency.

Ver. 2. *And spake unto him, saying, tell us by what authority doest thou these things? &c.*] The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, *this thing;* as if the sanhedrim only referred to his preaching the Gospel, which is mentioned in the preceding verse, and was what he was about when they came to him: but the Persic version reads, *all these things:* not only preaching, but working miracles; and particularly driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple, which especially affected them, they losing their rents thereby: *or who is he that gave thee this authority? God or man?* see the note on Matt. xxi. 23.

Ver. 3. *And he answered and said unto them, &c.*] That is, Jesus replied to them, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions express it: *I will also ask you one thing, and answer me;* when he also promised, that if they would give him an answer to his question, he would satisfy them in the point they interrogated him about: and as this was a prudent decline to avoid the snare they laid for him, so it was not an impertinent reply to them; since it led on to a proper answer to their question, as appears by the case proposed; see the note on Matt. xxi. 24.

Ver. 4. *The baptism of John, was it from heaven,*

of or men? This was a new ordinance, and John must have his authority for administering it either from God, or from men; and Christ is desirous to know from which he derived it in their opinion; suggesting, that by the same authority John, his forerunner, came baptizing, he himself came preaching and working miracles; see the note on Matt. xxi. 25.

Ver. 5. *And they reasoned with themselves, &c.*] Or *they thought with themselves*, as the Syriac version; or *within themselves*, as the Vulgate Latin, though they did not express it; or *one with another*, as the Arabic version; they took counsel together, and debated the matter among themselves, and reasoned after this manner: *saying, if we shall say from heaven: which was what, in their own consciences, they believed to be true, he will say, why then believed ye him not?* in what he said concerning the Messiah; which if they had, as they should, there would have been no reason for such a question they had put; see the note, as above.

Ver. 6. *But and if we say of men, &c.*] Which they had a good will to, against the dictates of their own consciences: *all the people will stone us*; meaning the common people, that were then in the temple about Christ, hearing him preach; who would be so enraged at such an answer, that without any regard to their character and office, they would rise and stone them. The Ethiopic version adds, *whom we fear*; see Matt. xxi. 26. for it seems that they had not so behaved as to have the good will and esteem of the people, at least they did not pin their faith on their sleeve: *for they be persuaded that John was a prophet*; they were fully assured of it; and the sentiments and authority of the chief priests could have no weight and influence upon them to weaken their faith in this point; the evidence was so strong, and their faith so firm and sure.

Ver. 7. *And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was.*] Whether from heaven, or of men; in this, no doubt, they told an untruth; but they chose rather to sacrifice their consciences than their interest, and pretend ignorance rather than profess the truth, when they saw they should be put to confusion, or be exposed to the resentments of the people.

Ver. 8. *And Jesus said unto them, &c.*] Since they would not give him a direct answer to his question: *neither tell I you by what authority I do these things*; nor was there any need of it; they might easily perceive, by what he had said, from whence he professed to have received his authority, from God, and not from men; see the note on Matt. xxi. 27.

Ver. 9. *Then began he to speak to the people this parable, &c.*] According to the other evangelists it seems to be spoken to the chief priests, Scribes, and elders; and certain it is, that they looked upon themselves as struck at in it; they might easily perceive, by what he had said, from whence he professed to have received his authority, from God, and not from men; see the note on Matt. xxi. 27.

Ver. 9. *Then began he to speak to the people this parable, &c.*] According to the other evangelists it seems to be spoken to the chief priests, Scribes, and elders; and certain it is, that they looked upon themselves as struck at in it; they might easily perceive, by what he had said, from whence he professed to have received his authority, from God, and not from men; see the note on Matt. xxi. 27.

about it, digging a wine-press, and building a tower in it; and the Persic version here adds, *and planted trees, and set a wall about it*; all which express the care that was taken to cultivate and protect it; and signify the various blessings and privileges the Jews enjoyed under the former dispensation; see the notes on Matt. xxi. 33. and Mark xii. 1. *and let it forth to husbandmen*; put the people of the Jews under the care not only of civil magistrates, but of ecclesiastical governors, who were to dress this vine, or instruct these people in matters of religion, that they might be fruitful in good works: *and went into a far country for a long time*: for a long time it was, from the times of Moses and Joshua, when the first settlement, both of the civil and ecclesiastical state of the Jews, was made, to the time of Christ; it was fourteen or fifteen hundred years; see the notes, as above.

Ver. 10. *And at the season, &c.*] Or *when it was the time of fruit*, as the Ethiopic version renders it, agreeably to Matt. xxi. 34. see the note there: *he sent a servant to the husbandmen*; or *servants*, as in Matthew; the prophets of the Lord, his messengers, whom he sent to them, to exhort them to bring forth the fruits of righteousness, as follows: *that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard*; that is, that they, bringing forth good fruit in their lives and conversations, whereby it might appear that they were trees of righteousness, and the planting of the Lord; he, or they observing them, might give an account of them to the Lord, to the glory of his name: *but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty*; the Jews not only mocked these messengers of the Lord, and despised their words, but misused them, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15. they beat them with their fists, smote them on the cheek, and scourged them with scourges; so that they had no account to give of their fruitfulness in good works, but the contrary; see the notes on Matt. xxi. 33. and Mark xii. 3.

Ver. 11. *And again he sent another servant, &c.*] Or set of prophets in after-times, and yet before the Babylonish captivity: *and they beat him also*; as they had done the other; they continued in their malpractices, yea increased in them; *and entreated him shamefully*; putting him to open shame, using him in a very ignominious and shameful manner, which it was a shame to relate, and which was shameful for them to do: *and sent him away empty*; as they had done the other.

Ver. 12. *And again he sent the third, &c.*] Perhaps after the return of the Jews from captivity, and between that time and the coming of Christ, in which interval many good men were used in a very inhuman manner, Heb. xi. 37, 38. *and they wounded him also*; by casting stones at him; see Mark xii. 4. *and cast him out of the vineyard*.

Ver. 13. *Then said the Lord of the vineyard, &c.*] Who planted it, and let it out to husbandmen, and expected fruit from it, and sent his servants from time to time for it: *what shall I do?* or what can be done more than has been done? Isa. v. 4. who else can be sent that is likely to do any good with such an ungrateful and unfruitful people? *I will send my beloved son*; the Lord Jesus Christ, the son of God, who lay in his bosom, was the darling of his soul, and the delight of

his heart; him he determined to send, and him he did send to the lost sheep of the house of Israel: *it may be they will reverence him, when they see him*: it might be thought after the manner of men, that considering the greatness of his person, as the son of God, the nature of his office, as the Redeemer and Saviour of men, the doctrines which he preached, the miracles which he wrought, and the holiness and harmlessness of his conversation, and the great good he did both to the bodies and souls of men, that he would have been had in great esteem and veneration with the men, to whom he was sent, and among whom he conversed: but, alas! when they saw him, they saw no beauty, comeliness, and excellency in him, and nothing on account of which he should be desired by them.

Ver. 14. *But when the husbandmen saw him, &c.*] In human nature, heard him preach, and observed the miracles done by him: *they reasoned among themselves*: as the Scribes and Pharisees, and elders of the people often did: *saying, this is the heir*: the heir of God, being his son; and so the Ethiopic version; *this son is his heir*, or the heir of the vineyard; being, by appointment, heir of all things, and by his descent from David heir to the kingdom of Israel; *come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours*. The Arabic and Persian versions render it, *and his inheritance shall be ours*: the nation, city, temple, and all the emoluments and benefits thereof. The word *come* is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Gothic and Vulgate Latin versions.

Ver. 15. *So they cast him out of the vineyard, &c.*] Rejected him as the Messiah, even denied that he was of the Jewish nation; said he was a Samaritan, and delivered him to the Gentiles that were without, and were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; and at last had him without their city, and put him to death, as follows: *and killed him*: the Prince of life, the Lord of glory, and heir of all things; see Acts ii. 23, 36. and iii. 15. and v. 30. and x. 39. *what therefore shall the Lord of the vineyard do unto them?* the husbandmen, the chief priests, elders, Scribes, and Pharisees; at whose solicitations the life of his son, and heir, was taken away; by which he must be greatly provoked and incensed.

Ver. 16. *He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, &c.*] Which had its accomplishment at the destruction of Jerusalem: according to the other evangelists, these words are the answer of the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, to the above questions put to them by Christ, after he had delivered the parable; but here they seem to be the words of Christ, who also said the same, and confirmed what they had observed, and could not but own, that it was just and right, and what might be expected, with what follows: *and shall give the vineyard to others*: the land of Judea to the Romans in particular, and the church-state, with the Gospel and ordinances of it, to the Gentiles in general, sometimes called *others*: see the notes on chap. v. 29. and xviii. 11. and when they heard it, they said, *God forbid*: for though they were their own words, yet being repeated and confirmed by Christ, and perceiving that they were the persons intended, deprecate the fulfilment of them; at least so far as they understood they related to the killing of the Mes-

siah, and to the destruction of their nation, city, and temple.

Ver. 17. *And he beheld them, &c.*] Looked very earnestly and wistly at them, speaking as it were by his looks, signifying, that verily so it would be, as he had said; that they would reject the Messiah, and put him to death, and bring utter ruin upon themselves, and deprive their posterity of many advantages and privileges: *and said, what is this then that is written*: that is, what else is the meaning of such a Scripture? is not the sense of that perfectly agreeable to what has been said, that the Messiah shall be rejected by the principal men among the Jews in church and state, and yet he shall be exalted, who will then take vengeance on them? *the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?* The passage is in Psal. cxviii. 22. see the note on Matt. xxi. 42.

Ver. 18. *Whosoever shall fall on that stone, shall be broken, &c.*] Not who shall fall upon Christ by faith, and build upon him as the foundation-stone, for such shall be saved; but that stumble at him, and are offended with him, and fall by unbelief and hardness of heart; such do themselves much hurt and mischief, and expose themselves to danger and ruin; they bid very fair for destruction: *but on whomsoever it shall fall*: as it did with its full weight upon the Jews at their destruction, and as it will upon all Christless sinners at the last day: *it will grind him to powder*; the ruin of such will be unavoidable, and there will be no recovery; see the note on Matt. xxi. 44.

Ver. 19. *And the chief priests, and the Scribes, that same hour, &c.*] As soon as he had delivered the above parable, together with that of the two sons: *sought to lay hands on him*; they had a good will to it, being exceedingly grieved with the question he put to them concerning John's baptism, which confounded them, and put them to silence; and with the parables he delivered, in which they were so manifestly pointed at: *and they feared the people*; lest they should rise and stone them, as in ver. 6. or rescue him out of their hands; *for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them*: and that they were the husbandmen that had used the servants of God so ill, and would put to death the son of God, the Messiah; and who would at length be destroyed themselves, and the kingdom of God be taken from them, though they seem to detest and deprecate it: *saying in ver. 16. God forbid*; that we should kill the heir, or that we should be destroyed, and the vineyard given to others: these things grievously nettled them, and exasperated them against him; but they knew not how to help themselves at present.

Ver. 20. *And they watched him, &c.*] What he said, and what he did, and where he went, that they might take an advantage against him, or know where he was, to send to him, as they should think fit, and take the best opportunity of so doing. The Syriac and Persian versions leave out this clause: *and sent forth spies which should seize themselves just men*: men of virtue and religion, conscientious men, that would do nothing but what was just and right, and were desirous of being exactly informed of the truth of things, that they might act right in every punctilio: *that they might take hold of his words*; improve them, and form

a charge upon them, of sedition and treason: *that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor*; the Roman governor, and by him be put to death. These men were some of them the disciples of the Pharisees, and others were Herodians; see Matt. xxii. 16.

Ver. 21. *And they asked him, saying, master, &c.*] Rabbi, or doctor; hoping, by this flattering title, and the flattering words used by them, to work him up to an openness and freedom of conversation with them: *we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly*; rightly diddest the word of God, and deliverest out sound doctrine according to it: and this he certainly did, though they spoke these words hypocritically, not believing what they themselves said; at least, they did not care that others should believe this of him: *neither acceptest thou the person of any*. The Persic version very wrongly renders it, *and lookest not upon the countenance, and heart of any one whomsoever*; for though Christ did not look upon the countenances of men, and judge according to the outward appearance, nor regard men on account of outward circumstances, as riches, honours, learning, &c. yet he looked upon the heart, and knew what was in it, and respected sincerity and uprightness wherever he found it, and which were wanting in these men: *but teachest the way of God truly*; the way of worshipping God, and of enjoying him, both in this world, and in that to come; see the note on Matt. xxii. 16.

Ver. 22. *Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar, or no?*] The Syriac and Persic versions here, as in the other evangelists, render it, *head-money*. The phrase, *for us*, is here added, and on it lies the emphasis, and stress of the question; for the doubt pretended, was not whether it was lawful for the Romans to pay tribute to Cæsar, but whether it was lawful for them who were Jews, were Abraham's seed, and, as they boasted, were never in bondage, but were the Lord's free people, to pay tribute to an Heathen emperor, or no.

Ver. 23. *But he perceived their craftiness, &c.*] Knowing what was in them, and being a discernor of the thoughts and intents of their hearts, he clearly saw that their view was either, that they might have a charge against him to the Roman governor, should he declare against payment of tribute; or that they might expose him to the people of the Jews, should he assert the lawfulness of it: *and said unto them, why tempt ye me?* with this ensnaring question.

Ver. 24. *Shew me a penny, &c.*] A Roman denarius, value seven-pence halfpenny of our money. The Persic version adds, *they shewed it, he asked of them*; and the Ethiopic version, *and they brought it, and he said unto them, as follows*; whose image and superscription hath it? for the penny had an head upon it, with something written, as the name of the emperor, whose image it was, his titles, the date of the coin, or some motto on it: *they answered and said, Cæsar's*; very likely Tiberius Cæsar's, who was at that time emperor of Rome; see the notes on Matt. xxii. 20, 21.

Ver. 25. *And he said unto them, render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, &c.*] The Arabic version renders it, *give to the king, what is the king's*; the

tribute that was due to him; since they were under his government, and were protected by him, and traded with his money; the currency of which among them was an acknowledgment of him as their sovereign: *and unto God the things which be God's*; which relate to his worship, honour, interest, and kingdom; see the note on Matt. xxii. 21.

Ver. 26. *And they could not take hold of his words before the people, &c.*] Which was what they wanted; that if he had dropped any seditious and treasonable expressions against the government, they might be witnesses against him; or if he had not vindicated the liberties of the people, and the rights of the Jewish nation, these might be exasperated against him, and leave him: *and they marvelled at his answer*; which was so formed, as to give them no handle against him either way: *and held their peace*; they were silenced, and had nothing to say to him, nor against him, but left him, and went their way.

Ver. 27. *Then came to him certain of the Sadducees, &c.*] That is, to Jesus, as the Persic version expresses it; and it was the same day, as Matthew says, on which the disciples of the Pharisees, and the Herodians, had been with him, putting the question about tribute to him: *which deny that there is any resurrection*; that is, of the dead; that there ever was any instance of it, or ever will be: this was the distinguishing tenet of that sect; see Acts xxiii. 8. *and they asked him*: the following question, after they had put a case to him.

Ver. 28. *Saying, master, Moses wrote unto us, &c.*] In Deut. xxv. 5. where the substance of what follows is contained, though not in express words: *if any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother*; the meaning of which is, that if a man died without issue, and left a wife behind him, his next brother, if unmarried, was to marry his wife, and the first child born of her, was to be reckoned the deceased's, and to inherit his estate; see the note on Matt. xxii. 24.

Ver. 29. *There were therefore seven brethren, &c.*] In the place where these Sadducees dwelt; or, however, that were known by them; at least they supposed such a case, and it might be fact: *and the first took a wife, and died without children*; son or daughter, and so had none to keep up his name, and to possess his inheritance.

Ver. 30. *And the second took her to wife, &c.*] As he was obliged by the above law, or pluck off the shoe: *and he died childless*: as his eldest brother before him.

Ver. 31. *And the third took her, &c.*] To wife, by virtue of the same law: *and in like manner the seven also*; the other four, one after another, when all seven married her: *and they left no children, and died*; or they died, leaving no children behind them.

Ver. 32. *Last of all the woman died also.*] Having had no children by either of her seven husbands.

Ver. 33. *Therefore in the resurrection, &c.*] At the time of the resurrection of the dead, in that state, supposing there will be such an one, which they denied; *whose wife of them is she?* for the first, or the last, or any of the intermediate ones? *for seven had her to wife*; and she had no child by either of them; so that their claim seems to be alike; this they thought

unanswerable, and sufficient to set aside the notion of a resurrection.

Ver. 34. *And Jesus answering, said unto them, &c.]* After he had observed that their error arose from ignorance of the Scriptures, and the power of God: *the children of this world marry, and are given in marriage* that is, such who live in this world, in the present mortal and imperfect state, being mortal men, and die, and leave their estates and possessions: these marry, and have wives given them in marriage; and it is very right, and fit, that so it should be, in order to keep up a succession of men, and that they may have heirs to enjoy their substance when they are gone.

Ver. 35. *But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, &c.]* The world to come, eternal life and happiness; not by their own works and merits, but through the blood, sacrifice, and righteousness of the Messiah; *and the resurrection from the dead*: that is, the first resurrection, the resurrection unto life, which only the dead in Christ will enjoy; otherwise all will be raised: but some to the resurrection of damnation: *these neither marry, nor are given in marriage*; there will be no need of any such practice, for the reasons that follow.

Ver. 36. *Neither can they die any more, &c.]* Therefore there will be no need of marrying to procreate children, to keep up a succession of men, any more than there is among the angels: *for they are equal unto the angels*; in spirituality, purity and immortality; see the note on Matt. xxii. 30. *and are the children of God*: as they are now by adopting grace; but, as yet, it does not appear as it will then, what they are and will be: *being the children of the resurrection*; as Christ was declared to be the son of God by his resurrection, so will they appear to be the children of God by their resurrection to eternal life; for though others will rise, yet not to everlasting life, and thus appearing to be children of God, they will also be heirs of God, and enjoy the inheritance, which they will always live to possess in their persons; and therefore the case being different with them from the children of the world, they'll not marry, nor be given in marriage, as they are.

Ver. 37. *Now that the dead are raised, &c.]* Or that there will be a resurrection of the dead, this is a proof of it: *even Moses shewed at the bush*; when the Lord appeared to him out of it, and he saw it burning with fire, and not consumed; when the Lord called to him out of it by the following name, as he has recorded it in Exodus iii. 6. Hence it is said, *when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*; for though the Lord called himself so, yet Moses likewise calls him by these names, when he gives an account of this affair, and when he went from him to the children Israel; see the note on Matt. xxii. 32.

Ver. 38. *For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living, &c.]* See the note on Matt. xxii. 32. *for all live unto him*. The Persic version reads, *all these live unto him*; namely, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; for though they are dead to men, they are not to God; their souls live with him, and their bodies will be

raised by him: he reckons of them, as if they were now alive, for he quickens the dead, and calls things that are not, as though they were; and this is the case of all the saints that are dead, as well as of those patriarchs. The Ethiopic reads, *all live with him*; as the souls of all departed saints do; the Arabic version reads, *all live in him*; so all do now, Acts xvii. 28.

Ver. 39. *Then certain of the Scribes answering, said, &c.]* Who believed the doctrine of the resurrection, which the Sadducees denied, and so were pleased with our Lord's reasonings on this subject: *master, thou hast well said*; thou hast spoken in a beautiful manner, reasoned finely upon this head, and set this matter in a fair and clear light; see the note on Mark xii. 28.

Ver. 40. *And after that, they durst not ask him any question at all.* Neither the Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, nor Herodians.

Ver. 41. *And he said unto them, &c.]* The Ethiopic version reads, *to the Pharisees*; and so it appears, that it was to them he spoke, from Matt. xxii. 41. *how say they?* The Syriac version reads, *how say the Scribes?* as in Mark xii. 35. and the Persic version, *how say the wise men, the doctors in Israel, that Christ is David's son?* than which nothing was more common among the Jews.

Ver. 42. *And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, &c.]* In Psal. cx. 1. *the Lord said to my Lord, sit thou on my right hand*; which words were delivered by David, as inspired by the spirit of God; and contain a speech of God the father to his son Jesus Christ, upon his ascension to heaven, after his sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead; when he was bid to sit down in human nature, at the right hand of God, in token of having done his work on earth to full satisfaction; and in the relation of which David calls Christ his Lord; and is the reason of their being mentioned.

Ver. 43. *'Till I make thine enemies thy footstool.]* Which words are a continuation of the citation out of the above Psalm; and for the application of these words, with the preceding, to the Messiah, see the note on Matt. xxii. 44.

Ver. 44. *David therefore called him Lord, &c.]* Or, *my Lord*, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read; or, *his Lord*, as the Arabic version. This is the inference from the words before cited, upon which the following question is asked, *how is he then his son?* how can these things be reconciled? in what sense can he be both his Lord and son? see the note on Matt. xxii. 45.

Ver. 45. *Then in the audience of all the people, &c.]* Whilst they were about him, and hearing him, and for their sakes too; *he said unto his disciples*; yea, he spake to the multitude, as well as to the disciples, as appears from Matt. xxiii. 1.

Ver. 46. *Beware of the Scribes, &c.]* And also of the Pharisees; for they are joined together in Matthew: *which desire to walk in long robes*: the rule for the length of a scholar's garment was this: "his flesh must not appear under his garments, as the light linen garments, and the like, they make in Egypt;

<sup>a</sup> Maimon Hilch. Dayot, c. 5. sect. 9. Vid. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 57. 2, & Gloss. in ib.



“nor must his garments be drawn upon the ground, “as the garments of proud men, but must reach to “his heel, and his glove must reach the top of his “fingers.” According to this rule, the garments of the doctors were to be so long as to cover the whole body, even down to their heels, but were not to be any longer; and by this it appears their garments were very long; but they did not always go by this rule; some had their garments so long as to have a train after them; see the notes on Matt. xxiii. 5. *and love greetings in the markets*; or in courts of judicature; they loved to be saluted with the titles of Rabbi, Master, and the like: *and the highest seats in the synagogues*; which were next to the place where the book of the law was

read and expounded, and where they might be seen by the people: *and the chief rooms at feasts*; the uppermost; see the notes on Matt. xxiii. 6, 7.

Ver. 47. *Which devour widows' houses, &c.*] As the characters of them, in the preceding verse, expose their pride, this shows their avarice; they were very voracious and cruel; they did not spare widows, but devoured their substance: *and for a shew make long prayers*; to cover their wickedness, pretending great devotion and religion; *the same shall receive greater damnation*; than openly profane sinners; doing such wickedness under a cloak of religion, will aggravate their condemnation; see the note on Matt. xxiii. 14.

## C H A P. XXI.

Ver. 1. *AND he looked up, &c.*] As Christ sat over-against the treasury, looking upon the ground, he lift up his eyes; for the treasury was not in an high place, or above Christ, who was right against it. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions leave out this clause. *And saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury*; see the note on Mark xii. 41.

Ver. 2. *And he saw also a certain poor widow, &c.*] Whom he took particular notice of above all the rest: the poor, and the widow, are regarded by him, and are his care; nor are their mean services, done in faith, and from a principle of love, despised by him, but preferred to the greater services of others, where faith and love are wanting: *casting in thither two mites*; the value of a farthing. The Persic version renders it, *two bottoms of yarn*; see the note on Mark xii. 42.

Ver. 3. *And he said, &c.*] To his disciples, as the Ethiopic version adds; these he called to him, upon this occasion, as appears from Mark xii. 43. *of a truth I say unto you, that this poor woman hath cast in more than they all*: than all the rich men; not in quantity, but in proportion to her ability; see the note on Mark xii. 43.

Ver. 4. *For all these have of their abundance, &c.*] Which they had remaining; the same Hebrew word *נָתַן*, signifying to remain, and to abound: they had large possessions, and gave in much, and yet had a great deal left; out of which they cast in unto the offerings of God; or gifts of God: not as gifts unto him; or among the gifts of God; but into the treasury where the gifts, and free-will offerings were put; the same with the *Corban*, in Matt. xxvii. 6. and so the Syriac version here renders it, *the house of the offering of God*: and it is expressed in the plural; because there were several chests, in which these gifts were put, for various uses; see the note on Mark xii. 41. *but she of her penny hath cast in all the living she had*; see the note on Mark xii. 44.

Ver. 5. *And as some spake of the temple, &c.*] These were the disciples; Mark says, one of them; but it seems there were more than one; one might begin the discourse, and others join him: *how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts*; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 1. *he said*; what follows. This was as he went out of the temple.

Ver. 6. *As for these things which ye behold, &c.*] Some, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, read these words by way of interrogation; *are these the things which ye behold?* do ye look upon these with wonder and delight? *the days will come*; and they are hastening on; a little while, a few years more: *in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down*; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 2.

Ver. 7. *And they asked him, &c.*] That is, his disciples, when they were come to the Mount of Olives, and as he sat upon that, Matt. xxiv. 3. *saying, master, but when shall these things be?* when the temple shall be destroyed; and one stone shall not be left upon another; *and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?* which shews that this refers to the destruction of the temple, and so the signs following; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 3.

Ver. 8. *And he said, take heed that ye be not deceived, &c.*] With false Christs, and false prophets: *for many shall come in my name*; making use of his name, taking it to them; not that they would pretend they were sent by him, but that they were he himself: *saying, I am Christ*; so the Syriac and Persic versions supply as we do: *and the time draweth near*; not that such will come, but when come, they will say, that the time of the deliverance of the Jewish nation from the Roman yoke is at hand: *go ye not therefore after them*; don't be their disciples, or follow them where they would lead you; for nothing but destruction will be the consequence of it.

Ver. 9. *But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, &c.*] Or seditions and tumults; *wars* may design the wars of the Romans, against the Jews; and the *commotions*, or seditions, the intestine troubles among themselves: *be not terrified*; as if the destruction of the nation, city, and temple, would be at once: *for these things must first come to pass, but the end is not by and by; or immediately*. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions leave out this last word, and read, as in Matt. xxiv. 6. see the note there.

Ver. 10. *Then said he unto them, nation shall rise, &c.*] See the note on Matt. xxiv. 7.

Ver. 11. *And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines and pestilences, &c.*] See the note

on Matt. xxiv. 7. *and fearful sights*: or *terrible things*: whether heard, or seen, as dreadful thunderings, and lightnings; and a voice heard in the temple, saying, let us go hence; and an ideot that went about several years together, saying, woe to the people, woe to the city, &c. a flame was seen in the temple, and the doors of it opened of themselves: *and great signs shall there be from heaven*: as comets and blazing stars, a flaming sword, or a comet like one, hanging over Jerusalem, and armies in the air engaged against each other<sup>b</sup>. The Syriac version adds, *and great winters there shall be*; that is, very long and cold; and so the Persic version, *and winter, and cold, shall be protracted*.

Ver. 12. *But before all these, &c.*] Before all these things come to pass: *they shall lay their hands on you*: as the high-priest, the priests, and the captain of the temple did upon the apostles, Acts iv. 1, 3. and v. 17, 18. *and persecute you*: as upon the death of Stephen, Acts viii. 1. *delivering you up to the synagogues*: to be scourged there; or to the courts of judicature, the consistories of the Jews, their great sanhedrim; before these the apostles were brought, Acts iv. 6, 7, 15. and v. 17, *and into prisons*: as were all the apostles together, and Peter at another time separately, Acts iv. 3. and v. 18. and xii. 4. *being brought before kings and rulers, for my name's sake*: for being called by his name, and calling upon it; for professing, and preaching his Gospel; see the note on Matt. x. 18.

Ver. 13. *And it shall turn to you for a testimony.*] By this means they would have an opportunity of leaving their testimony for Christ before kings and rulers; and what they should meet with from them, would be a means of strengthening and confirming them in the truths of the Gospel; and be a proof and evidence to them of the certainty of the above things Christ had said should be accomplished; as well as be for a testimony against the rulers and governors, Jews, and Gentiles, before whom they should be convened; see Matt. x. 18.

Ver. 14. *Settle it therefore in your hearts, &c.*] Resolve on this in your minds, and let it be a rule never to be departed from: *not to meditate before what you shall answer*: not to sit down, and study a form of words, and scheme of things, what to reply to the ensnaring questions that may be thought would be asked, by kings and rulers, or any of the judges before whom they should be brought; it being natural for persons, especially of a low life, to be timorous and fearful, to appear before such great personages, and to be thoughtful and solicitous what to say to any question that may be asked them; see the note on Matt. x. 19.

Ver. 15. *For I will give you a mouth, &c.*] A faculty of speaking, a freedom of expression, a door of utterance, a good degree of elocution, to speak properly, pertinently and freely to any point: *and wisdom*: to answer with great propriety, and in the most prudent manner, to any difficult and ensnaring question; and to furnish with such knowledge of the Gospel, and with such gifts and abilities to preach and defend it, that they should be able to give a clear and distinct account of it, and prove every point in it, by the most strong and convincing arguments, and vindicate it

against all objections: *which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist*. This was remarkably fulfilled in Peter, and John, and in Stephen, Acts iv. 13, 14. and vi. 10. The first word, *gainsay*, is left out in the Syriac and Persic versions.

Ver. 16. *And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, &c.*] See the note on Matt. x. 21. *and kinsfolks, and friends*. The Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions add, *your*, to each of these relations, as *your parents, &c. and some of you shall they cause to be put to death*; as Stephen was stoned to death, and James, the brother of John, Herod killed with the sword, Acts vii. 58. and xii. 2. and indeed all of them were put to death, excepting John, before the destruction of Jerusalem.

Ver. 17. *And ye shall be hated of all men, &c.*] See Matt. x. 22. and xxiv. 9.

Ver. 18. *But there shall not an hair of your head perish.*] That is, without the will of God, as in Matt. x. 29, 30. or not one shall perish, but what shall be restored again: or the sense is, that though they should be betrayed by their friends, and hated, and persecuted, and imprisoned by their enemies, yet they should be no losers in the main; all things should work together for their good; and though even they should be put to death, yet that would be to their advantage, since instead of a temporal, troublesome life, they should enjoy an eternal and happy one: for this can't be understood of entire preservation from all corporeal damages and hurt; seeing it is before declared, that they should be put into prisons, and some of them put to death; nor of their preservation at the destruction of Jerusalem, for none of them was living at that time, but the Apostle John, and he was not in those parts.

Ver. 19. *In your patience, possess ye your souls.*] By patiently bearing all afflictions, reproaches, indignities, and persecutions, enjoy yourselves; let nothing disturb or distress you; possess that peace and joy in your souls, which the world cannot take away; see Rom. v. 3, 4, 5. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, *ye shall possess*: and the sense may be this; by patient continuance, or by perseverance in the ways of God, and the truths of Christ unto the end, ye shall be saved; shall find your lives, and enjoy your souls, as in Matt. x. 22. and xxiv. 13.

Ver. 20. *And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions read, *with an army*; that is, with the Roman army, as it was by the army which Titus Vespasian brought against it, and besieged it with: *then know that the desolation thereof is nigh*; signifying, that there would be no deliverance to be expected, as when the Assyrian army under Rabshekah appeared against it; but that whenever the Roman army besieged it, its destruction might be looked upon as inevitable; nor was the siege raised until it was destroyed, which was about four years after.

Ver. 21. *Then let them which are in Judea, flee to the mountains, &c.*] See the note on Matt. xxiv. 16. *And let them which are in the midst of it*: either of Judea, as the preceding clause seems to direct the sense; or in Jerusalem, and which indeed was in the midst of Judea;

<sup>b</sup> Vid. Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 5.

and this sense is favoured by the Persic version, which renders it, *within the city*; let them go out of it, as the Christians did to Pella, Mount Libanus, and other places; and let not them that are in the countries: either foreign countries, or in country-towns and villages; enter thereinto: either into Judea, or into Jerusalem; contrary to this advice, they came from all countries to the feast of the passover at Jerusalem, and were there shut up by the siege and destroyed<sup>c</sup>.

Ver. 22. *For these be the days of vengeance, &c.*] Of God's vengeance on the Jewish nation, for their rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah; that all things which are written may be fulfilled; as in Moses and the prophets; see Deut. xxviii. 20—68. and xxxii. 22—26. Isa. vi. 10, 11, 12. Dan. ix. 26, 27.

Ver. 23. *But woe unto them that are with-child, &c.*] See the note on Matt. xxiv. 19. *For there shall be great distress in the land*; of Judea. The Greek word *αγωνη*, here used, properly signifies necessity, but here intends afflictions and distress; in which sense it is often used by the Septuagint, as in Psal. cvii. 6, 13, 19, 28, and cxix. 143. and Jer. ix. 15. and it is also by the Targumists adopted into their language, and used in the same sense<sup>d</sup>; and indeed, the distress was very great, and such a time of tribulation, as was never known since the beginning of the world, nor never will be the like; what with the enemy without, and their seditions and divisions within, the robberies, murders, and famine, which prevailed and abounded, their miseries are not to be expressed: and *wrath upon this people*; of the Jews; even the wrath of God, as well as of man, which came upon them to the uttermost; and their own historian observes, that God, who had condemned the people, turned every way of salvation to their destruction<sup>e</sup>.

Ver. 24. *And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, &c.*] Or *mouth of the sword*, an Hebraism; see the Septuagint in Jud. i. 8, 25. The number of those that perished by the famine and sword, were eleven hundred thousand<sup>f</sup>; and shall be led away captive unto all nations: when the city was taken, the most beautiful of the young men were kept for the triumph; and those that were above seventeen years of age, were sent bound into Egypt, to labour in the mines; many were distributed through the provinces, to be destroyed in the theatres, by the sword or beasts; and those that were under seventeen years of age, were led captive to be sold; and the number of these only, were ninety-seven thousand<sup>g</sup>; and *Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles*; the Romans, who ploughed up the city and temple, and laid them level with the ground; and which spot has been ever since inhabited by such as were not Jews, as Turks and Papists: and so it will be, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled; that is, till the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in; until the Gospel is preached all over the world, and all God's elect are gathered in out of all nations; and then the Jews will be converted, and return to their own land, and rebuild and inhabit Jerusalem; but till that time, it will be as it has been, and still is possessed by Gen-

tiles. The word *Gentiles*, is left out in one of Beza's exemplars, and so it is likewise in the Persic version.

Ver. 25. *And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, &c.*] They shall be darkened, and suffer very strange and surprising eclipses: and in the stars; they shall fall from heaven, as in Matt. xxiv. 29. and so the Ethiopic version reads here: all which, as it may be understood in a literal sense, so it may likewise in a figurative and mystical one, and be interpreted of the changes there should be in the Jewish state; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 29. So the Jewish writers<sup>h</sup> interpret the sun, the light, the moon, and stars, in Eccles. xii. 2. By the sun they understand the kingdom of the house of David; by the light, the law; by the moon, the saubedrim; and by the stars, the Rabbins; and the same seem to be designed by the stars here: and upon the earth distress of nations; upon the land of Israel, in the several nations and countries belonging to it; as Galilee of the nations, Judea, and the region beyond Jordan, shall be in great distress: with perplexity: of mind, not knowing what to do, which way to go, or step to take; the Syriac version, instead of it, reads *clapping, or pressing of the hands*; which is done by persons, when in an agony and great distress: the sea and the waves roaring; which design some unusual and extraordinary storms and tempests, and inundations in the sea of Galilee, or Tiberias, which would be so very terrible, as to cause great uneasiness, distress, and perplexity; and so some versions render it, *because of the sea, &c.*

Ver. 26. *Men's hearts failing them for fear, &c.*] Of what these signs in the heaven, earth, and sea portend: and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; on the land of Judea: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 29.

Ver. 27. *And then shall they see the son of man, &c.*] See the note on Matt. xxiv. 30.

Ver. 28. *And when these things begin to come to pass, &c.*] When the first of these signs appears, or any one of them: then look up and lift up your heads; be cheerful and pleasant; don't hang down your heads as bulrushes, but erect them, and put on a cheerful countenance, and look upwards, from whence your help comes; and look out wistly and intently, for your salvation and deliverance: for your redemption draweth nigh; not the redemption of their souls from sin, Satan, the law, the world, death, and hell; for that was to be obtained, and was obtained, before any of these signs took place; nor the redemption of their bodies at the last day, in the resurrection, called the day of redemption; for this respects something that was to be, in the present age and generation; see ver. 32. but the deliverance of the apostles and other Christians, from the persecutions of the Jews, which were very violent, and held till these times, and then they were freed from them: or by redemption is meant, the Redeemer, the son of man, who shall now come in power and glory, to destroy the Jews, and deliver his people; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *for he draws nigh who shall save you.*

<sup>c</sup> Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 7. c. 17.

<sup>d</sup> Vid. Targum in Gen. xxii. 14. & xxxviii. 25. & Targum Sheni in Ith. v. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 15.

<sup>f</sup> Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 7. c. 49. & Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 7.

<sup>g</sup> Ib.

<sup>h</sup> In Prefat. Echa Rabbati, fol. 98. 4. Jarchi in Eccles. xii. 2.

Ver. 29. *And he spake to them a parable, &c.]* That is, to his disciples: *behold the fig-tree, and all the trees;* that, or any other tree; see the note on Matt. xxiv. 32.

Ver. 30. *When they now shoot forth, &c.]* Their buds, branches, and leaves; the Vulgate Latin adds, *of themselves: ye see and know of your own selves;* without any hint, or direction from others, the case is so plain and obvious; the Syriac and Arabic versions read, *of them;* the trees, by their putting forth their buds and leaves; the Persic and Ethiopic versions leave out the clause *of yourselves;* and none of the Oriental versions read the word *see: the summer is now nigh at hand:* see Matt. xxiv. 32.

Ver. 31. *So likewise when ye see these things come to pass, &c.]* The signs before mentioned, in ver. 8, 9, 10, 11, 20, 25, 26. *Know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand:* a more visible and glorious display of the kingdom of the Messiah, in the destruction of his enemies, the Jews; see Mark ix. 1.

Ver. 32, 33. *Verily I say unto you, this generation, &c.]* See the notes on Matt. xxiv. 34, 35. All the Oriental versions read here as there, *all these things;* before related.

Ver. 34. *And take heed to yourselves, &c.]* To your souls and bodies, to your lives and conversations; be upon your watch and guard: *lest your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness;* with excessive eating and drinking; for these, as they oppress and burden the stomach, and disorder the body, so they stupify the senses, and make the mind dull and heavy, and unfit for spiritual and religious exercises; such as reading, meditation, and prayer: *and cares of this life:* concerning food and clothing, what you shall eat or drink, or where-with ye shall be clothed; all such anxious and worldly cares, being that to the soul, as intemperance is to the body; for there is such a thing as being inebriated with the world, as well as with wine: *and so that day come upon you unawares;* the day of Jerusalem's destruction; and this suggests, that such would be the calamity and security of some persons, and so they would be surprised with ruin at once; see ch. xvii. 26—30.

Ver. 35. *For as a snare shall it come, &c.]* In which a bird is suddenly taken, and cannot get out again; the

Persic version renders it, *as lightning and the splendour of the sun;* which break out at once, and enlighten the whole earth; so the destruction of the Jewish nation should be sudden and unavoidable, and universal; for it should come *on all them that dwell upon the face of the whole earth:* or land of Judea; and so it was, for not only Jerusalem, but all Judea, and Galilee, suffered in this desolation.

Ver. 36. *Watch ye therefore, and pray always, &c.]* Watch against every sin, snare, and temptation; particularly, against the above things, surfeiting, drunkenness, and worldly cares; pray continually, for fresh supplies of grace: *that ye may be counted worthy;* not for watchfulness and prayer, but through the grace and goodness of God: *to escape all these things that shall come to pass;* the dreadful miseries and distress, that shall come upon the Jews: *and to stand before the son of man:* with intrepidity, confidence, and pleasure; and meet him at his coming in this way, with joy and comfort; and likewise at death, and at judgment; see 1 John ii. 28.

Ver. 37. *And in the day-time he was teaching in the temple, &c.]* That is, Jesus, as the Persic version expresses it; his constant method every day, till the feast of passover came, was to go up to the temple, and there openly and freely preach the Gospel to the people, who resorted thither in great numbers, for that purpose: *and at night he went out;* of the temple, and out of the city: *and abode in the mount that is called the Mount of Olives;* very likely to pray, both for himself and for his disciples, his time with them being short.

Ver. 38. *And all the people came early in the morning, &c.]* Not all the people in Jerusalem, every inhabitant of the city; this word *all,* is often to be taken with a restriction, and here it designs a large number; the Persic version renders it, *vast multitudes:* these, some out of curiosity, and others from a real love to him, and his ministry, rose betimes, and came early, *to him in the temple, to hear him:* which is said, in commendation of Christ's hearers, and is worthy of imitation; as the former verse is a commendation of the preacher, in his constancy and diligence in his work, and following it with his prayers.

## C H A P. XXII.

Ver. 1. *NOW the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, &c.]* Which lasted seven days; during which the Jews eat their bread without leaven, in commemoration of the haste in which they went out of Egypt; being such, that they had not time to leaven their dough, but took it with their kneading-troughs along with them, as it was; and as figurative of the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, with which the Gospel feast is to be kept; see Exod. xii. 34. 1 Cor. v. 8. *Which is called the passover:* because the Lord passed over the houses of the Israelites, when he slew all the first-born in Egypt; now the time of this feast drew near, when the conspiracy was formed against the life of Christ: Matthew and Mark are

more express, and suggest, that it was two days before the passover; see Matt. xxvi. 2. Mark xiv. 1.

Ver. 2. *And the chief priests and Scribes, &c.]* Matthew adds, *and the elders of the people;* which made up the great sanhedrim and council of the nation; these met together, not in their usual place the temple, but at the palace of Caiaphas, the high-priest; see Matt. xxiv. 3. *And sought how they might kill him;* that is, *Jesus,* as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read; they had determined before, upon the advice of Caiaphas, to put him to death, and very likely had fixed what kind of death he should die; see John xi. 49, 50, 53. and now they consult together, of the manner of bringing it about, and at what time; and

the majority were not for doing it on a feast-day, when there was a great concourse of people, but with more privacy: for they feared the people: which were now in great multitudes with him, who came along with him, from Galilee, and other parts; and had *hosanna'd* him into the city, and still abode with him, and their numbers were increasing; and the sanhedrim were aware, that at the passover there would be still a greater-company of people from all parts of the land; and they might conclude, that he would have a large number of his friends come out of Galilee, where he had been for the most part teaching, and working miracles; and they were afraid, should they lay hold on him publicly, the people would rise and stone them; at least would rescue him out of their hands, and dis-appoint them of their designs.

Ver. 3. *Then entered Satan into Judas, &c.*] At the same time that the sanhedrim were sitting, and consulting about the death of Christ, Satan, or the adversary, as the word signifies, the devil, who is the enemy of the Messiah, the woman's seed, entered into Judas; not corporeally, as he did into those that were possessed by him; but he entered into his heart, as the Ethiopic version renders it; he put it into his heart to betray him, as it is said in John xiii. 2. he stirred up, and worked upon the corruptions of his heart; suggested evil things to his mind, and baited his temptations agreeable to his malice and covetousness: and this man was surnamed *Iscariot*; to distinguish him from another apostle of the same name; concerning this his surname, see the notes on Matt. x. 4. and John xiii. 2. *Being of the number of the twelve*; apostles, or disciples of Jesus, as the Persic version reads, and which is an aggravation of his sin: now this being two days before the passover, shews, that the sop which Judas took, after which the devil entered into him, John xiii. 27. could not be the passover sop, but was the sop he ate at the supper in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, so long before it.

Ver. 4. *And he went his way, &c.*] From Christ, and the rest of the apostles, out of Bethany; and when it was night, about two miles from Jerusalem, whither he went directly: and communed with the chief priests and captains; that is, of the temple, as in ver. 52. and so the Persic version reads, *the militia of the temple*; and the Syriac version renders it, *the captains of the militia of the temple*; instead of captains, the Ethiopic version reads *Scribes*, and so does the Arabic, and which adds, *and the soldiers*; but these captains were not Roman officers, or soldiers, but ecclesiastical persons, who presided in the temple, and were heads and governors, over bodies of men employed there, of which sort were the following <sup>f</sup>: “there were fifteen, כַּמְנִיץ, presidents, or governors in the sanctuary, and so they were appointed for ever over each of these fifteen things, one governor; and they are these: one was over the times, or solemn seasons; the second, over the shutting of the gates: the third, over those that kept watch; the fourth, over the singers; the fifth, over the cymbal, with the rest

“of the singing instruments; the sixth, over the lots; “the seventh over the nests (of doves); the eighth, “over the seals, or tickets; the ninth, over the drink-offerings; the tenth, over the sick (priests); the “eleventh, over the waters; the twelfth, over the “business of the shew-bread; the thirteenth, over “the business of the incense; the fourteenth, over “the business of the vail; and the fifteenth, over the “business of the priests' garments; and every one of “these governors had under him *abundance of men*, “that so they might prepare the business they pre-“sided over.” These seem rather to be meant, than the watch in the temple; which, though kept in several places, there was but one single person that presided over it; as appears from the above account, and from what follows; and who was called the man of the mountain of the house, or the governor of the temple<sup>k</sup>: “in three places the priests kept watch in the sanctu-“ary, in the house of Abtines, and in the house of “Nitzotz, and in the house of Moked, and the Levites “in twenty and one places—the man of the moun-“tain of the house, went round every ward with “torches burning before him, and every one that “was not standing, he said unto him, peace be on “thee; and if he found he was asleep, he struck him “with his staff, and had power to burn his garments.” Whence it does not appear to me, that there were heads or captains over every ward, as Dr. Lightfoot suggests, but one over them all; perhaps these captains may be the same with the governors of the temple, in 1 Esdras i. 8. and vii. 2. But be these who they will, Judas it seems was informed where, and upon what they were met together, and he went to them, and conversed with them: *how he might betray him unto them*; in the most secret manner, and with the least noise and disturbance.

Ver. 5. *And they were glad, &c.*] For nothing could be more opportune and agreeable to them, than that one of his disciples should meet them at this juncture, and offer to put him into their hands in the most private manner; and *covenanted to give him money*. The Ethiopic version reads, *thirty pieces of silver*; which was the sum they agreed to give him, and he accepted of; see Matt. xxvi. 15.

Ver. 6. *And he promised, &c.*] He undertook to deliver him into their hands; he laid himself under obligation to do it; he faithfully promised he would. The Arabic version renders it, *he gave thanks*; for the money he received, being well pleased he had made such a bargain; and so the word here used sometimes signifies; and indeed commonly either to confess, or to give thanks, in which latter sense it is used, in Matt. xi. 25. but here rather it is to be understood in the sense of promising; and *sought opportunity*; the two days following before the passover: *to betray him unto them in the absence of the people*; when they were gone from him, and he was alone; but found no opportunity of doing it this way, which they had agreed upon with him, and he had promised, until the night of the passover, when he was alone in the garden with his disciples.

<sup>f</sup> Maimon. Hilk. Cele Hamikdash, c. 7. sect. 1, 2. Misn. Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 1, 2.

<sup>k</sup> Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 1, 2.

Ver. 7. *Then came the day of unleavened bread, &c.*] The first of them, the fourteenth day of the month Nisan: when the passover must be killed; that is, the passover lamb, as the Persic version renders it; and which, according to the law in Exod. xii. 6. was to be done between the two evenings; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 17.

Ver. 8. *And he sent Peter and John, &c.*] That is, Jesus sent them, as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions express it; these were two favourite disciples of Christ, and were now sent by him from Bethany to Jerusalem: saying, go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat; it together; so servants used to be sent, to go and prepare the passover for their masters; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 17.

Ver. 9. *And they said unto him, where wilt thou that we prepare?*] Meaning, not in what village, town, or city, for it was a fixed and determined thing, that the passover should be eaten at Jerusalem, and nowhere else; see Deut. xvi. 2. but in what house in Jerusalem?

Ver. 10. *And he said unto them, behold, &c.*] Giving them a sign, whereby they should know the very house, where he would keep the passover: when ye are entered into the city; that is, the city of Jerusalem; for Christ and his disciples were now at Bethany, from whence he sent Peter and John thither, where only the passover was to be killed and eaten: there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; the Persic version adds, upon his back; for which he had been to some well, or fountain in the city, in order to mix with wine at the passover: follow him into the house where he entereth in; so that it seems they were to return, and go after him into the house, where he went with his pitcher of water; this was a trial of the faith and obedience of the disciples, and, as the sequel shews, a proof of the omniscience and deity of Christ.

Ver. 11. *And ye shall say unto the good man of the house, &c.*] The master of it; for the man bearing the pitcher of water seems to be a servant only: the master saith unto thee; by these his two disciples, Peter and John; it looks as if the word master, as peculiar to Christ, and by way of eminency belonging to him, Matt. xxiii. 10. was well known to those who believed, and were followers of him, as the man of this house might be; see John xi. 28. The Syriac and Persic versions read, our master saith, and leave out the other phrase, to thee: where is the guest-chamber; or dining-room: the word properly signifies an inn, or place to bait at; so called, from travellers unloosing their burdens there, either from themselves, or their beasts; the Arabic version renders it, the place of my rest: a place for refreshment and feasting: where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? who were a sufficient number to eat the passover lamb by themselves; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 18.

Ver. 12. *And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished, &c.*] With all things necessary, to eat and drink out of, at the passover; there make ready. The Ethiopic version adds, for us, as in Mark xiv. 15. The Persic version renders it, there prepare a place; but this was prepared already; the words design the

preparation of the passover, and every thing proper for it.

Ver. 13. *And they went, &c.*] From Bethany to Jerusalem: and found as he had said unto them; they met the man with the pitcher of water, and by following him, found the house Christ meant to keep the passover at; they told the master of it, what Christ ordered them, who immediately shewed them a very convenient room, as he had described to them: and they made ready the passover; provided a lamb, and got it killed and dressed, and prepared every thing necessary for the keeping of the feast, according to divine appointment; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 19.

Ver. 14. *And when the hour was come, &c.*] When it was evening, the last of the two evenings, when it was dark, at least after six o'clock; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 20. he sat down; or lay along on a couch, as was the custom; see the note, as before: and the twelve apostles with him; for Judas, after he had made his bargain with the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, came and took his place with the rest of the apostles, both to cover his sin, and to watch the best opportunity of betraying his master.

Ver. 15. *And he said unto them, &c.*] The twelve apostles, as they were eating the passover, it being usual to talk and converse much at such a time; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 21. With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; not for the sake of eating; for though he was traduced as a glutton, and did often eat and drink in a free and familiar way, both at the tables of Pharisees, and of publicans and sinners; yet he was not a man given to appetite; witness his fast of forty days and forty nights, and his great negligence of himself, which sometimes obliged his disciples to pray him to eat; see John iv. 31, 34. Indeed, according to the Jewish canons, it was not judged proper that a man should eat much on the day before the passover, that he might be hungry, and eat the passover, בְּתַבְּוֹתָי, with desire<sup>1</sup>, or with an appetite. Our Lord may allude to this; but this was not the thing he meant; nor merely does he say this on account of the passover, as it was God's ordinance; though as he was made under the law, and that was in his heart, he had a great regard to it, and a delight in it, which he had shewn in his frequent and constant attendance on it from his youth; but though he had kept many passovers, yet of none of them did he say what he does of this, which was his fourth passover from his entrance on his public ministry, and his last: two reasons are suggested in the text why he so greatly desired to eat this passover; the one is, because he should eat it with his disciples; an emphasis lies on the phrase, with you, to whom, and not so much to the passover, and the eating of that, was his desire; as it is to all his people: it was so from everlasting, when he desired them as his spouse and bride; and in time, when he became incarnate, suffered, died, and gave himself for them: his desire is towards them whilst in unregeneracy, that they may be converted; and to them when converted, notwithstanding all their backslidings and revoltings. His desire is to their persons, and the comeliness and

<sup>1</sup> Maimon. & Bartucora in Misn. Pesachim, c. 10. sect. 1.

beauty of them, which he himself has put upon them; and to their graces, and the exercise of them, with which he is ravished; and to their company and communion with them, which he chooses and delights in: and his desire is towards their being with him to all eternity, and which he delighted in the fore views of from eternity; and is the joy set before him, and which carried him through his sufferings and death; and is the amount and accomplishment of all his prayers and intercession: and the other reason of this his strong desire in the text is, that this was the last passover, and that his sufferings and death were just at hand, and which he longed to have over; not that he desired these sufferings, for the sake of them, which could not be agreeable to, and desirable by his human nature, but because of the effects of them; since hereby justice would be satisfied, the law would be fulfilled, sin atoned for, and the salvation of his elect obtained; for whom he bore the strongest affliction, and whom he loved with a love of complacency, and whose salvation he most earnestly desired, and even sufferings for the sake of it.

Ver. 16. *For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, &c.*] Of the passover, and which now, with the rest of the ceremonial law, was to be abolished: *until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God*; signifying, not that he should eat of it in the kingdom of God, where it would be fulfilled; seeing the passover was never more to take place, neither in the Gospel dispensation, nor in the heavenly glory; both which may be meant by the kingdom of God; but that he should never eat more of it in this ceremonial way, since it would have its accomplishment in each of those states: and it has been already fulfilled under the Gospel dispensation, which is often meant by the kingdom of God; in himself, who is the passover sacrificed for us, 1 Cor. v. 7. for the passover lamb was a type of Christ, and he is the sum and substance of that shadow, and the fulfilling end of that type; it had its accomplishment in him; of which see the note on 1 Cor. v. 7. and it will also be fulfilled in the kingdom of heaven, or eternal glory, when there will be a perfect deliverance of the saints from sin, Satan, and the world; which the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt was typical of, commemorated in the passover; and therefore then will be sung the song of Moses, and the Lamb; and then will Christ, and his true followers, eat and drink together in his father's kingdom, and spend an endless eternity in never-fading joys and pleasures.

Ver. 17. *And he took the cup and gave thanks, &c.*] There were four cups of wine drank at the passover, which the poorest man in Israel was obliged to drink; and over each of which a blessing was pronounced<sup>m</sup>: and this was one of them, and seems to be the first; for the passover was begun by mixing a cup of wine, and blessing it, or giving thanks over it<sup>n</sup>; and which was usually done in the following manner<sup>o</sup>: “blessed art thou, O Lord, our God, the King of the world, who hast created the fruit of the vine: blessed art

“thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who hath chosen us above all people, and hath exalted us above every tongue, and hath sanctified us by his commandments; and thou hast given unto us, O Lord our God, in love, the stated festivals for joy, and the feasts and seasons for rejoicing; this day of the feast of unleavened bread, this time of our freedom, a holy convocation, in remembrance of the going out of Egypt; for thou hast chosen us, and thou hast sanctified us, above all people; and the feasts of thine holiness with joy and rejoicing thou hast made us to inherit: blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast sanctified Israel, and the seasons: blessed art thou, O Lord our God, who hath kept us alive, and preserved us, and hast brought us to this time.” After this every one drank of his cup, and put it on the table: accordingly it follows, *and said, take this and divide it among yourselves*; that is, every one drink of it.

Ver. 18. *For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, &c.*] That is, wine; see the blessing at the passover cup in the notes on the preceding verse: *until the kingdom of God shall come*; with power, as in Mark ix. 1. in the resurrection of Christ from the dead; in his exaltation and session at God's right hand; in the pouring forth of the spirit on the apostles; in the conversion of great multitudes, both in Judea, and in the Gentile world; in the destruction of the Jews; in the latter-day glory; and in the ultimate state of happiness and bliss in the world to come. The Ethiopic version reads, *until I drink it new in the kingdom of God*; as in Mark xiv. 25. see the note on Matt. xxvi. 29.

Ver. 19. *And he took bread and gave thanks, &c.*] Or blessed it, as in Matt. xxvi. 26. Mark xiv. 22. Here begins the account of the Lord's supper after the passover was eaten; and brake it, and gave unto them; the disciples, as is expressed in Matt. xxvi. 26. *saying, this is my body*; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 26. *which is given for you*; or will be given for you, as an offering for sin in your room and stead; and accordingly it was given into the hands of men, and of justice, and unto death. The phrase denotes the substitution and sacrifice of Christ in the room of his people, and the voluntariness of it; and is only mentioned by Luke in this account: the Apostle Paul writes, *which is broken for you*, 1 Cor. xi. 24. alluding to the breaking of the bread in the ordinance, and as expressing the bruises, wounds, sufferings, and death of Christ: the Ethiopic version here adds, *for the redemption of many. This do in remembrance of me*; that is, eat this bread in remembrance of my love to you, and in commemoration of my body being offered up for you. Observe this ordinance in the manner I now institute it, in time to come, in memory of what I am about to do for you; for this direction does not only regard the present time and action, but is intended as a rule to be observed by the churches of Christ in all ages, to his second coming: and it is to be observed, that the Lord's supper is not a reiteration, but a commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ. This phrase is only mentioned by Luke here, and by the

<sup>m</sup> Maimon. Chametz Umetzah, c. 7. sect. 9, 10.

<sup>n</sup> Ib. c. 8. sect. 1.

<sup>o</sup> Haggada Shel Pesach. fol. 241. 1, 2. ed. Basil. p. 3, 4. ed. Ritangel.

Apostle Paul, who adds it also at the drinking of the cup, 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. The Persic version here reads, *do this perpetually in remembrance of me.*

Ver. 20. *Likewise also the cup after supper, &c.]* Both after the passover, and the Lord's supper; that is, he took the cup after they had eaten the bread, and gave thanks over it, and gave it to his disciples, bidding them drink of it, as in Matt. xxvi. 27. see the note there: *saying, this cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you.* The Ethiopic version reads, *for many*; as in Matt. xxvi. 28. where it is added, *for the remission of sins*; see the note there.

Ver. 21. *But behold the hand of him that betrayeth me, &c.]* By the hand is meant, not figuratively the counsel, contrivance, and conspiracy of Judas to betray him, as the word is used in 2 Sam. xiv. 19. but literally the hand of Judas, which was then dipping in the dish with Christ, Matt. xxvi. 23. and it follows here, *is with me on the table*; and is an aggravation of his sin, that one that sat with him at his table, ate bread with him, and dipped his morsel in the same dish, should be the betrayer of him, according to the prophecy in Psal. xli. 9. as well as describes and points at the person that should do this action, even one of his disciples; for which disciples, he had just now said, his body is given, and his blood is shed. The phrase, *with me*, is left out in the Syriac and Persic versions. From Luke's account it appears most clearly, that Judas was not only at the passover, but at the Lord's supper, since this was said when both were over.

Ver. 22. *And truly the son of man goeth, &c.]* That is, dies, which is going the way of all the earth, Josh. xxiii. 14. *as it was determined*; in the counsels and purposes of God, and agreed to by Christ in the covenant of grace; see Acts ii. 23. and iv. 28. the death of Christ, the manner of it, and the means by which it was brought about, were all predetermined by God; yet this did not, in the least, excuse the sin of those concerned in it, nor exempt them from punishment: *but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed*; who not only came to an untimely end, and died an infamous death by his own hands, but went to his own place, the piece of everlasting torments allotted him: wherefore in Matt. xxvi. 24. 'tis added, *it had been good for that man if he had not been born*; see the note there.

Ver. 23. *And they began to inquire among themselves, &c.]* Two days before, at the supper in Bethany, when the same thing was hinted to them, they looked at one another, John xiii. 22. as persons in the utmost surprise and consternation, not being able, for a while, either to speak to Christ, or one another; but now they inquired among themselves, and of Christ likewise, Matt. xxvi. 21. *which of them it was that should do this thing*; so barbarous, shocking, and horrible.

Ver. 24. *And there was also a strife among them, &c.]* The Persic version reads, *at a certain time there was a contention among the apostles*; and some think, that this refers to the time when the mother of Zebedee's two sons asked the favour of Christ, to set one of them at his right hand, and the other at his left, in his kingdom; which greatly incensed the other disciples, and

occasioned a dispute about precedence; when our Lord interposed, and used much the same arguments as here; and which, 'tis thought, Luke here inserts out of the proper place. The Ethiopic version renders it, *then his disciples disputed among themselves*; pinning it down to this very time: and what might give occasion to the present dispute, may be what Christ had said concerning the kingdom of God, ver. 16, 18. which they understanding of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, and fancying, by his words, that it was near at hand, began to strive among themselves who should be the greatest in it; or it might be brought on by their inquiry among themselves, who should betray him, which might lead them on each one to throw off the imputation from himself, and to commend himself as a steady follower of Jesus, and to express his hopes of being his chief favourite, and principal minister in his kingdom: for the strife was, *which of them should be accounted the greatest*; by Christ; or that should be so in his kingdom. Perhaps the contention might be chiefly between Peter, James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, and who were the favourite disciples of Christ; and Peter might urge his seniority, and what Christ had said to him, Matt. xvi. 18, 19. and the rather, since it is certain Satan was now busy about him; wherefore Christ calls him by name, and singles him out among the rest, ver. 31.

Ver. 25. *And he said unto them, &c.]* The disciples; that is, Jesus said to them, as the Syriac and Persic versions express: *the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them*; by which our Lord would dissuade his disciples from seeking to introduce a superiority over one another, since this was the practice of the Heathens, of the men of the world, of ignorant Gentiles; whereas Christ's kingdom was a spiritual kingdom, and not of this world, and therefore not to be managed in such a way. *And they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors*; either by themselves, or by their court-flatterers, to cover their ambition, tyranny, and cruelty. Two of the kings of Egypt were called by the name *Evergetes*<sup>p</sup>; the word that is here used, and translated *benefactors*; and it was commonly given to other kings, princes, and men in power: so Cyrus was called by the Armenians; Antigonus by the Greeks; and Phylacus among the Persians: the same name was given to Mithridates king of Pontus, to Titus Ælius Hadrianus, to Menander, to Marcus Aurelius Severus, and to Cato Uticensis, and others<sup>q</sup>.

Ver. 26. *But ye shall not be so, &c.]* See the note on Matt. xx. 26. *but he that is greatest among you*; in age or gifts, or would be thought to be the greatest, who is most ambitious of grandeur and authority, which perhaps might be Peter's case, who was the oldest man: *let him be as the younger*; as John, the beloved disciple, who was the youngest of them; and be as modest, and as humble as he, and reckon himself as in his place, and condescend to men of low estates, and esteem each other, even the youngest, better than himself. So the phrase, *הַגִּבּוֹר הַקָּטָן וְהַקָּטָן הַגִּבּוֹר*, both *greater and lesser*, is used of the elder and younger. *And he that is chief*; that is, a spiritual ruler and governor in the

<sup>p</sup> Alex. ab. Alexandro Genial. Diar. l. i. c. 2.

<sup>q</sup> Vid. Capr. Inscript. & Marmora. p. 293, 284.

<sup>r</sup> Targum in 2 Chron. xxxi. 15.



church of God, as all the disciples were: *as he that doth serve*: for the apostles and ministers of the word, though they are over others in the Lord, and have the rule over them, yet they are servants for Jesus' sake, and so ought to reckon themselves; see the note on Matt. xx. 27.

Ver. 27. *For whether is greater, &c.*] Christ appeals to themselves, and puts a case that is plain and obvious to any one, who is the greater, and more honourable person; *he that sitteth at meat*: that sits, or lies down at table, and another waits on him: *or he that serveth*? that stands behind, observes orders, and ministers to those that sit down: *is not he that sitteth at meat*? you, and every one must own, that he is the greatest, and most honourable person: *but I am among you as he that serveth*: Christ took upon him the form of a servant, and instead of being ministered unto, ministered to others; and had very lately, but two days before, girt himself, and took a bason and a towel, and washed and wiped the feet of his disciples: now our Lord, by his own example throughout the whole of his conduct among them, as well as by such a single action, would dissuade from their ambitious views of superiority over each other, and learn of him who was meek and lowly, and by love serve one another.

Ver. 28. *Ye are they which have continued with me, &c.*] From the beginning of his ministry, to that very time, they abode by him, and never departed from him, when others withdrew and walked no more with him: *in my temptations*: not in the wilderness by Satan; for they were not with him then, not being as yet called to be his disciples and followers: but in his afflictions, by the reproaches, and cavils, and ensnaring questions of the Scribes and Pharisees, and their attempts upon him to take away his life by stoning, &c. which were trials and temptations to him. So the Ethiopic version renders it, *in my affliction*: now, since they had stood their ground, and firmly adhered to him in all his trials, he would have them still continue with him, and in his interest, though they should not have that temporal glory and grandeur they expected; but, on the contrary, fresh troubles and exercises, reproach, persecution, and death itself; and, for their encouragement, he promises both pleasure and honour, though of another sort, than what they were seeking after.

Ver. 29. *And I appoint unto you a kingdom, &c.*] Not a temporal one, but a spiritual one; and either intends that they should have in the government of the church, peculiar to them, as apostles, they being set in the first, and highest place, and office, in the church; and have the keys of the kingdom of heaven, or the Gospel dispensation, and church-state, committed to them, whereby they should open the door of faith to men, both to Jews and Gentiles; and have the power of binding and loosing, or of pronouncing things to be lawful or unlawful to be retained and used, and even of remitting sins in a ministerial and declarative way; and not only of rebuking and reproofing for sin with authority, but even of inflicting corporeal punishment on delinquents, and that in a very severe way, as in the cases of Ananias and Sapphira, Elymas the sorcerer, the incestuous person at Corinth, and Hymenæus and Philetus: or the kingdom of grace, which they had in common with all the saints, which lies not in outward things, but in righteousness, peace, and joy, and which

can never be moved, or taken away; by virtue of which Christ reigns in the hearts of his people, and they are kings, and priests to God, and have power, as princes, with God and men, and overcome, and reign over their own lusts, and the world and Satan: or that kingdom, and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom, which shall be given to the saints of the Most High, Dan. vii. 27. in the latter-day glory and kingdom-state of Christ on earth, when the saints shall reign with him; or the kingdom of glory prepared from the foundation of the world; a gift of our heavenly father's, which the saints are called unto, made meet for, and have a right unto, in Christ, and are heirs of, and into which he will introduce them at the last day: and indeed, all these senses may be taken into the account of this text: *as my father hath appointed unto me*; a kingdom, not of nature and providence, which he has in right of nature, being of the same essence, and having the same perfections with his father; and in right of creation, all being made by him; for this is not given, or appointed to him; nor is he accountable for it to any, since he receives it not from any: but his mediatorial kingdom, which is given him, and which he will deliver up the account of to his father another day; see Dan. vii. 14. 1 Cor. xv. 24. which took place here on earth in the days of his flesh; though it was not of this world, nor came with observation, or with worldly pomp and splendour; and became more visible upon his resurrection from the dead, his exaltation at the right hand of God, the effusion of the spirit, the great conversions among men, and the destruction of the Jewish nation. This kingdom takes in the whole Gospel dispensation, reaching from the times of Christ being in the flesh, to his second coming; and comprehends all the elect of God, who are a kingdom of priests, or a royal priesthood, in whose hearts Christ reigns by his spirit, and grace; it includes the whole visible Gospel church-state on earth, which is God's holy hill of Sion, over which he has set Christ, as king, and which he governs by laws of his own enacting, and by governors appointed under him, among whom he'll reign; first more spiritually in the latter day, when the Gospel shall be spread all over the world, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and next personally with all his saints together, for the space of a thousand years; and last of all triumphantly to all eternity, in the ultimate glory and kingdom of his father.

Ver. 30. *That ye may eat, and drink, at my table, in my kingdom, &c.*] In the Gospel dispensation, or Gospel church-state, in which Christ has a table, called the table of the Lord, 1 Cor. x. 21. which is the Lord's supper, and is a table well furnished with the best of provisions, his flesh and blood, of which believers may eat and drink with a hearty welcome; Christ himself being present to sup with them: and in his personal reign on earth, where will be the marriage-supper of the Lamb, to which all the saints will be called; and will sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and be regaled with joys and pleasures not to be expressed: and in the ultimate glory, when the Lamb shall feed them, and shall lead them to fountains of water; and they shall never hunger nor thirst more, but shall have fullness of joy, and be satiated

with pleasures that will never fade nor end: *and sit on thrones*; expressive of the great honour and dignity they were raised to, both in this, and the other world, from a low and mean estate, being before as beggars on the dunghill, now among princes, and on thrones, even on the same throne with Christ; see 1 Sam. ii. 8. Rev. iii. 21. *judging the twelve tribes of Israel*; doctrinally and ministerially; accusing the Jews, and arraigning them for the crucifixion of Christ; passing sentence upon them, and condemning them, and declaring that they should be damned for their disbelief and rejection of him; see the note on Matt. xix. 28.

Ver. 31. *And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, &c.*] Peter is particularly, and by name, spoken to, either because he might be a principal person in the debate and contention about superiority, mentioned in the context; or because he was chiefly to suffer in the following temptation of Satan; or because he was generally the mouth of the rest of the apostles; and he is addressed, not by the name of Peter, the name Christ gave him, when he first called him, signifying his future solidity, firmness, and steadfastness; because in this instance, he would not give any proof of it; but by his former name, Simon, and which is repeated, partly to shew the earnestness of Christ in the delivery of what follows, and partly to express his affectionate concern for him; so the Jews observe concerning God's calling, *Moses, Moses*, Exod. iii. 4. that *כפול לשון הבה*, the doubling of the word, is expressive of love, and finding grace and favour; even as it is said, *Abraham, Abraham*, Gen. xxii. 11. or it may be to excite attention to what Christ was about to say. Though the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read the first of these, to *Simon*, thus: Jesus said to Simon, *Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you*; not only Peter, but all the apostles; for the word *υμεις*, *you*, is plural: Satan, the enemy of the woman's seed, the accuser of the brethren, the wicked one, and the tempter, desired, asked leave of God, for he can do nothing without permission; that he might have these disciples under his power, and in his hand; just as he got leave to have the goods, and even the body of Job in his hand, and fain would have had his life, and soul too, could he have obtained it; and he would have the lives and souls of others; for he goes about, seeking to devour whom he may; and he had now an evil eye upon the apostles, and wanted an opportunity to gratify his malice and envy: his end in desiring to have them in his power was, *that he may sift you as wheat*; not to separate the chaff from the wheat, but to make them look like all chaff, by covering the wheat of grace with the chaff of sin and corruption; or to destroy the wheat, was it possible; or to toss them to and fro as wheat is in a sieve; that is, to afflict and distress them; see Amos ix. 9. by scattering them both from Christ, and one another; by filling them with doubts about Jesus being the Messiah and Redeemer: and by frightening them with the fears of enemies and of death, which end he obtained; see Matt. xxvi. 56. Luke xxiv. 31. John xx. 19.

Ver. 32. *But I have prayed for thee, &c.*] Christ prayed for all the apostles; but particularly for Peter, because he was in the greatest danger: whether the

prayer Christ refers to was that in John xvii. in which are many passages relating to the preservation, sanctification, final perseverance and glorification of the apostles, as well as of other saints, as in ver. 9, 11, 15, 17, 20, 24. and so these words might be spoken a little after that prayer was ended, which was about this same time; or whether it was any other, and only mental, and not vocal, is not certain: however, the petition was, *that thy faith fail not*; Satan in his temptations strikes principally at the faith of God's people; that being a grace which gives much glory to God, and in the exercise of which believers have much peace, joy, and comfort; both which he envies and grudges; and it is also a shield which keeps off, and quenches his fiery darts, and is a piece of armour he is sadly harassed with, and therefore endeavours all he can to weaken and destroy it, or wrest it out of their hands: but though, through the power of sin, and the force of temptation, it may fail as to some degree of the steadfastness of it, as to the acting and exercise of it, and as to the sense believers may have of it; yet never as to its principle, it being an irrevocable gift of God's grace; a work of his almighty power; a solid and substantial grace, even the substance of things hoped for; an immortal and incorruptible seed, and of which Christ is the author and finisher; and to nothing more is its security owing, than to the prayers of Christ, which are always heard, and to his powerful mediation, and prevalent intercession; Christ is the advocate of his people; he prays that they might have faith, and then he prays, that it may not fail; and it shall not, notwithstanding all the opposition of hell, and earth, unto it: *and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren*: Peter was now a converted man, and had been for some years; but whereas he would fall by temptation into a very great sin of denying his Lord, and which was attended with such circumstances as made him look like an unconverted, and an unregenerate man; his recovery by the fresh exercise of faith in Christ, and repentance for his sins, is called conversion: and which was not his own act, but owing to the power and efficacy of divine grace; see Jer. xxxi. 18. Some versions render it in the imperative, *in time, convert, turn, or return, and strengthen thy brethren*; as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions: as he afterwards did: for whereas all the disciples forsook Christ, and fled, some one way, and some another, Peter, after his recovery, got them together again, and returned with them to Jerusalem; when they with him assembled together, till the third day Christ was risen: he strengthened their faith in the Messiah, and put them upon filling up the place of Judas, by choosing another apostle; and on the day of Pentecost preached a most excellent sermon, which as it was made useful for the conversion of three thousand sinners, was, doubtless, a means of confirming the minds of the disciples; and he has left two exceeding useful epistles for the strengthening of his brethren in all ages of time; the design of which is to establish the saints in faith and holiness, that they may not be drawn aside, and fall from the steadfastness of their faith, either by the lusts of the flesh, or by the persecutions of men, or by the error of the wicked.

\* Tzevor Hamor, fol. 88 4. Jarchi in Gen. xxii. 11. Bemidbar Rabba, seqt. 14. fol. 217.1.

Ver. 33. *And he said unto him, &c.*] That is, Simon, or Simeon, said unto him, as the Syriac and Persic versions express it; he made a reply to Jesus, saying, as one fearless of danger, and confident in himself: *I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death*; he suggests, that he was not afraid of Satan, nor of his temptations, of being sifted, shaken, and tossed by him: he was not to be frightened out of his faith by him, or to be scared with a prison, and death itself; he was ready for both; and they were welcome, come when they would; and rather than part from, or deny his Lord, he was then prepared to go with him, at once, to either of them. The phrase, *to go*, is not in the Syriac version.

Ver. 34. *And he said, &c.*] *To him*, as all the Oriental versions add; to Peter, as what is said shews; that is, Jesus said to him, as the Syriac and Persic versions express: *I tell thee*, Peter; who knew him, and his heart, better than he did himself, as well as knew what was to come, and what would befall him; and therefore declares it, as he does with the greatest assurance and certainty, and which might be depended on, and accordingly came to pass: *the cock shall not crow this day*: in this night, as in Mark xiv. 30. or this night, as in Matt. xxvi. 34. for it was now night; a natural day includes both night and day; a like way of speaking, see in Luke ii. 8, 11. *before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me*; as he did, ver. 57, 58, 60. See the note on Matt. xxvi. 34.

Ver. 35. *And he said unto them, &c.*] *To the disciples*, as the Persic version reads; not to Peter only, but to them all: *when I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes*; without the necessaries of life, without proper accommodations for a journey, without provisions, or money, to buy any with: so *αὐτῶν ἐλάττω*, *without a purse*, is, by the Scholiast on Aristophanes<sup>1</sup>, interpreted by *αὐτῶν ἀγροῦν καὶ δαπάνης*, *without money and expense*: Christ here refers to his mission of them in Matt. x. 5, 9, 10. *lacked ye any thing?* any of the common blessings of life, food to eat, or raiment to wear? *and they said, nothing*: they lacked nothing at all; wherever they came, they had friendly accommodations; they were provided with every thing necessary for them; they had both food and raiment, and good lodgings in every place; the houses and hearts of men were opened by Christ to receive them, though they were sent out by him so empty and destitute.

Ver. 36. *Then said he unto them, &c.*] That is, Jesus said unto them, as the Persic version expresses it: *but now he that hath a purse let him take it, and likewise his scrip*; signifying hereby, that from this time forward, immediately after his departure from them, after his death, resurrection, and ascension, when they should be sent into all the world to preach the Gospel, it would be otherwise with them than before; that they should be reduced to great penury and distress, should neither have food, nor money to buy any with; and that they should suffer hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, and have no certain dwelling-place, as was their case; see 1 Cor. iv. 11. and that they would not be received, and entertained in the

manner they had been; and therefore it would be advisable, if they had any provisions, to take them with them in their scrips; or if they had any money, to carry it with them in their purses; for glad would they be to provide themselves with necessaries at any rate: *and he that hath no sword*; the word *sword* is not in this clause, but in the next; 'tis only in the original, *he that hath not*; which, at first sight, looks as if the sense was, he that hath not a purse, or a scrip, to sell, and buy a sword with, let him sell his garment, and buy one: but, as De Dieu observes, the phrase, *he that hath not*, is the same with *he that has nothing*; who is a poor man, and has no money to buy a sword with, let him part with his garment, which rich men, who had money, had no need to do; though the Syriac, Persic, and Arabic versions put the word *sword*, in both clauses; *he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy a sword*; that is, if he could get one no other way. Christ here uses the common dialect of the nation, as Dr. Lightfoot observes. So on the feast of dedication of the temple, "if a man had not any thing to eat, but what he had by alms, he must beg, or כִּיכֹר כִּסְתוֹ, *sell his garment*, and take oil, and lamps, and light them."<sup>2</sup> These words of Christ are not to be understood literally, that he would have his disciples furnish themselves with swords at any rate, since he would never have said, as he afterwards does, that two were sufficient; which could not be enough for eleven men; or have forbid Peter the use of one, as he did in a very little time after this: but his meaning is, that wherever they came, and a door was opened for the preaching of the Gospel, they would have many adversaries, and these powerful, and would be used with great violence, and be followed with rage and persecution; so that they might seem to stand in need of swords to defend them: the phrase is expressive of the danger they would be exposed to, and of their need of protection; and therefore it was wrong in them to be disputing and quarrelling about superiority, or looking out for, and expecting temporal pomp and grandeur, when this would be their forlorn, destitute, and afflicted condition; and they would quickly see the affliction and distress begin in himself. In seven ancient copies of Beza's, 'tis read in the future tense, *he shall take, he shall sell, he shall buy*.

Ver. 37. *For I say unto you, that this that is written, &c.*] In Isa. liii. 22. *must yet be accomplished*; it having not been as yet; at least not so perfectly fulfilled: *and he was reckoned among the transgressors*. The Syriac and Arabic versions read in the first person, *and I shall be reckoned, &c.* and so the Persic version, *that I may be numbered, &c.* and the Ethiopic renders it, *and the Lord Jesus is numbered with sinners*; neither right: for the words are a proper citation from Isa. liii. 12. which, as the whole prophecy belongs to the Messial, was fulfilled in Jesus; who, though he was no transgressor, yet being in the likeness of sinful flesh, and dwelling among, and conversing with sinners, was traduced as one, and was joined with Barabbas, a murderer, a thief, and a robber, and put up with him for the people to choose which of the two they would have released; and was at

<sup>1</sup> In Avibus, p. 548.

<sup>2</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Megilla Uchanucha, c. 4. sect. 12.

last crucified between two thieves; and more than this, being in the law-place, and stand of his people, and having their sins laid upon him, and imputed to him, he was made and accounted, by imputation, not only a sinner, but sin itself; and as such, was considered in the eye of the law, and by the justice of God, and was treated accordingly; see the note on Mark xv. 28. *for the things concerning me have an end.* The Syriac version renders it, *all of them*; or *the whole of it*, as the Ethiopic version; all that were concerning him; all the counsels, purposes, and decrees of God, relating to his sufferings and death; to the manner in which his death was brought about, by one of his disciples betraying him; to the several indignities he should be used with, by Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Jews, and Roman soldiers; and to his death itself; all which were by the determinate counsel, and fore-knowledge of God, and now were about to have, and quickly had their fulfilling end; as also all his own covenant-engagements and agreements he entered into with his father, to bear the sins of many, to make his soul an offering for sin, to be numbered with transgressors, and pour out his soul unto death; and likewise all the types and shadows of the law, all sacrifices in general, and the daily sacrifice in particular, with the passover, brazen serpent, and other things, even the whole law, both moral and ceremonial, had their full and final accomplishment in him; together with all the prophecies of the Old Testament relating to this matter, particularly Gen. iii. 15. Psal. xxii. 12—18. Isa. liii. 5—12. Dan. ix. 26. Zach. xii. 10. and xiii. 6, 7.

Ver. 38. *And they said, Lord, behold here are two swords, &c.*] That is, the disciples said so, as the Persic version expresses it; for they understood Christ's words literally; and two swords being among them, and which they might bring with them from Galilee, to defend themselves from thieves, and robbers, which infested the roads between that country and Jerusalem; and one of these, as appears afterwards, belonged to Peter; they mention them with a desire of knowing they were sufficient, or whether they must provide themselves with more: *and he said unto them, it is enough*: or, *they are sufficient*, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it; which must be understood either ironically; yes, two swords, to be sure, are sufficient for eleven men, and against many and powerful enemies: or his meaning is, they were sufficient to answer his purpose, and be an emblem of what he designed by the sword: or this was a short way of speaking, suggesting their stupidity and ignorance: it is enough, it is very well, I perceive you don't understand my meaning, and I shall say no more at present.

Ver. 39. *And he came out, &c.*] That is, *Christ*, as the Persic version; or the *Lord Jesus*, as the Ethiopic version expresses; he came out of the guest-chamber, or upper room, and out of the house where he had been keeping the passover with his disciples; and he came out of the city of Jerusalem, to begin his sorrows and sufferings without the camp, where he was to end them: *and went, as he was wont, to the Mount of Olives.* This had been his practice and custom for several nights past, as appears from chap. xxi. 37.

Hence Judas knew the place he now went to, and could direct the soldiers and officers where to go, and apprehend him; and this shews the willingness of Christ to be taken, in order to suffer and die; otherwise he would have gone to another place, and not this. The Ethiopic version adds, *to pray*, as he did; and, as very likely he was used; for he would sometimes continue a whole night in prayer on a mountain; see Luke vi. 12. *and his disciples also followed him*: eleven of them, for Judas was now gone to the chief priests to inform them where Christ was going, that they might seize him: but the other disciples followed him, which was so ordered, that they might be witnesses of his sorrows and agonies in the garden, and of his being betrayed by Judas, and apprehended by the Jews; though upon this they forsook him and fled.

Ver. 40. *And when he was at the place, &c.*] In the garden, at Gethsemane, which was at the foot of the Mount of Olives; *he said unto them*: to the disciples, as the Persic version reads; *pray that ye enter not into temptation.* This, according to the Evangelists Matthew and Mark, was said to them after he had prayed the first time, and returned to the disciples, and found them sleeping; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 41.

Ver. 41. *And he was withdrawn from them, &c.*] That is, from the three disciples, Peter, James, and John, whom he took along with him, leaving the rest at some further distance; and from these he removed, *about a stone's cast*; fifty, or sixty feet from the place where they were: *and kneeled down and prayed*; the following prayer.

Ver. 42. *Saying, father, if thou be willing, &c.*] If it be consistent with thy will of saving sinners, and which thou hast declared to me, and I have undertook to perform: the other evangelists say, *if it be possible*: see the note on Matt. xxvi. 39. *remove this cup from me*; meaning, either his present sorrows and distress, or his approaching sufferings and death, which he had in view, or both: *nevertheless not my will*; as man, for Christ had an human will distinct from, though not contrary to his divine will: *but thine be done*: which Christ undertook, and came into this world to do; and it was his meat and drink to do it, and was the same with his own will, as the son of God; see the notes on Matt. xxvi. 39, 42.

Ver. 43. *And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, &c.*] Whether this was Michael the archangel, as some have conjectured, or Gabriel, or what particular angel, is not for us to know, nor is it of any importance: 'tis certain, it was a good angel: *an angel of God*, as the Ethiopic version reads; since he came from heaven, and was one of the angels of heaven, sent by God on this occasion; and it is clear also, that he was in a visible form, and was seen by Christ, since he is said to appear to him: *strengthening him*; under his present distress, against the terrors of Satan, and the fears of death, by assuring him of the divine favour, as man, and of the fulfilment of the promises to him to stand by him, assist, strengthen, and carry him through what was before him; and by observing to him the glory and honour he should be crowned with, after his sufferings and death, and the complete salvation of his people, which would be obtained hereby, and which was the joy set before him; and

which animated him, as man, to bear the cross, and despise the shame with a brave and heroic spirit. Now, though God the father could have strengthened the human nature of Christ, without making use of an angel; and Christ could have strengthened it himself, by his divine nature, to which it was united; but the human nature was to be brought into so low a condition, and to be left to itself, as to stand in need of the assistance of an angel: and this shews not only the ministration of angels to Christ, as man, but that he was at this present time made a little lower than the angels, who was the Creator and Lord of them; as he afterwards more apparently was, through the sufferings of death.

Ver. 44. *And being in an agony, &c.*] Or in a conflict, and combat; that is, with the devil, who now appeared visibly to him, in an horrible form: after his temptations in the wilderness Satan left him for a season, till another opportunity should offer; and now it did; now the prince of this world came to him; see Luke iv. 13. John xiv. 30. and attacked him in a garden, where the first onset on human nature was made: and now began the battle between the two combatants, the serpent, and the seed of the woman; which issued in the destruction of Satan, and the recovery of mankind. The Arabic version leaves out this clause; and the Syriac version renders it, *being in fear*: and to the same purpose are the Persic and Ethiopic versions; that is, of death; and must be understood of a sinless fear of death in his human nature, to which death, being a dissolution of it, must be disagreeable; though not death, barely considered, was the cause of this fear, distress, and agony he was in; but as it was to be inflicted on him for the sins of his people, which he bore, and as it was the curse of the law, and the effect of divine wrath and displeasure: *he prayed more earnestly*; repeating the words he had said before with great eagerness and importunity, with intenseness of mind, and fervour of spirit, with strong crying, and tears to him that was able to save him from death, Heb. v. 7. *and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground.* This account of Christ's bloody sweat is only given by Luke, who being a physician, as is thought, more diligently recorded things which belonged to his profession to take cognizance of; nor should it be any objection to the truth and credibility of this fact, that it is not mentioned by the other evangelists, since it is no unusual thing with them for one to record that which is omitted by another; nor that this is wanting in some Greek and Latin copies, as Jerom<sup>w</sup> and Hilary<sup>x</sup> observe; since it was expunged, as is supposed, either by some orthodox persons, who weakly thought it might seem to favour the Arians, who denied that Christ was of the same impassible nature with the father; or rather by the Armenians, or by a set of men called *Aphthartodocete*, who asserted the human nature of Christ to be incorruptible: but certain it is, that it is in the most ancient and approved copies, and in all the Oriental versions, and therefore to be retained; to which may be added, that

it is taken notice of, not to mention others, by those two early writers, Justin Martyr<sup>y</sup>, and Irenæus<sup>z</sup>; nor should its being so strange and unusual a sweat at all discredit the history of it, since there have been instances of this kind arising from various causes; and if there had been none, since the case of our Lord was singular, it ought to be credited. This bloody sweat did not arise from a cachexy, or ill state of body, which has sometimes been the cause of it, as Aristotle observes, who says<sup>a</sup>, that the blood sometimes becomes sanious, and so serous, insomuch that some have been covered with a *bloody sweat*: and in another place he says<sup>b</sup>, that through an ill habit of body it has happened to some, that they have sweat a bloody excrement. Bartholinus produces instances in plagues and fevers<sup>c</sup>; but nothing of this kind appears in Christ, whose body was hale and robust, free from distempers and diseases, as it was proper it should, in order to do the work, and endure the sufferings he did; nor did it arise from any external heat, or a fatiguing journey. The above writer<sup>d</sup> relates, from Actuarius, a story of a young man that had little globes of blood upon his skin, by sweat, through the heat of the sun, and a laborious journey. Christ's walk from Jerusalem to the garden was but a short one; and it was in the night when he had this sweat, and a cold night too; see John xviii. 18. it rather arose from the agony in which he was, before related: persons in an agony, or fit of trembling, sweat much, as Aristotle observes<sup>e</sup>; but to sweat blood is unusual. This might be occasioned by his vehement striving and wrestling with God in prayer, since the account follows immediately upon that; and might be owing to his strong cries, to the intenseness and fervour of his mind, and the commotion of the animal spirits, which was now very great, as some have thought; or, as others, to the fear of death, as it was set before him in so dreadful a view, and attended with such horrible circumstances. Thuanus<sup>f</sup>, a very grave and credible historian, reports of a governor of a certain garrison, who being, by a stratagem, decoyed from thence, and taken captive, and threatened with an ignominious death, was so affected with it, that he sweat a *bloody sweat* all over his body. And the same author<sup>g</sup> relates of a young man of Florence, who being, by the order of Pope Sixtus the Fifth, condemned, as he was led along to be executed, through the vehemence of his grief discharged blood instead of sweat, all over his body: and Maldonate, upon this passage, reports, that he had heard it from some who saw, or knew it, that at Paris, a man, robust, and in good health, hearing that a capital sentence was pronounced upon him, was, at once, all over in a bloody sweat: which instances shew, that grief, surprise, and fear, have sometimes had such an effect on men; but it was not mere fear of death, and trouble of mind, concerning that, which thus wrought on our Lord, but the sense he had of the sins of his people, which were imputed to him, and the curse of the righteous law of God, which he endured, and especially the

<sup>w</sup> Advers. Pelag. l. 2. fol. 96. F.

<sup>x</sup> De Trinitate, l. 10. p. 155.

<sup>y</sup> Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 331.

<sup>z</sup> Adv. Hæres. l. 3. c. 32.

<sup>a</sup> De Hist. Animal. l. 3. c. 19.

<sup>b</sup> De Part. Animal. l. 3. c. 5.

<sup>c</sup> De Cruce Hypomnem. 4. p. 185, 186.

<sup>d</sup> Ib. p. 184.

<sup>e</sup> Problem, sect. 2. c. 26, 31.

<sup>f</sup> Hist. sui Temporis, par. 1. l. 8. p. 804, 805.

<sup>g</sup> Ib. par. 4. l. 82. p. 69.

wrath of God, which was let into his soul: though some have thought this was owing to the conflict Christ had with the old serpent the devil; who, as before observed, now appeared to him in a frightful form: and very remarkable is the passage which Dr. Lightfoot, and others, have cited from Diodorus Siculus, who reports of a certain country, that there are serpents in it, by whose bites are procured very painful deaths; and that grievous pains seize the person bitten, and also a *flow of sweat like blood*. And other writers<sup>a</sup> make mention of a kind of asp, or serpent, called *Hæmorrhøis*; which, when it bites a man, causes him to sweat blood: and such a bloody sweat it should seem was occasioned by the bite of the old serpent Satan, now nibbling at Christ's heel, which was to be bruised by him: but of all the reasons and causes of this uncommon sweat, that of Clotzius is the most strange, that it should arise from the angels comforting and strengthening him, and from the cheerfulness and fortitude of his mind. This writer observes, that as fear and sorrow congeal the blood, alacrity and fortitude move it; and being moved, heat it, and drive it to the outward parts, and open a way for it through the pores: and this he thinks may be confirmed from the fruit and effect of Christ's prayer, which was very earnest, and was heard, as is said in Heb. v. 7. when he was delivered from fear; which deliverance produced joy, and this joy issued in the bloody sweat. Some think the words do not necessarily imply, that this sweat was blood, or that there was blood in it; only that his sweat, as it came out of his body, and fell on the ground, was so large, and thick, and viscous, that it looked like drops, or clots of blood; but the case rather seems to be this, that the pores of Christ's body were so opened, that along with sweat came out blood, which flowed from him very largely; and as it fell on the ground, he being fallen on his face to the earth, it was so congealed by the cold in the night season, that it became really, as the word signifies, clots of blood upon the earth. The Persic version, different from all others, reads, *his tears, like blood, fell by drops upon the ground*. This agony, and bloody sweat of Christ, prove the truth of his human nature; the sweat shews that he had a true and real body, as other men; the anxiety of his mind, that he had a reasonable soul capable of grief and sorrow, as human souls are; and they also prove his being made sin and a curse for us, and his sustaining our sins, and the wrath of God: nor could it be at all unsuitable to him, and unworthy of him, to sweat in this manner, whose blood was to be shed for the sins of his people, and who came by blood and water, and from whom both were to flow; signifying, that both sanctification and justification are from him.

Ver. 45. *And when he rose from prayer, &c.*] The Syriac version reads, *from his prayer*, having finished it; and the Persic and Ethiopic versions read, *from the place of prayer*, or where he prayed: *and was come to his disciples*: to the three, which he had left about the distance of a stone's cast: *he found them sleeping for sorrow*; on his account; for he had signified unto them, how exceeding sorrowful he was; and they might perceive by his looks and gestures, the anxiety

and distress of mind he was in, which must needs affect them; and besides, he had given them some intimations of his being to be betrayed by one of them, and of his sufferings and death, and speedy departure from them; and because of these things, sorrow had filled their hearts, and this had induced heaviness and sleep upon them; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 40.

Ver. 46. *And said unto them, why sleep ye? &c.*] The Arabic version prefaces this with these words, *and he awaked them*; and then rebuked them for sleeping, adding, *rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation*; together with words recorded in Matt. xxvi. 45, 46.

Ver. 47. *And while he yet spake, &c.*] The above words to his disciples, *behold a multitude*. The Persic version adds, *of Jews, with arrows, swords, and spears*; but the multitude consisted partly of Roman soldiers, and partly of the officers of the chief priests: *and he that was called Judas*; and sometimes Iscariot, to distinguish him from another Judas, who also was of the number of the apostles: *one of the twelve*; disciples of Christ, whom he had chosen, called, and ordained: *went before them*; as their guide, to shew them where Jesus was, and to point him out unto them; see Acts i. 16. *and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him*; that being the signal he had given them, by which they should know him. The Syriac version here adds, *for this sign he had given to them, whomsoever I shall kiss, the same is he*: and so likewise the Persic and Ethiopic versions, adding also this, *lay hold upon him*; but the whole seems to be transcribed from Matt. xxvi. 48.

Ver. 48. *But Jesus said unto him, Judas, &c.*] Calling him by his name, that he might know he knew him, and to aggravate his sin; what, Judas, my apostle, my friend, my familiar friend, in whom I trusted, or with whom I trusted all my worldly affairs, *betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss!* who assumed human nature for the good of mankind, who is the Messiah spoken of by the prophets, under the character of the son of man, and who is holy, harmless, and never did any mortal man any hurt or injury; and what, betray such an one into the hands of his most implacable adversaries, and in such an hypocritical and deceitful way! all which Christ said, to shew he was no stranger to what he was about to do.

Ver. 49. *When they which were about him, &c.*] That is, the eleven disciples that were about Christ, and with him in the garden: *saw what would follow*; that their Lord and master was about to be betrayed by Judas, and would be seized, and carried away by the multitude, that were with him: *they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? or swords*, as the Syriac and Persic versions read; with the two swords which they had along with them. This they said, not being thoroughly acquainted with the mind of Christ in this matter, whether they should use the temporal sword or no; and might choose to shew this forwardness to stand by him, and defend him, remembering how lately they had said, that though they died with him, they would not deny him: and might, no doubt, be thoroughly exasperated and provoked to see Judas at the head of such a mob, with swords and staves, and burned with true zeal for their Lord and master; and

<sup>a</sup> Solin. Polyhistor, c. 40. Isidor. Hispalens. Etymolog. l. 12. c. 4.

might be the more spirited up to this, by observing, that the men fell backwards to the ground, upon Christ's saying that he was the person they sought; at least their dependence was upon the exertion of his almighty power; for they could never otherwise imagine that eleven men, with two swords only, would be able to defend him, and rescue him out of the hands of such a multitude.

Ver. 50. *And one of them smote the servant of the high-priest, &c.*] The person that drew his sword, and performed this daring action, not waiting for an answer from Christ, was Peter, and the high-priest's servant, that he smote, was Malchus; both which we learn from John xviii. 10. *and cut off his right ear*; he aimed, no doubt, at his head, but missing his blow, took off his right ear. 'Tis very likely, that this servant was very busy and forward to lay hold on Christ, and shewed much virulence, and great malignity; and therefore Peter singled him out, and levelled his blow at him.

Ver. 51. *And Jesus answered and said, &c.*] Not to the question of the disciples, but either to Peter, who had done this rash action; and so the Persic and Ethiopic versions add, *to him*; or else to the multitude, *suffer ye thus far*; or to them both, to Peter to stop his hand, to proceed no further, but put up his sword; and so the Arabic version reads, *restrain thyself*; and to the multitude to be easy, and not revenge the affront that was given them: and in order to pacify them, *he went to the wounded man*, as the Persic version inserts, *and he touched his ear and healed him*; which shews, that though the human nature of Christ was in a very low condition, yet he still retained the power of doing miracles; and also his great humanity, by which example he confirmed his precept of doing good to enemies; and likewise hereby gave full proof of his willingness to be apprehended by them; for otherwise, he that wrought such a miracle as this, could easily have delivered himself out of their hands; and one would have thought this would have put a stop to them, and have convinced them of the truth of his being a divine person, and the Messiah.

Ver. 52. *Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, &c.*] After he had wrought this miracle, and had quieted the mob, and restrained them from falling upon the apostles, and cutting them to pieces, which in all likelihood they would otherwise have done; he addressed himself to the *chief priests*, who were members of the Jewish sanhedrim, and the *captains of the temple*; see the note on ver. 4. *And the elders which were come to him*; which came along with Judas and the multitude, in order to see things done to their mind, and to animate both Judas and the soldiers and their officers, by their presence, lest they should come without him, as they had before done, John vii. 45. *Be ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves?* see the note on Matt. xxvi. 55.

Ver. 53. *When I was daily with you in the temple, &c.*] As he had been for some days past, teaching the people, and disputing with them, the chief priests, &c. *ye stretched forth no hands against me*; to lay hold upon him, and kill him; the reason was, because his time

was not come, and they had no licence or permission to hurt him, or any power given them against him from above: *but this is your hour*; the time was now come for the betraying of him by Judas; for the seizing and apprehending him by the Roman soldiers and officers; and for the delivery of him into the hands of the chief priests and elders; and for them to insult, mock, buffet, scourge him, and spit upon him: and for the crucifixion of him, and putting him to death: the hour fixed for this was now come; it was now, and not before, and therefore they could not lay hold on him, and do to him what they listed, but now they might; yet this was but an hour, a short time that they had to triumph over him, in Caiaphas's palace, and Pilate's hall, upon the cross, and in the grave; for on the third day he arose again, notwithstanding all the precautions they took, and is ascended to heaven, and is received there, and is out of their reach: and since then, it has been his hour to take vengeance on them; on their nation, city, and temple, for their disbelief, rejection, and ill usage of him; and it will be likewise his hour at the day of judgment, when they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn; and hide their faces from him, and call to the mountains to cover them, and when they'll be punished with everlasting destruction from his presence: he adds, *and the power of darkness*. The Persic version reads, *the power of your darkness*; that is, either the power granted to them, who were darkness itself, born and brought up in darkness; were walking in darkness, and in the ignorance of their minds; and did works of darkness, and shunned the light, because their deeds were evil; and for which reason they now chose the night, to execute their black designs upon Christ: or rather, the power of the prince of darkness is here meant; that power which he usurped, and was now permitted him to exercise against Christ: and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *the power of the lord of darkness*: who was once an angel of light, but now full of darkness, and who darkens the minds of men, and for whom blackness of darkness is reserved: the Jews were used to call the evil angels by this name; for so they say, "the destroying angels are called, *דשך ואפלה*, darkness, and thick darkness." The sense of the whole passage is, that now was the time come, that Christ should be delivered up into the hands of wicked men and devils; that the former should have him in their power, and triumph over him for a season; and that hell was now let loose, and all the infernal powers were about him, throwing their poisoned arrows and fiery darts at him; all which Christ endured, to deliver his people from the present evil world, from the wrath of God, the curses of the law, and from the power of darkness.

Ver. 54. *Then took they him, and led him, &c.*] The band of soldiers, the captain, and the officers of the Jews, laid hold on Jesus, and bound him, John xviii. 12. and led him out of the garden; notwithstanding the miracle he had wrought, and the humanity he had shewn in healing the servant's ear; and notwithstanding his moving address to the chiefs of them; and indeed, this was a confirmation of his last words; for by this it appeared, that now was their time, and

power was given to them, as the emissaries of Satan, to act against him: *and brought him into the high-priest's house*; where the sanhedrim were assembled; but this was not in the temple where they used to sit: it is true, indeed, that the chamber in the temple, called the chamber *Parhedrin*, or *Palhedrin*, was, בית דירה, *the dwelling-house of the high-priest*, seven days before the day of atonement<sup>2</sup>; and this was also called the *chamber of the counsellors*<sup>1</sup>; so that had the time of year agreed, it might have been thought that this was the place that Jesus was had to; but here the high-priest did not usually dwell, and it is manifestly distinguished from his own house: for it is said<sup>m</sup>, "seven days before the day of atonement, they separate, or remove the high-priest, כבדו, *from his house*, to the chamber of *Palhedrin*;" see the note on Matt. xxvi. 3. *And Peter followed afar off*; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 58.

Ver. 55. *And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, &c.*] It being cold in the night-time, though it was at the passover, and the beginning of harvest, the servants and officers of the high-priest made a fire in the middle of the hall, whilst Jesus was examining before the sanhedrim, at the other end of it: *and were sat down together*; about it, as the Syriac version adds, to warm themselves: *Peter sat down among them*; for the same purpose, and as if he was one of them; and which he might do, not only to warm himself, but to prevent his being taken notice of, and suspected; as he might have been, had he been loitering about.

Ver. 56. *But a certain maid beheld him, &c.*] Looked upon him, and took notice of him, and observed his countenance and gesture: *as he sat by the fire*; or *light*; see the note on Mark xiv. 54. And both by the light of the fire, and other lights, which were doubtless in the hall, she discovered something in him, which made her look at him again with some earnestness; *and earnestly looked upon him, and said, this man was also with him*; that fellow, that vile and contemptible wretch, now examining before the high-priest; thus in a contemptuous manner, as was the custom and style of that nation, she disdained to mention the name of Jesus; though the Persic version here expresses it; and her sense was, that Peter was one of that clan, a disciple of his, and was only come hither as a spy.

Ver. 57. *And he denied him, saying, woman, I know him not.*] Startled at the maid's positive assertion, and knowing not how to clear himself any other way, roundly, and at once, denied that Jesus was his master; or that he was a disciple of his; or that he knew any thing of him, or had any acquaintance with him: and thus he that had said he would die with him, rather than deny him, is frightened at a servant-maid, and denies him upon the first attack upon him.

Ver. 58. *And after a little while, &c.*] A quarter, or half an hour after, within an hour at least: *another saw him*; not another maid, but another man, as appears from the answer; though the Syriac and Persic versions leave out the word *man*, it may be because Matthew and Mark represent the person, on account

of whose words Peter denied Christ a second time, to be another maid; but then it is to be observed, that that maid did not speak directly to Peter, as this person did, but to those that were present, or that stood by: and one of these taking the hint from her, looked at him, *and said, thou art also of them*: of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth; thou belongest to that company; thou art certainly one of his followers; *and Peter said, man, I am not*. This was after he had been out into the porch, and had mused upon it, and was come in again, but had not courage enough to withstand the temptation, and especially now, being attacked by a man; and so a second time denies that Christ was his master, or that he was a disciple of his.

Ver. 59. *And about the space of one hour after, &c.*] After the first assault, or rather after the second: *another confidently affirmed*; who was one of them that stood by the fire-side, and heard what had passed; and not only so, but was a kinsman to him, whose ear Peter had cut off, and who had seen him in the garden with Christ, and therefore with all assurance asserted it, as a matter of fact, as an unquestionable truth, and beyond all doubt: *saying of a truth, this fellow also was with him*; a disciple and follower of Jesus, and was with him when he was apprehended; I saw him there, and it may be depended on as a truth; and then added this reason, *for he is a Galilean*: you may be assured of this yourselves, his speech bewrays him; you may know him by his language, and which confirms my assertion.

Ver. 60. *And Peter said, man, I know not what thou sayest, &c.*] Suggesting, that he was so far from being a follower of Jesus, or a disciple of his, and from having any personal acquaintance with him, that he did not know what he was talking of, or at least could not understand what he meant by this harangue, or by talking after this manner about him; and then began to curse and swear, and wish the most dreadful things to befall him, if he knew any thing of Jesus of Nazareth: *and immediately while he yet spake*: in this shocking manner, with his mouth full of oaths, curses, and imprecations: *the cock crew*; the second time, Mark xiv. 72.

Ver. 61. *And the Lord turned, &c.*] Himself, his back being to Peter, whilst he was examining before the high-priest; but he knew full well what was doing, what had been said to Peter, and how often he had denied him: *and looked upon Peter*: with his bodily eyes, with great earnestness, expressing in his looks concern and pity for him; for it was a look, not of wrath and resentment, but of love and mercy, and power went along with it; it was not only a signal to Peter, to put him in remembrance of what he had said, but it was a melting look to him, and a means of convincing and humbling him, and of bringing him to repentance: *and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice*; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 75.

Ver. 62. *And Peter went out and wept bitterly.*] See the note on Matt. xxvi. 75.

Ver. 63. *And the men that held Jesus, &c.*] Whilst

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 10. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Mezuzah, c. 6. sect. 6.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 8. 2.

<sup>m</sup> Miana Yoma, c. 1. sect. 1.



he was before the sanhedrim; and were either the Roman soldiers, or the servants of the high-priest, who kept hold of him all the while, lest he should get away; though there was no reason for it; his time was come, nor would he escape out of their hands, though he could easily have rescued himself: *mocked him*; insulted him, and gave him very opprobrious language, and used him in a very scurrilous way, and even spit upon him; and *smote* him. This clause is left out in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions; the word used, signifies plucking off the skin; they pinched him, and tore off his flesh with their nails; they plucked the hairs of his beard, and the skin of his cheeks along with them, and so fulfilled Isa. l. 6.

Ver. 64. *And when they had blindfolded him, &c.*] Or put a veil, or linen cloth over his eyes, as children do at play, to make themselves some sport with him: *they struck him on the face*; on that part of it which was not covered, either with their hands, or with rods: and *asked him, saying, prophesy, who is it that smote thee?* hereby deriding his prophetic office, and using such language as children do at blindman's buff; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 68.

Ver. 65. *And many other things blasphemously spake they, &c.*] As denying and ridiculing his deity, and divine sonship; mocking at, and burlesquing his offices, of prophet, priest, and king; asserting him to be a mere man, and a very wicked one; a profane sinner, a glutton, and a wine-bibber; a sabbath-breaker, a blasphemer, and a seditious person; and one that had a devil, or dealt with familiar spirits: and thus spake they *against him*; his person, office, and character.

Ver. 66. *And as soon as it was day, &c.*] See the note on Matt. xxvii. 1. *The elders of the people*; or the presbytery of the people, that were chosen from among the people to sit in the sanhedrim; the Israelites, as distinct from priests and Levites, and the doctors: *and the chief priests and the Scribes came together*; which made up the great sanhedrim, or council of the nation: *and led him into their council*; or *sanhedrim*, the place where the sanhedrim sat, which was in the temple, and in the chamber called *לשכת הגזית*, the paved stone chamber<sup>a</sup>; here they usually met, and so the Persic version renders it, *where their congregation was daily there*.

Ver. 67. *Saying, art thou the Christ, &c.*] The Messiah, promised and prophesied of by Moses, and all the prophets, and long expected by us: *tell us*. The Ethiopic version adds, *openly*; tell us frankly, freely, plainly, as in John x. 24. *And he said unto*

*them, if I tell you, you will not believe.* The Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, *will not believe me*; neither what he said, nor that he was the Messiah; they were determined not to believe in him, and receive him as such; their unbelief was wilful, obstinate, and invincible: they were proof against all arguments, evidence, and demonstration itself.

Ver. 68. *And if I also ask you, &c.*] Or enter into a discourse on this subject, and require an answer to the arguments, proving me to be the Messiah, or desire to know what objections can be made thereunto: *you will not answer me*: fairly and directly, or go into a serious and sober conversation on this head: *nor let me go*; or dismiss me, though I should appear to be the Messiah, or ever so free from the charge of blasphemy and sedition; you are resolved, right or wrong, to detain me in bonds, and take away my life; so that it signifies nothing saying any thing to you.

Ver. 69. *Hereafter shall the son of man, &c.*] Meaning himself, who was truly man, and then in a low and mean form, and thought by the Jews to be a mere man; though this character was known by them to belong to the Messiah, especially what follows; as that he should *sit on the right hand of the power of God*: as he did after his resurrection, and ascension, and which was manifest by the destruction of their nation, city, and temple; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 64.

Ver. 70. *Then said they all, &c.*] The whole sanhedrim, with one voice, being greedy to lay hold on, and improve these words, that they might have something to lay to his charge: *art thou the son of God?* for they knew that the Messiah, or the son of man, that was to sit at the right hand of God, and come in the clouds of heaven, was the son of God: *and he said unto them, ye say that I am*; or rather the words may be rendered, *ye say it, and ye say right*; it is the very truth: *for I am*; that is, *the son of God*, as the Ethiopic version here adds; which sense agrees with Mark xiv. 62. and the following words seem to require this sense and version.

Ver. 71. *And they said, &c.*] That is, *the council*, as the Persic version reads; some of the members of the sanhedrim, or the whole body of them: *what need we any further witness?* or give any further trouble in getting witnesses, and hearing them: *for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth*: his blasphemy, and what amounts to a sufficient charge of that kind; upon which they all pronounced him worthy of death, and determined to deliver him into the hands of Pilate the Roman governor, in order to pass sentence on him, and put him to death.

## C H A P. XXIII.

Ver. 1. *AND the whole multitude of them, &c.*] Of the chief priests, Scribes, and elders; the whole of the sanhedrim, excepting Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea, having in their court adjudged Christ to death: *arose*; from the council-chamber, where they

sat in judgment upon him: *and led him unto Pilate*, the Roman governor, and into the *prætorium*, or judgment-hall, where causes were tried by him; hither they brought Jesus, having bound him as a prisoner and a malefactor, that their sentence might be con-

<sup>a</sup> Mishna Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 2. & Middot, c. 5. sect. 2.

firmed by civil authority, and that he might be put to the death of the cross, which was a Roman punishment.

Ver. 2. *And they began to accuse him, &c.*] After they found that Pilate would not receive him as a malefactor upon their word, and delivery of him to him as such; but insisted on knowing what they had to charge him with, and what accusation they had to bring against him: *saying, we have found this fellow perverting the nation*; the nation of the Jews. Three of Beza's copies read, *our nation*; and so do the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; and it is to be understood, either of his perverting the nation from the true doctrine of Moses and the prophets; by spreading among them new notions, and false principles of religion; whereby he was a troubler of God's Israel, as Ahab charged Elijah, 1 Kings xviii. 17. where the Septuagint use the same word as here; and so is a charge of heresy, or innovation in religion against Christ: and thus Jesus stands charged in their writings<sup>o</sup>; on those words in Psal. xci. 10. *Neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling*, they have this note; "that thou mayest not have a son, or a disciple, " that corrupts his food publicly (*i. e.* his doctrine, " who departs from the true doctrine and worship, " to heresy and idolatry, and propagates the same), " כִּנְיָן יֵשׁוּ הַנְּצוּרִי, *as Jesus the Nazarene.*" Which last clause, in some later editions of the Talmud, is left out: or it may be understood of his perverting the nation in their politics, and so is a charge of sedition against him, as follows; *forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar*; than which, nothing was more false; see Matt. xxii. 21. and xvii. 24—27. nor does what is after alleged, support this charge: *saying, that he himself is Christ, a King*; or Christ the King, or the King Christ; that is, he whom the Jews so frequently in their writings call מֶלֶךְ הַמָּשִׁיחַ, *the King Messiah*, for so he might be, and was, without any hurt to Cæsar's dignity, or revenue; for though he was a king, yet not an earthly one; and though he had a kingdom, yet not of this world: indeed they would insinuate by this, that he set himself up as an earthly king, in opposition to Cæsar, to draw off the people from him, and their allegiance and duty to him; and so the Jews say of Jesus of Nazareth, that he was put to death, and had no mercy shewn him, because he was קָרַב לְמַלְכוּת, *near to the kingdom*<sup>p</sup>. The whole of this charge was untrue; he was so far from perverting the nation with false doctrine and worship, that he taught the true doctrine, and right way of worship, and refuted the false glosses of the Pharisees, and opposed the vain traditions of the elders, by which both were corrupted; and so far was he from any seditious principles and practices, or doing any injury to Tiberius Cæsar, the then reigning emperor, that he taught the people to give Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's, and he himself paid the tribute-money; and when the people would have took him by force, and have made him a king, he avoided it by getting out of the way, John vi. 15.

Ver. 3. *And Pilate asked him, saying, &c.*] Observing that it was said, he had given himself out to be a king;

for as for what regarded religion, he took no notice of it; he put this question to him, *art thou the King of the Jews?* that their prophecies speak of, and they have expected; and he answered him and said, *thou sayest it*; that is, thou sayest well; it is as thou sayest, I am the King of the Jews; see the note on Matt. xxvi. 25. though he did not leave this without an explanation; without informing him what sort of a king he was, and what kind of a kingdom he had; see John xviii. 36, 37. which made Pilate perfectly easy, and desirous to release him, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 4. *Then said Pilate to the chief priests, and to the people, &c.*] Both to the sanhedrim, and to the mob that were gathered together about the governor's palace on this occasion; and who were standing without the judgment-hall, into which they would not enter, lest they should be defiled, and be unfit to eat the passover: wherefore Pilate came out to them; and this was the second time of his coming out to them, when he said the following words, John xviii. 28, 38. *I find no fault in this man*; no cause, or reason, why any punishment should be inflicted on him, and especially he be put to death; no crime that can be fastened on him, or accusation proved against him, or any thing that amounts to a charge of sedition: the man is an harmless and innocent man, that has done nothing against Cæsar, or the government, and good of the nation; and therefore is not worthy of death, or of stripes, but should be discharged. This was Pilate's sense.

Ver. 5. *And they were the more fierce, &c.*] Or urgent to have him put to death; so the Hebrew word קָוָה is rendered in Exod. xii. 33. which answers to that here used. *They cried out*, as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read; they were more clamorous and noisy; they cried out louder, and exerted themselves with great fury and violence, and added strength to their clamour, and increased their charges: *saying, he stirreth up the people*; to sedition and rebellion: *teaching throughout all Jewry*; or Judea; not in one, or a few places only, but every where: *beginning from Galilee*; where indeed our Lord did begin his ministry, and where he chiefly taught; see Matt. iv. 12, 17, 23. and which they rather chose to mention, because that the Galileans were reckoned a seditious people, and had been drawn into rebellion, and had suffered for it; see Acts v. 37. Luke xiii. 1. *to this place*; the city of Jerusalem, the metropolis of the nation; suggesting, that he taught seditious principles not only in Galilee, but all the way from thence throughout Judea, and even in their chief city, and had drawn many disciples after him every where; so that it was a notorious case, as well as of great consequence, and much danger, and ought not to be trifled with.

Ver. 6. *When Pilate heard of Galilee, &c.*] *The name of Galilee*, as the Syriac and Persic versions read: when that was mentioned, he asked; the Ethiopic version says, the *Galileans*; some of which might be present, being come to the feast of the passover, and were very proper persons to inquire of: *whether the man were a Galilean*; so Jesus was reputed to be: for

<sup>o</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 100. 1. & Beracot, fol. 17. 9.

<sup>p</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1.

though he was born at Bethlehem of Judah, he was brought up at Nazareth in Galilee, where he spent the greater part of his private life, and his public ministry was chiefly exercised in those parts; hence the Jews thought, that he came out of Galilee, and was a Galilean, John vii. 41, 52. and so he used to be called by Julian the apostate; and it seems, that the answer returned to Pilate was, that he was a Galilean; and so the Persic version adds, and *they said, yes*; for it follows,

Ver. 7. *And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, &c.*] The country which was under his power, and he had the government of; for Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, Luke iii. 1. This was Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the great, and the same that beheaded John the Baptist; wherefore as soon as Pilate found that Jesus was one of his province, immediately *he sent him to Herod*: to be examined, and to have his cause tried before him: and this he did partly, that he might be rid of this troublesome business; and partly that he might shew to Herod what a regard he had to his jurisdiction, and power; and that he was unwilling to break in upon it, or usurp that to himself, which did not belong to him: the way from Pilate's hall, to the place where Herod was, is computed, by Adrichomius, to be about three hundred and fifty steps: *who himself was also at Jerusalem at that time*; or *in those days*; the days of the passover; for Herod being born a Jew, and the son of a proselyte, was come to Jerusalem, at this time, to keep the feast of the passover.

Ver. 8. *And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad, &c.*] For though he had been brought up in his country, and had so frequently preached, and wrought miracles there, he had never seen him before; and to have a sight of him, was a great indulgence to his curiosity: *for he was desirous to see him of a long season*; perhaps ever since he had heard of his fame, and had entertained a notion that Christ was John the Baptist risen from the dead, whom he had beheaded; and therefore was desirous of seeing him, that he might know whether he was John or no: *because he had heard many things of him*; concerning his doctrine, and miracles, and especially the latter; how that he cast out devils, and healed all manner of diseases, and even raised the dead to life: *and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him*; which would have still more gratified his curiosity, and have been the subject of further inquiry and conversation.

Ver. 9. *Then he questioned with him in many words, &c.*] Or talked very much to him, inquiring who he was, whether John the Baptist, or no; whether it was true that he had wrought such miracles he had heard of, and how he wrought them, and by what power he performed them, and how he came by it; and used many arguments to persuade him to work a miracle at that time: *but he answered him nothing*; would not give him one word in return to his many words, nor work any miracle in his presence; he answered him neither by words nor deeds; he would not indulge his curiosity, though he might have obtained his liberty by it.

Ver. 10. *And the chief priests and Scribes, &c.*] The sanhedrim that followed him from Pilate's hall, to

Herod's palace; fearing, lest Herod should be disposed to let him go, should he gratify him by working a miracle: *stood*; before Herod; so witnesses, and accusers, used to do; see the note on Mark xiv. 57. *and vehemently accused him*; of the same things they had accused him before Pilate, with great bitterness and constancy, increasing, and aggravating the charges against him.

Ver. 11. *And Herod, with his men of war, &c.*] Or his soldiers, his life-guards that attended his person, who came with him from Galilee, and were both for his security and service, and for his pomp and magnificence: *set him at nought*; made nothing of him; had him in no account; treated him as a silly, and contemptible creature, that could not do any thing that was reported of him; nor able to say any thing for himself; but took him to be a mere fool and ideot; and so they used him: *and mocked him*; as a king, and made sport and pastime with him: *and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe*. The Vulgate Latin renders it, *a white robe*; a token of his innocence, though not so designed by them, but rather by way of derision, as a symbol of his simplicity and folly. The Syriac version renders it, *scarlet*; and the Arabic and Persic versions, *red*. It is very likely that it was an old worn-out robe of one of the officers, or soldiers, which they put on him; in contempt of his being a king, as the Roman soldiers afterwards did, upon the same account: *and sent him again to Pilate*; uncondemned, not knowing what to make of him, or the charge against him, and he might be unwilling to have any hand in his death, not having forgotten the case of John the Baptist; and therefore remits him to Pilate, to do as he thought fit with him.

Ver. 12. *And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together, &c.*] For it pleased Herod, that Pilate should shew such a regard to his authority and power, as to send one that belonged to his jurisdiction to take cognizance of his case; and especially as it was a person that was much talked of, and he had long wanted to see; and Pilate, on the other hand, was pleased with Herod, that though he was one that was under his jurisdiction, and so had a right of trying the cause, and either absolve or condemn, yet chose not to use this his power, but referred the case to the Roman governor: *for before they were at enmity between themselves*; it may be on account of the Galileans, the subjects of Herod, whom Pilate had slain, whilst they were sacrificing at Jerusalem, Luke xiii. 1. which Herod might resent, as an infringement upon his authority and power; for had they been ever so deserving of punishment, it ought to have been left to him, to have inflicted it, and not the governor of Judea, who had nothing to do with them: but now matters were made up by this step of Pilate's, in sending Christ to him, supposed to be a Galilean, and so of Herod's jurisdiction; which was tacitly acknowledging his former conduct to be wrong, and shewed a regard to Herod's authority: and thus they were reconciled together, and agreed in their contemptuous usage, and ill-treatment of Christ, and so fulfilled Psal. ii. 1, 2.

Ver. 13. *And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, &c.*] That is, after Herod had sent back

Christ unto him, he then summoned the chief priests together, to consider what should be done to him: and with them also, *the rulers and the people*; both the civil and ecclesiastical rulers, and the chief among the people, who had been forward in accusing Jesus, and seeking his death: the latter of these is not read in the Persic version; and both are joined together in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, and read thus; by the former, *the princes, or chiefs of the people*; and by the latter, *the judges of the people*: in a word, he convened the whole sanhedrim, which consisted of the chief priests, Scribes, and elders of the people.

Ver. 14. *Said unto them, ye have brought this man unto me, &c.*] Pointing to Jesus, who stood before him; *as one that perverteth the people*: from their religion, and laws, and allegiance to Cæsar. The Syriac and Persic versions read, *your people*: of the same nation with them, and that were under their care and jurisdiction; at least in an ecclesiastical way: *and behold, I having examined him before you*: not only privately, and alone, between themselves in the judgment-hall, John xviii. 33. and xix. 9. but openly in the presence of them, when he brought forth Jesus to them, and heard their charges, and urged him to answer to them, Matt. xxvii. 11—14. *have found no fault in this man*; can't perceive any charge proved against him, or any crime he is guilty of, for which punishment should be inflicted on him; or at least, that he should be put to death: *touching, or with regard to those things, whereof ye accuse him*. The Syriac and Persic versions read, *all those things*; intimating, that he had carefully looked into, and examined every thing, and had omitted nothing, and that all their accusations, and charges, put together, did not make it appear that he was guilty of a single crime.

Ver. 15. *No, nor yet Herod, &c.*] Who was a Jew, and better versed in their religious affairs, and understood the nature of such charges, and the amount of them, and what was sufficient proof in such cases; and who had also examined Jesus, and that in their presence, and had heard all that they had to accuse him with, and yet found no fault in him of any such kind, as to adjudge him to death for it: *for I sent you to him*; along with Jesus, to make your allegations against him good before him; or, *I sent him to him*, as the Syriac version reads; that is, Jesus to him, as the Persic version expresses, he being of his country, and belonging to his jurisdiction; or, *he sent him back to us*; as the Arabic version reads, and three of Beza's copies: that is, Herod, after he had examined Jesus, and found no fault in him, sent him again to us; not being able to make out any crime against him, or to pass any judgment on the matter, for it follows; *and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him*; or by him: the sense is, either that it appeared to Herod, that Christ had done nothing that deserved death; or that nothing was done to him by Herod, which shewed that he thought he was worthy of it; since he passed no sentence on him, nor ordered him to be scourged, nor delivered him into the hands of an executioner, or to be imprisoned 'till things could be cleared up.

Ver. 16. *I will therefore chastise him, &c.*] Give him some correction, as by scourging, or beating with rods: this he proposed, not because he thought him

deserving of it, but in complaisance to the Jews; since it would look as if their charges were not altogether weak and groundless, and that Jesus was not entirely innocent: this would carry a shew of guilt and punishment, and he hoped this might be thought sufficient, and so he should please them, and save Jesus from dying, which he much desired: *and release him*; from his bonds, and let him go.

Ver. 17. *For of necessity he must release one, &c.*] And therefore proposed to release Jesus *unto them at the feast*; of passover, which now was; not that there was any law that obliged to it, but it having been customary with the Roman governor to do so, the people expected it; custom had made it necessary: and so the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render it, *it was a custom to release, &c.* not at each feast, or every feast, as the last of these versions read, only at the passover, as is expressed, John xviii. 39.

Ver. 18. *And they cried out all at once, &c.*] The chief priests, rulers, and people, not bearing to hear of a release of him, now they had got him in their hands; and enraged at the proposal, in a most clamorous way, cried out, as one man, immediately: *Saying, away with this man*; to the cross; to Calvary, the place of execution; *away with him out of the world*; he is not fit to live: *and release unto us Barabbas*; whose character is given in the next verse; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 16.

Ver. 19. *Who, for a certain sedition made in the city, &c.*] Of Jerusalem: he had made an insurrection in it, in opposition to the government, in order to have thrown off the yoke, and to have asserted and maintained their liberties, as a free people; or rather to have seized and plundered the properties of other people, since he is represented elsewhere as a robber: *and for murder*; which had either been committed by himself, or his accomplices, in the insurrection; and for these things, sedition, and murder, he was cast into prison; where he lay till this fast, in order to be executed.

Ver. 20. *Pilate therefore willing to release Jesus, &c.*] Being more and more convinced of his innocence; and still seeing more clearly into the wickedness, malice, and envy of his accusers; and having received a message from his wife: *spake again to them*; putting it again to them, which he should release; asking them what he should do with Jesus; plainly signifying his mind, that he thought him innocent, and that it would be right to let him go. The Ethiopic version represents him, saying, *will ye that I save for you, or release to you the Lord Jesus?*

Ver. 21. *But they cried, saying, crucify him, crucify him.*] They were fierce and furious, more noisy and clamorous, the more they perceived Pilate was for saving him; and they were more desirous to have him crucified, and more impatient 'till it was done, as the repetition of the word shews.

Ver. 22. *And he said unto them the third time, &c.*] After Christ had been sent back to him from Herod; for he had declared before he had sent him to him, that he found no fault in him, John xviii. 38. *Why, what evil hath he done?* what capital crime has he committed? is he guilty of murder? or sedition? or blasphemy? or robbery, and theft? or any other enormous

crime? *I have found no cause of death in him*; why he should be put to death at all; and much less to this shameful and painful death of the cross, which was the punishment of slaves, and of the vilest of men, which they were desirous of: *I will therefore chastise him, and let him go*: this he said, not as if he was determined to do it, whether they liked it, or no; but as signifying what he willed, or chose, and hoped they would be contented with, that he should be scourged, or beaten, and dismissed, as he at first proposed.

Ver. 23. *And they were instant with loud voices, &c.*] They were urgent, and insisted upon his crucifixion, and pressed hard for it, and exerted their voices, and more loudly called: *requiring him, that he might be crucified*: desiring it in the most importunate manner; signifying, that it must be, that nothing else would content them: *and the voices of them, and the chief priests, prevailed*: upon Pilate to grant their request, contrary to the dictates of his own conscience, the conduct of Herod, and the message of his wife; the people being set on by the chief priests, and the chief priests joining with them, their numbers were so great, and their requests were pressed with so much force, and violence, and importunity, that Pilate could not withstand them.

Ver. 24. *And Pilate gave sentence, &c.*] Resolved, determined, and gave out: *that it should be as they required*; that they should have their request, what they asked for; namely, that Jesus should be crucified, and Barabbas released.

Ver. 25. *And he released unto them, him, &c.*] Barabbas, who is not named, as being a detestable person, and unworthy to be named; and is therefore described by the infamous, though just character of him, as follows: *that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, as in ver. 19. whom they had desired*; to be granted to them, and released; see Acts iii. 14. *but he delivered Jesus to their will*: to do as they would with him, to mock, and scourge, and crucify him.

Ver. 26. *And as they led him away, &c.*] From Pilate's hall, and out of the city of Jerusalem, towards Calvary; which was done by the Jews and Roman soldiers, after they had stripped him of his own clothes, and put on him a scarlet coat, and had platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and a reed in his hand, and bowed the knee, and mocked him, saluting him as King of the Jews; after they had finished their sport and pastime with him, and had put on him his own clothes again: *they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian*; father of Alexander and Rufus, Mark xv. 21. see the note on Matt. xxvii. 32. *coming out of the country*; either out of the country-part of Judea, to the city of Jerusalem; or out of the field where he had been about rural business, and was now returning home, and perhaps knew nothing of the matter, what had been doing at Jerusalem: *and on him they laid the cross*; on which Jesus was to be crucified, and which he was bearing himself; but finding that he was weak, and languid, and unable to carry it himself, and fearing, should he die by the way, they should be disappointed of glutting their malice, and seeing him in shame and

agony on the cross, and of triumphing over him there: and being in haste for the execution of their malicious designs, they put the cross, at least one end of it, upon this man's shoulders: *that he might bear it after Jesus*: either the whole of it, following Jesus; or only one end of it, Jesus going before with the other end on his shoulder; which seems to be the order in which it was carried between them.

Ver. 27. *And there followed him a great company of people, &c.*] Not only of the common people, but of the principal inhabitants of the city; for among these were the chief priests, Scribes, and elders: some went for one thing, and some another; some pitying, and others mocking at him, and all to see the melancholy sight, ver. 48. as is usual at executions: and what might make the crowd the greater, was the number of people in the city, which were come from all parts to the passover; as also the fame and character of the person, who was going to suffer: *and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him*; not that these were the same with the *prefæca* of the Romans, or the *πλινθιας* of the Grecians; for though the Jews had their *מקוננות*, or mourning women, who were hired to assist in mourning, by using mournful gestures, tones, and songs, see Jer. ix. 17. yet public mourning was not allowed for persons that were executed as malefactors; and therefore it is the more remarkable, that here, and in ver. 48. any public tokens of sorrow should be expressed: for, "those that are executed by the sanhedrim, *אין מואבלי עליהן*, they don't mourn for them; but their near relations come and ask the peace of, or salute the witnesses, and they salute the judges, to shew, that they have not any thing in their hearts against them, seeing they have passed a true sentence; but though they don't use mourning, lo, they grieve for them; for there is no grief but in the heart." The reason why they did not mourn was, because their ignominy and death atoned for their crime: but it seems, there was a difference between those that were put to death by the order of the Roman government, and those that were put to death by the sanhedrim: "all that are put to death by the government, although they are executed by the order of the king, and the law gives power to slay them, lo, they mourn for them; and they don't restrain any thing from them, and their substance goes to the king, and they are buried in the sepulchres of their fathers; but all that are put to death by the sanhedrim, they don't mourn for them; but they grieve for them; for there is no grief but in the heart; and they are not buried with their fathers, till their flesh is consumed; and their substance goes to their heirs." And since Christ was condemned to death by the Roman governor, hence it may be public mourning was allowed of, and might be done without notice; but these still were not the mourning women, but persons that followed on their own accord: some expressed their concern and sorrow through a natural tenderness of spirit, and from a principle of humanity, being grieved that so useful and innocent a person, as Christ appeared to be, should be put to such a cruel

\* Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 13. sect. 6. Vid. Misu. Sanhedrin, s. 6. sect. 4.

\* Jarchi & Bartenora in Misn. ib.  
\* Maimon. Hilch. Ebel. c. 1. sect. 9.

and shameful death; and others from a spirit of gratitude, they, or their friends, having received cures from him, being healed by him of sicknesses, or dispossessed of devils; and others from a spiritual, as well as natural affection for him; among whom were his own mother and his mother's sister, and Mary Magdalen, and other women that followed him out of Galilee.

Ver. 28. *But Jesus turning unto them, &c.*] These women being behind Christ, at the back of him; and he knowing who they were, and what they were doing, turns himself to them, and addressed them in the following manner: and *said, daughters of Jerusalem; or ye Jerusalem women; just as the inhabitants of Jerusalem are called daughters of Zion in Isa. iii. 16. weep not for me; signifying, that they need not be under any concern on his account, for he was very willing to die; he desired nothing more; this was that he came into the world about; nor was he afraid to die; death was no king of terrors to him; he went to the cross with the greatest courage and intrepidity: besides, his sufferings, though he knew they would be very great and painful, yet that they would be soon over; nor could he be long held in the power of death, but would be raised again, and go to his father, and be exalted at his right hand, and which should be matter of joy: to which might be added, that hereby his father's counsels and covenant, purposes and promises, would have their accomplishment, the law would be fulfilled, justice satisfied, and all the perfections of God glorified, and the salvation of his chosen people effected; which, as it was the joy set before him, is a ground of rejoicing to believers: not that weeping on account of his sufferings and death was sinful; for he had offered prayers to God with cries and tears himself on this head; nor that it was altogether unreasonable, stupid, and preposterous; but Christ's meaning is, that when things were rightly considered, there would be great reason to assuage their grief, on this account, and rather express it on another; *but weep for yourselves, and for your children;* not themselves personally, but their nation and posterity; and either for sin, their own, and others; the sins of professors, and of the profane; particularly the sin of crucifying him, which would be more injurious to that people than to him, and do them more hurt than him, since they had imprecated his blood upon them, and their children; or rather, and chiefly on account of those distresses and calamities, that would come upon them, in a short time, for their rejection and crucifixion of him; on account of which he himself had wept over Jerusalem, and its inhabitants, ch. xix. 41, 42.*

Ver. 29. *For behold the days are coming, &c.*] The time is hastening on; yet a little while, a few years more, and such times of distress will be: *in the which they shall say:* or it shall be commonly said; it will be in every one's mouth: *blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck;* that is, happy will those persons be who have no children, to be starved to death, for want of bread; or to be killed with the sword before their eyes, which must greatly enhance their own miseries. Dr. Hammond thinks, that one passage particularly is referred to, related by Josephus; that when Titus had so closely encompassed the city with a wall, that there was no

coming out for provisions, upon which a sore famine commenced, so that they fed on dung and dirt, and shoes, and girdles, one rich and noble woman, whose name was Mary, the daughter of Eleazar, being stripped of all she had, by the seditious, killed her own child, and dressed it, and ate part of it; and the other part being found by the soldiers that broke in upon her, the news of this shocking fact was spread all over the city, and every one looked with horror upon it, and with the same compassion, as if they had done it themselves; and then might those words be said, *blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, &c.* who, though starving themselves, were under no temptation to do such a detestable action.

Ver. 30. *Then shall they begin to say, &c.*] The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read, *then shall ye begin to say;* the tribulation being so great, as never was the like since the creation of the world, nor never will be to the end of it; and being so sore pressed with the sword and famine; with the enemy without, and divisions, robberies, and murders within; and their miseries being inexpressible, and intolerable, they will seek to go into the holes of the rocks, and caves of the earth, as is prophesied of them, Isa. ii. 19. and as Josephus says, many of them did, when the city was taken; and, like those in Hos. x. 8. will say, *to the mountains fall on us, and to the hills cover us;* will choose rather that the mountains and hills round about Jerusalem, should fall upon them, and they be buried under the ruins of them, than live in such terrible distress, or fall into the hands of their enemies! compare with this Rev. vi. 15, 16.

Ver. 31. *For if they do these things in a green tree, &c.*] Or it may be rendered impersonally, *if these things are done in a green tree;* by which is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, who is often compared to a tree, as to a green fir-tree, an apple-tree, a vine, and is called the tree of life: and may be said to be a moist or green tree; because, as a green tree is full of juice, so is he of grace and goodness; as that is flourishing, so was he in the fame of his doctrine and miracles, in the spread of his Gospel, and in the increase of his kingdom and interest; and as that is fruitful and useful, so was he in preaching the Gospel, and healing diseases; and as that is not proper to be cut down, nor fit fuel for the fire, so he was not deserving of death, or to be used in the manner he was; the metaphor seems designed to express the righteousness and innocence of Christ; see Ezek. xx. 47. and xxiv. 4. who was pure in his nature, without sin in his life, harmless in his conversation, and did no hurt to any man's person or property: his enemies could find nothing, nor prove any thing against him; nor even the devil himself, but owned him to be the holy one of God; and he was also declared innocent by his judge, the Roman governor: and yet, how many hard and grievous things were done unto him! He was persecuted in his infancy, and his life was sought for; he was despised and reproached by men all his days; he was apprehended as if he had been a thief, and was bound as a malefactor; and arraigned at the bar of men, as if he had been the greatest criminal on earth; he was mocked, buffeted, and spit upon in the palace of the

high-priest; he was scourged by Pilate, and misused by his soldiers, who arrayed him with a scarlet robe, put a crown of thorns on his head, and a reed in his hand, and in a mock way bowed the knee to him, and saluted him as King of the Jews; they crucified him between two thieves, and as he hung on the cross mocked him, and gave him gall and vinegar to drink. To which may be added, that he was forsaken by his God, and father, and his wrath was poured out upon him, as he sustained the persons, and bore the sins of his people; the curse of the law was executed on him: and justice drew its sword, and sheathed it in him: and now if all these things were done to such an useful, holy, harmless, and innocent person, *what shall be done in the dry?* by whom wicked men are designed; who, as dry trees are without juice, so are they destitute of grace and righteousness, and all that is good, and bring forth no fruit, neither to God, nor themselves, nor others; but, like dead and withered trees, are dead in trespasses and sins, and full of all manner of sin, and rottenness, and impurity; and are deserving to be cut down, and are fit fuel for the fire of divine wrath and displeasure, both in this, and in the other world. The wicked Jews that rejected Christ, and crucified him, are particularly meant; and if such evil things were done by them to so just a person, what may not be expected will fall on them in retaliation for such usage? and if the Roman soldiers, under their encouragement acted such a part to Christ, who had never done them any injury, what will they not do to these men, when provoked by their insults and rebellions? and if such things were done to Christ by his father, according to the requirement of the law, and the strictness of divine justice, when he was made sin for his people, though he knew none, nor committed any himself, what vengeance will fall on them, who must answer for their sins in their own persons? what devouring flames, and everlasting burnings, will such dry trees be exposed to, as being fit for them, and deserving of them? so the children of men are, by the Jews, in their writings, called, עֵצִים יָבֵשִׁים, *dry trees*<sup>2</sup>; the Targumist on Ezek. xvii. 24. paraphrases the words thus; "I have humbled the kingdom of the nations, which was strong as a green tree, and I have strengthened the kingdom of the house of Israel, which was weak as a dry tree." It is a common proverb with the Jews<sup>3</sup>; "two dry sticks, or brands, and one green, the dry burn up the green:" intimating, that a few righteous persons among wicked men suffer with them; but if righteous men suffer, how much more the wicked? see 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18.

Ver. 32. *And there were also two other malefactors, &c.*] Not that Christ was one, though indeed he was looked upon and treated as one by the Jews; but as the words may be read, *there were also two others* that were malefactors; really such, two thieves, who had been guilty of theft and robbery, and were condemned to die: and these were led with him; for the greater ignominy and reproach of Christ, that it might be thought he was equally a malefactor, and as deserving of

death as they: *to be put to death*: the death of the cross, which was the death the Romans put slaves, thieves, and robbers, and the worst and basest of men to.

Ver. 23. *And when they were come to the place which was called Calvary, &c.*] Or *Cranion*, which signifies a skull; so called from the skulls of persons that lay about, who were executed. It is a tradition of the ancients<sup>4</sup>, that Adam was buried in this place where Christ was crucified, and that his skull lay here. It was usual to crucify on high places, and on mountains, such an one as this was<sup>5</sup>: *there they crucified him, and the malefactors*; the two thieves; *one on the right hand, and the other on the left*; and so fulfilled the prophecy in Isa. liii. 12.

Ver. 34. *Then said Jesus, father, forgive them, &c.*] When he was crucified between the two thieves, and as he hung upon the cross, and while insulted and abused by all sorts of men, and put to the greatest pain and torture, he addressed himself to God his father: the Arabic version reads, *my father*, who was so to him, not as he was man; for as such he had no father; but as he was God, being as a divine person, his beloved, and only-begotten son: and this he uses, whilst, as man, he is praying to him; partly to express his faith of relation to him, his confidence of being heard; and partly to set believers an example of praying, as he has directed, saying, *our father, &c.* and the petition put up by him is for forgiveness; which is with God, and with him only; and that for his enemies, his crucifiers: not for those who sinned the sin unto death, the sin against the Holy Ghost, who knowing him to be the Messiah, maliciously crucified him, for whom prayer is not to be made; but for those who were ignorantly concerned in it, as the next clause shews, even for his own elect, whom the father had given him out of the world, which were among his crucifiers; for those, and not the world, he prays: and the fruit of this his prayer quickly appeared, in the conversion of three thousand of them under Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, next following, in six weeks time. Though such might be his affection, as man, in general, as to wish for, and desire, as such, was it consistent with the divine will, forgiveness for all of them; adding, *for they know not what they do, or are doing*, meaning, in crucifying him, which was the case of many of them, and of their rulers; they did not know that Jesus was the Messiah, nor the prophecies concerning him, nor the evil they were committing in putting him to death: not that their ignorance excused their sin; nor was it without sin; nor does Christ use it as a plea for pardon, or found his intercession upon it, which is always done upon his own propitiatory sacrifice; but this is mentioned as descriptive of the persons Christ prays for, and points out a branch of his priestly office he exercises, in having compassion on the ignorant, and them that are out of the way; and they parted his raiment, and cast lots; that is, upon his vesture, or seamless coat, and so fulfilled the prophecy in Psal. xxii. 18. see the notes on Matt. xxvii. 35. and John xix. 23, 24.

Ver. 35. *And the people stood beholding, &c.*] This

<sup>2</sup> Zohar in Lev. fol. 14. 2.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Cyprian de Resurrectione Christi, p. 479. Hieron. Tom. 1. fol. 42. Bar Babluti apud Castell. Lex. Polyglott. col. 3466.

<sup>5</sup> Lipsius de Cruce, l. 3. c. 13.

dismal and affecting sight; insulting and reviling him, and wagging their heads at him, as did also those that passed by: *and the rulers also with them derided him*; the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, the members of the sanhedrim, whose characters should have restrained them from such an inhuman conduct. The phrase, *with them*, is wanting in the Oriental versions, and in one of Beza's copies: *saying, he saved others*; by healing their diseases, or raising them from the dead: *let him save himself*; from death, by unnailling himself, and coming down from the cross; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 42. *if he be Christ*; the Messiah, he and his followers give out he is; even the *chosen of God*, referring to Isa. xlii. 1. The Arabic version reads, *the chosen son of God*, very wrongly; for Christ was not chosen to be the son of God; he was so by nature; but he was chosen to be a servant, as the text cited shews, to be a Mediator between God and man, and the Saviour of his people.

Ver. 36. *And the soldiers also mocked him, &c.*] The Roman soldiers, to whom the execution was committed, who crucified him, and parted his garments, and stood at his cross watching; these joined in the insult, which is not to be wondered at. *Coming to him and offering him vinegar*; which was what was a part of their allowance, and was their drink; see the note on John xix. 29.

Ver. 37. *And saying, if thou be the King of the Jews, &c.*] Or their Messiah, who was spoken of as a divine person; for otherwise he might have been their king, and not have been able to have done what is proposed: *save thyself*: or deliver thyself from the cross.

Ver. 38. *And a superscription also was written, &c.*] Containing the crime he was charged with, and accused of; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 37, and John xix. 19, 20.

Ver. 39. *And one of the malefactors, which were hanged, &c.*] On the cross, one of the thieves crucified with Christ; the Oriental versions add, *with him*: according to the Evangelists Matthew and Mark, both of them reviled him, and threw the same things in his teeth as the priests, people, and soldiers did; which how it may be reconciled, see the note on Matt. xxvii. 44. *railed on him, saying, if thou be Christ, save thyself, and us*; taking up the words of the rulers, and adding to them, perhaps, with a design to curry favour with them, hoping thereby to get a release; or, however, shewing the wickedness and malice of his heart, which his sufferings and punishment, he now endured, could make no alteration in; see Rev. xvi. 9.

Ver. 40. *But the other answering, rebuked him, &c.*] That is, the other malefactor made answer to him, and reproved him for his baseness and wickedness: *saying, dost not thou fear God*; or *neither dost thou fear God*, any more than these priests, people, and soldiers, that are acting such a barbarous and inhuman part to a man in misery: and wilt thou do the same, and shew that thou art an impious wretch, now thou art just going out of the world, and neither fears God, nor regards man, and art without compassion to a fellow-sufferer, adding sin to sin, *seeing thou art in*

*the same condemnation?* undergoing the same sort of punishment, though not on the same account, which might be the reason why they suffered on the same day: for the Jews say, they never judge (or condemn) two in one day, but one to-day, and the other to-morrow; but if they are *in one transgression*, "ומיתה אחת, and one death, as an adulterer with an adulteress, they condemn them both in one day; but if the adulterer lies with a priest's daughter, seeing he is to be strangled, and she to be burnt, they don't execute them both in one day."

Ver. 41. *And we indeed justly, &c.*] For sins committed against the law; our sentence is just, we are righteously punished: which shews that he had a true sense of sin; for where that is, there will be not only an acknowledgment of the offence, but a vindication of the justice of God, should he proceed to deal according to the demerit of sin: *for we receive the due reward of our deeds*; though, according to the law of Moses, theft was not punishable with death, but with a restoration, either double, or fourfold, or fivefold, according to the nature of it; see Exod. xxii. 1, 4. It may be these men had committed murder along with the robbery: *but this man hath done nothing amiss*; or absurd, unreasonable, wicked, and detestable: he did no injury to God, or man; wronged no man's person or property; did all things well; obeyed the law of God perfectly, and always did the things which were pleasing to God. Thus, from the mouth of one of the malefactors Christ suffered with, was he declared innocent; when the Jews designed, by crucifying him with them, to have led the people to have believed that he suffered for a crime equal, or superior to theirs.

Ver. 42. *And he said unto Jesus, Lord, &c.*] Acknowledging him to be the Messiah, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; the Lord of all, and especially of his church and people, and his own Lord. So the Syriac and Persic versions read, *my Lord*: however, he said this by the spirit of God, who enlightened his understanding, and wrought faith in him to believe in Christ; see 1 Cor. xii. 3. *remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom*; or rather *in thy kingdom*, as in Matt. xvi. 28. for this man had not only faith in the kingdom of Christ, as being of a spiritual nature, and not of this world, and not coming with outward pomp and observation; in which respect his faith exceeded that of the apostles themselves, who were looking for, and expecting a temporal kingdom; and he not only was without all doubt, or scruple, about Christ's entering into his kingdom and glory after death, but he had knowledge of, and faith in his second coming, when his glorious kingdom should appear, or his kingdom appear in glory; and when he desired he might be remembered by him, have favour shewn him, and he share in the glories and happiness of it. This was great faith indeed to be exercised on Christ at such a time as this, when he was under the greatest reproach and ignominy; while he was insulted and derided by all sorts of people; and when he was forsaken by his own apostles, and was suffering a shameful punishment, and now dying.



Ver. 43. *And Jesus said unto him, &c.*] Jesus immediately answered him, though he said not one word to the other that railed at him, or to the multitude that abused him; and promised him more than he asked for, and sooner than he expected. *Verily I say unto thee, to-day thou shalt be with me in paradise;* בְּנֵי עֵדֶן, *in the garden of Eden;* not the earthly paradise, nor the church militant, but the future place, and state of the happiness of the saints, even heaven, and eternal glory, which the Jews frequently call by this name; see the note on 2 Cor. xii. 4. and is so called, because, as the earthly paradise, or Eden's garden, was of God's planting, so is the heavenly glory of his providing and preparing: as that was a place of delight and pleasure, so here are pleasures for evermore: as there was a river in it, which added to the delightfulness and advantage of it, so here runs the river of God's love, the streams whereof make glad the saints now, and will be a broad river to swim in to all eternity: as there were the tree of life, with a variety of other trees, both for delight and profit, so here, besides Christ, the tree of life, which stands in the midst of it, are an innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect: and as the inhabitants of that garden were pure and innocent creatures, so into this paradise shall nothing enter but what is righteous, pure, and holy: and whereas the principal enjoyment of man in Eden was conversation with God, and communion with him, the glory of the heavenly paradise will lie in fellowship with God, Father, Son, and Spirit, in beholding the face of God, and seeing him as he is: and this is the happiness promised by Christ to the penitent and believing thief, that he should be here; and not only so, but *with him here*, which is far better than being in this world, and than which nothing can be more desirable: and which, when enjoyed, will be for ever: and this he was to enter upon that very day; which shews, that Christ's soul did not descend into hell, locally and literally considered, or into the *Limbus Patrum*, the Papists talk of, to fetch the souls of the patriarchs thence, but as soon as it was separated from the body was taken up into heaven; and also, that the souls of departed saints are immediately, upon their separation from the body, there; which was the case of this wonderful instance of the grace of God; and shews the swiftness of the soul, or the velocity of angels in conveying it thither immediately: and this agrees with the sense of the Jews, who say <sup>b</sup>, that "the souls of the fathers, or patriarchs have rest, and in a moment, immediately enter into their separate places, or apartments, and not as the rest of the souls; of whom it is said, all the twelve months the soul ascends and descends, (goes to and fro,) but the souls of the fathers, מֵיַד בְּהִפְיָדִן, *immediately, upon their separation*, return to God that gave them." Some would remove the stop, and place it after *to-day*, and read the words thus, *I say unto thee to-day*; as if Christ only signified the time when he said this, and not when the thief should be with him in paradise; which, besides it being senseless, and impertinent, and only contrived to serve an hypothesis, is not

agreeably to Christ's usual way of speaking, and is contrary to all copies and versions. Moreover, in one of Beza's exemplars it is read, *I say unto thee, οτι σήμερον, that to-day thou shalt be with me, &c.* and so the Persic and Ethiopic versions seem to read, which destroys this silly criticism. And because this was a matter of great importance, and an instance of amazing grace, that so vile a sinner, one of the chief of sinners, should immediately enter into the kingdom of God, and enjoy uninterrupted, and everlasting communion with him; and that it might not be a matter of doubt with him, or others, Christ, who is the *Amen*, the faithful witness, and truth itself, prefaces it after this manner: *verily I say unto thee*; it is truth, it may be depended on. This instance of grace stands on record, not to cherish sloth, indolence, security and presumption, but to encourage faith and hope in sensible sinners, in their last moments, and prevent despair. The Papists pretend to know this man's name; they say his name was Disma; and reckon him as a martyr, and have put him in the catalogue of saints, and fixed him on the *twenty-fifth* of March.

Ver. 44. *And it was about the sixth hour, &c.*] Or twelve o'clock at noon; and so the Ethiopic version, *when it was noon*; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 45.

Ver. 45. *And the sun was darkened, &c.*] There was an eclipse of it, which was preternatural, it being now full moon, and lasted three hours, and so total, as to darken the whole earth; and now was the prophecy in Amos viii. 9. literally fulfilled: *and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.* The Persic version renders it, *the gate of the temple*; and so the Syriac version, *the face of the gate of the temple*; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 51.

Ver. 46. *And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, &c.*] A second time; for at the first loud cry, he uttered these words, *Eli, Eli, lama, sabachthani*; and at the second what follows; see Matt. xxvii. 46, 50. and the notes there: *he said, father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*; not the Holy Spirit, nor his divine nature, but his human soul: for that he had a reasonable soul, as well as a true body, is certain; from his having an human understanding, will, and affections, ascribed to him; and indeed, without this he would not have been a perfect man, nor like unto us; and could not have been tempted, bore sorrows and griefs, and endured the wrath of God; nor could he have been a Saviour of souls: now just as he was expiring, as he made his soul an offering for sin, and which he offered unto God, he committed it to his divine care and protection; and to enjoy his presence, during its separation from his body, using the words of the Psalmist in Psal. xxxi. 5. and this shews, that his spirit, or soul, belonged to God, the father of spirits, and now returned to him that gave it; that it was immortal, and died not with the body, and was capable of existing in a separate state from it, and went immediately to heaven; all which is true of the souls of all believers in Christ; and what the dying head did, dying members may, and should, even commit their souls into the same hands: *and having said thus, he gave up the ghost*; breathed out his soul

<sup>b</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 58. 4.

dismissed his spirit, and laid down his life, freely and voluntarily, and which no man, or devil, otherwise could have taken away from him.

Ver. 47. *Now when the centurion saw what was done, &c.*] The eclipse of the sun, the darkness upon the land, the earthquake, the rocks rent, and Jesus expire in so uncommon a manner: *he glorified God*; by confessing that Christ was the son of God, and declaring him an innocent person: *saying, certainly, this was a righteous man*; clear of the charges exhibited against him, and has suffered wrongfully; and this he concluded from those unusual appearances, and which he considered as tokens of divine resentment.

Ver. 48. *And all the people that came together to that sight, &c.*] To see the execution of Jesus; and some of them might be his inveterate enemies, and came to insult him, and did insult him; any of these, though not every individual of them: *beholding the things which were done*; the eclipse, earthquake, &c. *smote their breasts*; as conscious of guilt, and as fearing some dreadful judgment would fall upon them, and their nation, for this sin of crucifying Christ. The Persic version reads, *they went back, and kneeled down, and prostrated themselves to the ground*; as being in the utmost astonishment, confusion, fear, and dread: *and returned*; to the city, and to their own houses, where they might more seriously, and with the greater composure of mind, reflect on these things.

Ver. 49. *And all his acquaintance, &c.*] That were related to him in a natural, or in a spiritual sense, or both, as his own mother, and beloved disciple John, who were both present, John xix. 26. or those that were known unto him, and familiar with him, who attended on his ministry, and often conversed, and were intimately acquainted with him: *and the women that followed him from Galilee*; among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Joses, and Salome the mother of Zebedee's children: *stood afar off*; from the cross: *beholding these things*; with wonder, as well as looking upon their dear suffering Lord, with aching hearts, and flowing eyes.

Ver. 50. *And behold, there was a man named Joseph, &c.*] See the note on Matt. xxvii. 57. *a counsellor*; Mark says, he was an *honourable* one; he was either one of the council of the high-priest, or a member of the great sanhedrim; see the note on Mark xv. 43. and he was a *good man, and a just*; he was kind and beneficent in his temper, and just, and righteous in his life and actions; a like character is given of Joseph the husband of Mary, the mother of our Lord, Matt. i. 19.

Ver. 51. *The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them, &c.*] Though he was with the Jews, the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, in the high-priest's palace, being one of that great council; yet he did not agree with them; nor was it his advice and counsel, that they should put Christ to death; he was against it, at least did not consent to it: he was of *Arimathea, a city of the Jews*; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 57. This clause in the Syriac and Persic versions stands in the preceding verse, and follows after the mention of his name and office, and where it seems

most natural; *who also himself waited for the kingdom of God*; see the note on Mark xv. 43.

Ver. 52. *This man went unto Pilate, &c.*] Mark says, he went *boldly* to him; see the note on Mark xv. 43. *and begged the body of Jesus*; knowing he was dead; *that he might bury it*, as the Ethiopic version adds, and prevent its being interred with the two malefactors, or abused by the mob.

Ver. 53. *And he took it down, &c.*] From the cross, with the help of others, having obtained leave of Pilate so to do; *and wrapped it in linen*; as was the custom of the Jews in burying their dead; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 59. *and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone*; cut out of a rock; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 60. *wherein never man before was laid*; so that it could not be said it was another body, and not that of Christ's, that was raised from the dead. This circumstance serves to confirm the truth of his resurrection.

Ver. 54. *And that day was the preparation, &c.*] Both for the sabbath, and for the *Chagigah*, or grand festival, which they kept on the fifteenth day of the month, in a very pompous manner; so that the day following was an high day; *and the sabbath drew on, or shone out*; which is so said, though it was evening, on account of the lights, which were every where, in every house, lighted up at this time, and which they were, by their traditions, obliged to: for so run their canons<sup>c</sup>; "three things a man is obliged to say in the midst of his house on the evening of the sabbath, "when it is near dark, have ye tithed? have ye "mixed? (*i. e.* the borders of the sabbath, the courts "and food) *הדליקו הנר, light the lamp.*" This was what could by no means be dispensed with; for so they say<sup>d</sup>, "the lighting of the lamp on the sabbath "is not in a man's power, (or at his liberty,) if he "pleases he may light, and if not, he may not light. "—But it is what he is obliged to, and every man "and woman are bound to have in their houses a lamp "lighted up on the sabbath; and though he has "nothing to eat, he must beg, and get oil, and light "a lamp; for this is included in the delight of the "sabbath.—And he that lights, ought to light within "the day, before the setting of the sun." So that when these lamps were every where lighting, before the sun was set, and the sabbath properly come, it might be said to draw on, or to be shining forth. Besides, it was usual to call the evening of any day by the name of *light*: thus it is said<sup>e</sup>, "אור לארבע עשר, "on the light (*i. e.* the night) of the fourteenth (of the "month *Nisan*), they search for leaven, &c." So that the evangelist might, very agreeably to the way of speaking with the Jews, say, that the sabbath was enlightening, or growing light, though the evening was coming on.

Ver. 55. *And the women also which came with him from Galilee, &c.*] See the note on ver. 49. *followed after*; Joseph; and those that were with him, when they carried the body of Jesus, in order to inter it: *and beheld the sepulchre*: took notice of it, what an one it was, whereabouts it stood in the garden, that

<sup>c</sup> Misn. Sabbat, c. 2. sect. 7.

<sup>d</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat, c. 5. sect. 1, 3.

<sup>e</sup> Misn. Pesachim, c. 1. sect. 1.

they might know, and find it again: *and how his body was laid*; in what position, form, and order; and observed that it was only wrapped in linen, and not anointed, or embalmed.

Ver. 56. *And they returned, &c.*] To the city, and to their own houses, or to some one of them; *and prepared spices and ointments*; for the anointing, and embalming the body of Christ, called by the Jews the spices of the dead; see the note on Mark xvi. 1. *and rested the sabbath-day, according to the commandment*, in Exod. xx. 8—11. not knowing as yet the abolition of it, with the rest of the ceremonial law; and therefore, though they had bought and prepared the spices and ointments, they did not carry them to the sepul-

chre to anoint the body with them, till the sabbath was over; for this was forbidden to be done on a sabbath-day. It is asked<sup>f</sup>, “what is that thing that is lawful to be done to a living man, and is forbidden to a dead man? It is said, *וה טיכה, this is anointing.*” Though elsewhere<sup>g</sup> this “is allowed of; for so runs one of their traditions; they do all things necessary for the dead, (*i. e.* on a sabbath-day,) *טכין, they anoint, and wash him, only they may not move a limb of him.*” But how he could be anointed, and washed, without a limb being moved, is not very easy to say, as his foot, or hand, or eye-brows, which are the parts one of their commentators instances in<sup>h</sup>.

## C H A P. XXIV.

Ver. 1. *NOW upon the first day of the week, &c.*] On which day it appears by what follows, Christ rose from the dead, and which was the third day from his death, and so verified the Scriptures, and his own predictions: *very early in the morning*: just as light began to spring, the day to dawn, and break; the first appearance of the morning; when it first began to dawn; *when it was yet dark*, as in John xx. 1. and so read the Syriac and Persic versions here; and the Ethiopic version, *while it was yet night*: this must be understood of the time when the women set out from the city, or suburbs; for by that time they got to the sepulchre it was sun-rising, Mark xvi. 2. and shews their great love, zeal, and devotion for Christ, and great courage and fearlessness to go out of the city at such a time, without any man with them, and to a grave: *they came unto the sepulchre*, where Christ was laid; that is, the women who came with Christ from Galilee, and who had observed where, and how his body was interred: *bringing the spices which they had prepared*; on the sabbath eve, to anoint the body, but were prevented by reason of the sabbath; see chap. xxiii. ver. 56. *and certain others with them*; that is, other women; besides Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joses, and Salome, and other Galilean women, there were other Jerusalem women, or of Bethany, it may be, Mary, and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, and of the parts adjacent: this clause is left out in the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, and in one ancient copy of Beza's; but is retained in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions.

Ver. 2. *And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.*] Which Joseph had laid there, for the security of the body, and in the sight of these women; and which gave them a concern, as they went along, seeing they were all women, who should roll away the stone for them, Mark xvi. 3. but when they came to the sepulchre, to their great surprise, they found it rolled away, which was done by an angel, Matt. xxviii. 2.

Ver. 3. *And they entered in, &c.*] To the sepulchre, being invited, encouraged, and led on by the angel that sat upon the stone; for the Jews' sepulchres were built large enough for persons to go into; see the note on

Mark xvi. 5. *and found not the body of the Lord Jesus*: as they expected, having seen him put there, and had observed in what cave in the sepulchre, and in what form he was laid.

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass as they were much perplexed thereabout, &c.*] About the body of Christ, and its being gone, what should become of it, whither it was removed, and by what means, and by whom; whether by a friend, or foe, for they had no thought, nor expectation of a resurrection; *behold, two men stood by them in shining garments*; who were angels in the form of men; and as these were the first witnesses of Christ's resurrection, there were two of them; for by the mouth of two or three witnesses every thing is established. Matthew and Mark take notice but of one; but John makes mention of two, as here, seen by Mary Magdalene, though in a different posture; they were sitting, the one at the head, the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain; but when the rest of the women came, they were risen up, and stood close by them, on a sudden, at an unawares, being arrayed in white raiment, as white as snow, as a token of their purity and innocence, and as bringers of good tidings; and as joining in the triumph of their Lord's resurrection: their garments were bright and glittering like lightning, to set forth the glory and majesty of these celestial spirits, and that they might be known to be what they were.

Ver. 5. *And as they were afraid, &c.*] That is, the women were afraid of these angels; these bright appearances and majestic forms, as it was usual for good men and women to be, as appears from the cases of Zacharias, the Virgin Mary, and others: *and bowed down their faces to the earth*, through great fear and reverence of these heavenly spirits, and as not being able to bear the lustre of their countenances and garments: *they said unto them*, that is, the angels: *why seek ye the living among the dead?* intimating, that Christ, though he had been dead, was now living, and not to be sought for in a sepulchre; a way of speaking, much like this, is used in a parable of R. Levi's, concerning Pharaoh's not finding the name of God among the gods of the nations, upon searching for it.

<sup>f</sup> T. Hierus. Sabbat. fol. 12. 2.

<sup>g</sup> Misn. Sabbat c. 23. sect. 5.

<sup>h</sup> Bartenora in ib.

Moses and Aaron said to Pharaoh, "thou fool, is it usual for the dead to seek them among the living?" שְׂמוֹת הַחַיִּים אֵצֶל הַמֵּתִים, or ever the living among the dead? our God is living, these thou speakest of are "dead!" Nor is Christ to be found among dead sinners, or lifeless professors, but among living saints, and among the churches of the living God; nor is life to be found among the dead works of the law, or to be obtained by lifeless performances on the dead letter of the law.

Ver. 6. *He is not here, but is risen, &c.*] So in Matt. xxviii. 6. see the note there: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee; for these women that followed him from Galilee were along with the disciples when he said the following words to them; and which are recorded in Matt. xvii. 22, 23.

Ver. 7. *Saying, the son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, &c.*] As Christ was, who is intended by the son of man, he being the son of David, and the son of Abraham, and the son of Adam, though he was the seed of the woman, and born of a virgin; he was truly man, and subject to the infirmities of men; for this is sometimes used as a diminutive expression, though a title of the Messiah in the Old Testament, and regards him in his state of humiliation. He was delivered into the hands of the band of men and officers by Judas, who came against him with swords and staves, as against a thief; and by the Jews to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, a very wicked man; and by him, to the will of the Jews, who, with wicked hands, took him, and slew him; and into the hands of the Roman soldiers, who crucified him, and who may more especially be meant by sinful men, the Gentiles; and especially Heathen soldiers, being reckoned by the Jews notorious sinners: to be among sinners, in the company of such sinful men, must needs be very disagreeable to the holy and harmless Lamb of God; but to be in their hands, and at their mercy, whose tender mercies are cruel, must be very afflicting: and be crucified: which was a Roman death, and a very shameful, and painful one: and the third day rise again; 'tis for the sake of this chiefly that the angels put the women in mind of this whole paragraph, which so fully confirms their testimony of his resurrection; and which the women might be assured of, upon calling to mind these words, which they themselves had heard from Christ's mouth; and it being now the third day since the death of Christ. The words declare, that all these things must be; that there was a necessity of them; partly on account of the decrees of God, by which it was determined they should be; and partly on account of the covenant-engagements of Christ, in which he agreed unto them; and also, by reason of the prophecies of the Old Testament, which gave out, that thus it must be; yea, our Lord's own predictions made them necessary; and the law and justice of God required them; or otherwise, the salvation of God's people could not have been obtained.

Ver. 8. *And they remembered his words.*] That is, the words of Christ, as the Persic version expresses it; which they had forgot, and it may be had never truly

understood 'till now; and had now their memories refreshed with them by the angels, and their understandings opened by the spirit of God. Saints are sometimes apt to forget even the gracious promises of God, they have understood and received comfort from; the word, or words, on which they have been caused to hope, until the spirit of God, who is their best remembrancer, puts them in mind of them.

Ver. 9. *And returned from the sepulchre, &c.*] Quickly, immediately, as soon as ever the angel had done speaking to them; they fled from the sepulchre in great haste, as persons affrighted and amazed, with fear and reverence, on account of the vision they saw, and with joy at what was told them; see Matt. xxviii. 8. Mark xvi. 8. and told all these things; as that the stone was rolled away from the sepulchre: and that they found not the body of Jesus in it; that they had seen a vision of angels, who had told them, that Christ was risen, and had put them in mind of some words of his spoken to the disciples in their hearing in Galilee: unto the eleven, and to all the rest; of the disciples: not only to the eleven apostles, but the seventy disciples, and as many others as were assembled together, perhaps the hundred and twenty, Acts i. 15. The Persic version very wrongly reads, to all the twelve; for Judas was not now one of them, nor alive; and Matthias was not yet chosen.

Ver. 10. *It was Mary Magdalene, &c.*] Out of whom Christ had cast seven devils, who was a sincere penitent, a true believer in Christ, and an affectionate lover of him, and to whom he first appeared: and Joanna: the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, one that had been a follower of Christ, and had ministered to him of her substance; see Luke viii. 2, 3. and Mary the mother of James; called the less; and also of Joses, and Simon, and Judas, the brethren, or kinsmen of Christ; this Mary, being the wife of Cleophas, or Alpheus, said \* to be the brother of Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of our Lord: and other women that were with them: as Salome, the mother of Zebedee's children, and others, that came from Galilee; Mark xv. 40, 41. and xvi. 1. which told these things unto the apostles; before observed.

Ver. 11. *And their words seemed to them as idle tales, &c.*] As fabulous things, as mere whims, and the fancies of their brains: as a dream, according to the Persic version; or, as a jest, as the Arabic version renders it. They looked upon them as mere deceptions and delusions, and not real things; the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, these words; what they related concerning what they saw, and heard, at the sepulchre: and they believed them not: for they had no thought, nor expectation of Christ's rising from the dead; they did not know that he was to rise again, according to the Scriptures; nor did they understand him when he told them of his rising again; and had no faith in it, nor hope concerning it, and could give no credit to it, when it was told them; and the Arabic version reads, they did not believe it: the word or report which the women delivered to them.

Ver. 12. *Then arose Peter, &c.*] Who, though he

\* Shemot Rabba, sect. 5. fol. 95. 2.

\* Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 11. 32. & 4. 28.

did not believe the report made, yet listened to it, and was alarmed and aroused by it, and was willing to know the truth of it: *and ran unto the sepulchre*; not alone, but with John, being in haste to be satisfied, how things were: *and stooping down*; see the notes on Mark xvi. 5. and John xx. 5. *he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves*; in which the body of Jesus was wrapped; these lay by themselves, without the body, in one place; and the napkin about his head was wrapped together, and lay in another place by itself: so that it was a plain case, the body was not stolen, nor taken away; for neither friends, nor foes, would have taken the pains, or have lost so much time, as to have stripped the body, but would rather have carried off the clothes along with it. The Alexandrian copy leaves out the word *μωρα*, *alone*, or *by themselves*: *and departed*; from the sepulchre to Jerusalem, to John's house there: *wondering in himself at that which was come to pass*; that the body should not be there, and yet the clothes should remain; he could not tell what to make of it. As for a resurrection, he had no notion of that, and yet could not account for the removal of the body, either by friends or foes, and the clothes left behind.

Ver. 13. *And behold two of them went that same day, &c.*] Two of the disciples, as the Persic version reads; not of the eleven apostles, for it is certain that one of them was not an apostle; but two of the seventy disciples, or of the society of the hundred and twenty that were together: one of these was Cleophas or Alphus, as appears from ver. 18. the other is, by some, thought to be Luke the Evangelist, as Theophylact on the place observes, who, out of modesty, mentions not his name; others have thought that Nathanael was the other person; and Dr. Lightfoot seems very confident, from ver. 34. and 1 Cor. xv. 5. that the Apostle Peter was the other; but it is not certain who he was: however, this very remarkable affair happened, and therefore a *behold* is prefixed to it, on the *same day*; the first day of the week; the day on which Christ rose from the dead; and the third day from his death it was, see ver. i. 21. that these two disciples travelled: *to a village called Emmaus*; whither they might go either to see their friends, or upon some secular affair, or to be retired from the noise of the city, and be secure from danger by their enemies; or it may be this was the place of Cleophas's abode, who, with the other disciple, was returning home after the celebration of the passover. The place whither they went is particularly mentioned, not because it was a place of note, but for the certainty of the fact. It was now but a village, having been burnt since the death of Herod the great, by the order of Varus, the Roman governor<sup>1</sup>; though it afterwards became a considerable city, if it is the same with Nicopolis, as Jerom asserts<sup>2</sup>; though that rather seems to be the Ammaus, or Chammath of Tiberias, since it was situated by the lake of Genesareth. However, it is certain, that Emmaus is reckoned, by

Josephus<sup>3</sup>, one of their chief cities; and Jarchi, and Bartenora<sup>4</sup> say, it is the name of a city; and Pliny<sup>5</sup> calls it a toparchy, and says it was watered with fountains; which agrees with the account the Jews give of it<sup>6</sup>. "R. Jochanan ben Zaccai had five disciples; all the time that he stood, or lived, they sat before him; when he departed, they went to Jabneh; and R. Eleazar ben Arach went to his wife, אַמְמַאֵס, at Emmaus, a place of pleasant waters, and a beautiful habitation." It is mentioned, in company with Bethoron, and Lud, or Lydda: it is said<sup>7</sup>, "from Bethoron, to אַמְמַאֵס, Emmaus, is the mountain; and from Emmaus to Lydda, the plain; and from Lydda to the sea, the valley." Bethoron is mentioned as near Nicopolis, by Jerom; and perhaps is the same with Betholone in Pliny: in Emmaus was a market: at least there was a butcher's market in it; hence we read of, אַמְמַאֵס שֶׁל אֲחֵיכֶם, the shambles of Emmaus<sup>8</sup>; mention is made of a place so called, in 1 Maccab. iii. 40, 57. and iv. 3. another Emmaus is here meant: *which was from Jerusalem about three-score furlongs*; or seven miles and a half; for eight furlongs make a mile. Josephus<sup>9</sup> says the same, and confirms the account of the distance of this place from Jerusalem.

Ver. 14. *And they talked together, &c.*] As they went along, on their journey: *of all these things which had happened*; concerning their dear Lord and master, Jesus Christ; how that he had been betrayed by Judas, one of his disciples; had been led bound, first to Annas, and then Caiaphas, the high-priest, in whose palace he had been condemned to death; how that he was delivered by the chief priests and elders, to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, of whom they requested, that he might be crucified: they very likely discoursed also, about the ignominious treatment he met with, both in the high-priest's palace, and in Pilate's hall; and how at last he was crucified between two thieves, and was dead and buried; and particularly, they might be talking together of what they had heard that morning from the women, that had been at the sepulchre of Christ, and reported that he was risen.

Ver. 15. *And it came to pass, that while they communed together, &c.*] About the abovesaid things: *and reasoned*; with one another, about the truth and credibility of the late report: *Jesus himself drew near*; the Persic version adds, *suddenly*; he came up at once to them, as if he had been a traveller on the road, and overtook them: *and went with them*; joined himself in company to them, and travelled with them.

Ver. 16. *But their eyes were holden, &c.*] The Ethiopic version adds, *and were covered*; and the Arabic version renders it, *now he had veiled their eyes*, ascribing it to Christ; and the Persic version renders it, *and the eyes of the disciples were shut*: to me it seems, that their eyes were held downwards; or they kept looking upon the ground as they walked, which was a posture suitable to their melancholy

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Antiqu. l. 17. c. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Epitaph. Paul. fol. 59. B. Catalog. Script. Eccl. fol. 98. B. Tom. I. & in Dan. viii. 14. Tom. V.

<sup>3</sup> Antiqu. l. 14. c. 18.

<sup>4</sup> In Misan. Ceritot, c. 3. sect. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Midrash Kohelet, fol. 74. 4.

<sup>7</sup> T. Hieros. Sheviith, c. 9. fol. 38. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Misan. Ceritot, c. 3. sect. 7. T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 91. 2. & Maccot, fol. 14. 1.

<sup>9</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 7. c. 27.

spirits; and there might be a peculiar influence of divine power and providence, so disposing them, that they did not look up to Christ their new fellow-traveller, who walked on with them: and this was so ordered, *that they should not know him*; that so they might not be surprised at once, as they would have been, had they looked at him, and discerned who he was; and that they might converse the more freely with him; and that he might convince them of their stupidity and unbelief, by proper arguments.

Ver. 17. *And he said unto them, &c.*] That is, *Jesus*, as the Persic version, or *our Lord*, as the Ethiopic version, expresses it: *what manner of communications are these, that ye have one to another, as ye walk?* what is the subject of your discourse; what is it your conversation one with another turns upon in your journey? *and are sad?* what melancholy story are you telling to one another, which causes such sadness of countenance, and dejection of mind? for Christ by their countenances and gestures, as the shaking of their heads, and lifting up and wringing of their hands, could easily discern as man, as well as know as God, that they were full of sorrow and heaviness, and which were occasioned and increased by what they were talking of.

Ver. 18. *And one of them, whose name was Cleophas, &c.*] Or Alpheus, for it is the same name; he was one of the severity disciples, and father of the Apostles James and Jude, and brother to Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of Christ, as before observed: *answering, said unto him, art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?* The Persic version reads, *in these two days*: the sense is, that whereas he appeared to come from Jerusalem, that if he was only a stranger and a sojourner, and not a stated inhabitant there, he could not be ignorant of what had been done there a few days past; or if he was, that he must be the only stranger, and the only man, that was so; for the facts referred to were so notorious, that every one must know them, inhabitant or stranger.

Ver. 19. *And he said unto them, what things? &c.*] Still appearing as if he was ignorant, and in order to draw out of them a particular relation: *and they said unto him*; both of them, or rather Cleophas, for himself and his companion: *concerning Jesus of Nazareth*; that is, what had happened to him, who was commonly known by this name, and was called so by way of contempt: but *which was a prophet*; not only a foreteller of things to come, as he foretold his sufferings, death, and resurrection, the troubles that should befall his disciples, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world; but he was a preacher of the Gospel, an eminent one, a famous and extraordinary one, that prophet which Moses spake of should come; and who was *mighty in deed and word*: he was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, which he shewed by the miracles he wrought; such as healing the sick, cleansing lepers, casting out devils, restoring sight to the blind, causing the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk, and raising the dead to life; and in the doctrines he taught, which were with authority, and such as never man spake: *before God and all the people*;

he was sent and anointed by God as a prophet, and approved by him; who bore a testimony to him by a voice from heaven, declaring him to be his beloved son; and the works he wrought, were done publicly before men, who glorified God on that account; and the doctrines he taught, were not taught in secret, but in the synagogues and in the temple, in the audience of all the people, and to their surprise and admiration.

Ver. 20. *And how the chief priests and our rulers, &c.*] Civil and ecclesiastic: *delivered him*; to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor: *to be condemned to death*; the death of the cross, by the said governor, having first seized him and examined him before their sanhedrim, and pronounced him guilty of death: *and have crucified him*; for though Pilate passed the sentence, and the Roman soldiers executed it, yet these men are said to do it, because it was at their request, and through their instigation, that it was done; hence Peter charges the Jewish sanhedrim with it, Acts iv. 10.

Ver. 21. *But we trusted, &c.*] *In him*, as the Ethiopic version adds: *that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel*; they thought, hoped, and believed, that he was the Messiah, spoken of under the character of the Redeemer of Israel; and they had been in expectation of redemption by him, though only of a temporal kind, from the Roman yoke and bondage; but now they could not tell what to think of it, since he was dead; indeed they were not altogether without hope, since there was a report of his being raised from the dead; but what credit was to be given to that, they could not say: but certain it is, that he was the true Messiah, and promised Redeemer; and who was to redeem, and has redeemed the whole Israel of God; even all the elect of God, whether among Jews or Gentiles, from the servitude and damning power of sin, from the slavery of Satan, and the bondage of the law, and from every enemy; and that by his precious blood, his sufferings and death, the very things which were the occasion of these disciples' doubts about him, as the Redeemer: so the Jews say, "that upon the death of the Messiah, the son of Joseph, all Israel shall flee to the deserts, and such as are of a doubtful heart shall turn to the nations of the world" and say, *is this the redemption we have waited for, for the Messiah is slain?* *And besides all this, to-day is the third day, since these things were done*; which is either mentioned, as an aggravation of the ignorance of the stranger, that these things should be done so lately, as within three days, and yet he should be ignorant of them, or not remember them, and need to be informed about them; or as a further reason of their doubting, that it was now the third day since the death of Jesus, and there was nothing certain of his resurrection, only the report of the women, which they could not depend upon; or else as a reason of their trusting, that he was the person that should redeem Israel; since this was the third day from his crucifixion, the day on which he said he should rise from the dead, and of which there was a report spread, not to be disproved, that he was that day actually risen: this day is greatly observed by the Jews: they take notice that the Scriptures speak of several remarkable

\* Abkath Rocel, l. 1. par. 1. sign. 7. p. 53.

\* Bereshit Rabba, sect. 56. fol. 49. 3.

third days; and besides Gen. xxii. 4. Hos. vi. 2. is cited a passage which refers to the resurrection of Christ on the third day; and they speak "of the third day of the tribes, Gen. xlii. 18. of the third day of the spies, Josh. ii. 16. of the third day of the giving of the law, Exod. xix. 16. of the third day of Jonas, Jonah i. 17. (which was a type of the resurrection of the Messiah, Matt. xii. 40.) of the third day of those that came up out of the captivity, Ezra viii. 15. of the third day of the resurrection of the dead, Hosea vi. 2. and of the third day of Esther, Esther v. 1."

Ver. 22. *Yea, and certain women also of our company, &c.*] Who came with them from Galilee, who were of the same religion, professed the same faith, and belonged to the same society and community; who they were, and their names, see ver. 10. *Made us astonished*: surprised us, with an account they brought, so that we could not, nor can we now tell, what to think or say of it; it is such an one, we know not how to believe, nor to disprove; it is we fear too good to be true, and should it be as they report, 'tis amazing indeed: *which were early at the sepulchre*; of the person now mentioned, Jesus of Nazareth; even this very morning, by break of day, at least at sun-rising, whither they went to anoint his body, thinking nothing at all about the resurrection of him.

Ver. 23. *And when they found not his body, &c.*] In the sepulchre, as they expected, and so could not do what they intended: *they came*; they returned from the sepulchre with great haste, and in a very great fright, and came to the disciples, where they were assembled; *saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels*. The Syriac and Persic versions add, *there*; at the sepulchre, for there were two of them at least, if not three; see ver. 4. John xx. 12. Matt. xxviii. 2. They not only reported, that they could not find the body of Jesus, but also that they had seen some angels: or the sense may be, that they told them, that though they could not find the dead body of their Lord, yet they had seen him alive, as they did by the way, as they were returning, Matt. xxviii. 9, 10. and also that a vision of angels had appeared to them: *which said that he was alive*; see ver. 5, 6. So that it was not a deception of their sight, they certainly saw both Christ and the angels; and were assured from their testimony, as well as by their own eyes and ears, that he was certainly risen: now, though this was so clear a point, and so well attested, the disciples knew not how to believe it; they were perplexed about it; they could neither receive it, nor discredit it; they hoped it might be so, but feared it was not.

Ver. 24. *And certain of them which were with us, &c.*] The apostles and brethren, who were together when the women came, and made the above report; particularly Peter, who is named, ver. 12. and John, who also was with him, as appears from John xx. 2. *these went to the sepulchre*; of Jesus, to satisfy themselves and their companions, as much as they could, about these things: *and found it even so as the women had said*; that is, that the body of Jesus was not there, and that the linen clothes were laid by themselves:

*but him they saw not*; the Ethiopic version reads, *and him they found not*: the women, as before observed, might report, that though they found not the body in the grave, yet they saw him alive by the way, but so did not the disciples; which made it look very strange, doubtful, and suspicious, that the women should see him, and not his apostles; they could not tell how to account for this, and this made them to be in suspense about the fact.

Ver. 25. *Then he said unto them, &c.*] That is, *Jesus said unto them*, as the Syriac and Persic versions read: *O fools*; not in a natural sense, as if they were destitute of the common understanding of men; nor in a moral sense, as wicked men, and as they themselves had been in their unregenerate estate; nor in a way of anger and contempt, and with a design to provoke; wherefore Christ did not act contrary to his own rule, in Matt. v. 22. but because they were so void of understanding in the Scriptures, and were so very ignorant of them, and were so blind as to the knowledge of them; particularly those which concerned the sufferings and resurrection of the Messiah, being influenced by the popular prejudices of education: he therefore expresses himself with much warmth, concern, and surprise, that he should have been so long with them, and they so long under his doctrine and ministry; besides the advantages of having the Scriptures, and being conversant with them from their youth; and which they daily read, and had heard expounded, and yet were so very senseless and stupid: *and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken*; that is, upon these points, concerning the sufferings of Christ, and his resurrection from the dead; and indeed, they were very slow of heart to believe, not only what the women reported from the angels, but even those of their brethren, who had seen him after he was risen; for which Christ upbraids them, Mark xvi. 14. *Yea, one of them declared after all, that he would not believe, unless he saw the print of the nails in his hands and feet, and put his hand into it, and thrust it into his side*; wherefore Christ had good reason to treat them in this sharp manner, and charge them with folly and incredulity; the Jews ought not to object to the word *fools*, as unbecoming Christ, since they frequently represent God as making use of it; as for instance, 'tis said, \* "the holy blessed God said to them, שׂוֹמְרֵי, *O ye fools* that are in the world, whatsoever ye do, ye do for your own necessities.—And a little after, *O ye fools* that are in the world, he that labours on the evening of the sabbath, shall eat on the sabbath-day."

Ver. 26. *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, &c.*] Mentioned in ver. 20. as to be delivered by the chief priests, to be condemned to death, and to be crucified: Christ suffered many things in his personal character, being traduced as a sinful and wicked man, and a friend and encourager of sinners; as a man of immoral principles and practices; as an idolater, a blasphemer, an impostor, a seditious person; as one that had had familiarity with the devil, and did his miracles by his assistance, with a load of other reproaches; and

\* T. Bab. *A'voda Zara*, fol. 2. 2. & 3. 1.

these he endured, to answer to the loss of the divine honour and glory, sustained by the sin of man; and to teach his people patience, under the loss of their good names, characters, and reputations: and he suffered much in his body, in the infirmities of it; which he assumed with it, being in all things like to his brethren, excepting sin; and in the pains which he endured, through buffeting and scourging before his crucifixion, and when he hung upon the cross: and he suffered greatly in his soul, partly from the temptations of Satan; and partly from the treatment of his own disciples, through the frowardness of their spirits; and especially his being betrayed by one, denied by another, and forsaken by them all, must greatly afflict his mind; but chiefly from his bearing the loathsome sins of men, the strokes of justice, and the wrath of God; and particularly, through his being forsaken by him: and of all these there was a necessity; he *ought* to have suffered these things, as he did; the counsels and purposes of God, the covenant transactions and agreement he himself entered into with his father, the prophecies of the Old Testament, and his own predictions concerning these things, together with the salvation of his people, in a way consistent with the justice of God, and the honour of his law, made them necessary: *and to enter into his glory*; which began at his resurrection from the dead, and is seen in his exaltation and session at the right hand of God; upon his ascension he was received up to glory, entered into it, took possession of it, and is crowned with it; and which will still be more manifest, when he shall come to judge the world in righteousness; when his saints also shall appear in glory with him, and shall be everlasting spectators of his glory; and indeed, his entrance into glory is not merely for himself, but in the name and behalf of them. The Vulgate Latin version reads, *and so, or thus to enter into his glory*; that is, by the way of sufferings, which is the way through which his saints enter the kingdom, Acts xiv. 22. And by a view of the glory that was to follow them, and which he and his people were to enjoy together, was he animated to endure them cheerfully and patiently; and this he is entered into, possesses and enjoys, as the consequence and reward of his sufferings.

Ver. 27. *And beginning at Moses, &c.*] The writings of Moses, the book of Genesis particularly, ch. iii. 15. which is the first prophecy of him, and speaks of the bruising of his heel, or of the sufferings of death by him; and proceeding to open and explain the types concerning his bearing the cross, and the lifting him upon it, in the business of Isaac, and of the brazen serpent; and concerning the shedding of his blood, and the oblation of himself in the sacrifices of the law of Moses: *and all the prophets*; as David, Isaiah, Daniel, and others, very likely the passages in Psal. xxii. Isa. liii. Dan. ix. *he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures in Moses, and the Prophets, concerning himself*; especially concerning these two points, his sufferings, and his glory, which the spirit of Christ, in the Prophets, testified before-hand: besides the above places referred to, concerning the sufferings of Christ, see the following, in reference to his resurrection and glory, Psal. xvi. 10, 11. and lxxviii. 18. and cx. 1, 7.

Ver. 28. *And they drew nigh unto the village, &c.*] Of Emmaus, before they were aware; their conversation was so very agreeable, that the way did not seem tedious, nor the time long: *whither they went*; where they intended to go, when they set out; this was the end of their journey; wherefore this village was not some intermediate place between Jerusalem and Emmaus: *and he made as though he would have gone further*; when they were come to Emmaus, and to the house where the two disciples intended to make their abode that night: whether it was a public house, or an house of one of their friends, or one of their own, it matters not; Christ stopped not, nor attempted to go in with them, but stepped a few steps onward, taking his leave of them. The Ethiopic version renders it, *he began to pass by them*; which carried in it an appearance as if he intended to have travelled further; and in it there was no fraud, dissimulation, or collusion: he would have gone some little way further, doubtless, had they not detained him; and he intended to stay with them, provided they should ask him, as he did, though not all night, which he never designed: the whole of it is nothing else but a piece of modesty, civility, and prudence; for guile was never found in his mouth.

Ver. 29. *But they constrained him, &c.*] The Arabic version renders it, *they held him by force*: but the meaning is not, that they laid hands on him, and held him in a forcible manner against his will; but they were very urgent and importunate with him, that he would stay with them; they would take no denial. The sense is better given in the Persic version, *the disciples with importunity said unto him*: they were so pressing with arguments, that he could not withstand them: *saying, abide with us*: his conversation was so engaging, and his discourses were so heavenly and instructive, so sweet and delightful, so powerful and moving, that they could not bear to part with him, but were exceeding desirous of his continuance with them, even though he was a stranger to them. And as they had in view their own pleasure and profit, so they urge the necessity and advantage of his stay, with respect to himself: *for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent*; if might be four or five o'clock in the afternoon: *and he went in to tarry with them*; for a while, not all night. So earnest, importunate, and resolute was the church, when she had found Christ, that he would abide with her, Cant. iii. 4, 5.

Ver. 30. *And it came to pass as he sat at meat with them, &c.*] When they were sat down at table with the provisions before them: *he took bread and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them*; as if he was the master of the house, when he was both a guest, and a stranger, and as he used to do at common meals, when he ate with his disciples; and thus he did, when he fed five thousand at one time, and four at another, Matt. xiv. 19. and xv. 26. see the notes there. Whether only Christ, and the two disciples, sat down together, or whether others that belonged to the house sat down with them, is not certain: if they were only three, they were a proper company to bless the bread together; that is, one in the name of the rest, they joining with him: if there were but two, they blessed, or said grace for themselves separately; but if three, the rules were



these, according to the Jews: "three that eat together, they are obliged to call a blessing (or for one) —and how do they call a blessing among three? —one says, let us bless: if there are three besides himself, he says, bless ye.—Three that eat together "have no power to divide;" that is, to make a separate blessing, but are obliged to it conjointly: thus here, being three at least, Christ, blessed bread for them all.

Ver. 31. *And their eyes were opened, &c.*] Not that they were before shut, or closed up, but what before held them was removed, and what hindered their sight and knowledge was taken away; and perhaps these actions of his taking the bread, and blessing, and breaking, and giving it to them, might put them in mind of him, and cause them to look wistly at him, when, what beclouded their sight being gone, and he appearing in his usual form, they perceived who he was: *and they knew him*; to be their dear Lord and master, for whose death they had been sorrowing, and of redemption by him, and of whose resurrection they had been doubting: *and vanished out of their sight*; not that he vanished as a spectre, or as smoke vanishes into air; but agility being a property of his risen body, he very suddenly, and swiftly, and in a moment, withdrew himself from them; for if he could withdraw himself from company in a very speedy manner before his resurrection, much more after; see Luke iv. 30. John v. 13. The Syriac version renders it, *he was taken away from them*; as if some of the ministering angels were made use of to remove him at once; but this seems not necessary: the Arabic version renders it, *he was hidden from them*: that same power of his that held their eyes all the while they were travelling together, interposed some object between him and them, so that he could not be seen by them that very instant, even before he was gone out of the house.

Ver. 32. *And they said one to another, &c.*] After Christ was gone, being surprised at what happened, that they should not know him all that while; and that as soon as they did, he should disappear, or withdraw himself in this manner: *did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?* concerning himself, his sufferings, death, and resurrection, which are in Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. The Scriptures are as a sealed book to men, learned and unlearned; and none so fit to open them as the lion of the tribe of Judah: he did open and explain them to these his disciples, as well as conversed with them about other things, as they travelled together; and his words came with such evidence, power, and sweetness, that they were ravished with them; their minds were irradiated with beams and rays of divine light; their hearts were warmed and glowed within them; they became fervent in spirit, and their affections were raised and fired; they found the word to be as burning fire within them; and they now knew somewhat what it was to be baptized with fire, which is Christ's peculiar office to administer; see Psal. xxxix. 3. Jer. xx. 9. they seem as it were not only to reflect on these things with wonder and pleasure, but also to charge themselves with want

of thought, with inattention and stupidity; since they might have concluded from the uncommon evidence, force, and energy with which his words came to them, who he was, seeing no man could speak as he did, and with such effect as his words had.

Ver. 33. *And they rose up the same hour, &c.*] Though it was now evening, and the day was spent and gone; and notwithstanding what business they might have to do at Emmaus, about which they came, and even might not have made an end of eating, or sufficiently refreshed themselves; and though they had had a walk of sixty furlongs that afternoon, yet being big with this appearance of Christ to them, and in haste to impart the joyful news to their fellow disciples, they immediately rose up from table: *and returned to Jerusalem*: the same night, from whence they had come that day: *and found the eleven gathered together*; at a certain house known to these two, and who met together in the night-season, for the sake of privacy, and for fear of the Jews, and who were now up, though it was late: these are called *eleven*, because Judas was now gone from them, and dead; and this being their whole number, it is used, though every one might not be present, as particularly Thomas was not; see John xx. 19—24. *and them that were with them*; the seventy disciples, and other believers, both men and women; see Acts i. 15.

Ver. 34. *Saying, &c.*] The following words; and which are not the words of the two disciples, but of the apostles, whom they found gathered together; and who, just as these two entered the room, said to one another, or rather to these two disciples, to whom at once, and as soon as ever they saw them, not being able to hold it in, they communicated the good news they had just heard, and which, perhaps, Peter had been just telling them: *the Lord is risen indeed*; it is certainly matter of fact: for though the women were not credited, but their accounts were as idle tales, and, at most, only occasioned some thoughts and reflections, which they could not settle; yet now they were satisfied of the reality of his resurrection, and speak of it with the greatest assurance and joy: *and hath appeared unto Simon*: he appeared to him first, before he did to any of the rest, though he had denied him in so shameful a manner: which is an instance of great grace and goodness: and he appeared to him, on purpose, no doubt, to comfort him under his distress; as well as being the oldest disciple, and a man of figure and credit among them, his report would be believed. None of the writers of the New Testament take notice of this appearance besides, only the Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 5. It is certain that it was the same day Christ rose from the dead; and was after the women had seen him, and after Peter had been at the sepulchre; and before the return of the two disciples from Emmaus, and before he shewed himself to the rest of the apostles.

Ver. 35. *And they told what things were done in the way, &c.*] That is, when the eleven had done speaking, and had finished their report, which they did with great joy and pleasure; then *these two disciples*, as the Persic version expresses it, to confirm them the more

in the truth of Christ's resurrection, gave them a particular account, how, as they were travelling, Jesus joined himself to them, and entered into a conversation with them, and opened the Scriptures in a sweet and powerful manner to them; and yet their eyes were holden all the while, so that they did not perceive who he was: *and how he was known of them in breaking of bread*; that so it was, that whilst he was breaking the bread, and giving it to them, and they were eating together, their eyes were opened, and they saw plainly who he was: now, though this was a common meal, and not the ordinance of the Lord's supper, yet since Christ made himself known to his disciples at an ordinary meal, may not his followers expect that he will make himself known to them, and grant them communion with him at his table? and which should be no small argument to engage believers to a constant attendance on it.

Ver. 36. *And as they thus spake, &c.*] While the two disciples, that came from Emmaus, were giving the above relation; just as they had finished it, and had scarcely done speaking: *Jesus himself stood in the midst of them*; the apostles; who were assembled together in a certain house, the doors being shut for fear of the Jews; and it was on the evening of the same day Christ rose from the dead, and late at night; see John xx. 19. and without hearing the doors opened, or the sound of the feet of Jesus, and without seeing him come in, and approach unto them, he, in a moment, at once, stood in the middle of them, as if he had immediately rose up out of the earth before them; and so the Persic version renders it, *Jesus rose up out of the midst of them*: by his power he opened the doors, and secretly let himself in, and shut them again at once; and by the agility of his body moved so swiftly, that he was not discerned until he was among them, where he stood to be seen, and known by them; whereby he made that good in a corporeal sense, which he had promised in a spiritual sense, Matt. xviii. 20: and was an emblem of his presence in his churches, and with his ministers, to the end of the world. *And saith unto them, peace be unto you*; which was an usual form of salutation among the Jews; see the note on John xx. 19. The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions add, *I am he, fear not*; but this clause is not in the Greek copies.

Ver. 37. *But they were terrified and affrighted, &c.*] At the sight of him, and at his sudden appearance among them, without being heard, or seen before, and the doors shut and bolted; they could not tell how to account for it, that it should be Jesus himself risen from the dead in his own body, though they had been just speaking of his resurrection, and had had a confirmation of it from the disciples that went to Emmaus: *and supposed that they had seen a spirit*; that what they saw was a phantom, or apparition, or a spirit, that had assumed, and appeared in, the shape of Jesus, and was not he himself.

Ver. 38. *And he said unto them, why are ye troubled, &c.*] Who had more reason to rejoice, and be glad, as they were when they knew that it was Jesus: *and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?* whether what

they saw was Jesus, or an apparition, which gave them a great deal of trouble and uneasiness, and filled them with fright and terror; as it was, and is usual with persons when they fancy they see a spirit, or an apparition; see Matt. xiv. 26.

Ver. 39. *Behold my hands, and my feet, &c.*] The Evangelist John adds, *and side*; that is, the prints of the nails and spear, in his hands, and feet, and side; and the wounds they made there, and the scars they left behind; by which they might be convinced he was not a spirit, and be assured of the truth of his resurrection, and that in the same numerical body in which he suffered; as well as that it might be observed by them how great was his love to them, to endure what he did for them. *Handle me and see*; or know by feeling, as well as by sight; so that if the one was not sufficient, the other might confirm; sight might be deceived, but feeling could not: Apollonius Tyaneus, to them that did not know whether he was alive or dead, and who took him for a spirit, proposed himself to be touched, and handled, that they might be convinced: *for a spirit hath not flesh and bones*; nothing but appearance, or air at most; no solid substance to be felt and handled: *as ye see me have*; or may perceive, both by sight and feeling.

Ver. 40. *And when he had thus spoken, &c.*] And put them into a method of satisfying themselves by their senses: *he shewed them his hands and his feet*; that is, he held them forth to be seen and handled by them, which no doubt they did; and which were the infallible proofs by which he shewed himself alive to them after his passion; and by which they knew the truth of his incarnation, or that he assumed a true and real body, and of the resurrection of the same body; see Acts i. 3. 1 John i. 1.

Ver. 41. *And while they yet believed not for joy, &c.*] Though they had been prepared for the belief of Christ's resurrection, by the report of the women, the relation of Simon Peter, and the account of the two disciples that came from Emmaus; yet such was the joy they were transported with, upon the evidence of it, the news was so good, and the favour and benefit so great, that they could scarcely believe their own senses of seeing and feeling: *and wondered*; at the sight of their risen Lord, and at the power of God, which was seen herein: the thing was marvellous in their eyes, and was a wonderful confirmation of the truth of his deity, sonship, and Messiahship. *He said unto them, have ye any meat?* not that he needed any, or was hungry and desirous of some to satisfy, or gratify his appetite, but to give them a further proof that he was not a spirit; and that he was risen from the dead in a true and real body, which was capable of eating and drinking.

Ver. 42. *And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, &c.*] Which was left by them at supper, of which they had been eating; for being fishermen, most of them, this was agreeable food to them: *and of an honey-comb*; not to eat with the fish, but after it.

Ver. 43. *And he took it, and did eat before them.*] That is, he took both the fish, and the honey-comb, and ate of them before them, they looking on all the

while; and which was a proof of his being truly risen from the dead, and not a spectre, or apparition, and which they failed not afterwards to make use of; see Acts x. 41. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions add, *he took the rest, or what remained, and gave it to them.*

Ver. 44. *And he said unto them, these are the words which I spake unto you, &c.*] Or this is the substance of them, the sense and meaning of them; for what follows, we don't find any where expressed in so many words: *while I was yet with you*: that is, whilst he was in his state of humiliation, whilst he dwelt among them, and had his abode with them; otherwise he was now with them, but not to continue with them; in a short time he was to ascend to his God, and their God, to his father, and their father: *that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me*: concerning his sufferings, and death, and resurrection from the dead, spoken of in Gen. iii. 15. Isa. liii. Dan. ix. 26. Hos. vi. 2. Psal. xxii. and xvi. 10. and in this he refers to what he had said to his disciples in Matt. xvi. 21. and xvii. 22, 23. and xx. 18, 19. and alludes to the usual distinction among the Jews of the books of the Old Testament into the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa; among which last stands the book of Psalms, and is put for the whole; a division often to be met with in both their Talmuds<sup>a</sup>, and other writings<sup>b</sup>.

Ver. 45. *Then opened he their understanding, &c.*] He not only opened their hearts, to attend to what he said, and the proofs he gave of his resurrection from the dead in a true body; but he removed the veil from the eyes of their minds, and gave them an understanding of the sacred writings, respecting this matter: *that they might understand the Scriptures*; concerning his sufferings, death, and resurrection, which they were very ignorant of before, and which were as a sealed book unto them, John xx. 9. though they had been from their infancy brought up to the reading of the Scriptures, and had had the advantage of Christ's ministry for some years; which shews the necessity of the special illumination of the spirit, and the influence of his grace to remove the darkness of the mind, and give the true sense of the sacred writings.

Ver. 46. *And he said unto them, thus it is written, &c.*] In the above cited-books of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms; not what after follows, in so many words, but the matter and substance thereof: *and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day*; it was necessary, both because of the decree and appointment of God, and because of the prophecies and predictions of the Old Testament; see ver. 25, 26.

Ver. 47. *And that repentance and remission of sins, &c.*] Which are the sum of the Gospel ministry; see Acts xx. 21. the doctrine of *repentance* is not of the law, which neither requires, nor admits of it, but of the Gospel. The Persic version calls it, *the Gospel of repentance*; a doctrine preached by John the Bap-

tist, Christ, and his apostles; and the thing itself is a blessing of the covenant, a gift of God's grace, and in the hands of Christ to bestow; and therefore the doctrine of it is published in his name, as well as *remission of sins*; which, though it springs from the free grace of God, is procured by the blood of Christ, and through him it is preached. These two are joined together, not because repentance is the cause of pardon; for repentance makes no satisfaction for sin, or atonement for it; nor does the law at all regard it: tears of repentance will not wash away sin; notwithstanding these, iniquity remains marked before God; Christ's tears themselves did not take away, nor atone for sin; his blood must be shed, and it was shed for the remission of it; and that is the only meritorious cause of it. The Syriac version wrongly reads, *repentance for the remission of sins*: the Jews<sup>c</sup> indeed have a notion that repentance atones for sin; but it is a very bad one, and has no countenance neither from the law of nature, nor the law of Moses: but these two are put together, because there is a connexion between them, as there is between repentance, and life, and salvation: repentance issues in these things; and to whomsoever the grace of repentance is given, to them the forgiveness of sins is applied; nor need any truly repenting sinner despair of the pardon of his sin: and indeed, there is no true evangelical repentance without views, or at least hopes of pardoning grace, and mercy; for that is attended with faith in Christ, and is heightened by the discoveries of forgiving love: such who have the fullest view of the remission of their sins, have the clearest sense of sin, and have the most sorrow for it, and loath themselves on account of it, and are ashamed of it, and do most frankly confess it, and most thoroughly forsake it. And now it was necessary, according to Old-Testament prophecies, that both these *should be preached in his name*; in the name of the Messiah; by his authority, and as coming through him; since the remission of sin is by his blood; and he is exalted as a prince, and a Saviour, to give both repentance and forgiveness of sins to all the Israel of God, whether Jews or Gentiles; and therefore it is fitting and proper that these should be preached, *among all nations*; of the world, where God's elect are; that so they may be brought hereby to repentance, and receive the forgiveness of their sins: *beginning at Jerusalem*; from whence, according to the Old Testament, the word and doctrine of the Lord were to go forth, Psal. cx. 2. Isa. ii. 3. and is particularly mentioned, because the Gospel was to be first preached to the Jews, and be the power of God unto salvation to them; and because that in Jerusalem lived those who had been concerned in crucifying Christ, to whom repentance and forgiveness must be preached; and which would be a great encouragement to the vilest of sinners, to hope for mercy and forgiveness, since such received both.

Ver. 48. *And ye are witnesses of these things.*] As they were witnesses of the truth of his humanity, having seen, and heard, and handled him, both before, and after his resurrection from the dead, and of

<sup>a</sup> T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 47. 3. T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 15. 1. & 18. 2. & 21. 1. Roshhashana, fol. 32. 1. Taanith, fol. 8. 1. & 16. 1. & 20. 1. & 30. 1. Megilla, fol. 21. 2. & 24. 1. Bava Bathra, fol. 8. 1. & 13. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 106. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Zohar in Lev. fol. 39. 2.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 7. 1.

all that he did, of all the miracles that he wrought in Jerusalem, Judea, and Galilee, and of his transfiguration on the mount; so likewise of his sorrows in the garden, and of his sufferings in the palace of the high-priest, and in Pilate's hall, and on the cross; and of his death, which was the death of the cross; and also of his resurrection from the dead, in the same body, to whom he shewed himself alive by many infallible proofs; by shewing them the print of the nails in his hands and feet; by being handled by them; by eating and drinking in their presence; and by conversing with them for the space of forty days: and their business was also to testify the doctrine of repentance, and remission of sins, in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth, which they accordingly did; see Acts i. 8. and ii. 32. and v. 30—32. and x. 39, 41. and xx. 21.

Ver. 49. *And behold, I send the promise of my father upon you, &c.*] By which is meant the promise of the spirit, called the promise of the father, because he was promised by the father to be sent, and poured on the saints in the times of the Messiah, Isa. xlv. 3. Joel ii. 28. and because Christ promised to pray the father for him, and to send him from him; and that the father should send him in his name, who would fit and qualify them for, and assist them in bearing a testimony for him; since he would teach them all things, lead them into all truth, take of the things of Christ, and shew them to them, and bring to their remembrance all things they had seen and heard: and this promise of the father was to be sent in a very short time, in ten days time, as accordingly it was; and might be very properly said to be sent upon them, since, when he was sent down, he sat upon them in the appearance of fire; and this being a marvellous thing, as well as of great moment and importance, it is introduced with a *behold*, as a note both of admiration and attention. *But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem;* for the space of ten days; here they were to continue during that time, and not depart thence; yea, they were to sit there, as the word used signifies: they were to sit still, and be silent; they were not to begin to preach; they were only to attend to prayer and Christian conversation, and to wait for the spirit, the promise of the father; and who also is designed in the following clause: *until ye be endued with power from on high;* the spirit of God is a spirit of might, and of power, as well as of knowledge, of understanding, of counsel, of love, and of a sound mind; whereby they were to be fortified, and inspired with courage and greatness of soul, so as to look their greatest adversaries in the face with boldness and intrepidity, and freely, and without fear, speak unto them; and whereby their ministrations would be succeeded to the conversion of many souls; and accordingly so it was: for after the spirit was poured out upon them, they who before were timorous and fearful, came forth publicly, with undaunted courage, and resolution, and boldness, to the amazement of their adversaries; and their preaching was with the demonstration of the spirit, and of power; who may be said to be *from on high*, since he descended from heaven upon them; and they may be said to be *endued, or clothed* with him, since there was such an extra-

ordinary and plentiful effusion of his gifts and graces on them: and now they were to wait in Jerusalem for this, that in the place where the spirit had been dishonoured and blasphemed, and the unpardonable sin against him had been committed by the Scribes and Pharisees, he might be in a most visible and signal manner honoured; and also, because the doctrine of the Lord was to go out of Zion, and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem. The Vulgate Latin version leaves out the word *Jerusalem*, and reads only, *sit ye in the city until, &c.* but then no other city can be designed.

Ver. 50. *And he led them out as far as Bethany, &c.*] Not the town of Bethany; could that be thought, it might be supposed that he led his disciples thither, to pay a visit to his dear friends there, Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, before his ascension; but the town of Bethany was fifteen furlongs, or near two miles distance from Jerusalem, John xi. 18. whereas the place from whence Christ ascended was but a sabbath-day's journey from it, which was two thousand cubits, or about a mile, Acts i. 12. This Bethany, therefore, was a tract of land, so called from the town, which began at the Mount of Olives, where Bethphage ended; see Mark xi. 1. and hither from Jerusalem Christ led his disciples, in order to ascend to heaven in their sight; and this was the spot of ground, where he began to ride in triumph to Jerusalem, and here he ascended in a triumphant manner to heaven; this was the place he frequently retired to for solemn, and solitary prayer, and where he had put up many a strong cry to God, and now from hence he ascended to him; this was the place whither he went after he had ate his last passover, where he was taken, and from whence he came to suffer and die for his people: *and he lift up his hands, and blessed them.* The lifting up of his hands was not in order to put them upon his disciples; though the Ethiopic version adds, *and put them on;* nor was it used as a prayer-gesture; nor was the blessing of them prayer-wise, or by praying for a blessing on them; but as Aaron, his type, lift up his hands towards the people of Israel, and blessed them, when he had offered the offerings for them, Lev. ix. 22. so Christ, as the great high-priest, having offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of his people, lift up his hands towards his apostles, and blessed them in an authoritative way, by bestowing blessings upon them: he blessed them with a larger measure of the spirit; for though they were to wait some few days longer for the extraordinary effusion of the spirit, yet, in the mean while, they received from him more of it than they had formerly had; for he breathed upon them, and said, receive the Holy Ghost, John xx. 22. He blessed them with larger measures of grace, and with more spiritual light, and understanding into the Scriptures of truth, and with much inward peace of mind, and with the fresh discoveries of pardoning love; and which seemed necessary, since by their conduct towards him, one by denying him, and the rest by forsaking him, the peace of their minds was broken, and they needed a fresh application of forgiving grace. The form of blessing the people used by Aaron, and his sons, the priests, who were types of Christ, is recorded in Num. vi. 23—27. and though our Lord might not use the same form in blessing his disciples,

yet it seems he used the same gesture, lifting up his hands, as they did. The Targumists say<sup>4</sup>, the blessing of the priests was done by stretching, or spreading out their hands; but other Jewish writers observe, it was by lifting them up: concerning which their rule is: "in the province, the priests lift up their hands, as high as their shoulders, but in the sanctuary, above their heads, except the high-priest, who did not lift up his hands above the plate of gold on his forehead." The reason of this was, because the name *Jehovah* was written upon it, and it was not proper his hands should be lifted up above that. The account Maimonides<sup>5</sup> gives of this affair is: "how is the lifting up of hands? in the borders, at the time the messenger of the congregation comes to service, when he has said, who ever will, &c. all the priests that stand in the synagogue, remove from their places, and go, and ascend the desk (or pulpit), and stand there with their faces to the temple, and their backs to the people, and their fingers closed within their hands, until the messenger of the congregation has finished the confession, or thanksgiving; and then they turn their faces to the people, and stretch out their fingers, and lift up their hands to their shoulders and begin to bless, and the messenger of the congregation pronounces them (the blessings) word by word, &c.—How is the blessing of the priests in the sanctuary? the priests go up into the desk (or pulpit), after the priests have finished the morning daily service, and lift up their hands above, over their heads, except the high-priest, who does not lift up his hands above the plate of gold, on his forehead; and one pronounces them (the blessings) word for word, as they do in the borders (in the country) &c." And as our Lord used this gesture in blessing, it is very likely he complied with another rule, by expressing it in the Hebrew tongue; for the Jews say<sup>6</sup>, the blessing of the priests is not said in any place, but in the holy tongue.

Ver. 51. *And it came to pass, while he blessed them, &c.*] Just as he was finishing the words, by which he expressed the blessings he bestowed on them: *he was parted from them*; as Elijah was from Elisha: their spiritual and mystical union by him remained, which is indissoluble; nor was his gracious presence from them withdrawn; nor was this parting in anger and resentment, as he sometimes does withdraw from his people, on account of their sinful conduct, in a little wrath, for a moment, resenting their unbecoming carriage; but this parting was while he was blessing them, and was only in body; his heart was still with them; it was a withdrawal of his corporeal presence from them, and that but for a while; he will come again a second time from heaven, from whence the saints expect him, and then they will meet, and never part more: *and carried up into heaven*; by his divine power, as God, by virtue of which he ascended himself, he went up gradually, till he became invisible to his disciples; or through the agility of his human body; for the bodies of the saints, when raised, will

be like the angels, swift and nimble, and capable of moving from place to place, and of ascending and descending; and much more the glorious body of Christ, according to which, theirs will be conformed; though neither of these deny the use of means, that might be made, as of a cloud, and of angels; for a cloud received him out of the sight of the apostles; and there were the twenty thousand chariots of God, even thousands of angels, which attended him, when he ascended on high, and in which he may be properly said to be carried up into heaven, Acts i. 9. Psal. lxxviii. 17, 18. where he was received with a welcome, by his father, by all the glorified saints, and holy angels, and where he is placed in human nature, at the right hand of God; is crowned with glory, and honour, and exalted above all creatures, human or angelic; and where he will remain until the time of the restitution of all things, and then he will descend to judge the quick and dead. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read both these clauses actively, *he parted himself, or he departed from them, and went up into heaven*; and so reads the Syriac version the last clause.

Ver. 52. *And they worshipped him, &c.*] Not with a civil worship, as he was sometimes worshipped by men, in the days of his flesh, who, though they took him for some extraordinary person, knew him not to be the son of God; but with religious worship as God: for by his resurrection from the dead, Christ was declared to be the son of God, and both by that, and by his going to his father, his ascension to heaven, the disciples were more confirmed in his proper deity, and divine sonship; and therefore worshipped him as God; by calling upon his name, ascribing blessings and honour, and glory, to him; by making him the object of their reverence and fear; and by trusting in him; and by doing every religious act in his name, and which they ever after continued to do: *and returned to Jerusalem*: as they were ordered, where they were to tarry and wait for the pouring down of the spirit: and this they did *with great joy*; for though their Lord was parted from them, and was gone to heaven, this did not cause sorrow, as did his death, but, on the contrary, joy, even great joy; partly because of the glory he was entered into, and possessed of; and partly on account of what he was gone to do for them; to appear in the presence of God for them, to make intercession for them, to take possession of heaven in their name, and to prepare a place for them, as well as to receive gifts for them; and now they return to Jerusalem with great cheerfulness, in full hope and expectation, yea, assurance of faith, that they should shortly receive the promise of the father.

Ver. 53. *And were continually in the temple, &c.*] At the time of worship, at the hours of prayer, or of public service; and perhaps always privately in an upper room in it, where they, with others, met frequently, and continued, with one accord, in prayer and supplication; see the note on Acts i. 14. a practice worthy of imitation, whether in the public or private way: *praising, and blessing God*; for his son Jesus Christ, who had died for their sins, was risen again for

<sup>4</sup> Targum Jon. in Num. vi. 22. & Targum in Cant. vii. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Misn Sota, c. 7. sect. 6. Beimidbar Rabba, sect. 11. fol. 209. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Hilchot Tephilla, c. 14. sect. 3. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Hilchot Tephilla, c. 14. sect. 11. Vid. Targum Jon. & Rabba, ut supra, & T. Bab. Sota, fol. 98. 1.

their justification, and was now ascended into heaven, to be their advocate there; and for all spiritual blessings, wherewith they were blessed in and by Christ; for all the gifts bestowed upon them, and for what they had reason to expect; and for the honour done them in having a commission from Christ to preach

his Gospel to every creature. *Amen*: so let him be praised, and blessed by all the saints, for all that is contained in this Gospel. In a manuscript copy of Beza's, 'tis added, "the Gospel according to Saint Luke was published fifteen years after the ascension of Christ;" see the note on the title of this Gospel.

---

## THE GOSPEL, ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN.

---

THE author of this Gospel is John, the son of Zebedee and Salome, the brother of James the greater; he out-lived the rest of the disciples, and wrote this Gospel after the other evangelists; and in it many things are recorded, which are not in the other Gospels; as various discourses of Christ, and miracles done by him; several incidents in his life, and circumstances that attended his sufferings and death: the occasion of it is generally thought to be the errors of Ebion and Cerinthus, who denied the divinity of Christ, asserted he was a mere man, and that he did not exist before his incarnation; and the design of it is to confute them: and it is easy to observe, that he begins his Gospel with the divinity of Christ; asserts him to be God, and proves him to be truly and properly so, by the works of creation, which were wrought by him, as well as shews that he was really man. Clemens <sup>a</sup> calls this Gospel of John, *πνευματικὸν Ευαγγέλιον*, a *spiritual Gospel*, as indeed it is; consisting of the spiritual discourses of our Lord, on various occasions, both at the beginning, and in the course of his ministry, and especially a little before his sufferings and death: and the same writer observes, that John, the last of the evangelists, considering that in the other Gospels were declared the things relating to the body of Christ, that is, to him, as he was after the flesh; to his genealogy and birth as man; to what was done to him, or by him, in his infancy; to his baptism, temptations, journeys, &c. at the request of his familiar friends, and moved by the spirit of God, composed this Gospel. Moreover, it is observed by some <sup>b</sup>, that the other three evangelists only record what was done by Christ, in one year after John the Baptist was cast into prison, as appears from Matt. iv. 12. Mark

i. 14. Luke iii. 20. wherefore John, at the entreaty of his friends, put these things into his Gospel, which were done or said by Christ, before John was cast into prison. He was called very early by Christ, though young; and was with him throughout the whole of his ministry, and was an eye and ear witness of what he here relates, and his testimony is to be received; he was the beloved disciple, he leaned on the bosom of Jesus, and had great intimacy with him; and might be privy to some things, which others were not acquainted with; and though he was a Galilean, and an unlearned man, Acts iv. 13. yet being endowed with the extraordinary gifts of the spirit, he was abundantly qualified to write this book: for what some ancient writers <sup>c</sup> say of him, that he was a priest, and wore a plate, that is, of gold upon his forehead, cannot be true, since he was not of the tribe of Levi; and besides, only the high-priest wore that upon his mitre; unless they mean, as seems most likely, that he was a Christian bishop: perhaps the mistake may arise from John the Baptist, who was of the priestly order, and is called by some Jewish writers <sup>d</sup>, John the high-priest. When and where this Gospel was written, is not certain; some say in <sup>e</sup> Asia, after he had wrote his Revelation in Patmos; and others say particularly, that it was wrote at Ephesus; the title of it in the Syriac version, signifies as much, which runs thus; "the holy Gospel, the preaching of John, which he spoke and published in Greek at Ephesus." And to the same purpose is the title of it in the Persic version; "the Gospel of John, one of the twelve apostles, which was spoken in the city of Ephesus, in the Greek-Roman tongue."

<sup>a</sup> Apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 6. c. 14.

<sup>b</sup> Ib. l. 3. c. 24.

<sup>c</sup> Polycrates in ib. l. 3. c. 31. & l. 5. c. 24. & Hieron. Catalog. Script. Eccles. fol. 96. sect. 55.

<sup>d</sup> Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 2.

<sup>e</sup> Hieron. Prolog. Evang. Joannis.

## C H A P. I.

Ver. 1. *IN the beginning was the word, &c.*] That this is said not of the written word, but of the essential word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is clear, from all that is said from hence, to ver. 14. as that this word was in the beginning, was with God, and is God; from the creation of all things being ascribed to him, and his being said to be the life and light of men; from his coming into the world, and usage in it; from his bestowing the privilege of adoption on believers; and from his incarnation; and also there is a particular application of all this to Christ, ver. 15, 16, 17, 18. And likewise from what this evangelist elsewhere says of him, when he calls him the word of life, and places him between the Father and the Holy Ghost; and speaks of the record of the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus, as the same thing; and represents him as a warrior and conqueror, 1 John i. 1, 2. and v. 7. Rev. i. 2, 9. and xix. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. Moreover this appears to be spoken of Christ, from what other inspired writers have said of him, under the same character; as the Evangelist Luke, ch. i. 2. the Apostle Paul, Acts xx. 32. Heb. iv. 12. and the Apostle Peter, 2 Pet. iii. 5. And who is called the word, not as man; for as man he was not in the beginning with God, but became so in the fulness of time; nor is the man God; besides, as such, he is a creature, and not the Creator, nor is he the life and light of men; moreover, he was the word, before he was man, and therefore not as such: nor can any part of the human nature be so called; not the flesh, for the word was made flesh; nor his human soul, for self-subsistence, deity, eternity, and the creation of all things, can never be ascribed to that; but he is the word as the Son of God, as is evident from what is here attributed to him, and from the word being said to be so, as in ver. 14, 18. and from those places, where the word is explained by the son, compare 1 John v. 5, 7. Matt. xxviii. 19. And is so called from his nature, being begotten of the father; for as the word, whether silent or expressed, is the birth of the mind, the image of it, equal to it, and distinct from it; so Christ is the only-begotten of the father, the express image of his person, in all things equal to him, and a distinct person from him: and he may be so called, from some action, or actions, said of him, or ascribed to him; as that he spoke for, and on the behalf of the elect of God, in the eternal council and covenant of grace and peace; and spoke all things out of nothing, in creation; for with regard to those words so often mentioned in the history of the creation, *and God said*, may Jehovah the son be called the word; also he was spoken of as the promised Messiah, throughout the whole Old-Testament dispensation; and is the interpreter of his father's mind, as he was in Eden's garden, as well as in the days of his

flesh; and now speaks in heaven for the saints. The phrase, *בְּיַמְרֵאֵל*, *the word of the Lord*, so frequently used by the Targumists, is well known: and it is to be observed, that the same things which John here says of the word, they say likewise, as will be observed on the several clauses; from whence it is more likely, that John should take this phrase, since the paraphrases of Onkelos and Jonathan ben Uzziel were written before his time, than that he should borrow it from the writings of Plato, or his followers, as some have thought; with whose philosophy, Ebion and Cerinthus are said to be acquainted; wherefore John, the more easily to gain upon them, uses this phrase, when that of the son of God would have been disagreeable to them: that there is some likeness between the Evangelist John and Plato in their sentiments concerning the word, will not be denied. Amelius<sup>f</sup>, a *Platonic* philosopher, who lived after the times of John, manifestly refers to these words of his, in agreement with his master's doctrine: his words are these; "and this was truly *Logos*, or "the word, by whom always existing, the things that "are made, were made, as also Heraclitus thought; "and who, likewise that *Barbarian* (meaning the Evangelist John) reckons was in the order and dignity of "the beginning, constituted with God, and was God, "by whom all things are entirely made; in whom, "whatsoever is made, lives, and has life, and being; "and who lapsed into bodies, and was clothed with "flesh, and appeared a man; so notwithstanding, that "he shewed forth the majesty of his nature; and after "his dissolution, he was again deified, and was God, "as he was before he descended into a body, flesh and "man." In which words it is easy to observe plain traces of what the evangelist says in the first four verses, and in the *fourteenth* verse of this chapter; yet it is much more probable, that Plato had his notion of the *Logos*, or word, out of the writings of the Old Testament, than that John should take this phrase, or what he says concerning the word, from him; since it is a matter of fact not disputed, that Plato went into Egypt to get knowledge: not only Clemens Alexandrinus a Christian writer says, that he was a philosopher of the Hebrews<sup>g</sup>, and understood prophecy<sup>h</sup>, and stirred up the fire of the Hebrew philosophy<sup>i</sup>; but it is affirmed by Heathen writers, that he went into Egypt to learn of the priests<sup>k</sup>, and to understand the rites of the prophets<sup>l</sup>; and Aristobulus, a Jew, affirms<sup>m</sup>, he studied their law; and Numenius, a Pythagoric philosopher<sup>n</sup>, charges him with stealing what he wrote, concerning God and the world, out of the books of Moses; and used to say to him, what is Plato, but Moses *Atticizing*? or Moses speaking Greek: and Eusebius<sup>o</sup>, an ancient Christian writer, points at the very places, from

<sup>f</sup> Apud Euseb. Prepar. Evangel. l. 11. c. 19.

<sup>g</sup> Stromat. l. 1. p. 274.

<sup>h</sup> Ib. p. 303.

<sup>i</sup> Ib. Paedagog. l. 2. c. 1. p. 150.

<sup>k</sup> Ib. Valer. Maxim. l. 8. c. 7.

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>l</sup> Apuleius de dogmate Platonis, l. 1. in principio.

<sup>m</sup> Apud Euseb. Prepar. Evangel. l. 13. c. 13.

<sup>n</sup> Hesyeh. Miles. de Philosophis. p. 50.

<sup>o</sup> Prepar. Evangel. l. 11. c. 9.

whence Plato took his hints : wherefore it is more probable, that the evangelist received this phrase of the word, as a divine person, from the Targums, where there is such frequent mention made of it ; or however, there is a very great agreement between what he and these ancient writings of the Jews say of the word, as will be hereafter shewn. Moreover, the phrase is frequently used in like manner, in the writings of Philo the Jew ; from whence it is manifest, that the name was well known to the Jews, and may be the reason of the evangelist's using it. This word, he says, *was in the beginning* ; by which is meant, not the father of Christ ; for he is never called the beginning, but the son only ; and was he, he must be such a beginning as is without one ; nor can he be said to be so, with respect to the Son or Spirit, who are as eternal as himself ; only with respect to the creatures, of whom he is the author and efficient cause : Christ is indeed in the father, and the father in him, but this cannot be meant here ; nor is the beginning of the Gospel of Christ, by the preaching of John the Baptist, intended here : John's ministry was an evangelical one, and the Gospel was more clearly preached by him, and after him, by Christ and his apostles, than before ; but it did not then begin ; it was preached before by the angel to the shepherds, at the birth of Christ ; and before that, by the prophets under the former dispensation, as by Isaiah, and others ; it was preached before unto Abraham, and to our first parents, in the garden of Eden : nor did Christ begin to be, when John began to preach ; for John's preaching and baptism were for the manifestation of him : yea, Christ existed as man, before John began to preach ; and though he was born after him as man, yet as the word and son of God, he existed before John was born ; he was in being in the times of the prophets, which were before John ; and in the times of Moses, and before Abraham, and in the days of Noah : but by the beginning is here meant, the beginning of the world, or the creation of all things ; and which is expressive of the eternity of Christ, he was in the beginning, as the Maker of all creatures, and therefore must be before them all : and it is to be observed, that it is said of him, that in the beginning he *was* ; not made, as the heavens and earth, and the things in them were ; nor was he merely in the purpose and predestination of God, but really existed as a divine person, as he did from all eternity ; as appears from his being set up in office from everlasting ; from all the elect being chosen in him, and given to him before the foundation of the world ; from the covenant of grace, which is from eternity, being made with him ; and from the blessings and promises of grace, being as early put into his hands ; and from his nature as God, and his relation to his father : so Philo the Jew often calls the *Logos*, or word, the eternal word, the most ancient word, and more ancient than any thing that is made<sup>p</sup>. The eternity of the Messiah is acknowledged by the ancient Jews : Mic. v. 2. is a full proof of it ; which by them<sup>q</sup> is thus paraphrased ; " out of thee, before me, shall come forth the Messiah, that he may exer-

cise dominion over Israel ; whose name is said from " eternity, from the days of old." Jarchi upon it only mentions Psal. lxxii. 17. which is rendered by the Targum on the place, *before the sun his name was prepared* ; it may be translated, before the sun his name was *Yinnon* ; that is, the son, namely the son of God ; and Aben Ezra interprets it, יקרנא בו, *he shall be called the son* ; and to this agrees what the Talmudists say<sup>r</sup>, that the name of the Messiah was before the world was created ; in proof of which they produce the same passage. *And the word was with God* ; not with men or angels ; for he was before either of these ; but with God, not essentially, but personally considered ; with God his father : not in the Socinian sense, that he was only known to him, and to no other before the ministry of John the Baptist ; for he was known and spoken of by the angel Gabriel before ; and was known to Mary and to Joseph ; and to Zacharias and Elisabeth ; to the shepherds, and to the wise men ; to Simeon and Anna, who saw him in the temple ; and to the prophets and patriarchs in all ages, from the beginning of the world : but this phrase denotes the existence of the word with the father, his relation and nearness to him, his equality with him, and particularly the distinction of his person from him, as well as his eternal being with him ; for he was always with him, and is, and ever will be ; he was with him in the council and covenant of grace, and in the creation of the universe, and is with him in the providential government of the world ; he was with him as the word and son of God in heaven, whilst he as man, was here on earth ; and he is now with him, and ever will be : and as John here speaks of the word, as a distinct person from God the father, so do the Targums, or Chaldee paraphrases ; Psal. cx. 1. *the Lord said to my Lord*, is rendered, *the Lord said to his word* ; where he is manifestly distinguished from Jehovah, that speaks to him ; and in Hos. i. 7. the Lord promises to *have mercy on the house of Judah, and save them by the Lord their God*. The Targum is, *I will redeem them by the word of the Lord their God* ; where the word of the Lord, who is spoken of as a Redeemer and Saviour, is distinguished from the Lord, who promises to save by him. This distinction of Jehovah and his word, may be observed in multitudes of places, in the Chaldee paraphrases, and in the writings of Philo the Jew ; and this phrase, of *the word being with God*, is in the Targums expressed by, " בו ימיר מן קדם, *the word from before the Lord, or which is before the Lord* : being always in his presence, and the angel of it ; so Onkelos paraphrases Gen. xxxi. 22. *and the word from before the Lord, came to Laban*, &c. and Exod. xx. 19. thus, *and let not the word from before the Lord speak with us, lest we die* ; for so it is read in the King of Spain's Bible ; and wisdom, which is the same with the word of God, is said to be *by him*, or with him, in Prov. 8. 30. agreeably to which John here speaks. John makes use of the word God, rather than father, because the word is commonly called the word of God, and because of what follows ; *and the word was God* ; not made a God, as he is said here-

<sup>p</sup> De Leg. Alleg. 1. 2. p. 93. de Plant. Noe, p. 217. de Migrat. Abraham, p. 389. de Profugis, p. 466. quis. rer. divin. Harres. p. 509.

<sup>q</sup> Targum Jon in loc.

<sup>r</sup> T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 54. 1. & Nedirim, fol. 39. 2. Pirke Eliezer, c. 3.



after to be made flesh; nor constituted or appointed a God, or a God by office; but truly and properly God, in the highest sense of the word, as appears from the names by which he is called; as Jehovah, God, our, your, their, and my God, God with us, the mighty God, God over all, the great God, the living God, the true God, and eternal life; and from his perfections, and the whole fulness of the Godhead that dwells in him, as independence, eternity, immutability, omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence; and from his works of creation and providence, his miracles, the work of redemption, his forgiving sins, the resurrection of himself and others from the dead, and the administration of the last judgment; and from the worship given him, as prayer to him, faith in him, and the performance of baptism in his name: nor is it any objection to the proper deity of Christ, that the article is here wanting; since when the word is applied to the father, it is not always used, and even in this chapter, ver. 6, 13, 18. and which shews, that the word *God*, is not the subject, but the predicate of this proposition, as we render it: so the Jews often use the word of the Lord for Jehovah, and call him God. Thus the words in Gen. xxviii. 20, 21. are paraphrased by Onkelos; "if *the word of the Lord* will be my " help, and will keep me, &c. then *the word of the Lord* shall be, לִי לְאֱלֹהִים, *my God*:" again, Levit. xxvi. 12. is paraphrased, by the Targum ascribed to Jonathan ben Uzziel, thus; "I will cause the glory " of my Shekinah to dwell among you, and *my word* " shall be *your God*, the Redeemer;" once more, Deut. xxvi. 17. is rendered by the Jerusalem Targum after this manner; "ye have made *the word of the Lord* " king over you this day, that he may be your God:" and this is frequent with Philo the Jew, who says, the name of God is his word, and calls him, my Lord, the divine word; and affirms, that the most ancient word is God<sup>1</sup>.

Ver. 2. *The same was in the beginning with God.*] This is a repetition of what is before said, and is made to shew the importance of the truths before delivered; namely, the eternity of Christ, his distinct personality, and proper deity; and that the phrase, *in the beginning*, is to be joined to each of the above sentences; and so proves, not only his eternal existence, but his eternal existence with the father, and also his eternal deity; and is also made to carry on the thread of the discourse, concerning the word, and not God the father; and to express, not only his co-existence in nature, but his co-operation in the works of creation next mentioned.

Ver. 3. *All things were made by him, &c.*] Which is a proof at once of all that is said before; as that he was in the beginning; and that he was with God the father in the beginning; and that he was God; otherwise all things could not have been made by him, had either of these been untrue: which is to be understood, not of the new creation; for this would be a restraining *all* things to a few persons only; nor is it any where said, that all things are new made, but made; and it is false, that all were converted, that have been converted, by the ministry of Christ, as

man: all men are not renewed, regenerated, nor reformed; and the greater part of those that were renewed, were renewed before Christ existed, as man; and therefore could not be renewed by him, as such: though indeed, could this sense be established, it would not answer the end for which it is coined: namely, to destroy the proof of Christ's deity, and of his existence before his incarnation; for in all ages, from the beginning of the world, some have been renewed; and the new creation is a work of God, and of almighty power, equally with the old: for who can create spiritual light, infuse a principle of spiritual life, take away the heart of stone, and give an heart of flesh, or produce faith, but God? regeneration is denied to be of man, and is always ascribed to God; nor would Christ's being the author of the new creation, be any contradiction to his being the author of the old creation, which is intended here: by *all things*, are meant the heaven, and all its created inhabitants, the airy, stary, and third heavens, and the earth, and all therein, the sea, and every thing that is in that; and the word, or son of God, is the efficient cause of all these, not a bare instrument of the formation of them; for the preposition *by* does not always denote an instrument, but sometimes an efficient, as in 1 Cor. i. 9. 2 Cor. i. 1. Gal. i. 1. and so here, though not to the exclusion of the father, and of the spirit: *and without him was not any thing made that was made*: in which may be observed the conjunct operation of the word, or son, with the father, and spirit, in creation; and the extent of his concern in it to every thing that is made; for without him there was not one single thing in the whole compass of the creation made; and the limitation of it to things that are made; and so excludes the increate being, Father, Son, and Spirit; and sin also, which is not a principle made by God, and which has no efficient, but a deficient cause. So the Jews ascribe the creation of all things to the word. The Targumists attribute the creation of man, in particular, to the word of God: it is said in Gen. i. 27. *God created man in his own image*: the Jerusalem Targum of it is, "and the word of the Lord created " man in his likeness." And Gen. iii. 22. and *the Lord God said, behold the man is become as one of us*, the same Targum paraphrases thus; "and the word of " the Lord God said, behold the man whom I have " created, is the only one in the world." Also in the same writings, the creation of all things in general is ascribed to the word: the passage in Deut. xxxiii. 27. *the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms*, is paraphrased by Onkelos, "the " eternal God is an habitation, by whose word the " world was made." In Isa. xlviii. 13. it is said, *mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth*. The Targum of Jonathan ben Uziah on it is, "yea, " by my word I have founded the earth:" which agrees with what is said in Heb. xi. 3. 2 Pet. iii. 7. 5, and the same says Philo the Jew, who not only calls him the archetype, and exemplar of the world, but the power that made it: he often ascribes the creation of the heavens, and the earth unto him, and likewise the creation of man after whose image, he says, he was made<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> De Allegor. l. 2. p. 99, 101 & de Somniis, p. 599.

<sup>1</sup> De Mundi Opificio, p. 4, 5, 31, 32. De Alleg. l. 1. p. 44. De Sacrificiis Abel & Cain, p. 131. De Profugis, p. 464. & de Monarch. p. 827

The Ethiopic version adds, at the end of this verse, *and also that which is made for himself.*

Ver. 4. *In him was life, &c.*] The Persic version reads in the plural number, *lives*. There was life in the word with respect to himself; a divine life, the same with the life of the father and of the spirit; and is in him, not by gift, nor by derivation or communication; but originally, and independently, and from all eternity: indeed he lived before his incarnation as Mediator, and Redeemer. Job knew him in his time, as his living Redeemer; but this regards him as the word and living God, and distinguishes him from the written word, and shews that he is not a mere idea in the divine mind, but a truly divine person: and there was life in Christ the word, with respect to others; the fountain of natural life is in him, he is the efficient cause, and preserver of it; whether vegetative, animal, or rational; and proves him to be truly God, and that he existed before his incarnation; since creatures, who have received such a life from him, did: and spiritual life was also in him; all his elect are dead in trespasses and sins, and can't quicken themselves. Christ has procured life for them, and gives it to them, and implants it in them; a life of sanctification is from him; and a life of justification is upon him, and of faith is by him; all the comforts of a spiritual life, and all things appertaining to it, are from him, and he maintains, and preserves it. Eternal life is in him, and with him; not the purpose of it only, nor the promise of it barely, but the gift of it itself; which was granted in consequence of his asking it, and which he had by way of stipulation; and hence has a right and power to bestow it: now, this being in him proves him to be the true God, and shews us where life is to be had, and the safety and security of it: *and the life was the light of men*; the life which was in, and by the word, was, with respect to men, a life of light, or a life attended with light: by which is meant, not a mere visive faculty, receptive of the sun's light, but rational knowledge and understanding; for when Christ, the word, breathed into man the breath of life, and he became a living soul, he filled him with rational light and knowledge. Adam had a knowledge of God; of his being, and perfections; of the persons in the Trinity; of his relation to God, dependence on him, and obligation to him; of his mind and will; and knew what it was to have communion with him. He knew much of himself, and of all the creatures; this knowledge was natural and perfect in its kind, but loseable; and different from that which saints now have of God, through Christ, the Mediator; and since this natural light was from Christ, the word, as a Creator, he must be the eternal God. The Socinians are not willing to allow this sense, but say that Christ is the light of men, by preaching the heavenly doctrine, and by the example of his holy life; but hereby he did not enlighten every man that cometh into the world; the greatest part of men, before the preaching, and example of Christ, sat in darkness; and the greatest part of the Jews remained in darkness, notwithstanding his preaching, and example; and the patriarchs that were enlightened under the former dispensation, were not enlightened this way: it will be owned, that all spiritual and supernatural light, which

any of the sons of men have had, since the fall, was from Christ, from whom they had their spiritual life; even all spiritual light in conversion, and all after-degrees of light; through him they enjoyed the light of God's countenance, and had the light of joy and gladness here, and of glory hereafter.

Ver. 5. *And the light shineth in darkness, &c.*] Which, through sin, came upon the minds of men; who are naturally in the dark about the nature and perfections of God; about sin, and the consequences of it; about Christ, and salvation by him; about the spirit of God, and his work upon the soul; and about the Scriptures of truth, and the doctrines of the Gospel. Man was created a knowing creature, but, not content with his knowledge, sins, and is banished from the presence of God, the fountain of light; which brought a darkness on him, and his posterity, and which is increased in them by personal iniquity, and in which Satan, the god of this world, has an hand; and sometimes they are left to judicial blindness, and which issues in worse darkness, if grace prevents not: now amidst this darkness there were some remains of the light of nature: with respect to the being of God, which shines in the works of creation and providence; and to the worship of God, though very dimly; and to the knowledge of moral good and evil: *and the darkness comprehended it not; or perceived it not*; as the Syriac version renders it. By the light of nature, and the remains of it, men could not come to any clear and distinct knowledge of the above things; and much less to any knowledge of the true way of salvation: unless, rather by the light should be meant, the light of the Messiah, or of the Gospel shining in the figures, types, and shadows of the law, and in the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament: and yet, such was the darkness upon the minds of men, that they could not very distinctly apprehend it, and much less fully comprehend it, so that there was need of a fresh and fuller revelation; an account of which follows;

Ver. 6. *There was a man sent from God, &c.*] John the Baptist: he was not the *Logos*, or word; nor was he an angel, but a man; yet an extraordinary one, in his conception of a barren woman, and in being born when both parents were stricken in years; and whilst he was in the womb, he leaped for joy at the salutation of Mary; and as soon as born was filled with the Holy Ghost; and when he was grown up, and appeared in public, it was in an uncommon manner: his dress and his diet were both out of the common way; and his temper and spirit were that of Elias the prophet; and as for his work and office, it was very peculiar; he was the forerunner of Christ, and the first administrator of the new ordinance of baptism, and the greatest of all the prophets: this person had his mission from God, both to preach and baptize: *whose name was John*; the name given him by the angel before his conception, and by his mother Elisabeth, after her neighbours and cousins had given him another; and which was confirmed by his father Zacharias, when deaf and dumb: it signifies grace, or gracious; and a gracious man he was; he was very acceptable to his parents; a man that had the grace of God in him, and great gifts of grace bestowed on him; he was a preacher

of the doctrines of grace; and his ministry was very grateful to many.

Ver. 7. *The same came for a witness, &c.*] The end of his being sent, and the design of his coming were, to bear witness of the light: by which is meant, not the light of nature, or reason; nor the light of the Gospel; but Christ himself, the author of light, natural, spiritual, and eternal. This was one of the names of the Messiah with the Jews; of whom they say <sup>1</sup> נְדִירָא שְׁמֵי, *light is his name*: as it is said in Dan. ii. 22. *and the light dwelleth with him*; on which they have <sup>2</sup> elsewhere this gloss, this is the King Messiah; and so they interpret Psal. xliii. 3. of him <sup>3</sup>. Philo the Jew often speaks of the *Logos*, or word, as light, and calls him the intelligible light; the universal light, the most perfect light; represents him as full of divine light; and says, he is called the sun <sup>4</sup>. Now John came to bear a testimony to him, as he did; of which an account is given in this chapter, very largely, and elsewhere; as that he testified of his existence before his incarnation; of his being with the father, and in his bosom: of his deity and divine sonship; of his being the Messiah; of the fulness of grace that was in him; of his incarnation and satisfaction; of his descent from heaven; and of his relation to his church, as in ver. 15, 16, 18, 23, 27, 29, 30, 34, 36. and ch. iii. 29, 31. the end of which witness was, *that all men through him might believe*; that is, that the Jews, to whom he preached, might, through his testimony, believe that Jesus was the light, and true Messiah; for these words are to be taken in a limited sense, and not to be extended to every individual of mankind; since millions were dead before John began his testimony, and multitudes then in being, and since, whom it never reached: nor can it design more than the Jews, to whom alone he bore witness of Christ; and the faith which he taught, and required by his testimony, was an assent unto him as the Messiah; though the preaching of the Gospel is a means of true spiritual faith in Christ; and doubtless it was so to many, as preached by John: it points out the object of faith, and encourages souls to believe in Christ; and hence, Gospel ministers are instruments by whom others believe; and faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; and then is a considerable end of the Gospel ministry answered.

Ver. 8. *He was not that light, &c.*] He was a light; he was the forerunner of the sun of righteousness, the *phosphorus* of the Gospel day; he had great light in him; he knew that the Messiah was ready to come, and declared it; and upon his baptism he knew him personally, and signified him to others: he had great light into the person and work of Christ; and into the way of salvation by him, and remission of sins through him; into the doctrines of faith in Christ, and of evangelical repentance towards God; and into the abolition of the legal Mosaic and Jewish dispensation; and was an instrument of giving light to others; yea, he was a turning and shining light, in whose light the Jews received, at least for a season: but then he was not that

light, the word and wisdom of God; that increased light that dwelt with him from all eternity; nor that which was the light of men, from the creation; nor that light, which was of old promised to the saints and patriarchs of the Old Testament, and shone in the ordinances and predictions of that state; nor that fountain and giver of light, of every sort, to men; nor that light in which is no darkness, and always shines; nor that true light, or sun of righteousness, the Messiah, or that lightens every man that comes into the world: but was sent to bear witness of that light; which is repeated, to distinguish him from that light; to shew what he was sent for, and that he acted according to his mission; and to express the honourableness to his work.

Ver. 9. *That was the true light, &c.*] Christ is that light, that famous and excellent light, the fountain of all light to all creatures; that gave light to the dark earth at first, and spoke light out of darkness; that light of all men in the earth, and of all the angels in heaven, and of all the saints below, and of all the glorified ones above: he is the *true light*, in distinction from typical lights; the *Urim* of the former dispensation; the candlestick, with the lamps of it; the pillar of fire which directed the Israelites by night in the wilderness; and from all the typical light there was in the institutions and sacrifices of the law; and in opposition to the law itself, which the Jews <sup>1</sup> magnify, and cry up as the light, saying, there is no light but the law; and in opposition to all false lights, as priests, diviners, and soothsayers among the Gentiles, Scribes, and Pharisees, and the learned Rabbins among the Jews, so much boasted of as the lights of the world; and to all false Christs and prophets that have risen, or shall rise, in the world. *Which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*: the sense is, either that every man that is enlightened in a spiritual manner, is enlightened by him, which is true of Christ, as the son of God, existing from the beginning; but not in the Socinian sense, as if they were enlightened by his human ministry and example; for the Old-Testament saints were not enlightened by his preaching; and many were enlightened by the ministry of John the Baptist; and multitudes afterwards, through the ministry of the apostles; and very few, comparatively, were enlightened under the ministry of Christ; and none we read of, in this sense, enlightened by him, when, and as soon as they came into the world: or the meaning is, that he is that light which lighteth all sorts of men; which is true in a spiritual sense: some connect the phrase, *that cometh into the world*, not with *every man*, but with the *true light*; and the Arabic version so reads, and joins it to the following verse; but this reading is not so natural, and the order of the words requires the common reading; nor is the difficulty removed hereby; for still it is every man that is enlightened: it is best therefore to understand these words of the light of nature, and reason, which Christ, as the word, and Creator and light of men, gives to every man that is born into the world; and which serves

<sup>1</sup> Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 2.  
<sup>2</sup> Bereschit Rabba, fol. 1. 3.  
<sup>3</sup> Jarchi in ib.

<sup>1</sup> De Maudi Opificio, p. 6. De Allegor. l. 2. p. 80. & de Somniis, p. 576, 578.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bava Bathra, fol. 4. 1.

to detect the Quakers' notion of the light within, which every man has, and is no other than the light of a natural conscience; and shews how much men, even natural men, are obliged to Christ, and how great a person he is, and how deserving of praise, honour, and glory. The phrase, *every man that cometh into the world*, is Jewish, and often to be met with in Rabbinical writings, and signifies all men that are born into the world; the instances are almost innumerable; take one or two: on those words in Job xxv. 3. *on whom doth not his light arise?* it is asked<sup>a</sup>, who is he that cometh, "כָּל בָּאֵי עוֹלָם", of all that come into the world; and says, the "sun hath not lightened me by day, nor hath the moon lightened me by night! thou enlightenest those above, and those below, and all that come into the world." Again, God is introduced thus speaking<sup>b</sup>: "I am the God, לְכָל בָּאֵי עוֹלָם, of all that come into the world; and I have not united my name, but to the people of Israel." Once more<sup>c</sup>, "Moses, our master, from the mouth of power, (i. e. God; see Matt. xxvi. 64.) commanded to oblige, אֵת כָּל בָּאֵי הָעוֹלָם, all that come into the world, to receive the commandments which were commanded the sons of Noah."

Ver. 10. *He was in the world, &c.*] This is to be understood, not of his incarnation; for the word *was* denotes past existence in the world, even all the time past from the creation of the world; and the *world* intends the world in general, as opposed to Judea, and the people of the Jews in the next *verse*; besides, the incarnation of the word is spoken of in ver. 14. as a new and distinct thing from this: but of his being in the world, when first made, and since, by his essence, by which he fills the whole world; and by his power, upholding and preserving it; and by his providence, ordering and managing all the affairs of it, and influencing and governing all things in it: he was in it as the light and life of it, giving natural life and light to creatures in it, and filling it, and them, with various blessings of goodness; and he was in the promise and type before, as well as after the Jews were distinguished from other nations, as his peculiar people; and he was frequently visible in the world, in an human form, before his incarnation, as in Eden's garden to our first parents, to Abraham, Jacob, Manoh, and his wife, and others. *And the world was made by him*: so Philo the Jew often ascribes the making of the world to the *Logos*, or word, as before observed on ver. 3. and this regards the whole universe, and all created beings in it, and therefore can't design the new creation: besides, if all men in the world were anew created by Christ, they would know him; for a considerable branch of the new creation lies in knowledge; whereas, in the very next clause, it is asserted, that the world knew him not; and they would also love him, and obey him, which the generality of the world do not; they would appear to be in him, and so not be condemned by him, as multitudes will. To understand this of the old creation, best suits the context, and proves the deity of Christ, and his pre-existence, as the word, and son

of God, to his incarnation. *And the world knew him not*; that is, the inhabitants of the world knew him not as their Creator: nor did they acknowledge the mercies they received from him; nor did they worship, serve, and obey him, or love and fear him; nor did they, the greater part of them, know him as the Messiah, Mediator, Saviour, and Redeemer. There was, at first, a general knowledge of Christ throughout the world among all the sons of Adam, after the first promise of him, and which, for a while, continued; but this, in process of time, being neglected and slighted, it was forgot, and utterly lost, as to the greater part of mankind; for the Gentiles, for many hundreds of years, as they knew not the true God, so they were without Christ, without any notion of the Messiah; and this their ignorance, as it was first their sin, became their punishment.

Ver. 11. *He came unto his own, &c.*] Not all the world, who are his own by right of creation; for these, his own, are opposed to the world, and distinguished from them; and his coming to them designs some particular favour, which is not vouchsafed to all: nor yet are the elect of God intended; though they are Christ's own, in a very special sense; they are his by his own choice, by his father's gift, by his own purchase, and through the conquest of his grace, and are the objects of his special love; and for their sake he came in the flesh, and to them he comes in a spiritual way, and to them will he appear a second time at the last day unto salvation: but they cannot be meant, because when he comes to them they receive him; whereas these did not, as the next clause affirms: but by his own are meant the whole body of the Jewish nation; so called, because they were chosen by the Lord above; all people; had distinguishing favours bestowed upon them, as the adoption, the covenants, the promises, the giving of the law, and the service of God; and had the Shekinah, and the symbol of the divine presence in a remarkable manner among them; and the promise of the Messiah was in a particular manner made to them; and indeed, he was to be born of them, so that they were his kindred, his people, and his own nation: and this his coming to them is to be understood not of his incarnation; though when he came in the flesh, as he came of them, so he came to them, particularly being sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and was rejected by them as the Messiah; yet his incarnation is afterwards spoken of in ver. 14. as a new and distinct thing from this; and to understand it of some coming of his before his incarnation, best suits with the context, and the design of the evangelist. Now Christ, the word, came to the Jews before his incarnation, not only in types, personal and real, and in promises and prophecies, and in the word and ordinances, but in person; as to Moses in the bush, and gave orders to deliver the children of Israel out of Egypt: he came and redeemed them himself with a mighty hand, and a stretched-out arm; in his love and pity he led them through the Red Sea as on dry ground; and through the wilderness in a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar

<sup>a</sup> Vajikra Rabba, sect. 31. fol. 171. 4.

<sup>b</sup> Midrash Ruth, c. 1. v. 1. fol. 27. 3.

<sup>c</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Melakim. c. 8. sect. 10. Vid. Misn. Roshhashana,

c. 1. sect. 2. T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 25. 4. & 26. 3. Sepher Bahir apud Zohar in Gen. fol. 30. 3. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 21. 2. & 22. 3. & 24. 3. & 27. 2. Capiter, fol. 26. 1. Jarchi in Exod. 15. 2.

of fire by night; and he appeared to them at Mount Sinai, who gave unto them the lively oracles of God: and his own received him not; they did not believe in him, nor obey his voice; they rebelled against him, and tempted him often, particularly at Massah and Meribah; they provoked him to anger, and vexed, and grieved his holy spirit, as they afterwards slighted and despised his Gospel by the prophets. Of this non-reception of the word by the Jews, and their punishment for it, the Targumist on Hos. ix. 17. thus speaks: "my God will remove them far away, because, לא קבילו למריה, they receive not his word: and they shall wander among the people." And so they treated this same *Logos*, or word of God, when he was made flesh, and dwelt among them. Somewhat remarkable is the following discourse of some Jews among themselves: "when the word of God comes, who is his messenger, we shall honour him. Says R. Saul, did not the prophets come, and we slew them, and shed their blood? (compare this with Matt. xxiii. 30, 31, 37.) how therefore now, נקבל מדבר, shall we receive his word? or wherefore shall we believe? Says R. Samuel, the Levite, to him, because he will heal them, and deliver them from their destructions; and because of these signs we shall believe him, and honour him." But they did not.

Ver. 12. *But as many as received him, &c.*] This is explained, in the latter part of the text, by believing in his name; for faith is a receiving him as the word, and son of God, as the Messiah, Saviour, and Redeemer; a receiving grace out of his fulness, and every blessing from him, as a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified; for though the generality rejected him, there were some few that received him: *to them gave he power to become the sons of God*; as such were very early called, in distinction from the children of men, or of the world; see Gen. vi. 2, 4. To be the sons of God is a very special favour, a great blessing, and high honour: saints indeed are not in so high a sense the sons of God as Christ is; nor in so low a sense as angels and men in common are; nor in such sense as civil magistrates; nor merely by profession of religion; much less by natural descent; but by adopting grace: and in this, Christ, the word, has a concern, as all the three divine persons have. The father predestinated men to the adoption of children, secures this blessing for them in the covenant of his grace, and puts them among the children, and assigns them a goodly heritage: the spirit, and who is therefore called the spirit of adoption, discovers and applies this blessing to them, and witnesses to their spirits that they are the children of God: and Christ, the word, or son of God, not only espoused their persons, and in time assumed their nature, and by the redemption of them opened a way for their reception of the adoption of children; but actually bestows upon them the power, as it is here called, of becoming the sons of God: by which is meant, not a power of free will to make themselves the sons of God,

if they will make use of it; but it signifies the honour and dignity conferred on such persons: so Nonnus calls it, *the heavenly honour*; as indeed, what can be a greater? It is more honourable than to be a son or daughter of the greatest potentate on earth; and it is expressive of its being a privilege; for so it is an undeserved and distinguishing one, and is attended with many other privileges; for such are of God's household and family, and are provided for by him; have liberty of access unto him; are Christ's free men, and are heirs to an incorruptible inheritance. This is a privilege that excels all others, even justification and remission of sins; and is an everlasting one: and it also intends the open right which believers have unto this privilege, and their claim of it: hence it follows, even to them that believe in his name; that is, in himself, in Christ, the word: the phrase is explanative of the former part of the verse, and is a descriptive and manifestative character of the sons of God; for though the elect of God, by virtue of electing grace, and the covenant of grace, are the children of God before faith; and were so considered in the gift of them to Christ, and when he came into the world to gather them together, and save them; and so, antecedent to the spirit of God, being sent down into their hearts, to make this known to them; yet no man can know his adoption, nor enjoy the comfort of it, or claim his interest in it, until he believes.

Ver. 13. *Which were born not of blood, &c.*] Or bloods, in the plural number. The birth, here spoken of, is regeneration, expressed by a being born again, or from above; by a being quickened by the spirit and grace of God; by Christ being formed in men; and by a partaking of the divine nature; and by being made new creatures, as all that believe in the name of Christ are; and which is the evidence of their being the sons of God: and now this is owing not to blood, or bloods; not to the blood of circumcision; or of the passover, which the Jews had an high opinion of, and ascribe life and salvation to, and to which notion this may be opposed: so their commentators<sup>f</sup> on Ezek. xvi. 6. where the word *live* is twice used, observe on the first *live*, by the blood of the passover, on the second *live*, by the blood of circumcision; but, alas! these contribute nothing to the life of the new creature: nor is regeneration owing to the blood of ancestors, to natural descent, as from Abraham, which the Jews valued themselves upon; for sin, and not grace, is conveyed by natural generation: all men are of one blood, and that is tainted with sin, and therefore can never have any influence on regeneration; no blood is to be valued, or any one upon it, but the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin. *Nor of the will of the flesh*; man's free will, which is carnal and corrupt, is enmity to God, and impotent to every thing that is spiritually good: regeneration is ascribed to another will and power, even to the will and power of God, and denied of this: *nor of the will of man*: of the best of men, as Abraham, David, and others; who, though ever so willing and desirous, that their children, relations,

<sup>f</sup> Ben Arama in Gen. xlviii. 4. apud Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. Ver. l. 3. c. 5.

<sup>f</sup> Jarchi & Kimchi in loc. Shemot Rabba, sect. 19. fol. 103. 2. & 104. 4. & Mattanot Cebuna in Vajikra Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 164. 2. Zohar in Lev. fol. 39. 2.

friends, and servants, should be born again, be partakers of the grace of God, and live in his sight, yet cannot effect any thing of this kind : all that they can do is to pray for them, give advice, and bring them under the means of grace ; but all is ineffectual without a divine energy. So with the Jews, *אִישׁ*, *a man*, signifies a great man, in opposition to *Adam*, or *Enosh*, which signify a mean, weak, frail man ; and our translators have observed this distinction, in Isa. ii. 9. *and the mean man (Adam) boweth down, and the great man (Ish) humbleth himself* : on which Jarchi has this note, *Adam boweth down*, i. e. little men ; and *a man humbleth himself*, i. e. princes, and mighty men, men of power : and so Kimchi on Psal. iv. 2. *O ye sons of men*, observes, that the Psalmist calls them the sons of men, with respect to the great men of Israel ; for there were with Absalom the sons of great men. Though sometimes the Jews say<sup>2</sup>, *Adam is greater than any of the names of men*, as Geber, Enosh, Ish. But now our evangelist observes, let a man be ever so great, or good, or eminent, for gifts and grace, he cannot communicate grace to another, or to whom he will ; none are born again of any such will : *but of God* ; of God, the father of Christ, who begets to a lively hope ; and of the son, who quickens whom he will ; and of the grace of the spirit, to whom regeneration is generally ascribed.

Ver. 14. *And the word was made flesh, &c.*] The same word, of whom so many things are said in the preceding verses ; and is no other than the son of God, or second person in the Trinity ; for neither the Father, nor the Holy Ghost, were made flesh, as is here said of the word, but the Son only ; and *flesh* here signifies, not a part of the body, nor the whole body only, but the whole human nature, consisting of a true body, and a reasonable soul ; and is so called, to denote the frailty of it, being encompassed with infirmities, though not sinful ; and to shew, that it was a real human nature, and not a phantom, or appearance, that he assumed : and when he is said to be *made flesh*, this was not done by the change of one nature into another, the divine into the human, or the word into a man ; but by the assumption of the human nature, the word, taking it into personal union with himself ; whereby the natures are not altered ; Christ remained what he was, and became what he was not ; nor are they confounded, and blended together, and so make a third nature ; nor are they separated, and divided, so as to constitute two persons, a divine person, and an human person ; but are so united as to be but one person ; and this is such an union, as can never be dissolved, and is the foundation of the virtue and efficacy of all Christ's works and actions, as Mediator : *and dwelt among us* ; or *tabernacled among us* ; in allusion to the tabernacle, which was a type of Christ's human nature : the model of the tabernacle was of God, and not of man ; it was coarse without, but full of holy things within ; here God dwelt, granted his presence, and his glory was seen ; here the sacrifices were brought, offered, and accepted. So the human nature of Christ was of God's pitching, and not man's ; and though it dwelt mean without, the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in it, as well as a fulness of grace and truth ; in

the face of Christ the glory of God is seen, and through him, even the veil of his flesh, saints have access unto him, and enjoy his presence ; and by him their spiritual sacrifices become acceptable to God : or this is observed, in allusion to the feast of tabernacles, when the Jews dwelt in booths, in remembrance of their manner of living in the wilderness : the feast of tabernacles was typical of Christ, and of his tabernacling in our nature. Solomon's temple, which was also a type of Christ, was dedicated at the time of that feast ; and it seems probable, that our Lord was born at that time ; for as he suffered at the time of the passover, which had respect unto him, and the pouring forth of the spirit was on the very day of Pentecost, which that prefigured ; so it is highly probable, that Christ was born at the time of the feast of tabernacles, which pointed out his dwelling among us ; and is therefore very pertinently hinted at, when mention is here made of his incarnation. However, reference is manifestly had to the Shekinah, and the glory of it, in the tabernacle and temple ; and almost the very word is here used. The Targumists sometimes speak of the Shekinah of the word dwelling among the Israelites : so Onkelos in Numb. xi. 20. where the Israelites are threatened with flesh, 'till they loath it ; because, says the paraphrast, " ye have loathed the word of the Lord, whose Shekinah dwelleth among you." Jonathan ben Uzziel, on the same place, expresses it thus ; " because ye have loathed the word of the Lord, the glory of whose Shekinah dwelleth among you." And it follows here, *and we beheld his glory* ; the glory of his divine nature, which is essential to him, and underrived, is equal to the father's glory, is transcendent to all creatures, and is ineffable, and incomprehensible ; some breakings forth of which there were in his incarnate state, and which were observed by the evangelist, and his companions ; who, in various instances, saw plainly, that Christ was possessed of divine perfections, such as omniscience, and omnipotence ; since he knew the thoughts of the heart, and could do the things he did : his father declared him to be his beloved son ; and the miracles he wrought, and the doctrines he taught, manifested forth his glory ; and not only there were some beams of his glory at his transfiguration, which were seen by the apostles, among which the Evangelist John was one, and to which he may have here a particular reference ; but even at his apprehension, and death, and especially at his resurrection from the dead. The Jews speak of the glory of the Messiah to be seen in the world to come. They say<sup>1</sup>, " If a man is worthy of the world to come, (*i. e.* the times of the Messiah,) he shall see the glory of the King Messiah." And of Moses, they say<sup>1</sup>, " there was (or will be) no generation like that in which he lived, until the generation in which the King Messiah comes, which shall behold the glory of the holy, blessed God, as he." This our evangelist, and the other disciples of Christ have seen : *the glory, as of the only-begotten of the father* ; a glory becoming him, suitable to him as such ; the very real glory of the son of God ; for the *as*, here, is not a note of similitude, but of certainty, as in Matt. xiv.

<sup>1</sup> Zohar in Lev. fol. 90. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 58. 1.

<sup>1</sup> Zohar in Lev. fol. 9. 4.

5. Psal. ii. 8. and the word is here called, *the only-begotten of the father*; which can't be said of Christ, as man; for as such, he was not *begotten* at all: nor on the account of his resurrection from the dead; for so he could not be called *the only-begotten*, since there are others that have been, and millions that will be raised from the dead, besides him: nor by reason of adoption; for if adopted, then not *begotten*; these two are inconsistent; besides, he could not be called the only-begotten, in this sense, because there are many adopted sons, even all the elect of God: nor by virtue of his office, as magistrates are called the sons of God; for then he would be so only in a figurative and metaphorical sense, and not properly; whereas he is called God's own son, the son of the same nature with him; and, as here, the only-begotten of the father, begotten by him in the same nature, in a way unconceivable and inexpressible by us: *full of grace and truth*; that is, he dwelt among men, and appeared to have a fulness of each of these: for this clause is not to be joined with the glory of the only-begotten, as if this was a branch of that; but regards him as incarnate, and in his office, as Mediator; who, as such, was full of *grace*: the spirit, and the gifts of the spirit; of all the blessings of grace, of justifying, pardoning, adopting, sanctifying, and persevering grace; of all the promises of grace; of all light, life, strength, comfort, peace, and joy: and also of *truth*, of all Gospel-truths; and as he had the truth, the sum, and substance of all the types and prophecies concerning him in him; and as he fulfilled all his own engagements, and his father's promises; and as possessed of sincerity towards men, and faithfulness and integrity to God.

Ver. 15. *John bare witness of him, &c.*] Which was his office and business, for which purpose he was sent, ver. 6, 7, 8. *and cried*: this agrees with his work and office, according to the prophecy of him in Isa. xl. 3. and with the time of his ministry, the year of jubilee; and with the nature of his ministry, which was clear, open, and public; and performed with vigour, and in a powerful manner, with much assurance and certainty, with boldness and intrepidity, and with great zeal and fervency, and in an evangelical way; for it was such a cry as debased the creature, and exalted Christ: *this was he, of whom I spake*: when he first entered upon his ministry and baptism, before he saw Christ, or baptized him; see Matt. iii. 11. *he that cometh after me*: for Christ came into the world after John; he was born six months after him; he came after him to be baptized by him, and attended on his ministry; and came later into the public ministry than he did; *is preferred before me*; by God, the father, in setting him up as Mediator; constituting him the head of the church; causing a fulness of grace to dwell in him; appointing him the Saviour of his people; and ordaining him judge of quick and dead. And by the prophets, who spake much of him, and sparingly of John; and of him as the Messiah and Saviour, and of John only as his harbinger: and by John himself, who represents him as coming from above, and as above all; and himself as of the earth, earthly: and by all Gospel ministers, and every true believer; and good reason there is for it: *for he was before me*; which can't be meant of honour and dignity; for this is

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

expressed before; and it would be proving one thing by the same: nor of his birth, as man; for John in that sense was before him, being born before him; besides, being born before another, is no proof of superior worth; others were born before John, whom he yet excelled: but of his eternal existence, as the word, and son of God, who was before John, or any of the prophets; before Abraham, and Noah, and Adam, or any creature whatever: the Arabic and Persic versions read, *for he was more ancient than me*; being from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.

Ver. 16. *And of his fulness have all we received, &c.*] These are the words not of John the Baptist; but of the evangelist carrying on his account of Christ, after he had inserted the testimony of the Baptist, in connexion with ver. 14. where he is said to be *full of grace and truth*: and which fulness is here intended; for the fulness of the Godhead in him is incommunicable; and the fulness of his fitness, and ability for his office, as Mediator, was for himself; but his fulness of grace and truth is dispensatory, and is in him, on purpose to be communicated unto others: and of *it*, the evangelist says, *have all we received*; not all mankind, though they all receive natural light and life from him; nor merely all the prophets of the Old Testament, though they had their gifts and grace from him, who then was, as now, the head of the church; nor only all the apostles of Christ, though these may be principally intended; but all believers, who, though they have not all the same measure of grace, nor the same gifts, yet all have received something: nor is there any reason for discouragement, envy, or reproach. Faith is the hand which receives Christ, and grace from him; and the act of receiving, being expressed in the past tense, seems to regard first conversion, when faith is first wrought, and along with it abundance of grace is received; for a believer has nothing but what is given him, and what he has, is in a way of receiving; so that there is no room for boasting, but great reason for thankfulness, and much encouragement to apply to Christ for more grace, which is the thing received, as follows: *and grace for grace*: according to the different senses of the preposition *καὶ*, different interpretations are given of this passage; as that signifies a substitution of a person, or thing, in the room of another, the sense is thought to be, the Gospel, instead of the law; or the grace of the present dispensation, instead of the grace of the former dispensation; grace, different from the former grace, as Nonnus expresses it. If it designs the original, and moving cause, the meaning is, grace is for the sake of grace; for there is no other cause of electing, justifying, pardoning, adopting, and regenerating grace, and even eternal life, but the grace, or free favour of God; and the one is the reason why the other is received: if it signifies the end, or final cause, then it is explained in this way; the disciples received the grace of apostleship, or gifts of grace, in order to preach the Gospel of the grace of God, and for the implanting and increasing grace in men; and grace also, in this life, is received, in order to the perfection of grace, or glory, in the other: if it denotes the measure and proportion of a thing, as one thing is answerable to another, then it may be interpreted after this manner: the saints receive grace

from the fulness of Christ, according, or answerable to the grace that is in him; or according to the measure of the gift of Christ, and in proportion to the place, station, and office they bear in the church. Some think the phrase only designs the freeness of grace, and the free and liberal manner in which it is distributed, and received; along with which, I also think, the abundance of it, at first conversion, with all afterwards, is intended; and that grace for grace, is the same with grace upon grace, heaps of grace; and that the phraseology is the same with this Jewish one<sup>k</sup>, *טִיבָה עַל דְּרוּמָה טִיבָה*, *goodness upon that goodness*, an additional goodness; so here, grace upon grace, an abundance of it, an addition to it, and an increase of it: *סוּחַ עַל חוּסוּ*, joy upon joy, is an abundance of joy, a large measure of it; and *holiness upon holiness*<sup>m</sup>, abundance of it.

Ver. 17. *For the law was given by Moses, &c.*] Both moral and ceremonial. The moral law was given to Adam, in innocence, which having been broken, and almost lost out of the minds, and memories of men, was given by Moses, in a new edition of it in writing; and points out what is man's duty both to God and men; discovers sin, accuses of it, convicts of it, and condemns for it; nor could it give strength to perform its demands; nor does it give the least hint of forgiveness; nor will it admit of repentance: and hence is opposed to grace; though it was a benefit to men, being in its own nature good and useful in its effects. The ceremonial law pointed out the pollution of human nature, the guilt and punishment of sin; was a type and shadow of deliverance by Christ, but could not give the grace it shadowed, and therefore is opposed both to grace and truth. Now both these were given by Moses to the people of the Jews, not as the maker, but the minister of them: it was God who appointed each of these laws, and ordained them in the hand of the mediator Moses, who received them from him, by the disposition of angels, and delivered them to the people of Israel; and a very high office this was he was put into, and a very great honour was conferred upon him; but Jesus Christ is a far greater person, and in an higher office: *but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*: by *grace and truth*, is meant the Gospel, in opposition to the law; which is called *grace*, because it is a declaration of the love, and grace, of God to men; it ascribes salvation, in all the parts of it, to the free grace and favour of God; and is the means of implanting and increasing grace in the hearts of men. And *truth*, not only because it contains truth, and nothing but truth, it coming from the God of truth; and the substance of it being Christ, who is the truth; and being revealed, applied, and led into by the spirit of truth; but because it is the truth of the types, and the substance of the shadows of the law: or these two may mean distinct things; grace may design all the blessings of grace which are in Christ, and come by him; and truth, the promises, and the fulfilment of them, which are all yea, and amen, in Christ: and when these are said to be by him, the meaning is, not that they are by him, as an instrument, but as the au-

thor of them; for Christ is the author of the Gospel, and the fulfiller of the promises, and the giver of *all* grace; which shews the superior excellency of Christ to Moses, and to all men, and even to angels also.

Ver. 18. *No man hath seen God at any time, &c.*] That is, God the father, whose voice was never heard, nor his shape seen by angels or men; for though Jacob, Moses, the elders of Israel, Manoah, and his wife, are said to see God, and Job expected to see him with his bodily eyes, and the saints will see him as he is, in which will lie their great happiness; yet all seems to be understood of the second person, who frequently appeared to the Old-Testament saints in an human form, and will be seen by the saints in heaven, in his real human nature; or of God in and by him: for the essence of God is invisible, and not to be seen with the eyes of the body; nor indeed with the eyes of the understanding, so as to comprehend it; nor immediately, but through, and by certain means: God is seen in the works of creation and providence, in the promises, and in his ordinances; but above all, in Christ the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person: this may chiefly intend here, man's not knowing any thing of God in a spiritual and saving way, but in and by Christ; since it follows, *the only-begotten son*; the word that was with God in the beginning. The Jerusalem Targum on Gen. iii. 22. says almost the same of the word of the Lord, as here, where it introduces him saying, "the word of the Lord God said, lo, the man whom I created, the only one in my world, even as I am, *יְחִידִי*, the only one, (or, as the word is sometimes rendered, *the only-begotten*), in the highest heavens." And to the same purpose the Targum of Jonathan, and also Jarchi, on the same place. The Syriac version here renders it, *the only-begotten, God which is in the bosom of the father*; clearly shewing, that he is the only-begotten, as he is God: the phrase, *which is in the bosom of the father*, denotes unity of nature, and essence, in the father and son; their distinct personality; strong love, and affection between them; the son's acquaintance with his father's secrets; his being at that time, as the son of God, in the bosom of his father, when here on earth, as the son of man; and which qualified him to make the declaration of him: *he hath declared him*. The Persic and Ethiopic versions further add, *to us*; he has clearly and fully declared his nature, perfections, purposes, promises, counsels, covenant, word, and works; his thoughts and schemes of grace; his love and favour to the sons of men; his mind and will concerning the salvation of his people: he has made, and delivered a fuller revelation of these things, than ever was yet; and to which no other revelation in the present state of things will be added. Somewhat like this the Jews<sup>n</sup> say of the Messiah; "there is none that can declare the name of his father, and that knows him; but this is hid from the eyes of the multitude, until he comes, *וַיְבַרְרֵנוּ*, and he shall declare him." He is come, and has declared him: so Philo speaks of the *Logos*, or word, as the interpreter of the mind of God, and a teacher of men<sup>o</sup>.

<sup>k</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 45. 1.

<sup>l</sup> Ib. in Lev. fol. 28. 1. & in Num. fol. 69. 2. & 71. 2.

<sup>m</sup> Ib. fol. 40. 2. & in Num. fol. 61. 1.

<sup>n</sup> R. Moses Haddarsan in Psal. 85. 11. apud Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. ver. 1. 8. c. 2.

<sup>o</sup> De nominum mutat. p. 1047.



Ver. 19. *And this is the record of John, &c.*] The evangelist proceeds to give a large, and full account of the testimony John the Baptist bore to Christ, which he had hinted at before, and had signified was his work, and office, and the end of his being sent. *When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him, who art thou?* The Jews that sent were the great sanhedrim that sat at Jerusalem, whose business it was to inquire into, examine, and try prophets, whether true or false? and John appearing as a prophet, and being so esteemed by the people, they deputed messengers to him to interrogate him, and know who he was. The persons sent were very likely of their own body, since priests and Levites were in that council. For it is said<sup>p</sup>, “they don’t constitute, or “appoint in the sanhedrim but priests, Levites, and “Israelites, who have their genealogies—and it “is commanded, that there should be in the great sanhedrim priests and Levites, as it is said, Deut. “xvii. 9. *and thou shalt come unto the priests, the Levites, “&c. and if they are not to be found, though they “are all Israelites, (not of the tribe of Levi,) it is right.*” Such a sanhedrim is a lawful one; but priests and Levites, if such could be found, that had proper qualifications, were to be admitted in the first place. A message from so august an assembly, at so great a distance, (for Jordan was a day’s journey distant from Jerusalem<sup>q</sup>; according to Josephus<sup>r</sup>, it was 210 furlongs, or 26 miles and a quarter, and by the hands of persons of such character and figure, was doing John a great deal of honour, and serves to make his testimony of Christ the more public and remarkable; and it also shews what a noise John’s ministry and baptism made among the Jews, that it even reached Jerusalem, and the great council of the nation; and likewise the question put to him, which by John’s answer seems to intimate as if it was thought he was the Messiah, shews the opinion that was entertained of him, and even the sanhedrim might not be without thoughts this way: and the question they put by their messengers might not be, as some have thought, to ensnare John, nor out of disrespect to Jesus, who, as yet, was not made manifest; but might be in good earnest, having, from many circumstances, reason to think there might be something in the people’s opinion of him; since, though the government was not wholly departed from Judah, yet they could not but observe it was going away apace, an Idumean having been upon the throne for some years, placed there by the Roman senate; and now the government was divided among his sons by the same order; Daniel’s weeks they could not but see were just accomplishing; and besides, from the uncommon appearance John made, the austerity of his life, the doctrine of remission of sins he preached, and the new ordinance of baptism he administered, they might be ready to conclude he was the person.

Ver. 20. *And he confessed, and denied not, &c.*] He freely, and without any reserve, declared, and in the plainest and strongest terms professed to the messengers before all the people, that he was not the Messiah;

nor did he retract his confession, or draw in his words again, or drop any thing that looked doubtful or suspicious; *but confessed, I am not the Christ:* he stood to it, and insisted on it, that he was not that illustrious person; nor had they any reason to entertain such an opinion of him; nor would he have them do so; they might assure themselves he was not Christ.

Ver. 21. *And they asked him, what then? art thou Elias? &c.*] Elijah, the prophet; the Tishbite, as Nonnus in his paraphrase expresses it; who was translated, soul and body, to heaven: the Jews had a notion that that prophet would come in person a little before the coming of the Messiah; see the note on Matt. xvii. 10. wherefore these messengers inquire, that since he had so fully satisfied them that he was not the Messiah, that he would as ingenuously answer to this question, if he was Elias, or no: *and he saith, I am not;* that is, he was not Elijah the prophet that lived in Ahab’s time, and was called the Tishbite; for John’s answer is to the intention of their question, and their own meaning in it, and is no contradiction to what Christ says of him, Matt. xi. 14. that he was the Elias that was to come; for he was the person meant by him in Mal. iv. 5. though not in the sense the Jews understood it; nor is it any contradiction to what the angel said to Zacharias, Luke i. 17. for he does not say that John should come in the body, but in the power and spirit of Elias; see the note on Matt. xi. 14. *Art thou that prophet?* Jeremiah, whom some of the Jews have thought to be the prophet Moses spoke of, in Deut. xviii. 15. and expected that he would appear about the times of the Messiah; see Matt. xvi. 14. or any one of the ancient prophets risen from the dead, which they also had a notion of, Luke ix. 8, 19. or, as it may be rendered, *art thou a prophet?* for prophecy had long ceased with them: *and he answered, no;* he was not Jeremiah, nor any one of the old prophets risen from the dead, nor a prophet in the sense they meant: he was not like one of the prophets of the Old Testament; he was a prophet, and more than a prophet, as Christ says, Matt. xi. 9. yet not such a prophet as they were; his prophesying lay not so much in predicting future events, as in pointing out Christ, and preaching the doctrine of the remission of sins by him.

Ver. 22. *Then said they unto him, who art thou? &c.*] Since, as yet, he had only answered in negatives, who he was not, that he was not the Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet; they desire he would give them a positive account who he was: *that we may give answer to them that sent us;* that their labour might not be in vain; that they might not come so far for nothing, without knowing who he was; and that they might be capable of giving an account of him to the sanhedrim: *what sayest thou of thyself?* they insisted on it, that he would openly, and honestly declare who he was, and what was his office and business; that from his own mouth, and not from the opinion and conjectures of others, they might represent him in a

<sup>p</sup> Misa. Sanhedrim, c. 1. sect. 5.

<sup>q</sup> Maimon. Hiltch. Sanhedrim, c. 9. sect. 1, 2.

<sup>r</sup> Misa. Maaser Shevi, c. 5. sect. 2. Juchasin, fol. 65. 9. Jarchi in Isa. xxiv. 16.

<sup>s</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 4.

<sup>t</sup> Baal Haturim in Deut. xviii. 15. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 127. 4. & 142. 4. Sippre in Jarchi in Jer. i. 5.

true light to those who had deputed them on this errand.

Ver. 23. *And he said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, &c.*] These words are cited by the other evangelists, and applied to John the Baptist; but then they are only to be considered as their citation, and as an application of them to him by them: but here they are used by John himself, who both expresses them, and interprets them of himself; and in which he was undoubtedly under the infallible direction of the blessed spirit; and which confirms the sense of the evangelists, who apply the words to him. The Jews give a different interpretation of the words; though one of their celebrated commentators<sup>u</sup> owns, that the comforts spoken of in the preceding verses are what will be in the days of the King Messiah: one of them<sup>v</sup> interprets, *the voice*, of the Holy Ghost; and so far it may be true, as John was filled with the Holy Ghost, and he spake by him in his ministry: and another<sup>z</sup>, of the resurrection of the dead, or the voice that will be heard then, which will be the voice of the archangel: though another of<sup>y</sup> them better explains it by, *הים המבשרים*, *they are they that bring glad tidings*, or good news: such are Gospel preachers; only it should have been in the singular number: for the text speaks but of one voice; of one person crying; and of John the Baptist, who brought the good news, and glad tidings, that the Messiah was coming, yea, that he was already come, and that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. The Hebrew writers generally understand the passage, of the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, and of removing all obstructions in their way to Jerusalem; to which sense the Targum on the place inclines, which paraphrases it thus; “the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare the way before the people of the Lord, “make in the plain, paths before the congregation of “our God;” but not the people of the Lord, but the Lord himself, and not the congregation of God, but God himself is intended; whose ways were to be prepared, and made plain, even the King Messiah; which was to be done, and was done by his forerunner John the Baptist, who, with great modesty, expresses himself in the language of this Scripture, as being a prophecy of him: he was a *voice*, but not a mere voice; nor was his ministry a mere voice of words, as the law was, but it was the sweet voice of the Gospel, proclaiming the coming of the Messiah; encouraging men to believe in him; calling them to evangelical repentance, and publishing remission of sins in the name of Christ, and pointing him out as the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world: this voice was *crying*; it was not a still small voice, it was a very loud one; John lifted up his voice like a trumpet; he delivered himself with great zeal and fervency; and it was *in the wilderness* where this voice was heard, in the wilderness of Judea, as in Matt. iii. 1. where Jesus came preaching; the Ethiopic version renders the words, *I am the voice of one that goes about in the wilderness*; that is, in the several towns and villages which were in the wilderness, to whom John went

and preached the Gospel: the Persic version reads, *I am the voice and cry which cometh out of the wilderness*; referring to the place where he was before he entered on his public ministry, and from whence he came; for he was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel, Luke i. 80. The words this voice cried were, *make straight the way of the Lord*; he called upon persons to reform their ways, and walk in the way of the Lord, to repent of their sins, believe in Christ, and submit to the ordinance of baptism: the Ethiopic version reads, *the way of God*; and such was the person he came to prepare the way for, even the son of God, and who is truly and properly God, *as said the prophet Esaias*, in Isa. xl. 3. see the note on Matt. iii. 3.

Ver. 24. *And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.*] Who were the strictest sect of religion among the Jews; were very zealous of the traditions of the elders, and professed an expectation of the Messiah; and were famous in the nation for their knowledge and learning, as well as for their devotion and sanctity: and many of them were in the sanhedrim, as appears from John iii. 1. Acts xxiii. 6. see the note on Matt. iii. 7.

Ver. 25. *And they asked him, and said unto him, &c.*] They put a question, by saying to him, *why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?* since he denied that he was the Messiah, or Elias that was to come before the Messiah, according to the expectation of the Jews, or that prophet, or a prophet, they demand by what authority he introduced a new rite and ordinance among them, which they had never been used to; for though there were divers washings or baptisms among them, enjoined by the law of Moses in certain cases, and others which obtained by tradition, as the immersion of themselves after they had been at market, and of cups, pots, brazen vessels, and tables, yet nothing of this kind that John administered: and as for the baptism of proselytes, it seems to be of a later date than this, and had no manner of likeness to it. The ordinance John administered was such, as they apprehended that no one ought to practise, unless he was the Messiah, or his forerunner, or some eminent prophet; they insist upon it therefore, that since he denied he was either of these, that he would shew his credentials, and what commission he had from God to baptize; or they suggest he was liable to be called to an account by their sanhedrim, and be condemned as a false prophet, or an innovator in religious affairs. From hence it appears, that the Jews expected that baptism would be administered in the times of the Messiah, and his forerunner; but from whence they had this notion, it is not easy to say, whether from Zech. xiii. 1. as Grotius, or from Ezek. xxxvi. 25. as Lightfoot; nor do they speak contemptibly of it, but rather consider it as a very solemn affair, to be performed only by great personages: and this may teach modern ones to think and speak more respectfully of this ordinance than they do, who have given themselves great liberties, and have treated it with much contempt and virulence;

<sup>u</sup> Kimchi in Isa. xl. 1.  
<sup>v</sup> Jarchi in Isa. xl. 3.

<sup>x</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 70. 4.  
<sup>y</sup> Aben Ezra in Isa. ib.

calling it by the names of uncleanness, abomination, filthy water, and a devoting of persons to Satan<sup>2</sup>: likewise, it is clear from hence, that they expected that this ordinance would be first administered by some person of very great note, either some very famous prophet, as Elias, whom they looked for before the coming of the Messiah, or else the Messiah himself, and not by a common teacher, or any ordinary person; wherefore this rite, as performed by John, could have no likeness with any thing that was in common use among them: besides, it was expressly done in the name of the Messiah, Acts xix. 5. therefore they conclude he, or his forerunner, must be come; and that John must be one, or other of them, otherwise, why did he administer it? and it is also evident from hence, that no such practice had obtained before among them, or they would not have been alarmed at it, as they were; nor would they have troubled themselves to have sent after John, and inquire of him who he was, that should practise in this manner.

Ver. 26. *John answered them, saying, I baptize with water, &c.*] Or in water, so the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions render it. The sense of the answer is, that he indeed baptized persons in water, which was all that he could do, or pretended to do; and he owned, that this was a new rite, and that he was the administrator of a new ordinance; but he suggests, as may be supplied from Matt. iii. 11. that there was one at hand, and even now among them, that should baptize, and so it is read in one of Stephens's copies here, in the Holy Ghost, and in fire; and it was by his authority, by a commission he had received from him, that he baptized in water; and that his speedy manifestation and appearance as the Messiah, which would be confirmed by his power of baptizing in the Holy Ghost, and by his ministry and miracles, would be a sufficient vindication of his conduct, and support him in his administration of water-baptism: *but there standeth one among you; or hath stood*, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; referring, not to his being among them at twelve years of age, but a few days ago when he came to John to be baptized, and was baptized by him; for from ver. 29 'tis plain he was not now, or to-day, as Nonnus expresses it, standing in the midst of them. The Ethiopic version renders it, *there is one about to stand among you*, as he did the next day: though the meaning of the phrase may only be, that he was then in being, and dwelt somewhere among them, and not that he was personally present at that time: *whom ye know not*: neither from whence he is, nor who he is, or what is his work and office; neither the dignity of his person, nor the end of his coming into the world, nor the nature of his business in it.

Ver. 27. *He it is who coming after me, &c.*] Both into the world, and into the ministry of the word; for John was before Christ, in both these respects, though greatly behind him in others, and therefore he adds, *is preferred before me*: being not only of a more excellent nature, the son of God, and of an higher extract, the Lord from heaven; but in an higher office, and having greater gifts, and the spirit of God without measure on

him; and also being more followed by the people; for John decreased, but he increased: or rather the words may be rendered, *who was before me*; being the eternal son of God, whose goings-forth were of old, from everlasting; who was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was; the first-born, or first bringer-forth of every creature; and therefore must be before all things, which are created by him; see the note on ver. 15. *Whose shoes latchet I am not worthy to unloose*; which was one of the meanest services done by a servant to his master; see the note on Matt. iii. 11.

Ver. 28. *These things were done in Bethabara, &c.*] That is, this testimony was bore by John; and this discourse passed between him and the Pharisees, at the place here mentioned; which was a passage over Jordan, where much people walked to go on the other side, *beyond Jordan*; and where also John was baptizing; which brought a great concourse of people together: so that this witness was bore in a very public manner, and before a large number; and it is to this that Christ refers, in ch. v. 33. for this was so well known, that there was no hiding or denying it: the place where this conversation passed, is in the Vulgate Latin, and all the eastern versions, and in the Alexandrian copy, and many other copies, and so in Nonnus, called Bethany; but as De Dieu observes, Bethany was not beyond Jordan, nor in the wilderness of Judea, but near to Jerusalem, about two miles distant from it; nor was it situated by waters convenient for baptizing, unless they went to the brook Cedron, which indeed was not far from it; but it is clear from the history, that John was not so near Jerusalem; nor did that brook which might be forded over, continues the same learned author, seem fit and proper enough, *mergendis baptizandorum corporibus, for plunging the bodies of those that were to be baptized*; wherefore he rightly concludes, that either this reading is an error, or there was another Bethany near Jordan: Bethabara signifies *the house of passage*, and is thought to be the place where the Israelites passed over Jordan, to go into the land of Canaan, Josh. iii. 16, 17. And which, as it must be a very convenient place for the administration of baptism by immersion, used by John, so it was very significant of the use of this ordinance; which is, as it were, the passage, or entrance, into the Gospel church-state; for persons ought first to be baptized, and then be admitted into a Gospel church, according to the example of the primitive Christians, Acts ii. 41. but whether there was a place of this name, where the Israelitea went over Jordan, is not certain; and if there was, it does not seem so likely to be the place here designed, since that was right over-against Jericho; whereas this seems to be rather further off, and over-against Galilee: there were several passages of Jordan, Judges xii. 5, 6. There was a bridge over it, between the lake of Samochon and Gennesareth, now called Jacob's bridge, where Jacob is supposed to have wrestled with the angel, and to have met with his brother Esau; and there was another over it at Chammath, near Tiberias, and in other places: and it might be at one of these passages, by which they went over into Galilee,

<sup>2</sup> Vet. Nizzachon, p. 56, 62, 64, 70, 74, 77, 148, 191, 193.

that John pitched upon to continue preaching and baptizing at; partly because of the number of people that went over, to whom he had the opportunity of preaching; and partly, for the sake of baptizing those who became proper subjects of that ordinance through his ministry. Some have thought, that this place is the same with Beth-barah, in Judges vii. 24. which was either in the tribe of Ephraim or of Manassch, and not far from the parts where this place must be, but was on this side Jordan; and so Beza says the words should be rendered; and those who came to John at Jordan, are not said to pass over that river: others are of opinion, that Bethabara is the same with Betharabah, Josh. xv. 6, 61. since this is called Bethabara by the Septuagint, in Josh. xviii. 22. However, be it what place soever, and wheresoever, it was no doubt very proper for John's purpose; and therefore he chose it, and for a while continued at it: and here, says Jerom<sup>a</sup>, "to this day many of the brethren, that is, of the number of believers, desiring there to be born again, are baptized in the vital stream;" such veneration had they for the place where John first baptized: Origen says<sup>b</sup>, that in his time it was said, that Bethabara was shewed by the banks of Jordan, where they report John baptized.

Ver. 29. *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, &c.*] Not to be baptized, for he had been baptized before by him. This seems to have been after Christ had been forty days in the wilderness, from whence he now returned, and came to attend on John's ministry; both to do honour to him, and that he might be made manifest by him; and this was the day after John had bore such a testimony concerning him, to the priests and Levites; and which Christ the omniscient God, knew full well, and therefore came at this season, when the minds of the people were prepared by John's testimony, to expect and receive him: one part of the work of Elias, which the Jews assign unto him, and the precise time of his doing it, exactly agree with this account of John the Baptist; they say<sup>c</sup>, that his work is "to bring to them (the Israelites) the good news of the coming of the Redeemer; and this shall be, יום אחד, *one day*, before the coming of the Messiah; and this is that which is written, *behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord*, Mal. iv. 5." For John, the day before Christ came to him, had signified to the priests and Levites, that the Messiah was already come; and now on the day following, seeing him, pointed as with his finger to him, and saith, *behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*: he calls him a *lamb*, either with respect to any lamb in common, for his harmlessness and innocence; for his meekness and humility; for his patience; and for his usefulness, both for food and clothing, in a spiritual sense; as well as for his being to be a sacrifice for the sins of his people: or else with respect to the lambs that were offered in sacrifice, under the legal dispensation; and that either to the passover lamb, or rather to the lambs of the daily sacrifice, that were offered morning and evening; since

the account of them best agrees with what is said of this Lamb of God, who was slain in type, in the morning of the world, or from the foundation of the world; and actually in the evening of the world, or in the end of it; and who has a continued virtue to take away the sins of his people, from the beginning, to the end of the world; and their sins, both of the day and night, or which are committed every day: for as they are daily committed, there is need of the daily application of the blood and sacrifice of Christ, to remove them: or of continual looking unto him by faith, whose blood has a continual virtue, to cleanse from all sin: the Jewish doctors say<sup>d</sup>, that "the morning daily sacrifice made atonement for the iniquities done in the night; and the evening sacrifice made atonement for the iniquities that were by day:" and in various things they were typical of Christ, as that they were lambs of the first year, which may denote the weakness of the human nature of Christ, which had all the sinless infirmities of it: they were also without spot, signifying the purity of Christ's human nature, who was holy and harmless, a lamb without spot and blemish; these were offered as a sacrifice, and for the children of Israel only, as Christ has given himself an offering and a sacrifice to God, both in soul and body, for the sins of the mystical Israel of God, the Israel whom God has chosen for himself, whether Jews or Gentiles; for Christ is the propitiation for the sins of both: and these were offered daily, morning and evening; and though Christ was but once offered, otherwise he must have often suffered; yet as he has by one offering put away sin for ever, so there is a perpetual virtue in his sacrifice to take it away, and there is a constant application of it for that purpose; to which may be added, that these lambs were offered with fine flour, oil and wine, for a sweet savour to the Lord; denoting the acceptableness of the sacrifice of Christ to his father, to whom it is for a sweet-smelling savour, Eph. v. 2. And Christ is styled the *Lamb of God*, in allusion to the same, whom the Cabalistic Jews<sup>e</sup> call the secret of the mystery, and כִּבְשֵׁי רִמְכָנָה, *the Lambs of God*; because God has a special property in him; he is his own son; and because he is of his providing and appointing, as a sacrifice for sin, and is acceptable to him as such; and to distinguish him from all other lambs; and to give him the preference, since he does that which they could not do, *taketh away the sin of the world*: by the *sin of the world*, is not meant the sin, or sins of every individual person in the world; for some die in their sins, and their sins go before-hand to judgment, and they go into everlasting punishment for them; which could not be, if Christ took them away: rather, the sin which is common to the whole world, namely, original sin; but then it must be observed, that this is not the only sin Christ takes away; for he also takes away actual sins; and the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read in the plural, *the sins of the world*; and also that this he takes away, only with respect to the elect; wherefore they are the persons intended by the world, as in John vi. 33, 51. whose sin, or sins,

<sup>a</sup> De Locis Hebraicis, fol. 80. L.

<sup>b</sup> Comment. in Joannem, Tom. 3. p. 131.

<sup>c</sup> R. Abraham ben David in Mian. Ediot, c. 8. sect. 7.

<sup>d</sup> R. Menachem, fol. 115. apud Ainsworth, in Exod. xxix. 39.

<sup>e</sup> Raya Mechinna, in Zohar in Lev. fol. 33. 2.

Christ takes away: and a peculiar regard seems to be had to the elect among the Gentiles, who are called the world, in distinction from the Jews, as in John iii. 16. 1 John ii. 2. and the rather, since the lambs of the daily sacrifice, to which the allusion is, were only offered for the sins of the Jews: but John here signifies, that the Lamb of God he pointed at, and which was the antitype of these lambs, not only took away the sins of God's people among the Jews, but the sins of such of them also as were among the Gentiles; and this seems to me to be the true sense of the passage. The phrase *taking away sin*, signifies a taking it up, as Christ did; he took it voluntarily upon himself, and became responsible to divine justice for it; and also a bearing and carrying it, for taking it upon himself, he bore it in his own body on the tree, and carried it away, as the scape-goat did under the law; and so likewise a taking it quite away: Christ has removed it as far as the east is from the west, out of sight, so as never to be seen any more; he has destroyed, abolished, and made an utter end of it: and this is expressed in the present tense, *taketh away*: to denote the continued virtue of Christ's sacrifice to take away sin, and the constant efficacy of his blood to cleanse from it, and the daily application of it to the consciences of his people; and which is owing to the dignity of his person, as the son of God; and to his continual and powerful mediation and intercession: this must be a great relief to minds afflicted with the continual ebullitions of sin, which is taken away by the Lamb of God, as fast as it rises; and who, for that purpose, are called to *behold*, and wonder at, the love and grace of Christ, in taking up, bearing, and taking away sin; and to look to him by faith continually, for everlasting salvation; and love him, and give him the honour of it, and glorify him for it.

Ver. 30. *This is he, of whom it is said, &c.*] Either the day before, as in ver. 27. or some time before that, ver. 15. when he first began to baptize, even before Christ came to be baptized by him, and before he personally knew him; see Matt. iii. 11, 13. *After me cometh a man*; not a mere man, but the man God's fellow: and this is said, not because he was now a grown man, or to shew the truth of his human nature; but seems to be a common Hebraism, and is all one as if it had been said, *after me cometh one*, or a certain person: for the sense of this phrase, and what follows, see the note on ver. 15.

Ver. 31. *And I knew him not, &c.*] Ομματα, by sight, as Nonnus paraphrases it; personally he had never seen him, nor had had any conversation and familiarity with him; for though they were related to each other, yet lived at such a distance, as not to know one another, or have a correspondence with each other: John was in the deserts, until the day of his shewing unto Israel; and Christ dwelt with his parents at Nazareth, in a very mean and obscure manner, till he came from thence to Jordan to John, to be baptized by him; and which was the first interview they had: and this was so ordered by providence, as also this is said by John, lest it should be thought, that the testimony he bore to Jesus, and the high commendation he gave of him, arose from the relation between them; or from a confederacy and compact they had entered into: *but that*

*he should be made manifest to Israel*; who had been for many years hid in Galilee, an obscure part of the world: and though he had been known to Joseph and Mary, and to Zacharias and Elisabeth, and to Simeon and Anna; yet he was not made manifest to the people of Israel in common; nor did they know that the Messiah was come: but that he might be known: *therefore am I come baptizing with water*; or *in water*, as before: for by administering this new ordinance, the people were naturally put upon inquiry after the Messiah, whether come, and where he was, since such a new rite was introduced; and besides, John, when he baptized any, he exhorted them to believe on him, which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus; and moreover, by Christ's coming to his baptism, he came to have a personal knowledge of him himself, and so was capable of pointing him out, and making him manifest to others, as he did.

Ver. 32. *And John bare record, &c.*] The same day that he said the above things, and at the same time: *saying, I saw the spirit*; that is, of God, as is said in Matt. iii. 16. and which Nonnus here expresses; and the Ethiopic version reads, *the Holy Ghost, descending from heaven like a dove*; at the time of his baptism; see the note on Matt. iii. 16. *And it abode upon him*; for some time; so long as that John had a full sight of it, and so was capable of giving a perfect account of it, and bearing a certain and distinct testimony to it.

Ver. 33. *And I knew him not, &c.*] That is, before he came to be baptized by him; when it was secretly suggested to him who he was, and the following signal was given him, to confirm him in it: *but he that sent me to baptize with water*; or *in water*; that is, God; for John's mission was from God, as in ver. 6. and his baptism from heaven; he had a divine warrant and commission for what he did: *the same said unto me*; either by an articulate voice, or by a divine impulse on his mind, or by the revelation of the spirit: *upon whom thou shalt see the spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost*; that is, the Messiah; see the notes on Matt. iii. 11, 16.

Ver. 34. *And I saw, &c.*] The spirit descending from heaven as a dove, and lighting upon Jesus, and remaining some time on him; this he saw with his bodily eyes: *and bore record*: at the same time, before all the people that were with him, when he baptized Jesus: *that this is the son of God*; the natural, essential, and eternal son of God; who being sent in the fulness of time, had assumed a human nature, in which he became subject to all ordinances, and had the spirit without measure bestowed on him; and which was an evidence who he was, and of what he came about.

Ver. 35. *Again, the next day after, &c.*] The third day from the priests and Levites having been with John, to know who he was. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, leave out the word *again*: *John stood, and two of his disciples*; one of these was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, as appears from ver. 40. and very likely the other was the Evangelist John, the writer of this Gospel, who always chooses to conceal himself. John the Baptist stood, and these disciples by him, in some certain place near Jordan, where he was preaching and baptizing.

Ver. 36. *And looking upon Jesus as he walked, &c.*] Either by them; or as he was going from them to his lodgings; it being toward the close of the day, when John had finished his work for that day, and the people were departing home: John fixed his eyes intently on Christ, with great pleasure and delight, and pointing at him, *he saith, behold the Lamb of God*: as in ver. 29. where 'tis added, *which taketh away the sin of the world*; and which the Ethiopic version subjoins here.

Ver. 37. *And the two disciples heard him speak, &c.*] The above words, and took notice of them; faith in Christ came by hearing them; they reached their hearts, and they found their affections, and the desires of their souls, to be after Christ: *and they followed Jesus*; left their master, and went after him, in order to get some acquaintance with him, and receive some instructions from him.

Ver. 38. *Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, &c.*] That is, *him*, as the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions add: he saw by their walk, and by their countenances, that they were following him; and which he knew before he turned himself: he knew what John had said, and what an effect it had upon these disciples, and what was working in their hearts, and how desirous they were of coming up to him, and conversing with him; and therefore he turned himself, that they might have an opportunity of speaking to him; or rather, in order to speak to them first, as he did: *and saith unto them, what seek ye?* This he said, not as ignorant of whom, and what they were seeking, and desirous; but to encourage them to speak to him, which, through fear and bashfulness, they might be backward to do; and therefore, he who will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smouldering flax, but cherishes and encourages the first motions of grace, begins first with them, and treats them in a free and familiar manner; thereby to animate and engage them to use freedom with him, and which end was answered: *they said unto him, Rabbi*; a title which now began to be in much use with the Jews, and which they gave to their celebrated doctors; and these disciples of John, observing how magnificently their master spoke of Jesus, in great reverence to him, addressed him under this character; see the note on Matt. xxiii. 7. *which is to say, being interpreted, master.* These are the words of the evangelist, interpreting the word *Rabbi*, and not of the disciples, and are left out in the Syriac and Persic versions, who, for *Rabbi*, read *our master*, or our *Rabbi*; being said by both the disciples, or by one in the name of both, putting the following question: *where dwellest thou?* signifying, that that was not a proper place, in the public way, to enter into a conversation with him, and acquaint him with what they were desirous of; but should be glad to know where he lodged, that they might wait upon him there, either then, or on the morrow, or at any convenient time.

Ver. 39. *He saith unto them, come and see, &c.*] He gave them an invitation, to go along with him directly, and see with their own eyes, where he dwelt, and there and then converse with him, and at any other

time; to which they had a hearty welcome: *they came and saw where he dwelt*; they accepted of the invitation, and went along with him immediately, and saw, and took notice of the place where he had lodgings, that they might know it, and find it another time; which Dr. Lightfoot conjectures was at Capernaum, which is very probable; since that was his own city, where he paid tribute, where he frequently resorted, and was on the banks of Jordan, near the lake of Genesareth; and these disciples were Galileans: *and abode with him that day*; the remaining part of the day, which they spent in delightful conversation with him; by which they knew that he was the Messiah; at least they were better instructed in this matter, and more confirmed in it. The Arabic version renders it, *they remained with him that his own day*; and Dr. Lightfoot thinks the next day is meant, and that it was the sabbath day, which they kept with him in private devotion and conference: *for it was about the tenth hour*; which, according to the Roman way of reckoning, must be ten o'clock in the morning; so that there was a considerable part of the day before them; but according to the Jewish way of reckoning, who reckon twelve hours to a day, it must be four o'clock in the afternoon, when there were but two hours to night: and this being about the time when the lamb of the daily sacrifice of the evening was offered up, very seasonably did John point unto them, at this time, Christ the Lamb of God, the antitype of that sacrifice; for the daily evening sacrifice was slain at eight and a half, and was offered at nine and a half<sup>r</sup>, or between the ninth and tenth hours of the day. The Ethiopic version renders it, *they remained with him that day unto the tenth hour.*

Ver. 40. *One of the two which heard John speak, &c.*] The above things, concerning Jesus being the Lamb of God: *and followed him*; that is, Jesus, as the Syriac and Arabic versions read; and the Persic version, *Christ*: and the Ethiopic version, *the Lord Jesus*; for not John, but Jesus they followed: *was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother*; see Matt. iii. 18. the other, as before observed, might be the writer of this Gospel.

Ver. 41. *He first findeth his own brother Simon, &c.*] Either before the other disciple, or before he found any other person: after he and the other disciple departed from Christ, being affected with the grace bestowed upon him, and his heart warm with the conversation he had had with him, and transported with joy at finding the Messiah, goes in all haste in search of his relations, friends, and acquaintance, to communicate what he had seen and heard, in order to bring them to the knowledge of the same; for such is the nature of grace, 'tis very communicative, and those that have it, are very desirous that all others should be partakers of it: and the first person he lighted on was Simon, who was afterwards called Peter, who was his own brother; not a brother-in-law, but his own brother, by father and mother's side, and so dear unto him by the ties of nature and blood: *and saith unto him*; with all eagerness imaginable, and in a rapture of joy: *we have found the Messiah*; I, and a fellow disciple have had the Messiah, so often foretold by the

prophets, and so long expected by our fathers, pointed out to us; and we have followed him, and have had conversation with him, and are well assured he is that illustrious person: *which is, being interpreted, the Christ*; which, as in ver. 38. are the words of the evangelist, and not Andrew, and are therefore left out in the Syriac version; the word Messiah needing no interpretation in that language, and which was the language in which Andrew spoke. This name, Messiah, was well known among the Jews, for that great person who was promised, and they expected would come, as a Saviour and Redeemer; though it is not very often mentioned in the books of the Old Testament, chiefly in the following places, Psal. ii. 2. xviii. 50. lxxxix. 39, 51. Dan. ix. 25, 26. but is very much used in the Chaldee paraphrases: Elias Levita<sup>s</sup> says, he found it in more than fifty verses; and Buxtorf<sup>h</sup> has added others to them, and the word appears in *seventy-one* places, which he takes notice of, and are worthy of regard; for they shew the sense of the ancient synagogue, concerning the passages of the Old Testament, respecting the Messiah: this Hebrew word is interpreted by the Greek word, *Christ*; and both signify *anointed*, and well agree with the person to whom they belong, to which there is an allusion in Cant. i. 3. *thy name is as ointment poured forth*: he is so called, because he was anointed from everlasting, to be prophet, priest, and king; see Psal. ii. 6. and lxxxix. 20. Prov. viii. 22, 23. and he was anointed as man, with the oil of gladness, with the graces of the spirit, without measure, Psal. xlv. 7. Acts x. 38. And it is from him the saints receive the anointing, or grace in measure; and are from him called Christians, and are really anointed ones; see 1 John ii. 27. Acts xi. 25. 2 Cor. i. 21. hence it is a name precious to the saints, and savoury to them. These words were delivered by Andrew, in a very exulting strain, expressing great joy; as indeed what can be greater joy to a sensible soul, than to find Christ? which in a spiritual sense, is to have a clear sight of him by faith, to go unto him, and lay hold on him, as the only Saviour and Redeemer: who is to be found in the Scriptures of truth, which testify of him; in the promises of grace, which are full of him; and in the ordinances of it, where he shews himself; for he is not to be found by the light of nature, or by carnal reason, nor by the law of Moses, but by means of the Gospel, and the spirit of God attending that, as a spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him: and happy are those souls that find Christ under his direction; for they find life, spiritual and eternal, in him; a justifying righteousness; free and full pardon of their sins; spiritual food for their souls; and peace, comfort, joy, and rest, and eternal glory: wherefore this must needs be matter of joy unto them, since such a finding is a rich one, a pearl of great price, riches durable and unsearchable; and which a man that has found, would not part with for all the world; but parts with all he has for it; and is what can never be lost again; and, particularly of two sorts of persons, finding Christ must give a

peculiar pleasure, and an inexpressible joy; to such as are under a sense of sin and damnation, and to such who have been under desertion. The phrase of *finding* a person, twice used in this text, and hereafter in some following verses, is frequent in Talmudic and Rabbinic writings; as "he went, *לרבו אשכחיה*, and "found him with Rab".

Ver. 42. *And he brought him to Jesus, &c.*] That is, Andrew brought his brother Simon to Jesus; he persuaded him to go along with him, and shewed him where he was; which discovered great zeal for Christ, being desirous of gaining souls unto him; and great affection to his brother, being heartily concerned that he might know Christ, as well as he; nor did he choose that he should take up with the bare account that he gave of him, but would have him go to him himself, that he might be personally acquainted with him, and instructed by him: and this also shews the readiness and willingness of Simon, to see and hear Christ himself, and not sit down contented with the bare relation his brother gave: no doubt he found his heart stirred up within him, and the desires of his soul going after Christ; and therefore he at once rose up and went with Andrew to him; and thus one person may be the means of bringing another to Christ: and it may be observed, that Peter was not the first of the apostles that was called by Christ, or first knew him; Andrew was before him, and the means of bringing him into an acquaintance with him; had it been the reverse, the Papists would have improved it in favour of Peter, as the prince of the apostles: this clause is omitted in the Persic version. *And when Jesus beheld him*; as he was coming, or come to him: he had beheld him before in the glass of his father's purposes and decrees; he had viewed him in his blood, and said unto him, live; and he now looked upon him with a look of love, of complacency, and delight: *he said, thou art Simon, the son of Jona*; thy name is Simon, and thy father's name is Jona: he knew both their names, though he might have never seen their faces, nor heard of them: this he said to give Simon a testimony of his omniscience; and which, no doubt, must strike him at once. Simon, or Simeon, was a common name among the Jews, being the name of one of the twelve patriarchs; see the note on Matt. x. 2. and so likewise was Jona, being the name of a prophet of theirs; see the note on Matt. xvi. 17. and inasmuch as the prophet Jonah was of Geth Ephrah in Zebulon, which was in Galilee; see the note on John vii. 52. this might be a common name among the Galileans; so that there seems no reason why it should be thought to be the same with John, as the Ethiopic version reads it, and by way of interrogation, *art thou not Simon the son of John? Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a stone*; or *Peter*, as it should rather be rendered; and as it is in the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions; and as *Cepha*, or *Cephas*, in the Syriac and Chaldee languages signifies a stone, or rock<sup>k</sup>, so does *Peter* in Greek; hence, the Syriac version here gives no interpretation of the word. Christ not only calls Simon by his

<sup>s</sup> Prefat. ad Methurgemen, & in voce משה.

<sup>h</sup> Lexicon Talmud. p. 1268.

<sup>k</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 108. 1. Zohar in Lev. fol. 15. 3.

<sup>k</sup> Vid. Targum in Psal. xl. 3. & Prov. xvii. 8. T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 6. 1. & Gloss. in ib. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 63. 2.

present name, at first sight of him, but tells him what his future name should be; and which imports, not only that he should be a lively stone in the spiritual building, the church, but should have a considerable hand in that work, and abide firm and steadfast to Christ, and his interest, notwithstanding his fall; and continue constant and immovable until death, as he did. The Jews also, in their writings, call him Simeon Kepha<sup>1</sup>.

Ver. 43. *The day following, &c.*] Not the day after John had pointed out Christ, as the Lamb of God, to two of his disciples; but the day after Simon had been with him, being brought by Andrew: *Jesus would go forth into Galilee*; from whence he came to Jordan, to John, to be baptized by him; and which being done, and his temptations in the wilderness over, it was his will, resolution, and determination, to return to Galilee, the place of his education and conversation, till this time; and therefore chose to begin his ministry, and miracles, there, both to give honour to it, and to fulfil a prophecy in Isa. ix. 1, 2. and besides this, he had doubtless another end in going thither: which was to call some other disciples that dwelt there: *and findeth Philip*; as he was going to Galilee, or rather when in it; not by hap or chance; but knowing where he was, as the shepherd and bishop of souls, looked him up and found him out, and called him by his grace, and to be a disciple of his; see the note on Matt. x. 3. *and saith unto him, follow me*: leave thy friends, thy calling, and business, and become a disciple of mine: and such power went along with these words, that he at once left all, and followed Christ; as the other disciples, Peter, and Andrew, James, and John, and Matthew did, as is recorded of them, though not of this; but the following history makes it appear he did.

Ver. 44. *Now Philip was of Bethsaida, &c.*] A town on the lake of Genesareth, afterwards made a city by Philip the tetrarch, and called Julias, after the name of Caesar's daughter<sup>m</sup>: it was a fishing-town, and had its name from thence; and the disciples that were of it, were of this business: *the city of Andrew and Peter*; or *Simon*, as read the Syriac and Persic versions: three apostles were called out of this place, as mean, and wicked, as it was; see Matt. xi. 21. which was no small honour to it: it is a saying of the Jews<sup>n</sup>, that "a man's place (his native place) does not honour him, but a man honours his place." This was the case here.

Ver. 45. *Philip findeth Nathanael, &c.*] Who was of Cana of Galilee, John xxi. 2. and where, 'tis very likely, Philip found him; since we quickly read of Jesus, and his disciples being there. This man is thought, by some, to be the same with Bartholomew; and so he is called Bartholomew, in a Syriac dictionary<sup>o</sup>; and the rather, since he and Philip are always mentioned together in the account of the apostles, Matt. x. 3. Mark iii. 18. Luke vi. 14. And certain it is, from the above-mentioned place, that Nathanael was among the apostles after our Lord's resurrection; and it is highly probable was one of them<sup>p</sup>: his name might be Nathanael bar Tholmai, the son of Tholmai,

Ptolomy, or Tholomew. It is the same name with Nethaneel, and which is read Nathanael, as here, in 1 Esdras ix. 22. and by the Septuagint on 1 Chron. ii. 14. and xv. 24. and xxiv. 6. and xxvi. 4. 2 Chron. xxxv. 9. Ezra x. 22. Neh. xii. 36. and signifies one given of God; and is the same with Theodore in Greek, and Adcodatus in Latin; a doctor of this name, R. Nathaniel, is mentioned in the Jewish writings<sup>q</sup>: *and saith unto him, we have found him of whom Moses, in the law, and the prophets, did write*. He does not say, that he, and Andrew, and Simon, had found the Messiah; though he designs him by this circumlocution; Nathanael being, as is generally thought, a person well versed in the law, and the prophets, and so would at once know who Philip meant: for Moses, in the law, or Pentateuch, in the five books written by him, frequently speaks of the Messiah as the seed of the woman, that should break the serpent's head; as the seed of Abraham, in whom all nations should be blessed; and as the Shiloh to whom the gathering of the people should be; and as the great prophet, like to himself, God would raise up among the children of Israel, to whom they were to hearken: and as for the prophets, they wrote of his birth of a virgin; of the place of his birth, Bethlehem; of his sufferings, and the glory that should follow; of his resurrection from the dead, his ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God; and of many things relating to his person, and office, and work. And Philip having given this general account of him, proceeds to name him particularly; and affirms him to be *Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph*; that his name was Jesus, which signifies a saviour; and answers to the promises, and prophecies, and character of him in the Old Testament; that he was of Nazareth, a place not above three hours walk from Cana, as Adrichomius says, where Philip and Nathanael were: Nazareth was the place where Christ had lived almost all his days hitherto, and therefore is said to be of it; though Bethlehem was the place of his birth, which Philip might not as yet know: as Capernaum afterwards was his city, or the more usual place of his residence: and that he was the son of Joseph; this Philip says, according to the common opinion of people, for he was supposed to be the son of Joseph; he having married his mother Mary.

Ver. 46. *And Nathanael said unto him, &c.*] Taking notice of, and laying hold on what Philip said, that he was of Nazareth, which at once stumbled, and prejudiced him against Jesus being the Messiah; knowing very well that Bethlehem was to be the place of his birth: *can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?* The whole country of Galilee was had in contempt with the Jews; but Nazareth was so mean a place, that it seems it was even despised by its neighbours, by the Galileans themselves; for Nathanael was a Galilean, that said these words. It was so miserable a place that he could hardly think that any sort of good thing, even any worldly good thing, could come from thence; and it was so wicked, as appears from their murderous designs upon our Lord, that he thought no good man could arise from hence; and still less,

<sup>1</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 20, 21, 22, 23.

<sup>m</sup> Joseph. Antiqu. l. 18. c. 2.

<sup>n</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 21. 2.

<sup>o</sup> Bar Bahul apud Castell. Lex. Polyglott. col. 2437.

<sup>p</sup> Pirke Eliezer, c. 48.



any prophet, any person of great note; and still least of all, that that good thing, or person, the Messiah, should spring from it: so that his objection, and prejudice, proceeded not only upon the oracle in Micah v. 2. which points out Bethlehem as the birth-place of the Messiah; but upon the wickedness, and meanness, and obscurity of Nazareth. *Philip saith unto him, come and see*; who though he might not be master of this point, and knew not how to solve this difficulty, and remove this prejudice from Nathanael's mind, yet persuades him to go with him to Jesus; who, he doubted not, would give him full satisfaction in this, and all other points; and then it would most clearly appear to him, as it had done to him, that he was the true Messiah. The phrase, *תָּא וְרָא, come, see*, is often used in the book of Zohar<sup>9</sup>: so it is, and likewise, *בֵּא וְרָא, come and see*, in the Talmudic writings<sup>10</sup>.

Ver. 47. *Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, &c.* For notwithstanding his prejudices, he was a man of so much uprightness and honesty, that he thought Philip's request was very reasonable; and that it was but right, and fair, that he should see, and hear, and judge, for himself, whether the person Philip spoke of was the Messiah, or no; and therefore he came along with him; and as he was coming, Jesus saw him, who knew all that had passed between him and Philip: *and saith of him*; to those that were standing by him, and in the hearing of Nathanael, *behold an Israelite indeed!* a son of Israel, as the Syriac and Persic versions read; a true son of Jacob's; an honest, plain-hearted man, like him; one that was an Israelite at heart; inwardly so; not one after the flesh only, but after the spirit; see Rom. ii. 28, 29. 1 Cor. x. 18. and which was a rare thing at that time; and therefore a note of admiration is prefixed to it; for all were not Israel, that were of Israel; and indeed but a very few then: and *בֶּן יִשְׂרָאֵל, a son of Israel, יִשְׂרָאֵל נָכוֹר, a perfect Israelite*, are<sup>11</sup> said of such who have regard to the articles of the Jewish faith, though not even of the seed of Israel: 'tis added, *in whom there is no guile*; not that he was without sin; nor is this said of him; nor was he in such sense without guile, as Christ himself was; but guile was not a governing sin in him: the course of his life, and conversation, was with great integrity, and uprightness, and without any prevailing hypocrisy and deceit, either to God, or men. This Christ said to shew how much such a character is approved by him; and that he knew the secrets of men's hearts, and the inward frames of their minds.

Ver. 48. *Nathanael saith unto him, whence knowest thou me? &c.* 'This he said as one surprised, that he, who was a stranger to him, should hit upon his general character, and describe the internal state and frame of his soul: this was more surprising to him, than if he had called him by his name Nathanael, as he did Simon; or had said what was the place of his abode; Cana of Galilee; since this ordinarily was only to be observed, and learned, from a long and familiar acquaintance and conversation: by Nathanael's reply, it

looks as if he had no doubt, or fears, about the character Christ gave him; but rather, that he believed it, as every good man must be conscious to himself of his own integrity; only it was amazing to him, how he should know it: *Jesus answered and said unto him*; in order to satisfy him, how he could know this inward temper of his mind, and to give him some undeniable proofs of his omniscience, which he himself must acknowledge, being such as none but an all-seeing eye could discover: *before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee*; in which words Christ gives two instances of his omniscience; the one is, that he knew Philip had called him; he was privy to all that passed between them, though they were alone, and the conversation was had in the most private manner. Christ knew what an account Philip had given of him, and what objection Nathanael had made; and what an invitation Philip had given him to go along with him to Christ, and judge for himself; which is here meant by calling him, and with which he complied: and the other is, that he saw him under the fig-tree before that: he was sitting under it, as men in those countries used to do; see Micah iv. 4. where he might be reading the Scriptures, and meditating upon them; and if, as some observe, he was reading, and thinking upon Jacob's dream, concerning the ladder which reached from earth to heaven, and on which he saw the angels of God ascending and descending, the words of Christ in ver. 51. must strike him with fresh surprise, and give him another convincing proof of his omniscience: or he might be praying here in secret, and so acted a different part from the generality of religious men of that nation, who chose to pray in synagogues, and corners of the streets, that they might be seen; and likewise proved him to be what Christ had said of him, a true and rare Israelite, without guile and hypocrisy, which were so visible and prevailing among others. It was usual with the doctors to read, and study in the law, under fig-trees, and sometimes, though rarely, to pray there. It is said<sup>12</sup>, "R. Jacob, and his companions, were sitting, studying in the law, תַּרְוֹת דְּרֵינָא תַּמְיָנָא, under a certain fig-tree." And the rule they give about praying, on, or under one, is thus<sup>13</sup>: "he that prays on the top of an olive-tree, or on the top of a fig-tree, or on any other trees, must come down, and pray below." It is said of Nathanael, in the Syriac dictionary<sup>14</sup>; that his mother laid him under a fig-tree, when the infants were slain, i. e. at Bethlehem; which, if it could be depended upon, must be to Nathanael a surprising and undeniable proof of the deity of Christ, and of his being the true Messiah; since, at that time, he was an infant of days himself, and was the person Herod was seeking to destroy, as the Messiah, and king of the Jews.

Ver. 49. *Nathanael answered and saith unto him, &c.* Being fully convinced of his omniscience by these instances: *Rabbi*; that is, master, as it is interpreted in ver. 38. and is not here, because it is there: *thou art the son of God*; not by creation, for this would be to say no more of him, than may be said of every man; nor

<sup>9</sup> In Gen. fol. 13. 1. & 14. 3. & 16. 1, 2. & in Exod. fol. 83. 4. & passim.

<sup>10</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 9. 1. & 23. 2. & 24. 1. Kiddushin, fol. 20. 1. & 23. 1. & Sota, fol. 5. 1, 2. & passim.

<sup>12</sup> Addareth Eliahu apud Trigland. de Sect. Karzororum, c. 10. p. 175, 176.

<sup>13</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 5. 3. Vid. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 16. 4.

<sup>14</sup> Ib. col. 1. & T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 16. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Bar Bahluli apud Castell. Lexic. Polyglott. col. 2437.

by adoption, for in that sense Nathanael himself was a son of God, and many others; nor on account of his wonderful incarnation, which, 'tis very likely, at this time Nathanael knew nothing of; nor by reason of his resurrection from the dead, which, as yet, was not, and still less might be known by this person; nor because of his office, as Mediator, for this is expressed in the next clause; but by nature, as being of the same essence, and possessed of the same perfections God is; and of which he was convinced by the instances he gave of his omniscience; for it was from hence, and no other consideration, that he concludes him to be the son of God: wherefore this phrase must be understood of him, not as Mediator, but as a divine person; as the natural, essential, and eternal son of God; and who is truly and properly God: he adds, *thou art the King of Israel*; having in view, no doubt, the passage in *Psal. ii. 6, 7.* where the characters of Son of God, and King of Zion, meet in the same person: not King of Israel, in a literal sense; though he was the son of David, and a descendant of his in a right line, and was of the royal line, and had a legal right to the throne of Israel; and Nathanael might have a view to this, being tinged with the common national prejudice, that the Messiah would be a temporal prince: but his kingdom is not of this world; nor with observation; but is spiritual; and he is a King over Israel in a spiritual sense, even of saints, whether Jews or Gentiles: whom he conquers by his power, and rules in their hearts by his spirit, and grace; and protects, and defends them from all their enemies.

Ver. 50. *Jesus answered and said unto him, &c.*] Not as reproving him for his faith, as if he was too credulous, and too easily gave into the belief of Christ, as the son of God, and true Messiah, upon these single expressions of his; but as approving of it, and surprised at it: *because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou?* some read the words, not by way of interrogation, but as an assertion; *thou believest, or hast believed,* as the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Persic versions: *thou shalt see greater things than these;* meaning that he should have larger discoveries of his person, nature, and perfections, and should see things done by him, much more surprising than any thing he had seen yet; referring to the miracles of raising the dead, casting out devils, and healing all manner of diseases.

Ver. 51. *And he saith unto him, verily, verily, I say unto you, &c.*] Not only to Nathanael, but to the rest of the disciples that were then with him; and to shew himself to be the *Amen*, and faithful witness, as well as more strongly to asseverate what he was about to say, he doubles the expression: *hereafter you shall see heaven open*; either in a literal sense, as it had been at his baptism; or, in a mystical sense, that there should be a clearer manifestation of heavenly truths made by his ministry; and that the way into the holiest of all should be made more manifest; and a more familiar intercourse be opened between God and his people; and also between angels and saints: *and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the son of man*; or *to the son of man*, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it; meaning himself in human nature; the second Adam, and seed of the woman; and is expressive both of the truth, and infirmity of that nature. Reference may here be had to the ladder Jacob dreamed of, in *Gen. xxviii. 12.* which was a representation of Christ, in his person, as God-man; who, as God, was in heaven, whilst he, as man, was on earth; and in his office, as Mediator between God and man, making peace between them both; and in the ministrations of angels to him in person, and to his body the church. And it is observable, that some of the Jewish writers understand the ascent, and descent of the angels, in *Gen. xxviii. 12.* to be, not upon the ladder, but upon Jacob; which makes the phrase there still more agreeable to this; and so they render עָלָיו, in ver. 13. not *above it*, but *above him*. Or the sense is, that there would be immediately made such clearer discoveries of his person, and grace by his ministry, and such miracles would be wrought by him in confirmation of it, that it would look as if heaven was open, and the angels of God were continually going to and fro, and bringing fresh messages, and performing miraculous operations; as if the whole host of them were constantly employed in such services: and this the rather seems to be the sense, since the next account we have, is, of the beginning of Christ's miracles to manifest forth his glory in Cana of Galilee, where Nathanael lived; and since the word, rendered *hereafter*, signifies, *from henceforward*; or, as the Persic version renders it, *from this hour*; though the word is left out in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions.

## C H A P. II.

Ver. 1. *AND the third day there was a marriage, &c.*] Either from the second testimony bore by John the Baptist concerning Christ, and from the call of Simon Peter, which seem to be of the same date; see *chap. i. 35, 36, 42, 43.* or from Christ's coming into Galilee; or from the conversation he had with Nathanael; from either of which the date is taken, it matters not; the first is as agreeable and plain, as any. There is much dispute, and many rules with the Jews about the times, and days of marriage: "a virgin, (they

" say <sup>2</sup>), marries on the fourth day (of the week), and a  
" widow on the fifth, because the sanhedrim sit in the  
" cities twice in the week, on the second, and on the  
" fifth days; so that if there is any dispute about vir-  
" ginity, he (the husband) may come betimes to the  
" sanhedrim." This was a law that obtained since  
the times of Ezra; for it is said <sup>3</sup>, "before the order of  
" Ezra, a woman might be married on any day;" but  
in after-times, feast-days, and sabbath-days, were particularly excepted. One of their canons is <sup>b</sup>, "they

<sup>1</sup> Beresbit Rabba, sect. 68. fol. 61. 2. & sect. 69. fol. 61. 3. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Mian. Cetubet, c. 1. sect. 1.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 3. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Mian. Moed Katon, c. 1. sect. 7. & T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 8. 2. & 18. 2.

"don't marry women on a feast day, neither virgins, nor widows." The reason of it was, that they might not mix one joy with another; and lest a man should leave the joy of the feast, for the joy of his wife. The account Maimonides<sup>c</sup> gives of these several things is this; "it is lawful to espouse on any common day, even on the ninth of Ab, whether in the day, or in the night; but they don't marry wives neither on the evening of the sabbath, nor on the first of the week: the decree is, lest the sabbath should be profaned by preparing the feast; for the bridegroom is employed about the feast: and there is no need to say, that it is unlawful to marry a wife on the sabbath-day; and even on the common day of a feast they don't marry wives, as we have explained; because they don't mix one joy with another, as it is said in Gen. xxix. 27. *fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also*: but on the rest of the days it is lawful to marry a wife, any day a man pleases; for he must be employed in the marriage-feast three days before the marriage. A place in which the sanhedrim don't sit, but on the second and fifth days only, a virgin is married on the fourth day; that if there is any objection to her virginity, he (her husband) may come betimes to the sanhedrim: and it is a custom of the wise men, that he that marries one that has been married, he may marry her on the fifth day, that so he may rejoice with her on the fifth day, and on the evening of the sabbath, (i. e. the sixth,) and on the sabbath-day, and may go forth to his work on the first day." But elsewhere 'tis said<sup>d</sup>, that "now they are used to marry on the sixth day of the week." Yea<sup>e</sup>, that "it is lawful to marry, and to make the feast on the sabbath-day." But whether this marriage was of a virgin, or a widow, cannot be known; nor with certainty can it be said on what day of the week it was: if that day was a sabbath-day on which the disciples abode with Christ, as Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, then it must be on the first day that Christ went into Galilee, and found Philip, and conversed with Nathanael; and if this third day is reckoned from John's second testimony, it must be on a Tuesday, the third day of the week; but if from Christ's going into Galilee, then it must be on a Wednesday, the fourth day of the week, the day fixed by the Jewish canon for the marriage of a virgin. This marriage was in *Cana of Galilee*. The Syriac and Persic versions read, in *Kotne, a city of Galilee*: and which, in the Jewish map, is called קַנְתָּנָא בגליל, *Katna in Galilee*, and is placed in the tribe of Zebulon, which was in Galilee, and not far from Nazareth; and bids fair to be the same place with this; though it is more generally thought<sup>f</sup>, that Cana, in the tribe of Asher, mentioned in Joshua xix. 28, which was also in Galilee, is here meant; and is so called to distinguish it from another Canah, in the tribe of Ephraim, Joshua xvi. 8. and xvii. 9. Josephus<sup>g</sup> speaks of a town, or village, of Galilee, called Cana, which was a day's march from it to Tiberias, and seems to be the same place: and another Jewish

writer<sup>h</sup> says, "to me it appears that Ceper Chana-nia, is Ceper Cana; or the village of Cana, as is clear in Misna Sheviith, c. 9. sect. 1. for there is the beginning of lower Galilee," which also accords with this. Now in the case of marriage, there was some difference between Judea and Galilee, and certain rules were laid down relating thereunto: and 'tis said<sup>i</sup>, "there are three countries, for the celebration of marriages; Judea, the country beyond Jordan, and Galilee;" that is, that were obliged to marry among themselves; so that if any one married a wife out of any of these countries, she was not obliged to go along with him from one country to another<sup>k</sup>: hence it follows, "they don't bring them out from city to city, (i. e. oblige them to go with them from city to city,) nor from town to town; but in the same country they bring them out from city to city, and from town to town." And it is elsewhere observed<sup>l</sup>, that "in Judea, at first, they joined the bridegroom and bride together an hour before they went into the bride-chamber, that so his heart might be lifted up in her; but in Galilee they did not do so: in Judea, at first, they appointed for them two companions, one for him, and another for her, that they might minister to, or wait on the bridegroom, and bride, when they went into the bride-chamber; but in Galilee they did not do so: in Judea, at first, the companions slept in the house where the bridegroom and bride slept; but in Galilee they did not do so." Next we have an account of the persons that were present at this marriage: *and the mother of Jesus was there*; who seems to have been a principal person at this wedding, and was very officious; when wine was wanted, she signified it to her son, and ordered the servants to do whatever he bid them; and since she, and Jesus, and his brethren, were all here, it looks as if it was a relation of her's that was now married: and since these brethren were the kinsmen of Christ, Simon, Judas, and Joses, the sons of Cleophas or Alpheus, whose wife was sister to the mother of our Lord; and since one of them, to distinguish him from Simon Peter, is called Simon the Canaanite, or an inhabitant of Cana, as some have thought; hence it is conjectured by Dr. Lightfoot, that Alpheus had an house in Cana, and that his family dwelt there, and that it was for one of his family that this marriage-feast was made; see ver. 2, 3, 5, 12. and chap. xix. 25. Matt. xiii. 55. and x. 4. Joseph, the husband of Mary, perhaps, was now dead, since no mention is made of him here, nor any where else, as alive, after Christ had entered on his public ministry.

Ver. 2. *And both Jesus was called, &c.*] Or invited, as being a relation, according to the flesh: *and his disciples, to the marriage*; who were bidden, on his account; and they seem to be these, Andrew, and the other disciple, that followed Jesus, and Simon Peter, and Philip, and Nathanael, who was of this place; and accordingly they all went to it. Christ, and his five disciples, made six of the ten, which were always necessary to be present at the benediction of bride-

<sup>c</sup> Hach. t. Ishot, c. 10. sect. 14, 15.

<sup>d</sup> Pitke Toseph. Cetubot, art. 6.

<sup>e</sup> Ib. art. 28.

<sup>f</sup> Jeron de Locis Hebraicis, fol. 90. B.

<sup>g</sup> La vita sua.

<sup>h</sup> Juchasin, fol. 57. 2.

<sup>i</sup> Misn. Cetubot, c. 12. sect. 10. T. Hieros. Cetubot, fol. 36. 2.

<sup>k</sup> Partenora in ib.

<sup>l</sup> T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 12. 1.

grooms: for so runs the canon<sup>h</sup>; "they don't bless the blessing of bridegrooms, but with ten principal and free men; and the bridegroom may be one of the number." To attend a wedding, was reckoned, with the Jews, an act of beneficence and kindness<sup>i</sup>. Our Lord, being at this wedding, was acting like himself, and his general character, of being free, affable, and courteous; who accepted of every invitation, and refused not to be at any entertainment, made by who it would, or on whatever occasion: and particularly in this instance, it shews his humility in not disdaining his poor relations, but giving them his company at such a time; as also it was bearing a testimony to the institution of marriage, as honourable; and teaches us to rejoice with them that rejoice: and as this was, at the first of Christ's ministry and miracles, 'tis likely it might give the occasion of that calumny cast on him in Matt. xi. 19. The disciples of Christ followed the example of their master. According to the Jewish canons<sup>j</sup>, a disciple of a wise man might not partake of any feast, but what was according to the commandment, as the feast of espousals, and of marriage; and such a feast was this, which Christ and his disciples were at; and so not to be condemned for it, according to their own maxims.

Ver. 3. *And when they wanted wine, &c.*] Or *wine was wanting*; not through the intemperance of the guests, rather through the poverty of the family, who were not able to provide very largely; and it may be by reason of a larger number of guests than were expected; however, so it was ordered by Divine Providence, that there might be an opportunity for Christ to manifest forth his glory: *the mother of Jesus saith unto him, they have no wine*; being concerned for the family, lest they should be put to shame and disgrace, and the entertainment should not proceed with becoming credit and honour; and knowing the power of Christ to help in this time of necessity, she modestly moves it to him, perhaps by a whisper, sitting next him; or, it may be, might call him out, and just drop the hint; being well persuaded of his power, as she might; not from any miracles wrought by him in her family for the support of it, when in distress; for as Christ wrought no miracle, in the time of his public ministry, for the support of himself, or his disciples, but for others, 'tis not likely he should do it for his family in private life; but from the wonderful things told her by the angel that brought the news of her conception, and by the shepherds, and by Simeon and Anna, which she had laid up in her heart; and from his being the Messiah, who, according to the general belief of the nation, was to work miracles; and particularly from the last words of the preceding chapter; see the note there: for she might be present at the delivery of them; and therefore might hope that as this was the first opportunity that offered after, that he would display his power in supplying the family with wine in this time of exigence.

Ver. 4. *Jesus saith unto her, woman, &c.*] Calling

her *woman*, as it was no ways contrary to her being a virgin, Gal. iv. 4. so it was no mark of disrespect; it being an usual way of speaking with the Jews, when they shewed the greatest respect to the person spoken to; and was used by our Lord when he addressed his mother with the greatest tenderness, and strongest affection, John xix. 26. The Jews frequently object this passage to us Christians: one of their writers forms his objection in this manner<sup>k</sup>; "they (the Christians) say, the mother of Jesus is never called a woman in their law; but here her son himself calls her a woman." Another puts it thus<sup>l</sup>; "it is their (the Christians) belief, that Mary, even after she brought forth Jesus, was a virgin; but if she was, as they say, why does not her son call her by the name of virgin? but he calls her a woman, which signifies one known by man, as appears from ch. iv. 2 and viii. 10." To which may be replied, that the mother of Jesus is never called a woman in the New Testament, is not said by us Christians: it is certain she is so called, both here, and elsewhere; but then this is no contradiction to her being a virgin; one, and the same person, may be a virgin, and a woman: the damsel, Abraham's servant was sent to take for wife for his son Isaac, is called a woman; though a virgin that had never known any man, Gen. xxiv. 5, 8, 14, 16, 43, 44. Besides, we don't think ourselves obliged to maintain the perpetual virginity of Mary, the mother of our Lord, it is enough that she was a virgin when she conceived, and when she brought forth her first-born: and as the Jews endeavour to take an advantage of this against the character of Mary, the Papists are very solicitous about the manner in which these words are said, lest they should be thought to contain a reproof, which they can't bear she should be judged worthy of; or suggest any thing to her dishonour, whom they magnify as equal to her son: but certain it is, that the following words, *what have I to do with thee?* shew resentment and reproof. Some render the words, *what is it to thee and me?* and give this as the sense; what concern is this of ours? what business have we with it? let them look to it, who are the principal in the feast, and have the management of it. The Jew<sup>r</sup> objects to this sense of the words, but gives a very weak reason for it: "but I say, (says he,) who should be concerned but the master of the feast? and he was the master of the feast:" whereas it is a clear case that he was one of the guests, one that was invited, ver. 2. and that there was a governor or ruler of the feast, who might be more properly called the master of it than Jesus, ver. 8, 10. However, since Christ afterwards did concern himself in it, it looks as if this was not his meaning. Others render it to the sense we do, *what have I with thee?* as the Ethiopic version; or *what business hast thou with me?* as the Persic version; and is the same with כוה לי ריך, *what have I to do with thee?* used in 1 Kings xvii. 18. and 2 Kings iii. 13. where the Septuagint use the same phrase as here; and such a way of speaking is common with Jewish

<sup>h</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, c. 10. sect. 5. Pirke Eliezer, c. 19. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 9. 3.

<sup>i</sup> Maimon. in Min. Peah, c. 1. sect. 1.

<sup>j</sup> T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 49. 1. & Maimon. Hilchot Deyot, c. 5. sect. 2.

<sup>k</sup> Vet. Nizzachon, p. 222.

<sup>l</sup> R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 42. p. 433.

<sup>r</sup> Vet. Nizzachon, p. 223.

writers hereby signifying, that though, as man, and a son of hers, he had been subject to her, in which he had set an example of obedience to parents; yet, as God, he had a father in heaven, whose business he came to do; and in that, and in his office, as Mediator, she had nothing to do with him; nor was he to be directed by her in that work; or to be told, or the least hint given when a miracle should be wrought by him in confirmation of his mission and doctrine. Moreover, he adds, *mine hour is not yet come*: meaning not the hour of his sufferings and death, in which sense he sometimes uses this phrase; as if the hint was, that it was not proper for him to work miracles as yet, lest it should provoke his enemies to seek his life before his time; but rather the time of his public ministry and miracles, which were to go together, and the one to be a proof of the other; though it seems to have a particular regard to the following miracle, the time of doing that was not yet come; the proper juncture, when all fit circumstances meeting together, it would be both the more useful, and the more illustrious: or his meaning is, that his time of doing miracles in public was not yet; and therefore, though he was willing to do this miracle, yet he chose to do it in the most private manner; so that only a few, and not the principal persons at the feast should know it: wherefore the reproof was not so much on the account of the motion itself, as the unseasonableness of it; and so his mother took it.

Ver. 5. *His mother said unto the servants, &c.*] She took the reproof in good part, and by the words he said, and the manner in which he spake them, or by the looks he gave, and the gestures he might use, she hoped, and even believed, that the thing she moved for would be done; and therefore went immediately to the servants, and gave them the following instructions: *whatsoever he saith unto you, do it*; punctually observe and obey his orders in every circumstance.

Ver. 6. *And there were set six water-pots of stone, &c.*] To distinguish them from other vessels made of different matter: for the Jews had "vessels made of dust, and the dung of beasts, כלי אבנים, vessels of stone, vessels of earth, vessels made of shells, vessels of nitre, vessels made of the bones and skins of fishes." And as these vessels were very likely for washing of hands, such were used for that purpose: their rule is, "they may put water for the hands in all sorts of vessels; in vessels of dung, in stone vessels, and in vessels of earth." At a wedding were set vessels of various sizes to wash hands and feet in; there was one vessel called משיכילא, which the gloss says was a large pitcher, or bason, out of which the whole company washed their hands and their feet; and there was another called משיכלתא, which was a lesser and beautiful bason, which was set alone for the more honourable persons, as for the bride, and for any gentlewoman; and such might be these six stone jars, or pots: after the manner of the purifying of the Jews; or for the purifying of the Jews, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render it; that is, for the washing of

them, their hands and feet, and their vessels, pots, and cups, according to the traditions of the elders; see Mark vii. 2, 3, 4. containing two or three firkins apiece. The Ethiopic version reads, *some held two measures, and some three*; how large the *metreta*, or measure was, which we render a *firkin*, is not certain; 'tis most likely it answered to the *Hebrew bath*, which was a common measure of liquids with the Jews, and held four gallons and a half, or more; see the note on Luke xvi. 6. so that such of these vessels, that held two of these measures, contained nine gallons, and such as held three of them, thirteen gallons and a half; and six of these contained a large quantity of wine, one with another: and which makes the following miracle the greater; and shews the liberality of Christ the more, in providing for the following days of the feast, for a marriage was kept seven days; and for the family, some time after it was over.

Ver. 7. *Jesus saith unto them, &c.*] To the servants that waited at the feast, fill the water-pots with water. The Ethiopic version adds, *to their brims*, as they did. Christ chose the water-pots, and not the vessel, or vessels, or bottles, now empty, out of which they had drank their wine; that it might not be said that there was any left therein, which gave colour and flavour to the water: and he ordered them to be filled with water by the servants, that they might take notice, and be witnesses, that that, and nothing else, was put into them; and up to the brims, so that they could not be capable of having any other liquor infused into them: and they filled them up to the brim; strictly observing the orders of Christ, and the instructions of his mother.

Ver. 8. *And he saith unto them, draw out now, &c.*] As soon as ever the vessels were filled with water, without any more delay, he ordered the servants to draw out of those larger, into lesser vessels; he does not say what, water or wine: and bear unto the governor of the feast; who either had the ordering and management of the feast, and the command of the whole affair; hence the Ethiopic version calls him, *the master of the waiters*, or servants: or he was the chief guest, as the word seems to import, who sat, or rather lay, on the chief couch at the table; and so a proper person to begin with, and put the cup round: or else he might be doctor or chaplain: for such an one was necessary at a marriage; since there were six or seven benedictions to be pronounced; and particularly a blessing was said over the cup of wine: for if there was any wine, a cup of it was brought, and he blessed over it first, and ordered every thing concerning the cup; and this made up seven blessings at such a time; and therefore was a very fit person to bear the wine to first: and they bore it; the servants having drawn out of the stone vessels, by cocks, into smaller ones, carried the liquor, as they were ordered, to the above person.

Ver. 9. *When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water, &c.*] The Persic version reads, *tasted of the wine*, and adds, what is not in the text, *it was of a very grateful savour*: but the sense is, he tasted of that which

\* Vid. Kimchi in Psal. ii. 12. Bechinat Olam, p. 70.

† Mian. Celim, c. 10. sect. 1. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

‡ Mian. Yadaim, c. 1. sect. 2.

\* Gloss. in T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 77. 2.

† Maimon. Hilchot Iehot, c. 10. sect. 12, 12.

‡ Ib. sect. 3, 4.

was before water, but now *was made wine*; not in such sense as the Papists pretend that the bread and wine, in the Lord's supper, are transubstantiated into the body and blood of Christ, by the consecration of the priest; after which they appear to have the same properties of bread and wine as before; but this water, that was turned into wine, ceased to be what it was before, and became what it was not: it had no more the properties, the colour, and taste of water, but of wine; of which the whole company were judges: *and knew not whence it was*; from whence it came, where it was had, nor any thing of the miracle that was wrought, and therefore was a proper person to have it put into his hands first; since it can't be thought he should say what he does in the following verse, from any compact with Christ, or in favour of him. *But the servants which drew the water knew*: they knew from whence they had it, out of the water-pots; and they knew that they filled them with water; and that that liquor, which the ruler of the feast had in his hands, and commended as most excellent wine, was drawn out of them; and that there was no juggle, nor deceit in the case: and, upon tasting of it, *the governor of the feast called the bridegroom to him*; out of the place where he sat, and which might not be far from him.

Ver. 10. *And saith unto him, &c.*] The following words; expressing the common custom used at feasts: *every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine*; that is, it is usual with men, when they make entertainments, first to give the guests the best, the most generous, and strongest-bodied wine; as being most suitable for them, and they being then better able to bear it, and it being most for the credit of the maker of the feast: *and when men have well drunk*; not to excess, but freely, so as that they are exhilarated; and their spirits cheerful, but their brains not intoxicated: so the word, as answering to the Hebrew word שָׂרָב, is used by the Septuagint in Gen. xliii. 34. and Cant. v. 1. *then that which is worse*: not bad wine, but τὸν ἁπλοῦν, *that which is lesser*; a weaker-bodied wine, that is lowered, and of less strength, and not so intoxicating, and which is fittest for the guests. So Martial<sup>2</sup> advises Sextilianus, after he had drank the tenth cup, not to drink the best wine, but to ask his host for wine of Laletania, which was a weaker and lower sort of wine. *But thou hast kept the good wine until now*; which shews he knew nothing of the miracle wrought. And as the bridegroom here did, in the apprehension of the ruler of the feast, at this his marriage, so does the Lord, the husband of the church, in the marriage-feast of the Gospel; and so he will do at the marriage-supper of the lamb. The Gospel, which may be compared to wine for its purity, pleasant taste, and generous effects in reviving drooping spirits, refreshing weary persons, and comforting distressed minds, as also for its antiquity, was published before the coming of Christ, in the times of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets, but in a lower and weaker way; at sundry times, here a little, and there a little, by piecemeals, as it were; and in divers manners, by promises, prophecies, types, shadows, and

sacrifices; and was attended with much darkness and bondage: but under the Gospel dispensation, which is compared to a marriage-feast, it is more fully dispensed, more clearly published, and more freely ministered. The whole of it is delivered, and with open face beheld; and saints are made free by it; it is set in the strongest and clearest light; the best wine is reserved till now; God has provided some better thing for us, Heb. xi. 40. And so with respect to the future state of the saints, their best things are kept for them till last. They have many good things now; as the Gospel, Gospel ordinances, the blessings, and promises of grace, the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, the presence of God, and communion with Christ, at least at times; all which are better than wine: but then there is an alloy to these; they are lowered by other things, as the corruptions of the heart, the temptations of Satan, the hidings of God's face, and a variety of afflictions; but they shall have their good and best things hereafter, and drink new wine in Christ's father's kingdom, without any thing to lower and weaken it: they'll have full joys, and never-fading pleasures, and shall be without sin and sorrow; no more deserted, nor afflicted, and shall be out of the reach of Satan's temptations, and with Christ for evermore. Happy are they that are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb.

Ver. 11. *This beginning of miracles, &c.*] This miracle of turning water into wine, was the first miracle Christ ever wrought, either in public or private; for as for what miracles he is said to do in his infancy, there is no reason to give credit to them: and this he *did in Cana of Galilee*; not that this was only the first he did in that place; he afterwards working another there, namely, the cure of a nobleman's son, John iv. 46, 54. but the first he did any where, and it was in this place; and which the Syriac and Persic versions again call *Kotne of Galilee*; see the note on ver. 1. *and manifested forth his glory*; the glory of his deity and divine sonship, which was hid by his assumption of human nature, but broke forth and shewed itself in his miraculous operations, and particularly in this: *and his disciples believed on him*; the above five disciples; see ver. 2. whom he had called, and who were with him at this marriage, and were made acquainted with this miracle: and though they believed in him before, and had declared, and professed him to be the Messiah, Moses and the prophets spoke of, and the son of God, and King of Israel; yet they were, by this miracle, more and more confirmed in the faith of these things: besides, others might be made his disciples at this time, and be hereby brought to believe in him.

Ver. 12. *After this he went down to Capernaum, &c.*] After he had been at Cana, and at the wedding there: after he had wrought the miracle of turning water into wine; and after he had manifested forth the glory of his deity thereby, and had confirmed the faith of his disciples, he departed from thence, and went lower into the country of Galilee, to Capernaum, a city near the sea of Tiberias; and which, from henceforward, he made the more usual place of his residence, and

<sup>2</sup> A Caupone tibi fex Laletana petatur  
Si plus quam decies, Sextiliane, bibis. L. 1. Ep. 25.

whither he frequently resorted, and therefore it is called his city, Matt. ix. 1. This refers not to the same journey recorded in Matt. iv. 12, 13. for that was after John was cast into prison, whereas this was before; see John iii. 24. the company that went with him, are as follow, *he, and his mother*; who had been with him at Cana, and was a principal person at the wedding: and she now returning home, he accompanies her, to see her to her own habitation; or to settle her in Capernaum, whilst he went about discharging his public ministry. *And his brethren*; or near kinsmen, according to the flesh, the sons of Alpheus, or Cleophas, and Mary, sister to the mother of our Lord; whose names were James, Joses, Simon, and Judas, three of which afterwards became his apostles: *and his disciples*; as many as he had yet called, which were Andrew, and the disciple that followed Jesus with him, and Simon Peter, and Philip, and Nathanael, *and they continued there not many days*; not because of the impenitence, unbelief, and wickedness of the place, but for the reason following.

Ver. 13. *And the Jews' passover was at hand, &c.*] That feast which was kept on the fourteenth day of Nisan, in commemoration of the Lord's passing over, and by the houses of the Israelites, when he slew the first-born in Egypt: and it is called the Jews' passover, because they only were obliged to keep it: nor was it obligatory upon the Gentiles; and besides, was now abolished when John wrote this Gospel, though still retained by the Jews. And moreover, John was now among the Gentiles, and for whose sake he penned this Gospel; and therefore so distinguishes this feast, which was typical of the Christian passover, or of Christ our passover that is sacrificed for us. This was the first *passover* after Christ's baptism, which is generally thought to have been about half a year before; though so much time cannot be made out from the scriptural account; for from his baptism, to his return out of the wilderness to John, were forty days; and from thence, to his coming to Cana, four or five days more; and perhaps he might be seven days in Cana; for so long a wedding was usually kept; and his stay at Capernaum was but a few days; all which don't amount to above eight or nine weeks at most: the second passover after this, is, by some, thought to be the feast mentioned in John v. 1. and the third in John vi. 4. and the fourth and last, at which he suffered, in John xviii. 28. The Evangelist John is the only writer that gives an account of the passovers after Christ entered on his public ministry; by which is known the duration of it, which is generally thought to be about three years and a half. *Three years and a half*, the Jews say<sup>a</sup>, the Shekinah sat upon the Mount of Olives, expecting that the Israelites would repent, but they did not; and this seems to be the term of time for disciples to learn of their masters: 'tis said<sup>b</sup>, one came from Athens to Jerusalem, and he served *three years and a half* to learn the doctrine of wisdom, and he learned it not. *And Jesus went up to Jerusalem*; not alone, but his disciples with him, as appears from ver. 17. to keep the passover as he had been wont to do,

and as the law required; and he being under the law, as a son of Abraham, and the surety of his people, it became him to fulfil all righteousness, ceremonial, as well as moral, and which he strictly observed. He is said to go up to Jerusalem, because that stood on higher ground than the low lands of Galilee, and was the only place where the passover might be kept; see Deut. xvi. 2.

Ver. 14. *And found in the temple, &c.*] Not in the holy place itself, nor in the court of the priests, where the sacrifices were offered, nor in the court of the women, nor in the court of the Israelites, where the people worshipped; but in the court of the Gentiles, or the outward court, even all that space of ground which was between the wall which divided the whole from common ground, and the buildings of the temple, and which was open to the air; for the whole sacred enclosure, or all within the wall, went by the name of the temple. Into this all strangers might come; and the passover now being at hand, here were *those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves*: the oxen, or bullocks, were for the Chagigah, or feast kept on the second day of the passover; see the note on John xviii. 28. and the sheep, or lambs, as the Persic version reads, for the passover-supper; and the doves were for the offerings of the poorer sort of lying-in women: with these they were supplied from the Mount of Olives. It is said<sup>c</sup>, "there were two cedar-trees on the Mount of Olives, and under one of them were four shops of them that sold things for purification; and out of one of them they brought forty bushels of young doves every month: and out of them the Israelites had enough for the nests, or the offerings of turtle-doves;" see the note on Matt. xxi. 12. *and the changers of money sitting*: who changed foreign money into the current coin of the Jews, strangers coming, at this feast, from several parts of the world; and sometimes there was need of changing shekels into half shekels, which, at certain times, were paid for the ransom of Israelites; see the note on the place above mentioned.

Ver. 15. *And when he had made a scourge of small cords, &c.*] That is, Jesus, as the Persic version expresses it. This scourge might be made either of thongs cut out of the hides of beasts slain in sacrifice; or of the cords, with which the owners of the cattle had brought them to this place; or with which they had fastened them in it. And it seems to be made, and used, not so much for force and terror, as to intimate, that these persons, the violators of the holy place, deserved the scourge of divine wrath and punishment; as well as to shew the miraculous power of Christ in driving such a number of men before him, with so small and insignificant a weapon; for the phrase is diminutive. The reason given by Dr. Lightfoot, and others, why Christ made use of a whip, or scourge, rather than a staff, is, because it was contrary to a Jewish canon<sup>d</sup> to go into the mountain of the house, or temple, with a staff in the hand; and yet the man of the mountain of the house, or the master of it, who used to go about every ward with torches burning before him, if he found a Levite asleep in his ward<sup>e</sup>,

<sup>a</sup> Præfat. Echa Rabbati, fol. 40. 4.

<sup>b</sup> Echa Rabbati, fol. 44. 4.

<sup>c</sup> Ib. fol. 52. 4.

<sup>d</sup> Min. Berncot, c. 9. sect. 5.

<sup>e</sup> Min. Middot, c. 1. sect. 2.

struck him **במקלו**, with his staff, and had power to burn his clothes. *He drove them all out of the temple*: that is, he drove out *the men*, as the Persic version reads; the merchants, the sellers of oxen, sheep, and doves, and the money-changers: *and the sheep, and the oxen* likewise; the Persic version adds, *doves*; but these are after mentioned: *and poured out the changers' money*; off of the tables, or out of the boxes, or dishes, or drawers, or purses, in which it was put: *and overthrew the tables*; at which they sat, and on which they told their money.

Ver. 16. *And said unto them that sold doves, &c.* For as these were kept in coups, or cages, they could not be drove, as the sheep and oxen, nor could they be let out, and fly, without the loss of the owners: and therefore Christ said to them, *take these things hence*; not only the doves, but the pens, coups, or cages, in which they were, and both together: *make not my father's house an house of merchandise*; so he calls the temple, which was built as an house for God, and where he took up his residence; where were the symbols of his presence; where his worship was kept, and sacrifices offered to him: and he asserts God, whose house this was, to be his father, and himself to be his son, as none of the prophets that went before him did; and in such sense as neither men nor angels are; and which carries in it a reason why he was so much concerned for the honour of God, and so much resented the profanation of his house, because he was his father. A like action with this, done by Christ at another time, is recorded in Matt. xxi. 12, 13. This was at the beginning of his ministry, that at the close of it, in which he expressed himself with more warmth and severity than here: here he only charges them with making his father's house an house of merchandise, but there with making it a den of thieves; since they had not only slighted, and despised his first reproof, but had returned to their evil ways, and might grow more wicked and audacious. This instance of Christ now coming into the temple as a public minister, and which was the first time of his entrance into it, after he had taken this character, was a further accomplishment of Mal. iii. 1. for he now went into it, as the Lord and proprietor of it; and which this action of his in driving out the merchants, with their cattle, shews; and was a surprising instance of his divine power; and is equal to other miracles of his, that a single person, a stranger, one of no power and authority in the government, unassisted and unarmed, with only a scourge of small cords, should carry such awe and majesty with him, and inject such terror into, and drive such a number of men before him, who were selling things for religious uses, and were supported in it by the priests and sanhedrim of the nation.

Ver. 17. *And his disciples remembered that it was written, &c.* In Psal. lxxix. 9. which Psalm belongs to the Messiah, as is manifest from the citations out of it in the New Testament, and the application of them to Christ, as in John xv. 25. and xix. 28. Rom. xv. 3. compared with Psal. lxxix. 4, 9, 21. Christ is represented in it, as suffering for the sins of his people; for he

himself was innocent; and was hated without a cause; but having the sins of his people imputed to him, he made satisfaction for them, and so restored what he took not away. His sufferings are spoken of in it as very great; and from it we learn, that they are fitly called, by himself, a baptism, which he desired to be baptized with, Luke xii. 50. since the waters are said to come into his soul, and he to be in deep waters, where the floods overflowed him; so that he was as one immersed in them: it is not only prophesied of him in it, that he should be the object of the scorn and contempt of the Jewish nation, and be rejected by them, and treated with the utmost indignity, and loaded with reproaches; but it foretold, that they should give him gall to eat, and vinegar to drink, which were literally fulfilled in him: and even the Jews themselves seem to be under some conviction, that the Psalm has respect to him; for *Aben Ezra*, a noted commentator of theirs, on the last words of the Psalm, has this note: "the sense is, they and their children shall inherit it in the days of David, or in the days of the Messiah." It appears from hence, that the disciples of Christ were acquainted with the sacred writings, and had diligently read them, and searched into them, and had made them their study; and upon this wonderful action of Christ, called to mind, and reflected upon the following passage of Scripture, which they judged very proper and pertinent to him: *the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.* This passage, so far as it is cited, agrees exactly, word for word, with the original text in Psal. lxxix. 9. wherefore it is very strange that *Surenhusius* <sup>f</sup> should remark a difference, and give himself a good deal of trouble to reconcile it: he observes, that in the Hebrew text, it is read, **קנאת יידיה**, *the zeal of the Lord*, in the third person; whereas it is there, **קנאת ביתך**, *the zeal of thine house*, as here, in the second person: indeed, the word **כי**, *for*, is left out, as he remarks, there being no need of it in the citation; the evangelist only historically relating the accommodation of it to Christ, by the disciples; whereas in the original text, the words contain a reason of the reproach and shame which Christ endured, and was put to by the Jews on account of his zeal for the house, honour, and worship of God; and the latter part of the text is not produced at all, being not for the present purpose, though very applicable to Christ; and is cited, and applied to him by the apostle, in Rom. xv. 3. Such was Christ's regard to his father's house, and which was typical of the church of God; and such his concern for his honour, ordinances, and worship, that when he saw the merchandise that was carried on in the temple, his zeal, which was a true and hearty affection for God, and was according to knowledge, was stirred up in him, and to such a degree, that it was like a consuming fire within him, that ate up his spirits; so that he could not forbear giving it vent, and expressing it in the manner he did, by driving those traders out of it. Phinehas and Elias were in their zeal, as well as other things, types of Christ; and in the spirit and power of the latter he came; and Christ not only expressed a zeal for the house of God, the place of religious wor-

<sup>f</sup> *Biblos Katalleges*, p. 547.



ship, but for the church and people of God, whose salvation he most earnestly desired, and most zealously pursued: he shewed his strong, and affectionate regard to it, by his suretyship-engagements for them, by his assumption of their nature, by his ardent desire to accomplish it, and by his voluntary and cheerful submission to death on account of it. And such was his zeal for it, that it eat him up, it inflamed his spirit and affections, consumed his time and strength, and, at last, his life: and he also shewed a zeal for the discipline of God's house, by his severe reflections on human traditions; by asserting the spirituality of worship; by commanding a strict regard to divine institutions; and by sharply inveighing against the sins of professors of religion: and he discovered a warm zeal for the truths of the Gospel, by a lively and powerful preaching of them; by his constancy and assiduity in it; by the many fatiguing journeys he took for that purpose; by the dangers he exposed himself to by it; and by the care he took to free the Gospel from prejudice and calumnies: and it becomes us, in imitation of our great master, to be zealous for his truths and ordinances, and for the discipline of his house, and not bear with either the erroneous principles, or the bad practices of wicked men.

Ver. 18. *Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, &c.*] They did not lay hands on him, or offer any violence to him; they did not, as the inhabitants of Nazareth did, thrust him out, and lead him to a precipice, to cast him down headlong; nor did they take up stones to stone him, as they afterwards did, when he asserted his deity: and it is surprising, that they did not rise up and destroy him at once, a single man, unarmed, and without assistance, having so highly provoked them; the restraint upon them must be his almighty power: nor do they deny what he suggested, that they had made his father's house an house of merchandise; nor do they offer to vindicate their profanation of the temple, or object to the purging of it; only demand a proof of his right to do it: and which demand was made, not by the common people, or by the sellers of oxen, sheep, and doves, and the money-changers, who were drove out, and had not spirit to rally again: but by the chief priests and elders, the sanhedrim of the nation, who had the care and government of the temple, and under whose authority the above persons acted; and whose gain and worldly interest were promoted hereby, as a like demand was afterwards made by the same persons; see Matt. xxi. 23. *what sign shewest thou unto us, seeing thou dost these things?* they argued, that either he did these things of himself, by his own authority, and then they must be deemed rash and unjustifiable; or he did it by the authority of others: they knew it was not by theirs, who were the great council of the nation, from whom he should have had his instructions and orders, if he acted by human authority; and if he pretended to a divine authority, as they supposed he did, then they insisted upon a sign or miracle to be wrought, to prove that God was his father, as he suggested; and that he was the proprietor and owner of the temple, and had a right to purge it, as he had done; see 1 Cor. i. 22.

Ver. 19. *Jesus answered and said unto them, &c.*] In a dark and enigmatical way, though very properly and pertinently; since it was with respect to the temple, and his power over it, and right to purge it, that a sign was required of him: *destroy this temple*; pointing, as it were, with his finger to his body; for of that he spake, as appears from ver. 21. the dissolution of which, by death he means, the separation of his soul from his body, though not of either from his divine person: and it is to be understood, not as a command, or a grant, or as an exhortation, and advice to them, to kill his body; but rather as a prophecy of what they would do; or as putting the case, that should they, as he knew they would, destroy his body, then, says he, as a sign of having a power to do what I have done, *in three days I will raise it again*; by which he would appear to be the son of God, with power, that had power of laying down his life, and taking it up again; and is the very sign, namely, his resurrection from the dead on the third day, he gives the Jews, when they sought one of him at another time, and upon another occasion.

Ver. 20. *Then said the Jews, &c.*] *Unto him, as read the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions: forty and six years was this temple in building*; which can't be understood of the temple as built by Solomon, for that was but seven years in building, 1 Kings vi. 37, 38. But rather of the temple, as built by Zorobabel, commonly called the second temple, and might be more properly said to be *this temple*; the calculations of this made by learned men, are various and endless to recite. Daniel's seven weeks, or forty-nine days, which are so many years, can have nothing to do with this account; since they regard not the building of the temple, but the city of Jerusalem; though from the second year of Cyrus, in which the temple began to be built, to the thirty-second of Darius exclusive, were just forty-six years; Cyrus reigning three years, Artaxerxes Ahasuerus fourteen years, and Artaxerxes Darius thirty-two; but their account is more likely, which begins at the first of Artaxerxes Longimanus, who reigned forty years, and ends in the sixth year of Darius, his successor, in which year the temple was finished, Ezra vi. 15. But to me it seems rather, that Herod's temple, or the temple as rebuilt, or repaired by Herod, is here meant; and which the Jews call בנין הרודים, *the building of Herod*<sup>2</sup>; and say of it, that "he who has not seen Herod's building, never saw a beautiful building." And this, according to Josephus<sup>3</sup>, was begun in the eighteenth year of his reign, in the thirty-fifth of which Christ was born, who was now thirty years of age: so that reckoning either the eighteenth year of Herod, or the thirtieth of Christ, the present year exclusively, just forty-six years had run out, since the rebuilding or reparations were first begun; and which were not yet finished; for some years after this, the above writer observes<sup>1</sup>, the temple was finished, even in the times of Nero and Agrippa: and agreeably to this, the words may be rendered, *forty-six years has this temple been building*; and which still adds more force to the following reasoning of the Jews: *and wilt thou rear it up in three*

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 4. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Antiqu. Jud. l. 15. c. 14.

<sup>1</sup> Antiqu. Jud. l. 20. c. 9.

days? the thing is impossible and impracticable; 'tis madness to the last degree, to talk at this rate: thus from the length of time which had run out from Herod's first beginning to repair and beautify the temple, till now, and yet not finished, they argue the absurdity of his pretending to raise up such a fabric, should it be demolished, in three days time; they understanding him either ignorantly or wilfully, to speak of the material temple, when his sense was otherwise, as appears from the words of the evangelist, in the next verse. The Jew<sup>k</sup> objects to this account, of the temple being forty-six years in building; he observes, that "according to the sense of the Nazarenes, this was the building of king Herod, that was in the time of Jesus; and the whole time of his reign were but seven and thirty years, as is manifest from the book of Joseph ben Gorion, c. 65. Besides, that which Herod built, was built in eight years, as is evident from the same author, c. 55. wherefore the number of forty-six years, in the words of the writer, (the evangelist,) is a palpable error." To which may be replied, that admitting there is an error in this number, it is not the error of the evangelist, but of the Jews, whose words the evangelist relates; and supposing this was a mistake of theirs, either ignorantly or wilfully made, to aggravate the absurdity and impossibility of Christ's rebuilding the temple; and that even the evangelist knew it to be a mistake; yet he acts the most faithful and upright part, in repeating the words of the Jews, as they delivered them; and it lies upon the Jew to prove, that these words were not said by them, or that it is not credible that they should: that this was the building of Herod which is here referred to, and that he reigned but thirty-seven years, will be granted; but this is no objection to its being forty-six years in building, since in this account it is not said that it was forty-six years in building by Herod; the sense is only, that such a number of years had passed, since it first began to be built by him: as for what Joseph ben Gorion says, of its being built by him in the space of eight years, it is not to be depended upon, since he is not the true Josephus, that wrote the history of the Jews, and is to be corrected by the genuine historian; and from what has been before observed, from the time which, according to the true Josephus, this building was begun, to this present year of Christ, when this discourse was had, were just forty-six years; and admitting, that the main of the building was finished in eight years time, yet additions were continually made to it, so that it was not finished entirely, until many years after.

Ver. 21. *But he spake of the temple of his body.*] Which was the antitype of the material temple; and might well be called so, since the bodies of the saints are called temples, 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. and vi. 19. 2 Cor. vi. 16. and the human nature of Christ is called a tabernacle, Heb. viii. 2. and he himself, in prophecy, is said to be *מִקְדָּשׁ*, for a sanctuary, or temple, Isa. viii. 14. and that because the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily, the train of the divine perfections filled the temple of his human nature, Col. ii. 9.

Isa. vi. 1. And because here, as in the temple, God grants his presence, and communes with his saints, accepts of their prayers and praises, and all their spiritual sacrifices through him; and who is the oracle, the true *Urim* and *Thummim*, by whom he delivers his whole mind and will to his people.

Ver. 22. *When therefore he was risen from the dead, &c.*] Which was three years after this: his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; either to the Jews, or to them the disciples; though the phrase to them, is not in the Vulgate Latin, nor in any of the Oriental versions. The disciples themselves were very dull of understanding the doctrine of Christ's resurrection; and so they continued, notwithstanding he gave them afterwards very full hints of it, until that he was actually risen; and then they called to mind these words of his, with others that dropped from him upon the same subject: and they believed the Scripture; that spoke of his resurrection, Psal. xvi. 10. and on the third day, Hos. vi. 2. *And the word which Jesus had said;* concerning his rising again the third day at this time, and at others, as in Matt. xvi. 21. and xvii. 23. and xx. 19. and they believed his word equally with the Scripture, it agreeing to it, and being founded on it.

Ver. 23. *Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, &c.*] Whither he went, in order to keep it, that being at hand, and now come; see ver. 13. *In the feast-day;* either on the day the *Chagigah* was eaten, which was sometimes emphatically called the feast, as in Numb. xxviii. 16, 17. and in the fourteenth day of the first month, is the passover of the Lord; and in the fifteenth day of this month, is the feast; the passover-lamb was eaten on the fourteenth day of the month *Nisan*, and the *Chagigah* was on the fifteenth; in the former only a lamb was eaten, in the other, cattle out of the herds; hence mention is made, both of flocks and herds, for the keeping the passover, Deut. xvi. 2. Jarchi's note upon the place is, that the herds were for the *Chagigah*, with which the Talmud<sup>l</sup> agrees; and Jonathan ben Uzziel paraphrases the words thus, "and ye shall slay the passover before the Lord your God, between the evenings, and the sheep and oxen on the morrow, in that very day, for the joy of the feast;" for it was observed with great joy and mirth: and the rather this is here meant, since the *Chagigah* is not only called the feast, but this here is distinguished from the passover, as that is in the passage above cited, Numb. xxviii. 16, 17. For the passover here, seems to be the general name for the whole seven days of the festival; and the feast to be the particular feast of the first day of it, which was the fifteenth; to which may be added, that on this day all the males made their appearance in court<sup>m</sup>; and so was a very proper time for Christ to work his miracles in, when there were so many spectators: though it may design the whole time of the feast, all the seven days of unleavened bread; during which time Christ was at Jerusalem, and wrought miracles, which had the following effect: many believed in his name; that he was some great prophet, or the prophet,

<sup>k</sup> R. Isaac Chizzuk Emunah, par. 2. c. 43. p. 434.

<sup>l</sup> Pesachim, fol. 70. 2.

<sup>m</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Chagigah, c. 1. sect. 1.

or the Messiah; they gave an historical assent unto him as such, at least for that time: *when they saw the miracles which he did*. for as miracles, according to the prophecies of the Old Testament, were to be performed by the Messiah, such as giving sight to the blind, causing the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk, Isa. xxxv. 5, 6. so they were expected by the ancient Jews, that they would be wrought by him, when he came; wherefore these Jews, seeing such like wonderful things wrought by Jesus, they concluded he must be the Messiah: though the modern ones, in order to shift off the evidence of Jesus being the Messiah, from his miracles, deny that miracles are the characteristic of the Messiah, or will be performed by him; at least, that there is no necessity of them to prove him to be the person. What miracles these were, which were now wrought by Christ, are not recorded by this, or any other evangelist; see ch. xx. 30. However, being surprised at the marvellous things he did, and upon the evidence of these extraordinary works, there were many that concluded he must be come from God; among these it seems as if Nicodemus was one; see ch. iii. 2. great part of these, at least some of them, were only nominal and temporary believers, who were not to be confided in as true disciples, and hearty followers of Christ; and who continued not long in the same mind and profession, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 24. *But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, &c.*] The sense according to some of the ancients is, that he did not commit the whole of the Gospel to them; he did not make known to them all his mind and will; this he only did to the twelve apostles, his special disciples and friends; nor was the time come, that he would make known, or have made known, the things concerning his person, office, obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead: but rather the meaning is, that he did not trust himself with these persons, who believed in him, on the foot of his miracles; he did not take them into the number of his associates; he did not admit them to intimacy with him; nor did he freely converse with them, or make any long stay among them; but soon withdrew himself from hence, and went into other parts of Judea, and into Galilee: *because he knew all men*: good and bad: all openly profane sinners, and all their actions; not only their more public ones, but those that are done in the dark, and which are the most secretly devised, and levelled against the saints; and he so knew them, as to bring them into judgment: and all good men, true believers; he knows their persons, as they are his father's choice, his gift of them to him, his own purchase, and as called by his grace; and so as to distinguish them at the last day, and give up the full account of every one of them to his father: he knows the worst of them, the sin that dwells in them, their daily infirmities, their secret personal sins; their family sins, both of omission and commission; and their church sins, or which are committed in the house of God; and takes notice of them,

so as to resent them, and chastise them for them; he knows the best of them, their graces, their faith, hope, love, patience, humility, self-denial, &c. He knows their good works, and all their weaknesses and their wants: and he knows all nominal professors, on what foot they take up their profession, and what trust they place in it; he can distinguish between grace and mere profession, and discern the secret lusts which such indulge, and the springs and progress of their apostasy: he knew all these men, that upon seeing his miracles, professed at this time to believe in him; he knew the hypocrisy and dissimulation of some of them; and he knew the notions they had of a temporal Messiah, and the temporal views they had in believing in him; and their design to set him up as a temporal prince, as some afterwards would have done: he knew the flashy affections of others, who were like John's hearers, that were pleased for a while; he knew what sort of faith it was they believed in him with, that it would not hold long, nor they continue with him; for he knew not only all persons, but *what*, all things, as some copies read here; see John xxi. 17.

Ver. 25. *And needed not that any should testify of man, &c.*] Of this or the other man, that he was a good or a bad man; he needed no proofs to be made, or testimonies bore, or evidence given of men's characters and actions; he was of quick understanding, and could distinguish at once between a wicked man and a good man; and so had the characteristic which the Jews require of the Messiah; for they rejected Bar Cozba from being the Messiah, and slew him, because he could not smell, referring to Isa. xi. 3. or discern a bad man from a good man; but this Jesus could do, without any external evidence: *for he knew what was in man*; which none but the spirit of a man can know; his inward thoughts, the secrets of the heart; thus Christ knew the thoughts of the Scribes and Pharisees, Matt. ix. 4. being a discerner of the thoughts, and intents of the heart, Heb. iv. 12. This Apollonius Tyaneus, the ape of Christ, ascribed to himself; but is what is peculiar to God; and Christ being God, knows all that is in man; that there is no good in him naturally, nothing but what comes from his father, is imparted by himself, or implanted by his spirit; he knows the wickedness there is in man, that his heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, and full of all manner of iniquities; he knows in what condition all the powers and faculties of the souls of men are; what their affections are set upon, on earthly or heavenly things; whether there is any light in their understandings, or no; whether their wills are subdued and resigned to the will of God, or no; whether their minds and consciences are defiled, or their hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience; in short, whether the internal good work of grace is begun upon their souls, or not; and he knows the secret springs of all actions, good and bad; all which prove his true and proper deity, and shew him to be a suitable Saviour of sinners, and qualify him to be the Judge of the whole earth.

\* T Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 2.

° Philostrat. Vit. Apollonii, l. 1. c. 13.

## C H A P. III.

Ver. 1. **THERE** was a man of the Pharisees, &c.] The Syriac version adds, *there*; that is, at Jerusalem; and who was among those that believed in the name of Christ, upon seeing the miracles he did at the feast of the passover, in that place. This man was not a common and ordinary man, but a man of note and eminence, of dignity and figure; and who was of the sect of the Pharisees, which was the strictest sect for religion and holiness, among the Jews; and which, as corrupt as it was, was also the soundest; as having not only a regard to a Messiah, and to all the writings of the Old Testament, but also believed the doctrines of angels and spirits, and the resurrection of the dead, which the Sadducees denied; but yet they were implacable enemies of Christ; and therefore it is the more to be wondered at, that such an one should come to him, and desire a conversation with him: named *Nicodemus*; frequent mention is made of נִקְדִּימֹן בֶּן נֹרְדִי (Nikdimon ben Nori), *Nicodemon ben Gorion*, the brother of Josephus ben Gorion<sup>p</sup>, the writer of the Wars and Antiquities of the Jews; and there are some things which make it probable, that he was the same with this Nicodemus; for the Nicodemon the Jews speak so much of, lived in this age; as appears, not only from his being the brother of Josephus, but also from his being cotemporary with R. Jochanan ben Zaccai, who lived in this time, and until the destruction of the temple; since these two are said<sup>q</sup> to be together at a feast, made for the circumcision of a child. Moreover, he is represented as very rich, and is said to be one of the three rich men in Jerusalem<sup>r</sup>, and who was able to have maintained מְדִינָה, a city ten years<sup>s</sup>; and they speak of his daughter, as exceeding rich: they say, that she had for her dowry a thousand thousand golden denarii, or pence; and that her bed was strewed with (*i. e.* the furniture of it cost) twelve thousand golden denarii; and that a Tyrian golden denarius was spent upon her every week, for a certain kind of soup<sup>t</sup>; and the wise men decreed her four hundred golden denarii, for a box of spices every day<sup>u</sup>; and it is elsewhere<sup>v</sup> said, five hundred: and this our Nicodemus was very rich, as appears from his liberality at the funeral of our Lord, John xix. 39. Moreover, the Nicodemon of the Jews, is said to be a counsellor<sup>w</sup> in Jerusalem; and so was this, as seems evident from John vii. 32, 50, 51. and it may be further observed<sup>y</sup>, that the right name of Nicodemon, was Boni<sup>z</sup>; now Boni elsewhere<sup>a</sup>, is said to be one of the disciples of Jesus, as Nicodemus was secretly, and perhaps at, and after his death openly, as his associate Joseph of Arimathea was; to which may be added, the extreme poverty

that his daughter is by them said to be reduced unto; for they report, that R. Jochanan ben Zaccai saw her gathering barley-corns from under the horses' hoofs in Aco<sup>b</sup>; or as it is elsewhere said, out of the dung of the beasts of the Arabians; when she asked alms of him, and he inquired of her, what was become of her father's substance. Now to this low estate, the family of our Nicodemus might be reduced, through the persecution of the Christians by the Jews. The name is Greek, as at this time many Greek names were in use among the Jews, and signifies the same as Nicolas; but the Jews give an etymology of it, agreeably to the Hebrew language; and say, that he was so called, because the sun, נִקְדָּר, *shone out for his sake*: the occasion and reason of it, they tell us, were this<sup>c</sup>; Nicodemon, upon want of water at one of the feasts, agreed with a certain man for twelve wells of water, to be returned on such a day, or pay twelve talents of silver; the day being come, the man demanded the water, or the money; Nicodemou went and prayed, and a plentiful rain fell, and filled the wells with water; but meeting the man, he insisted on it that the day was past, the sun being set, and therefore required the money; Nicodemou went and prayed again, and the sun shone out; and they add, that there are three persons for whom the sun נִקְדָּרָה, was prevented, detained, or hindered in its course, (a word nearer his name than the former,) Moses, and Joshua, and Nicodemon ben Gorion; for the two former they produce Scripture, and for the latter tradition: hence it is elsewhere said<sup>d</sup>, that as the sun stood still for Joshua, so it stood still for Moses, and for Nicodemon ben Gorion: but to proceed with the account of our Nicodemus, he was a ruler of the Jews; not a civil magistrate; for the civil government was now in the hands of the Romans; but an ecclesiastical ruler; he was a member of the sanhedrim, which consisted of the doctors, or wise men, and priests, Levites, and elders of the people; and so was a dignified person, and as afterwards called, a master in Israel.

Ver. 2. *The same came to Jesus by night, &c.*] Through fear of the Jews, of being reproached or turned out of his place by them; or through shame, that such a doctor as he was, should be known to go to Jesus of Nazareth, to be instructed by him; or lest he should offend any of his brethren of the sanhedrim: though some things may be said in favour of this conduct of Nicodemus; for since Christ would not trust himself with those that believed in him upon seeing his miracles, ch. ii. 23, 24. among whom Nicodemus

<sup>p</sup> Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 1.<sup>s</sup> Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 19. 1.

<sup>q</sup> Pirke Eliezer, c. 2. & Juchasin, fol. 23. 2.

<sup>r</sup> T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 56. 1.

<sup>s</sup> Midrash Kohelet, fol. 75. 4.

<sup>t</sup> Abot R. Nathan, c. 6. fol. 3. 2.

<sup>u</sup> T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 66. 2.

<sup>v</sup> Echa Rabbati, fol. 49. 2.

<sup>x</sup> Echa Rabbati, fol. 46. 3. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 75. 1.

<sup>y</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 20. 1.

<sup>z</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1.

<sup>a</sup> Echa Rabbati, fol. 49. 3.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 66. 2.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 20. 1.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 25. 1.

seems to be; or would not admit them into his company, and enter into a free conversation with him; it was necessary, that if he would have any discourse with him, that he should take this method; and if it was the same night, in which he had seen his miracles in the day, as is probable, he took the first opportunity he could, and which shews great readiness and respect; add to which, that it was very common with the Jewish doctors, to meet and converse together, and study the law in the night. "R. Aba rose, בַּלַּיְלָא, *in the middle of the night*, and the rest of the "companions, to study in the law." And it is often<sup>f</sup> said of R. Simeon ben Jochai, and Eleazar his son, that they sat in the night and laboured in the law; and it was reckoned very commendable so to do, and highly pleasing to God: it is said<sup>g</sup>, "whoever "studies in the law in the night, the holy blessed "God draws a thread of mercy upon him in the "day:" and likewise<sup>h</sup>, that "every one that studies "in the law in the night, the Shekinah is over-against "him." But it seems, the Babylonian Jews did not study in the law in the night: it might seem a needless question to ask, whether Nicodemus came alone, or no, were it not that according to the Jewish canon<sup>k</sup>, a scholar might not go out in the night alone, because of suspicion: and said unto him, *Rabbi*; a title which now greatly obtained among the Jewish doctors, and of which they were very fond; see the note on Matt. xxiii. 7. It comes from a word, which signifies great and large; and was used by them, to suggest the large compass, and great plenty of knowledge they would be thought to have had; and best becomes and suits with our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are: salutations among the Jews, were forbidden in the night<sup>l</sup>; "says "R. Jochanan, it is forbidden a man to salute his "neighbour in the night, lest it should be a demon:" but here was no such danger; nor was this salutation made in the street, and in the dark, which the canon seems to respect: *we know that thou art a teacher come from God*; the Jews expected the Messiah as a teacher, which they might learn from many prophecies, as from Isa. ii. 2, 3, and xlvi. 17. and lxi. 1. Upon the first of which, and on that passage in it, *he will teach us of his ways*, a noted commentator<sup>m</sup> of theirs has this remark; "הַמּוֹרֶה, *the teacher*, he is the "King Messiah." And the Targum on Joel ii. 23. paraphrases the words thus; "O ye children of Zion, "rejoice and be glad in the word of the Lord your "God, for he will return יְת מְלַפְכֵן, *your teacher* to "you." And Nicodemus acknowledges Jesus as such; and as one that did not come, or was sent by men, as their doctors were; nor did he come of himself, as false teachers did; but he came from God, and had his mission and commission from him: and this was a known case, a clear point, not only to himself, but to many of the Jews; and even to some of his brethren, the members of the sanhedrim; who

upon hearing of, and seeing the miracles done by Christ, might meet and converse freely together about him, and give their sentiments of him; and might then agree pretty much in this at that time, that he was at least a prophet, and some extraordinary teacher, whom God had sent among them; and Nicodemus coming directly from them, repeats his own sense and theirs, supported by the following reason: *for no man can do these miracles that thou dost, except God be with him*; referring to the miracles he had done at the passover in Jerusalem, very lately; see ch. ii. 23. And which, though they are not particularly mentioned, may be concluded to be such, as the dispossessing of devils, the curing of all manner of diseases by a word, or touch, from what he at other times, and elsewhere did. Miracles were expected by the Jews, to be wrought by the Messiah, and many believed in Jesus on this account; see ch. vi. 14. and vii. 31. though the modern Jews deny it to be necessary, that miracles should be done by the Messiah<sup>n</sup>; but Nicodemus, and other Jews, thought otherwise, and considered the miracles of Christ as such, as could never be done by man, nor without the presence and power of God; and concluded that he was with God, and God with him, and was the true Immanuel, who is God with us.

Ver. 3. *Jesus answered and said unto him, &c.*] Not to any express question put by Nicodemus; unless it can be thought, that a question of this kind might be asked, what is the kingdom of God, so much spoken of in thy ministry? and what is requisite to the seeing and enjoying of it? though not recorded by the evangelist; but rather to the words of Nicodemus, concluding from his miracles, that he was the Messiah; and that the kingdom of God was now approaching, or the world to come, the Jews so much speak of; and in which all Israel, according to their notion, were to have a part<sup>o</sup>; and which notion, our Lord in the following words, seems to oppose: *verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*; Nicodemus, according to the general sense of the nation, thought that when the Messiah came, and his kingdom was set up, they should all share in it, without any more ado; they being the descendants of Abraham, and having him for their father: but Christ assures him, that he must be *born again*; in distinction from, and opposition to his first birth by nature; in which he was vile, polluted, carnal, and corrupt, being conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity, and was a transgressor from the womb, and by nature a child of wrath; and in opposition to his descent from Abraham, or being born of him, and of his seed; for this would be of no avail to him in this case, nor give him any right to the privileges and ordinances of the kingdom of God, or the Gospel dispensation; see Matt. iii. 9. as also to birth by proselytism; for the Jews have a frequent saying<sup>p</sup>, that "one that is made a proselyte, כְּמִן שְׂנוּרָה דְּבִי, *is like*

<sup>a</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 94. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Ib. fol. 88. 2. in Lev. fol. 5. 3, 4. & 10. 1. & passim.

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 12. 2. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Talmud Torā, c. 3. sect. 13.

<sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Tamid, fol. 32. 2.

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 9. 2.

<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 91. 1. Piske Tosephot Pesach. art. 12. & Maimon. Hilch. Deyot. c. 5. sect. 9.

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 44. 1. & Megilla, fol. 3. 1. & Piske Tosephot Megilla, art. 4. & in Yebamot, art. 238.

<sup>m</sup> R. David Kimchi in loc.

<sup>n</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Melacim. c. 11. sect. 3.

<sup>o</sup> Misa. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1.

<sup>p</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 22. 1. 48. 2. 62. 1. & 97. 2.

“*a child new born.*” Which they understand, not in a spiritual, but in a civil sense; such being free from all natural and civil relations, and from all obligations to parents, masters, &c. And by this phrase our Lord signifies, that no man, either as a man, or as a son of Abraham, or as a proselyte to the Jewish religion, can have any true knowledge of, or right unto, the enjoyment of *the kingdom of God*, unless he is born again; or regenerated, and quickened by the spirit of God; renewed in the spirit of his mind; has Christ formed in his heart; becomes a partaker of the divine nature; and in all respects a new creature; and another in heart, in principle, in practice, and conversation; or unless he be *born from above*, as the word is rendered in ver. 31. that is, by a supernatural power, having the heavenly image instamped on him; and being called with an heavenly calling, even with the high calling of God in Christ Jesus: if this is not the case, a man can have no true knowledge of the kingdom of the Messiah, which is not a temporal and carnal one; it is not of this world, nor does it come with observation; nor can he have any right to the ordinances of it, which are of a spiritual nature; and much less can he be thought to have any true notions, or to be possessed of the kingdom of grace, which lies in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; or to have either a meetness for, or a right unto the kingdom of glory: though by the following words it seems, that the word is rightly rendered *again*, or a *second time*, as it is by Nonnus.

Ver. 4. *Nicodemus saith unto him, &c.*] Understanding him of a natural birth, to be repeated: *how can a man be born when he is old?* as it seems by this, he himself now was: *can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?* The Ethiopic version adds, *again*; and the Arabic version, *and then be born*; this he urges, as absurd, impracticable, and impossible; and which shews him to have been as yet a natural man, who could not receive nor discern spiritual things.

Ver. 5. *Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say unto thee, &c.*] Explaining somewhat more clearly, what he he before said: *except a man be born of water and of the spirit*: these are, כְּלוּת שְׁנוֹת, *two words*, which express the same thing, as Kimchi observes in many places in his commentaries, and signify the grace of the spirit of God. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, *the Holy Spirit*, and so Nonnus; and who doubtless is intended: by *water*, is not meant material water, or baptismal water; for water-baptism is never expressed by water only, without some additional word, which shews, that the ordinance of water-baptism is intended: nor has baptism any regenerating influence in it; a person may be baptized, as Simon Magus was, and yet not born again; and it is so far from having any such virtue, that a person ought to be born again, before he is admitted to that ordinance: and though submission to it is necessary, in order to a person's entrance into a Gospel church-state; yet it is not necessary to the kingdom of heaven, or to eternal life and salvation: such a mistaken sense of this text, seems to have given the first birth and rise to infant

baptism in the African churches; who taking the words in this bad sense, concluded their children must be baptized, or they could not be saved; whereas by *water* is meant, in a figurative and metaphorical sense, the grace of God, as it is elsewhere; see Ezek. xxxvi. 25. John iv. 14. Which is the moving cause of this new birth, and according to which God begets men again to a lively hope, and that by which it is effected; for it is by the grace of God, and not by the power of man's free will, that any are regenerated, or made new creatures: and if Nicodemus was an officer in the temple, that took care to provide water at the feasts, as Dr. Lightfoot hints, and as it should seem Nicodemus ben Gorion was, by the story before related of him; see the note on ver. 1. very pertinently does our Lord make mention of water, it being his own element: regeneration is sometimes ascribed to God the Father, as in 1 Pet. i. 3. James i. 18. and sometimes to the Son, 1 John ii. 29. and here to the Spirit, as in Tit. iii. 5. who convicts of sin, sanctifies, renews, works faith, and every other grace; begins and carries on the work of grace, unto perfection; and unless a man has this work of his wrought on his soul, as he'll never understand divine and spiritual things, so he can have no right to Gospel ordinances, or things appertaining to the kingdom of God; nor can he be thought to have passed from death to life, and to have entered into an open state of grace, and the kingdom of it; or that living and dying so, he shall ever enter into the kingdom of heaven; for unless a man is regenerated, he is not born heir-apparent to it; and without internal holiness, shall not enter into it, enjoy it, or see God.

Ver. 6. *That which is born of the flesh, is flesh, &c.*] Man by his natural birth, and as he is born according to the flesh of his natural parents, is a mere natural man; that is, he is carnal and corrupt, and cannot discern spiritual things; nor can he, as such, enter into, and inherit the kingdom of God; see 1 Cor. ii. 14. and xv. 50. And therefore there is a necessity of his being born again, or of the grace of the spirit, and of his becoming a spiritual man; and if he was to be, or could be born again of the flesh, or ever so many times enter into his mother's womb, and be born, was it possible, he would still be but a natural and a carnal man, and so unfit for the kingdom of God. By *flesh* here, is not meant the fleshy part of man, the body, as generated of another fleshy substance; for this is no other than what may be said of brutes; and besides, if this was the sense, *spirit*, in the next clause, must mean the soul, whereas one soul is not generated from another: but by *flesh* is designed, the nature of man; not merely as weak and frail, but as unclean and corrupt, through sin; and which being propagated by natural generation from sinful men, cannot be otherwise; for *who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one*, Job xiv. 4. \* And though the soul of man is of a spiritual nature, and remains a spirit, notwithstanding the pollution of sin; yet it being defiled with the flesh, and altogether under the power and influence of the lusts of the flesh, it may well be said to be carnal or fleshy: hence *flesh*, as it

\* Vid. Maimon. Issue Bia, c. 14. sect. 11. & Éduth. c. 13. sect. 2.

stands opposed to *spirit*, signifies the corruption of nature, Gal. v. 17. and such who are in a state of unregeneracy, are said to be after the flesh, and in the flesh, and even the mind itself is said to be carnal, Rom. viii. 5, 6, 7, 8. *And that which is born of the spirit, is spirit*: a man that is regenerated by the spirit of God, and the efficacy of his grace, is a spiritual man; he can discern and judge all things of a spiritual nature; he's a fit person to be admitted to spiritual ordinances and privileges; and appears to be in the spiritual kingdom of Christ; and has a right to the world of blessed spirits above; and when his body is raised a spiritual body, will be admitted in soul, body, and spirit, into the joy of his Lord. *Spirit* in the first part of this clause, signifies the Holy Spirit of God, the author of regeneration and sanctification; whence that work is called the sanctification of the spirit, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, 1 Pet. i. 2. Titus iii. 5. *And spirit*, in the latter part, intends the internal work of grace upon the soul, from whence a man is denominated a spiritual man; and as a child bears the same name with its parent, so this is called by the same, as the author and efficient cause of it: and besides, it is of a spiritual nature itself, and exerts itself in spiritual acts and exercises, and directs to, and engages in spiritual things; and has its seat also in the spirit, or soul of man.

Ver. 7. *Marvel not that I said unto thee, &c.*] For Nicodemus was quite astonished, at this doctrine of the new birth; it was altogether new to him, and unheard of by him; nor could he understand, nor conceive in what manner it could be: *ye must be born again*; in four of Beza's copies, it is read *we*; but as Christ was not begotten in a carnal way, or descended not from Adam in the ordinary way of generation, he was not carnal and corrupt, nor in the least tainted with sin; and so stood in no need of regeneration; wherefore such a reading must be rejected. There is a necessity of the regeneration of those, who are the chosen of God, and the redeemed of the Lamb; and of them only can the words be understood; for as for others, they neither can, nor will, nor must be born again: but the people of God *must*: partly because it is the will of God; it is his purpose and resolution, that they shall be regenerated; he has chosen them, through sanctification of the spirit, unto salvation by Christ: this is the way and method of saving sinners he has fixed upon, namely, not to save them by works of righteousness, but by grace, and according to abundant mercy, through the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost: and partly, because of the case and condition of men, which requires it; for whereas the chosen people of God, are predestinated to the adoption of children, and are taken into the family of God, and are heirs to an inheritance, it is necessary they should have a nature, temper, and disposition of mind, suitable to the inheritance they are to enjoy; which they have not in their natural estate, and which is conveyed to them in regeneration: besides, their carnal minds are enmity to God, and it is necessary that they should be friendly to him, which can't be without regeneration; nor can they, till they are born again, please God, or do those things which are pleasing to him: to which may be added, which

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

Christ has before suggested, and which shews the necessity of it, that without it, no man can either see, or enter into the kingdom of God. To take off the surprise of Nicodemus, our Lord instances in a common natural case, and to which this affair of regeneration may be compared, and by it illustrated.

Ver. 8. *The wind bloweth where it listeth, &c.*] For ought any mortal can say, or do to the contrary: and so the spirit of God is a free agent in regeneration; he works how, and where, and when he pleases; he acts freely in the first operation of his grace on the heart, and in all after-influences of it; as well as in the donation of his gifts to men, for different purposes; see 1 Cor. xii. 11. and this grace of the spirit in regeneration, like the wind, is powerful and irresistible; it carries all before it; there's no withstanding it; it throws down Satan's strong holds, demolishes the fortifications of sin; the whole posse of hell, and the corruptions of a man's heart, are not a match for it; when the spirit works, who can let? *and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth*; as the wind, though its sound is heard, and its force felt, it can't be seen; nor is it known certainly, from whence it comes, and where are the treasures of it; from whence it begins, and where it ends; so is the grace of the spirit of God in regeneration to a natural man; it is imperceptible, indiscernible, and unaccountable by him, 1 Cor. ii. 14. *So is every one that is born of the spirit*: he is regenerated by grace, that is, as free and sovereign, as powerful and irresistible, and as secret and imperceptible, as the wind is: and seeing so ordinary a thing as the blowing of the wind is of such a nature, and so little to be accounted for; regeneration by the spirit of God, who is comparable to the wind, and whose name so signifies, need not be thought so marvellous and astonishing, though the natural man discerns it not, and can't account for it. The beauty and propriety of this simile will more appear by observing, that the same Hebrew word, רוּחַ, is used both for the wind, and for the Holy Spirit of God; it is used for the *wind*, in Gen. iii. 8. and viii. 1. 1 Kings xix. 11. Eccl. i. 6. and in other places, and for the spirit of God, in Gen. i. 2. and vi. 3. Job xxxiii. 4. and elsewhere: and so likewise the Greek word πνεῦμα, is used for them both, for the wind in this place, and often for the Holy Ghost: and it may be observed, that the Holy Spirit, because of his powerful, comfortable, and quickening influences, is compared to the wind, especially to the south wind, in some passages of the Old Testament, which Christ might have in view, Cant iv. 16. Zech. ix. 14. What our Lord here says, concerning the wind, is confirmed by all experience, and philosophical observations; the rise of winds, from whence they come, and whither they go, cannot be ascertained; the treasures of them are only with God, and known to him; see Eccl. xi. 5.

Ver. 9. *Nicodemus answered and said unto him, &c.*] Remaining still as ignorant as ever, though Christ had explained the phrase *born again*, at which he stumbled, by a being *born of water and of the spirit*, or of the grace of the spirit of God; and had illustrated this by the free, powerful, and invisible blowing of the wind: *how can these things be?* The Arabic version reads,

5 F

*how can this be?* referring either to the last thing said, that a man's being born of the spirit, is like the blowing of the wind; or to the explanation of the first expression, that a man should be born of water, and of the spirit; or to the first assertion itself, that a man should be born again; which notwithstanding the explanation and illustration, seemed as impossible, and as impracticable as ever; or rather to them all, and so the Persic version reads, *how can all these things be?*

Ver. 10. *Jesus answered and said unto him, &c.* Upbraiding him with his continued and invincible ignorance, which was aggravated by his dignified character: *art thou a master in Israel?* or of Israel, as all the Oriental versions render it, as it literally may be rendered. He was one of the *חכמי ישראל*, *wise men, or doctors of Israel*,<sup>1</sup>, so often mentioned by the Jews. One of the Jewish doctors was answered, by a boy, just in such language as is here used; who, not understanding the direction he gave him about the way into the city, said to him, *אתה הוּא חכם של ישראל*, *art thou he, a doctor, or master of Israel?* did not I say to thee so? &c.<sup>1</sup>. He was not a common teacher; nor a teacher of babes, nor a teacher in their synagogues, or in their *Midrashim*, or divinity schools, but in their great sanhedrim; and the article before the word used will admit it to be rendered, *that master*, doctor, or teacher; that famous, and most excellent one, who was talked of all over Jerusalem and Judea, as a surpassing one: and now, though he was not only an Israelite, with whom were the laws, statutes, judgments, and oracles of God, the writings of Moses, and the prophets; but a teacher of Israelites, and in the highest class of teachers, and of the greatest fame among them, yet was he ignorant of the first and most important things in religion: *and knowest not these things?* which were so plainly to be suggested in the sacred writings, with which he was, or ought to have been conversant: for the same things Christ had been speaking of, are there expressed by a circumcision of the heart; by a birth, a nation's being born at once; by sanctification; by the grace of God signified under the metaphor of water; and by quickening persons, comparable to dry bones, through the wind blowing, and breathing into them, Deut. xxx. 6. Isa. xlix. 21. and lxvi. 8. Ezek. xxxvi. 25. and xxxvii. 9, 10.

Ver. 11. *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, &c.* Meaning either himself, and John the Baptist his forerunner, who preached the same doctrine of regeneration, internal sanctification, and evangelical repentance, as well as outward reformation, as necessary to entrance into the kingdom of heaven, or the Gospel dispensation, he declared was just at hand; or his disciples with himself, who were now with him, and whom he had called to preach the same truths he himself did; or the prophets of the Old Testament, who agreed with him in these things; or the Father that was with him, and never left him alone, and the Holy Spirit that was upon him, by whom he was anointed to preach these things, and who spoke them in him; or else he may use the plural number of himself alone, as being one in authority, and speaking with it, as he sometimes did, Mark iv. 30. and the

rather this seems to be the sense, since he immediately, in the next verse, speaks in the singular number, *if I have told you earthly things, &c.* Now Christ must needs thoroughly, and certainly know what he spoke, since he was not only the omniscient God, but, as Mediator, had all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in him, and the spirit of wisdom and knowledge rested on him: *and testify that we have seen;* and therefore ought to have been received as a credible witness, as he was a faithful one; since *seeing and knowing* are qualifications in a witness, Lev. v. 1. and though these were eminently in Christ, the generality of the Jews gave no credit to his testimony: *and ye received not our witness;* which was an aggravation of their sin and unbelief; see ver. 32.

Ver. 12. *If I have told you earthly things, &c.* Not that the doctrines he delivered were earthly ones; for he was not of the earth, but from heaven, and above all, and so spake not of the earth, but of heaven, ver. 31. and this doctrine of regeneration was an heavenly doctrine; and the thing itself required supernatural power, and grace from above: but either they were the more easy doctrines of the Gospel; or were delivered in a plain and easy style, and illustrated by similes taken from earthly things, as from human birth, from the water, and from the wind: *and ye believe not;* i. e. those things; ye don't receive them, nor give credit to them; or *me*, as the Ethiopic version adds, who relate them on the best evidence, having fully known, and clearly seen them: *how shall ye believe;* give credit to me, or receive my testimony: *if I tell you of heavenly things?* of the more sublime doctrines of the Gospel, such as the descent of the Messiah from heaven; the union of the two natures, human and divine, in him; his being the only-begotten son of God; his crucifixion and death, signified by the lifting up of the serpent on a pole in the wilderness; and the wonderful love of God to the Gentile world in giving Christ to, and for them; and the salvation, and eternal happiness of all that believe in him, whether they be Jews or Gentiles; and these delivered in language suitable to them, without figures, or natural similes, which help the understanding, and convey ideas of things more easily to it.

Ver. 13. *And no man hath ascended into heaven, &c.* Though Enoch and Elias had, yet not by their own power, nor in the sense our Lord designs; whose meaning is, that no man had, or could go up to heaven, to bring from thence the knowledge of divine and heavenly things; in which sense the phrase is used in Deut. xxx. 12. Rom. x. 6. and which may be illustrated by John i. 18. wherefore inasmuch as Nicodemus had acknowledged Christ to be a teacher come from God, our Lord would have him know, that he was the only teacher of heavenly things, as being the only person that had been in heaven, and in the bosom of the father; and therefore if he, and the rest of the Jews, did not receive instructions from him, they must for ever remain ignorant; for there never had been, nor was, nor could be, any mere man that could go up to heaven, and learn the mysteries of God, and of the kingdom of heaven, and return and

<sup>1</sup> Derech Eretz. fol. 18. 1.

<sup>1</sup> Echa Rabbati, fol. 44. 4.



instruct men in them: *but he that came down from heaven*; meaning himself, who is the Lord from heaven, and came from thence to do the will of God by preaching the Gospel, working miracles, obeying the law, and suffering death in the room of his people, and thereby obtaining eternal redemption for them. Not that he brought down from heaven with him, either the whole of his human nature, or a part of it; either an human soul, or an human body; nor did he descend locally, by change of place, he being God omnipresent, infinite and immense, but by assumption of the human nature into union with his divine person: *even the son of man which is in heaven*; at the same time he was then on earth: not that he was in heaven in his human nature, and as he was the son of man; but in his divine nature, as he was the son of God; see John i. 18. though this is predicated of his person, as denominated from the human nature, which was proper to him only in his divine nature; for such is omnipresence, or to be in heaven and earth at the same time; just as on the other hand God is said to purchase the church with his blood, and the Lord of glory is said to be crucified, Acts xx. 28. 1 Cor. ii. 8. where those things are spoken of Christ, as denominated from his divine nature, which were proper only to his human nature; and is what divines call a communication of idioms or properties; and which will serve as a key to open all such passages of Scripture: and now as a proof of our Lord's having been in heaven, and of his being a teacher come from God, and such an one as never was, or can be, he opens and explains a type respecting himself, in the following verse.

Ver. 14. *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness*, &c.] The history referred to is in Numb. xxi. 8. There is, in many things, an agreement between this serpent, and Jesus Christ: as in the *matter* of it, it was a brazen serpent; it was made not of gold, nor of silver, but of brass, the meaner metal, and was a very unlikely means, of itself, to heal the Israelites; and might be despised by many: this may denote the meanness of Christ in his human nature, in his birth and parentage, and place of education and converse; and especially in his crucifixion and death; and which, to an eye of carnal sense and reason, seemed a very improbable means of saving sinners; and therefore were to some a stumbling-block, and to others foolishness: though on the other hand, as brass is a shining metal, and might be chose for the serpent in the wilderness to be made of, that by the lustre of it the eyes of the Israelites might be attracted and directed to it, who were at the greatest distance in the camp; so it may be expressive of the glory of Christ, as the only-begotten of the father, and who is the brightness of his father's glory; and which is the great attractive, motive, and inducement to engage souls to look unto him, and believe in him, Isa. xlv. 22. and whereas brass is both a strong and durable metal, it may signify the strength of Christ, who is the mighty God, and mighty to save; and his duration, as a Saviour, being the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever: likewise, the comparison between the serpent Moses lifted up, and Christ, may be observed in the form of it. The brazen serpent had the form of a serpent, but not the poison and venomous nature of one; so Christ was

sent, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and was found in fashion as a man, as a sinful man, but was without sin, and was perfectly holy; and yet being in this form, was made both sin and a curse, that he might redeem his people both from sin, and from the curse of the law, by dying a death which denominated him accursed, of which the serpent was an emblem: besides, this serpent was a fiery one; at least it looked like one of the fiery serpents, being of brass, which shone as though it burned in a furnace; and may be an emblem both of Christ's father's wrath, which was poured out like fire upon him, and of his love to his people, which was like burning fire, the coals whereof gave a most vehement flame. Moreover, this serpent Moses made, and was ordered to make, was but *one*, though the fiery serpents, with which the Israelites were bitten, were many; so there is but one Mediator between God and man; but one Saviour, in whom alone is salvation, and in no other, even Jesus Christ. To which may be added the *situation* in which this serpent was put: it was set by Moses on a pole; it was lifted up on high, that every one in the camp of Israel might see it; and may point out the ascension of Christ into heaven, and his exaltation at God's right hand there, as some think; or his being set up in the ministry of the word, and held forth and exalted there as the only Saviour of lost sinners; or rather his crucifixion, which is sometimes expressed by a lifting up, John viii. 28. and xii. 32. Once more, there is an agreement in the effect that followed upon the lifting up of the serpent; and which was the design of it, *viz.* the healing of such Israelites as were bitten by the fiery serpents, who looked to this: for as the Israelites were bitten by fiery serpents, with the poison of which they were infected, and were in danger of death, and to many of them their bitings were mortal; so men are poisoned with the venom of the old serpent the devil, by which they are subjected to a corporeal death, and are brought under a spiritual, or moral death, and are liable to an eternal one: and as these bitings were such as Moses could not cure; so the wounds of sin, through the old serpent, are such as can't be healed by the law, moral or ceremonial, or by obedience to either; and as they were the Israelites who were convinced of their sin, and acknowledged it, and had a cure by looking to the brazen serpent; so such whom the spirit of God convinces of sin, and to whom he gives the seeing eye of faith, these, through seeing the son, and looking to Jesus, as crucified and slain, receive healing by his stripes and wounds: and as those, who were ever so much bit and poisoned by the fiery serpents, or were at ever so great a distance from the pole, or had the weakest eye, yet if they could but discern the serpent on the pole, though it only appeared as a shining piece of brass, had a cure; so the greatest of sinners, and who are afar off from God, and all that is good, and who have faith but as a grain of mustard-seed, or but a glimmering view of Christ, of his glory, fullness, and suitability, shall be saved by him. To add no more, this was done *in the wilderness*: which may signify this world, Christ's coming into it, his crucifixion in it, and his going without the camp, bearing our reproach, or suffering without the gates of Jerusalem. It is certain, that the Jews had a notion that the brazen

serpent was symbolical and figurative: Philo the Jew makes it to be a symbol of fortitude and temperance; and the author of the apocryphal book of Wisdom<sup>1</sup>, calls it a *sign of salvation*. They thought there was something mysterious in it: hence they say<sup>2</sup>, "in four places it is said, *make thee*, &c. In three places it is explained, viz. Gen. vi. 14. Numb. x. 2. Josh. v. 2. and one is not explained, Numb. xxi. 8. *make thee a fiery serpent*, לֹא פִירִשׁ, is not explained." And elsewhere<sup>3</sup> they ask, "and could the serpent kill, or make alive? But at the time that Israel looked up, and served with their hearts their father which is in heaven, they were healed; but if not, they were brought low." So that the look was not merely to the brazen serpent, but to God in heaven; yea, to the word of God, his essential Logos, as say the Targumists on Numb. xxi. 9. The Jerusalem Targum paraphrases the words thus: "and Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a high place, and whoever was bitten by the serpents, and lift up his face, in prayer, to his father which is in heaven, and looked upon the serpent of brass, lived." And Jonathan ben Uzziel paraphrases them thus: "and Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a high place; and it was, when a serpent had bitten any man, and he looked to the serpent of brass, and directed his heart, לְשֵׁם כִּימְרָא דַּי, to the name of the word of the Lord, he lived." And this healing they understand not only of bodily healing, but of the healing of the soul: for they observe<sup>4</sup>, that "as soon as they said, *we have sinned*, immediately their iniquity was expiated; and they had the good news brought them of the healing of the soul, as it is written, *make thee a seraph*; and he does not say a serpent; and this is it: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live, רִפְאוּת הַנֶּפֶשׁ, through the healing of the soul:" yea, they compare the Messiah to a serpent; for so the Targum on Isa. xiv. 29. paraphrases that passage: "the Messiah shall come forth from Jesse's children's children; and his works shall be among you as a flying serpent." And who else can be designed by the *other serpent of life*<sup>5</sup>, and the *holy serpent*<sup>6</sup> they speak of, in opposition to the evil serpent that seduced Eve? And it is well known, that נָחֻשׁ, a serpent, and מְשִׁיחַ, Messiah, are numerically, or by gematry, the same; a way of interpretation, and explanation, often in use with the Jews. Now, as this serpent was lifted up on a pole on high, that every one that was bitten with the fiery serpent might look to it, and be healed; even so must the son of man be lifted up; upon the cross, and die: the crucifixion and death of Christ were necessary, and must be, because of the decrees and purposes of God, by which he was fore-ordained thereunto, and by which determinate counsel he was delivered, taken, crucified, and slain; and because of his own engagements as a surety, laying himself under obligations in the council and covenant of peace, to suffer, and die, in the room of his people; and because of the prophecies in the Old Testament, and his own predictions,

that so it should be; as also, that the antitype might answer the type; and particularly, that he might be a suitable object of faith for wounded sinners, sensible of sin, to look unto.

Ver. 15. *That whosoever believeth in him, &c.*] Whether Jew or Gentile, a greater, or a lesser sinner, and of whatsoever state and condition, age or sex; and though ever so weak a believer, provided his faith is of the right kind: not an historical or temporary one, a mere assent to the truth of things respecting his person, office, and work; but such a faith, by which a soul sees a glory, fullness, and suitableness in him as a Saviour; goes to him, ventures on him, commits itself to him, lays hold on him, and receives him, leans and relies upon him, and trusts in him, and lives upon him; and which is the faith of God's elect; a gift of his grace, and the operation of his spirit; and which works by love, and is attended with the fruits of righteousness: now the end of Christ's crucifixion and death is, that such an one *should not perish*; though he is in a lost and perishing condition in Adam, and by nature, and sees himself to be so, and comes to Christ as such; and though his frames and comforts are perishing, and he sometimes fears he shall be utterly lost; and though he is subject to slips and falls, and great spiritual decays; and shall perish as to the outward man by death; yet he shall never perish eternally, or be punished with everlasting destruction, as the wicked will: but have eternal life; not by his works, but as the gift of God: and which he that truly believes has already in the covenant of grace, in Christ his head, in faith and hope; and has the earnest and pledge of it, the spirit of God; and the beginning of it, which is the knowledge of God in Christ; and shall hereafter possess it fully, and in person, to all eternity: even a life of perfect holiness and knowledge; a life of never-ending pleasure; a life free from all the sorrows, distresses, and imperfections of this; and which will always continue.

Ver. 16. *For God so loved the world, &c.*] The Persian version reads *men*; but not every man in the world is here meant, or all the individuals of human nature; for all are not the objects of God's special love, which is here designed, as appears from the instance and evidence of it, the gift of his son: nor is Christ God's gift to every one; for to whomsoever he gives his son, he gives all things freely with him; which is not the case of every man. Nor is human nature here intended, in opposition to, and distinction from, the angelic nature; for though God has shewed a regard to fallen men, and not to fallen angels, and has provided a Saviour for the one, and not for the other; and Christ has assumed the nature of men, and not angels; yet not for the sake of all men, but the spiritual seed of Abraham; and besides, it will not be easily proved, that human nature is ever called the world: nor is the whole body of the chosen ones, as consisting of Jews and Gentiles, here designed; for though these are called the world, John vi. 33, 51. and are the objects of God's special love, and to them Christ is given,

<sup>1</sup> De Agricult. p. 202. & Allegor. l. 3. p. 1101, 1102, 1103, 1104.

<sup>2</sup> C. 16. v. 6.

<sup>3</sup> T. Hieros. Roshhashanah, fol. 59. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Misn. Roshhashanah, c. 3. sect. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 123. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 36. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Tikkune Zohar in Jetzira, p. 134.

and they are brought to believe in him, and shall never perish, but shall be saved with an everlasting salvation; yet rather the Gentiles particularly, and God's elect among them, are meant; who are often called *the world*, and *the whole world*, and *the nations of the world*, as distinct from the Jews; see Rom. xi. 12, 15. 1 John ii. 2. Luke xii. 30. compared with Matt. vi. 32. The Jews had the same distinction we have now, the church and the world; the former they took to themselves, and the latter they gave to all the nations around: hence we often meet with this distinction, Israel, and the nations of the world; on those words, "let them bring forth their witness, that they may be justified," Isa. xliii. 9. (say<sup>b</sup> the doctors) these are Israel; or "let them hear and say it is truth, these are the nations of the world." And again<sup>c</sup>, "the holy, blessed God said to Israel, when I judge Israel, I don't judge them as the nations of the world:" and so in a multitude of places: and it should be observed, that our Lord was now discoursing with a Jewish Rabbi, and that he is opposing a commonly-received notion of theirs, that when the Messiah came, the Gentiles should have no benefit or advantage by him, only the Israelites; so far should they be from it, that, according to their sense, the most dreadful judgments, calamities, and curses, should befall them; yea, hell and eternal damnation. "There is a place (they say<sup>d</sup>), the name of which is *Hadrach*, Zech. ix. 1. This is the King Messiah, who is, רך ורך, sharp and tender. "sharp to the nations, and tender to Israel." And so of the sun of righteousness, in Mal. iv. 2. they say<sup>e</sup>, "there is healing for the Israelites in it: but the idolatrous nations shall be burnt by it." And that<sup>f</sup> there is mercy for Israel, but judgment for the rest of the nations." And on those words in Isa. xxi. 12. *the morning cometh, and also the night*, they observe<sup>g</sup>, "the morning is for the righteous, and the night for the wicked; the morning is for Israel, and the night for the nations of the world." And again<sup>h</sup>, "in the time to come, (the times of the Messiah,) the holy, blessed God will bring darkness upon the nations, and will enlighten Israel, as it is said, Isa. lx. 2." Once more<sup>i</sup>, "in the time to come, the holy, blessed God will bring the nations of the world, and will cast them into the midst of hell under the Israelites, as it is said, Isa. xliii. 3." To which may be added that denunciation of theirs<sup>k</sup>, "woe to the nations of the world, who perish, and they know not that they perish: in the time that the sanctuary was standing, the altar atoned for them; but now who shall atone for them?" Now, in opposition to such a notion, our Lord addresses this Jew; and it is as if he had said, you Rabbins say, that when the Messiah comes, only the Israelites, the peculiar favourites of God, shall share in the blessings that come by, and with him; and that the Gentiles shall reap no advantage by him, being hated of God, and rejected of him: but I tell you, God has so loved the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, that he gave his only-

begotten son; to, and for them, as well as for the Jews; to be a covenant of the people, the Gentiles, the Saviour of them, and a sacrifice for them; a gift which is a sufficient evidence of his love to them; it being a large and comprehensive one, an irreversible and unspeakable one; no other than his own son by nature, of the same essence, perfections, and glory with him; begotten by him in a way inconceivable and expressible by mortals; and his only-begotten one; the object of his love and delight, and in whom he is ever well pleased; and yet, such is his love to the Gentiles, as well as Jews, that he has given him, in human nature, up, into the hands of men, and of justice, and to death itself: that whosoever believeth in him, whether Jew or Gentile, should not perish, but have everlasting life; see the note on the preceding verse.

Ver. 17. *For God sent not his son into the world, &c.*] God did send his son into the world in the likeness of sinful flesh, being made of a woman, and made under the law; and which is an instance of his great love, and not of any disrespect to his son, or of any inequality between them: but then this was not to condemn the world; even any part of it, or any in it: not the Gentiles, as the Jews thought he would; for though God had suffered them to walk in their own ways, and had winked at, or overlooked the times of their ignorance, and had sent no prophet unto them, nor made any revelation of his will, or any discovery of his special grace unto them; yet he sent his son now, not to destroy them for their idolatry, and wickedness, but to be the Saviour of them: nor the Jews; for as impenitent and unbelieving, and as wicked as they were, he did not accuse them to the father, nor judge and condemn them; he was to come again in power and great glory, when he would take vengeance on them, and cause wrath to come upon them to the uttermost, for their disbelief and rejection of him; but this was not his business now: nor the wicked of the world in general; to judge, and condemn them, will be his work, when he comes a second time, in the day God has appointed to judge the world in righteousness. But the end of his mission, and first coming is, that the world through him might be saved: even the world of the elect in general, whom God determined to save, and has chosen, to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ, and has appointed Christ to be the salvation of; and who being sent, came into the world to seek and save them; and his chosen people among the Gentiles in particular: wherefore he is said to be God's salvation to the ends of the earth: and all the ends of the earth are called upon to look unto him, and be saved by him, Isa. xlix. 6. and xlv. 22.

Ver. 18. *He that believeth on him is not condemned, &c.*] Whether Jew or Gentile, because a believer is openly in Christ; and there is no condemnation to those that are in him: and though the sentence of death passed upon all in Adam, and judgment came upon all men to condemnation in him; yet this sentence being executed on Christ, the surety of his people, who has

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 2. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Ib. fol. 4. 1. Vid. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 91. 2. & Bereshit Rabba, fol. 11. 3.

<sup>d</sup> Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 24. 1. Jarchi & Kimchi in Zech. ix. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Zohar in Gen, fol. 112. 2.

<sup>f</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 15. 1, 2.

<sup>g</sup> T. Hieros. Taanot, fol. 64. 1.

<sup>h</sup> Shemot Rabba, sect. 14. fol. 99. 4.

<sup>i</sup> Ib. sect. 11. fol. 98. 3.

<sup>k</sup> T. Bab. Succa, fol. 55. 2.

been condemned to death, and has suffered it in their stead, his death is a security to them from all condemnation : and they are delivered by him from the curse and condemnation of the law : and having in conversion openly passed from death to life, they shall never enter into condemnation; and this is the happy case of every one that believes in Christ : *but he that believeth not is condemned already.* The Persic version renders it, *from the beginning* ; he remains under the sentence of condemnation passed in Adam upon him ; the law accuses him, and pronounces him guilty before God ; he is under the curse of it, and it is a ministration of condemnation and death to him ; nor has he any thing to secure him from its charge, curse, and condemnation : this must be understood of one that is a final unbeliever, or that lives, and dies, in a state of impenitence, and unbelief : *because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten son of God* ; whom God has sent to be the Saviour of lost sinners, and to deliver them from wrath to come ; and there is no other name but his, whereby men can be saved ; so that such that do not believe in him, must be damned.

Ver. 19. *And this is the condemnation, &c.*] Of him that believes not in Christ ; that is, this is the matter and cause of his condemnation, and by which it is aggravated, and appears to be just : *that light is come into the world* : by which is meant, not natural, or corporeal light ; though natural darkness is, by some, preferred to this, being more convenient for their evil works ; as by thieves, murderers, and adulterers : nor is the light of nature designed, with which every man is enlightened that comes into the world ; which, though but a dim light, might be of more use, and service, than it is ; and is often rejected, and rebelled against, by wicked men, and which will be the condemnation of the Heathen world : but rather the light of divine revelation, both in the law of God, and Gospel of Christ ; especially the latter is here intended ; and which, though so great a favour to fallen men, is despised, and denied by the sons of darkness : though it may be best of all to understand it of Christ himself, the light of the world, and who is come a light into it ; see John viii. 12. and xii. 46. who may be called *light*, because he has set revelation in its clearest and fullest light ; he has declared the whole mind, and will of God concerning the affair of divine worship, and the business of salvation : grace, and truth, are come by him ; the doctrines of grace, and the truths of the Gospel, are most clearly brought to light by him ; the types, and shadows of the law are removed ; and the promises, and the prophecies of the Old Testament, are most largely expounded by him, and most perfectly fulfilled in him : and besides ; he is the author and giver of the light of grace, by which men see themselves to be what they are, lost and undone sinners ; and see him to be the only able, willing, suitable, sufficient, and complete Saviour : and he it is that now gives the saints the glimpse of glory they have, and will be the light of the new Jerusalem, and the everlasting light of his people hereafter. He, by his incarnation, may be said to *come into the world* in general, which was made by him, as God ; and as he was in it, as man ; though he was not known by it as the God-man, Mediator, and Messiah : and particularly he came into the Jewish

world, where he was born, brought up, conversed, lived, and died ; and into the Gentile world, by the ministry of his apostles, whom he sent into all the world, to preach the Gospel to every creature, and spread the glorious light of it in every place : *and men loved darkness rather than light* : the Jews, the greater part of them, preferred the darkness of the ceremonial law, and the Mosaic dispensation, and even the traditions of their elders, before the clear Gospel revelation made by Christ Jesus ; and the Gentiles also, for the most part, chose rather to continue in their Heathenish ignorance, and idolatry, and to walk in their own ways, and in the vanity of their minds, than to embrace Christ, and his Gospel, and submit to his ordinances, and appointments ; and the generality of men, to this day, love their natural darkness, and choose to walk in it, and to have fellowship with the works of darkness, and delight in the company of the children of darkness, rather than follow Christ, the light of the world ; receive his Gospel, and walk in his ways, in fellowship with his saints : the reason of all this is, *because their deeds were evil* ; which they chose not to relinquish ; and Christ, his Gospel and ordinances are contrary to them ; for the doctrine of the grace of God, which has appeared, and shone out in great lustre, and splendour, in the world, teaches men to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts ; and therefore it is hated, and rejected, by men.

Ver. 20. *For every one that doth evil, hateth the light, &c.*] Every man, the series of whose life and conversation is evil, hates Christ and his Gospel, because they make manifest his evil deeds, convict him of them, and rebuke him for them : *neither cometh to the light* ; to hear Christ preach, or preached ; to attend on the Gospel ministration and means of grace : *lest his deeds should be reproved* ; or discovered, and made manifest, and he be brought to shame, and laid under blame, and advised to part with them, which he cares not to do ; see Eph. v. 11, 12, 13.

Ver. 21. *But he that doth truth, &c.*] That which is true, right and good : *he whose work is just*, as the Ethiopic version renders it ; or, *he that does that which is right*, so the Persic ; that which is according to the will of God, and from a principle of love to him, and with a view to his glory : *cometh to the light* ; to Christ, and to his word, and ordinances : *that his deeds may be made manifest* ; being brought to the light, to the test, and standard, whether they are right, or wrong ; and that it may appear, *that they are wrought in God* ; or *by God* ; by his assistance, and gracious influence, without which men can do nothing ; for 'tis God that works in them both to will and to do : or, *according to God*, as others render it ; according to the will of God, both for matter and manner : or *for God*, as the Ethiopic version renders it ; for the glory of God, which ought to be the aim, and end of every action. The Persic version reads the whole thus, *that the work which is between God and him may be known* ; that such deeds may be discovered, which are only known to God and himself.

Ver. 22. *After these things, &c.*] After Christ's coming to Jerusalem, at the feast of the passover, with his disciples, and driving the buyers and sellers from the temple, and doing the miracles he did there, upon

which many believed on him; and after the long discourse he had with Nicodemus, concerning regeneration, and other things: *came Jesus and his disciples, into the land of Judea; or into Judea the country, having been in Jerusalem, the city-part or chief city in Judea; so that the country is distinguished from, and opposed to the city.* And thus, a countryman, and a Jerusalemite, or citizen of Jerusalem, are distinguished; "if, *דוקרתי, a countryman,* (one that "lives in the country any where in the land of Israel "out of Jerusalem") receives a field, *בירושלמי, from "a man of Jerusalem,* the second tithes belong to the "Jerusalemite; but the wise men say, the country-  
"man may bring them up, and eat them at Jerusalem." Or, it may be, because that Jerusalem was part of it in the tribe of Benjamin, and the other in the tribe of Judah; therefore, when Christ, and his disciples, left Jerusalem, they might more properly be said to come into the land of Judea. Indeed, it is commonly said by the Jews<sup>1</sup>, that Jerusalem was not divided among the tribes, and that it did not belong to any tribe; and if so, then with greater propriety still might Christ be said to come into the land of Judea, when he departed from Jerusalem; unless it should be thought, that he went into Galilee, and after that came into the land of Judea; so Nonnus: *and there he tarried with them;* with his disciples, as Nonnus; and with the inhabitants of those parts: he made a longer stay here than at Jerusalem, having more work to do here, and being more delighted with the plainness and simplicity of the country-people; or *he conversed with them,* as the Syriac version renders it; he exercised, and employed himself among them, as the Greek word used signifies: he went about from village to village, doing good, healing diseases, and preaching the Gospel, which was made useful to many: *and baptized;* not he himself, but his disciples, by his orders, and in his name; see chap. iv. 2. whereby he gave fresh countenance and sanction to the ordinance of water-baptism, administering it to others, as well as submitting to it himself.

Ver. 23. *And John also was baptizing in Ænon, &c.]* The Syriac and Persic versions call it *Ain,* or *In-you,* the fountain of the dove; and the Arabic version reads it, the fountain of *Nun:* and whether it was a town, or river, it seems to have its name from a fountain near it, or that itself was one, where was an abundance of water, as the text shews. There's a city of this name in the Septuagint version of Josh. xv. 61. and mention is made of Hazer Enon in Numb. xxxiv. 9. Ezek. xlvii. 17. but neither of them seem to be the same with this; but be it where, and what it will, it was *near to Salim;* and where that was, is as difficult to know as the other. Some take it to be Shalem, a city of Shechem, mentioned in Gen. xxxiii. 18. but that is not the same name with this; and besides was in Samaria; and indeed is by some there thought not to be the proper name of any place. Others are of opinion, that it is the same with Shalim in 1 Sam. ix. 4. though it seems rather to

be the place which Arias Montanus calls " *Salim juxta torrentem,* Salim by the brook; and which he places in the tribe of Issachar: and might be so called, either because it was near this Ænon, and may be the brook, or river intended, by which it was; or because it was not far from the place where the two rivers, Jaboc and Jordan, met; and so the Jewish maps place near Jordan, in the tribe of Manasseh, bordering on the tribe of Issachar, a Shalem, and by it Ain-yon. And the Septuagint in Josh. xix. 22. mention *Salim by the sea,* as in the tribe of Issachar. There is a passage in the Talmud<sup>2</sup>, which, whether it has any regard to this Ænon, and Salim, I leave to be considered: "the wine of Ogedoth, why is it forbidden? because of "the village Pegesh; and that of Borgetha, because of "the Saracene palace; and of Ain-Cushith, because "of the village Salem." Nonnus here calls Ænon, a place of deep waters; and Salim he reads Salem; and so some copies. Ænon, where John baptized, according to Jerom<sup>3</sup>, was eight miles from Scythopolis, to the south, and was near Salim and Jordan; and he makes Salim to be at the same distance from Scythopolis. However, John was baptizing in these parts, at the same time that Christ was teaching and baptizing: he did not leave off on that account. This was the work he was sent to do, and which he continued in as long as he had his liberty; and he chose this place, *because there was much water there; or many waters;* not little purling streams, and rivulets; but, as Nonnus renders it, abundance of water; or a multitude of it, as in the Arabic version; see Rev. i. 15. and xv. ii. 9, 15. Cant. viii. 7. and the Septuagint in Psal. lxxvii. 16. and cvii. 23. and what was sufficient to immerse the whole body in, as Calvin, Aretius, Piscator, and Grotius, on the place, observe; and which was agreeable not only to the practice of the Jews, who used dipping in their baptisms, and purifications, as Musculus and Lightfoot assert; but to John's method and practice elsewhere: *and they came, and were baptized.* The Ethiopic version renders it, *they came to him,* that is, to John, *and he baptized them;* as the Persic version adds, *there, in Ænon, near Salim, in the much water there:* it may be understood of the people coming both to John and Christ, and of their being baptized by them; though it seems rather to be said of John; and so Nonnus paraphrases it.

Ver. 24. *For John was not yet cast into prison.]* As he afterwards was by Herod, for the sake of Herodias, because he reproved Herod for taking her to be his wife, when she was wife to his brother Philip; see Matt. xiv. 3, 4. and this circumstance shews, that these things were done before that journey of Christ into Galilee, mentioned in Matt. iv. 12, 13.

Ver. 25. *Then there arose a question, &c.]* A dispute, or controversy, occasioned by the baptism of John and Christ: *between some of John's disciples and the Jews.* The Syriac and Persic versions read, *between one of John's disciples, and a certain Jew:* and Nonnus renders it, *with an Hebrew man;* and so the Alexandrian manuscript; many others read, *with a Jew:* the contentions

<sup>1</sup> Mish. Demai, c. 6. sect. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Maimon. Bartenora in ib.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 12. 1. & Megilla, fol. 26. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Antiqu. Jud. l. 2. c. 3.

<sup>5</sup> T. Hieros. Avoda Zara, fol. 44. 4.

<sup>6</sup> De locis Hebraicis, fol. 89. C. & fol. 94. F.

between them was *about purifying*; either about the ceremonial purifications, and ablutions commanded in the law of Moses; or concerning the various washings of persons, and vessels, according to the traditions of the elders, which the Jews in common were very tenacious of; and which they thought were brought into neglect, and contempt, by the baptism of John: and this seems to have been occasioned by the baptism of Christ; which the Jew might improve against the disciple of John, and urge, that since another, besides his master, had set up baptizing, who could tell which was rightest and safest to follow? and therefore it would have been much better, if no such rite at all had been used by any, but that the purifications required by the law of Moses, and by their elders, had been strictly and solely attended to.

Ver. 26. *And they came unto John, &c.*] The Persic version reads, *he came unto John*; that disciple that had the controversy with the Jew about purifying, who not knowing well how to answer him, and which might be the case of more, applied to John: *and said unto him, Rabbi; or master; or, our master*; as the Syriac and Persic versions read, which was a title of great respect, and reverence, and much in use in those times; see the notes on Matt. xxiii. 7, 8. The Arabic version joins this word to the following clause, and applies it to Christ, rendering it thus, *the master that was with thee beyond Jordan*; which is making them to speak more honourably of Christ than they intended; for though they speak very respectfully to John, yet with much disdain and neglect of Christ; not so much as mentioning his name, or using any term of honour or respect; only saying, *he that was with thee*; namely, at Bethabara; who came from Galilee to Jordan, unto John, to be baptized by him, and who was baptized by him; and for some little time continued with him, and attended on his ministry; and as they thought, was a disciple of John's: *to whom thou bearest witness*; that he was before him, and to be preferred unto him; and that he was the Lamb of God, and even the son of God; suggesting, that by this testimony of his, Christ had gained all the credit and reputation he had; and that therefore he had done a wrong thing in enlarging so much in the praise and commendation of him: *behold the same baptizeth*; takes upon him to administer the ordinance of baptism; at least gives orders to administer it; which John's disciples thought was the proper, and peculiar business of their master; and therefore speak of this as an intrusion into his office, and an entering into his province; and an assuming that which only belonged to him: and what gave still more uneasiness, and increased the complaint, was, *and all men come to him*; that is, *many*, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it, even more than came to John; see chap. iv. 1. Large multitudes from all parts flocked to hear Christ preach, and great numbers were made disciples by him, and then baptized. That he should baptize, gave them great offence; and that he was so followed, raised their envy; and his being so near to John, might add to their uneasiness. 'Tis a rule with the Jews, that "it is not lawful for a disciple

"before his master; but must be twelve miles distant from him, as the camp of Israel." And they say, that "a disciple that teaches before, or in the presence of his master, is guilty of death."

Ver. 27. *John answered and said, &c.*] The Syriac and Arabic versions add, *to them*; the answer being made to the disciples of John, who came to him with their complaint: *a man can receive nothing*; the Syriac and Persic versions add, *of his own will*: some understand this of Christ, as man, who did not take upon him the character of the Messiah, nor the office of a Mediator, nor the honour of it of himself; and who received the gifts and graces of the spirit of God, without measure, and had his success in his work from above: and indeed, it is true of both Christ, and John; for as Christ, so John received his office, and honour, as the harbinger and forerunner of Christ, and all his gifts qualifying for it, and his success in it, not of himself, but of God: and since therefore the superior office, and honour, and usefulness of the one above the other, were according to the sovereign will of God, there was no room for complaint, murmuring, and envy; but there ought to be contentment and pleasure in the wise disposition of things by God. Yea, this is true of every man, who has nothing of his own; and whatever he has in nature, providence and grace, is a gift to him; and all he enjoys is in a way of receiving: nor can he receive it, *except it be given him from heaven*; from God who dwells there; see the note on Matt. xxi. 25. who is the author and donor of every gift, temporal, spiritual, and eternal; particularly he cannot perceive, and discern spiritual things, nor receive Gospel truths; as it appeared to John his disciples could not, unless spiritual light is given from above; and such a favour is bestowed, as to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven: and therefore, for every office, whether of a superior, or inferior kind, and for every degree of honour, and for whatsoever blessing and gift, whether for soul or body, for time, or for eternity, men ought to be thankful, and not glory in them, as though they had not received them; nor is there any reason to murmur against God, or envy one another, as these disciples did.

Ver. 28. *Ye yourselves bear me witness, &c.*] In what they now said, and referred to, in describing Christ, as he to whom John bore witness; and he appeals to them for what he said in their presence, and before all the people in that testimony: *that I said I am not the Christ*; see ch. i. 19, 20. wherefore, if he, who is the Christ, is now come, and teaches, and baptizes, and has the greatest number of followers, it is not to be wondered at; and much less to be envied; but rather to be rejoiced at. For John, by repeating what he had before said, that he was not the Christ, suggests, that Jesus was; and therefore was superior to him in office, honour, and usefulness, who was only his harbinger and forerunner, as follows: *but I am sent before him*; to prepare his way, to make straight his paths, to proclaim his coming, and kingdom, being at hand; and that the expectations of men may be raised, and they may be ready to receive him when come: and hereby the end of John's office, and ministry, had its accomplishment. The Ethiopic version adds, *to preach him*.

Ver. 29. *He that hath the bride, &c.*] By whom particular persons seem here to be meant, who were called, converted, and brought to Christ, and were made his disciples, and baptized, and so were openly espoused unto him; though sometimes it designs a particular church of Christ, and even the whole general assembly, and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven; all the elect of God, whether among Jews, or Gentiles; see 2 Cor. xi. 2. Rev. xxi. 2, 9. These Christ has in a conjugal relation; and he came, and comes to have them after this manner: he saw them in his father's purposes, and decrees, in all the glory he meant to bring them to; and loved them, and desired them of his father, as his spouse, who gave them to him, as such; and he betrothed them to himself for ever; and in time he sends his ministering servants with his Gospel, to engage and betroth them to him; and by the power of his grace, he makes them willing to give up themselves to him; which is the open espousal of them; and at the last day, when the number of the elect are completed, the marriage of the Lamb will be publicly solemnized, and a marriage-supper will be made; and all that are called, and ready, will enter into the marriage-chamber, and share in the joys, and pleasures of that day: thus by virtue of the father's gift, Christ has them now as his own property, as his portion, his jewels, his bride, and wife; and by, and through his great love to them, he has them not only in his arms, from whence they can never be plucked; but in his heart, where they are set as a seal; and by virtue of this love, they are united to him, become one with him, are members of his body, flesh, and bones; and are one spirit with him, and nothing can be able to separate them; and he will have them all with him to all eternity, to be where he is, and behold his glory: and now, he that has the bride in this sense, is the bridegroom; and such is Christ; see Matt. ix. 15. and xxv. 1. and he acts, and behaves, as such; he loves the saints, as a bridegroom loves his bride, with a love prior to theirs; with a love of complacency and delight, which is single, chaste, and inviolable; free, and sovereign, wonderful, unchangeable, and from everlasting to everlasting: he sympathises with them in all their adversities, and afflictions; he nourishes, and cherishes them, and provides every thing for them, for food, and clothing, for refreshment and protection; and interests them in all he has: and an amazing instance of grace this is, that such who are no better than others, children of wrath by nature; exceeding great sinners, guilty, and filthy; bankrupts, and beggars on the dunghill; and yet are taken into so near a relation to him; who is in the form of God, and equal to him, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, the son of God, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells; the King of kings, and Lord of lords. And this being the case, John suggests, that by these persons following Christ, and giving up themselves to him, it appeared that he was the bridegroom; and to whom should they betake themselves but to him? Nor did it become him, or any other, to seek to draw them from him; nor should any envy his

enjoyment of them, since they were his in so peculiar a sense, and in so near a relation: *but the friend of the bridegroom*; meaning himself: and such is every true minister of the Gospel; he is a lover of Christ, a friend to his interest, and seeks by all means to promote it, and to bring souls unto him. The allusion is to a custom among the Jews, who, at their marriages, used to have persons both on the side of the bride, and of the bridegroom, as companions that attended each, and were called their friends; see Judg. xiv. 20. Such an one is called by the Rabbins, שושבין; and this word is interpreted by אהוב, a lover, or friend, the same as here; and by רעו, his (the bridegroom's) friend in the time of his marriage<sup>1</sup>. There were two of these, one for the bride, and another for the bridegroom; for so it is said<sup>2</sup>, "formerly they appointed two שושבין, friends, one for him (the bridegroom), and one for her (the bride), that they might minister to the bridegroom, and do all things at their entrance into the marriage-chamber.—And formerly, these friends slept where the bridegroom and bride slept." And so as John is here represented as the friend of Christ, the bridegroom of the church; the Jews speak of Moses as the friend of God, the bridegroom of the people of Israel. So one of their writers<sup>3</sup>, having delivered a parable concerning a certain king going into a far country, and leaving his espoused wife with his maid-servants, who raising an evil report on her, his friend tore in pieces the matrimonial contract, thus applies it: "the king, this is the holy, blessed God; the maidens, these are the mixed multitude; and דושבין, the friend, this is Moses; and the spouse of the holy, blessed God is Israel." The Jews say<sup>4</sup>, that Michael and Gabriel were the שושבין, bridal friends to the first Adam. Which standeth; the phrase may be seen in the above parable of the Jewish writer<sup>5</sup> referred to עמד שושבין, his friend standeth: this was the posture of servants, and is fitly applied to John, who was the harbinger of Christ, and judged himself unworthy to bear his shoes; and well agrees with the ministers of the Gospel, who stand before Christ, wait upon him, and minister in his name, and are the servants of the churches for his sake: and heareth him; hearkens to his words; observes, and obeys them; hears his voice, so as to understand it, and distinguish it from another's; and hears it with delight and pleasure, as every true friend of Christ does his Gospel, which is his voice, and is a joyful sound; and so rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: such an one rejoices at the sight of his person, and in communion with him; he rejoices at the sound of his voice; and is delighted to hear him in the ministry of the word, calling to one, and to another, to come unto him, and causing them to believe in him, and give up themselves to him. This my joy therefore is fulfilled; in Christ, he being come in person, and his voice heard in the land of Judea, and multitudes of souls flocking to him, who believing in him, were baptized; than which nothing could be a greater pleasure to John, or to any Gospel minister. This was the accomplishment and perfection of his joy, which carried it to its utmost

<sup>1</sup> Minn. Sanhedrin, c. 3. sect. 5. & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 12. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Jarchi in Exod. xxxiv. 1. Vid. Shemot Rabba, sect. 46. fol. 142. 2.

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>4</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 3. fol. 8. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Jarchi in ib.

height: this was what he wished for; and now he had the desire of his heart. It was usual for the friend of the bridegroom to carry provisions with him, and eat and drink with the bridegroom, and rejoice with him; and this rejoicing was mutual. Hence those words, "give me *עוֹשֵׁי כִי*, *my friend*, that I may rejoice with him:" the gloss upon it is, "and eat at his marriage, even as he also rejoiced, and ate at my marriage?" To this rejoicing the allusion is here.

Ver. 30. *He must increase, &c.*] Not in stature of body, or in wisdom and understanding of mind, as man, he being come to maturity in these things already; but in fame, credit, and reputation among men; as he afterwards did in the land of Judea, by reason of his miracles and doctrines; and after that among the Gentiles, through the publication of his Gospel; and will more and more in the latter day, when he, and he alone, shall be exalted: and he must increase in the ministry of his word, which was published by him, and his disciples, throughout all the cities of Israel; and which, after his resurrection and ascension, grew and increased mightily, notwithstanding the opposition made unto it both by their civil and ecclesiastical rulers; and which, by the means of his apostles, was spread throughout the Gentile world, and will hereafter cover the earth, as the waters do the sea: and also in his kingdom and interest, which at first were very small, like a grain of mustard-seed, or like a little stone cut out of the mountain without hands; but in process of time grew exceedingly, and will, ere long, fill the face of the whole earth; for the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; and of the increase of it there shall be no end. And so likewise in the number of his followers, which at first were but few in Judea, but afterwards greatly increased, and especially among the Gentiles; and will be very numerous in the latter-day glory, when the nation of the Jews will be born at once, and the fulness an 1 forces of the Gentiles are brought in: *but I must decrease*; as he did in his esteem among the people; see John v. 35. and in his work and office, which were now come to an end, Christ, whose forerunner he was, being come; and quickly after this he was put into prison, and there put to death.

Ver. 31. *He that cometh from above, &c.*] Meaning Christ; not that he brought his human nature with him from heaven, or that that is of a celestial nature; but he came from heaven in his divine person, not by change of place, he being God immense and infinite, but by assumption of human nature; which he took upon him, in order to do in it his father's will, and the work of our salvation. *Is above all*; above John, before whom he was preferred, for he was before him; above the prophets of the Old Testament, and even above Moses, the chief of them; yea, above all the angels in heaven, being God over all, blessed for ever: wherefore all glory is to be given him; no honour is to be envied him, or detracted from him. *He that is of the earth*; as John was, and all mankind are, being de-

scended from Adam, who was made of the dust of the earth; and who dwell in houses of clay, and in earthly tabernacles, which are at last resolved into their original dust: *is earthly*; of an earthly nature, frame, temper, and disposition; see ver. 6. Men naturally mind earthly things; and it is owing to the spirit and grace of God, if they mind and savour spiritual things, or have their affections set on things above, or their conversation in heaven; and even such, at times, find that their souls cleave unto the dust, and are hankering after the things of the earth: *and speaketh of the earth*; of earthly things, as in ver. 12. and indeed of heavenly things, in an earthly manner, in a low way, and by similes and comparisons taken from the things of the earth; not being able to speak of celestial things, as in their own nature, and in that sublime way the subject requires: but *he that cometh from heaven is above all*; men and angels, in the dignity of his person; and all prophets and teachers, in the excellency of his doctrine, and manner of delivering it: and therefore it is not to be wondered at, that he should be followed as he is; but rather it should seem marvellous, that he has no more followers than he has; see 2 Esdras iv. 21.

Ver. 32. *And what he hath seen and heard, &c.*] Of the father, of his mind and will, of his purposes and promises, of his love, grace, and mercy, in the council and covenant of peace, lying in his bosom, and being privy to all his secrets. The phrases express the clear and perfect knowledge Christ has of all truths and doctrines; he having all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in him. *That he testifieth*; fully, freely, and faithfully; withholds nothing, but declares the whole counsel of God; and is deservedly called the faithful witness, Rev. i. 5. *And no man receiveth his testimony*; though it was the testimony of God, which is greater than that of man; yet few, and which were next to none at all, gave any heed or credit to it; few or none among the Jews, or among the disciples of John, or even among those that followed Christ. John, and his disciples, widely differed; they thought that all men came to Christ, and believed in him; and John thought few or none, in comparison of the numbers he could have wished, did; and indeed, no one person can receive the testimony of Christ, and believe in him, unless it be given him from above, by the grace of God: for the natural man receives not divine and spiritual things; see ver. 11.

Ver. 33. *He that hath received his testimony, &c.*] For there was here and there one that did, who believed in him as the Messiah, and embraced his Gospel, and submitted to his ordinances, and truly and sincerely followed him: and for the encouragement of such, 'tis said, *hath set to his seal that God is true*; faithful in fulfilling the promises he has made concerning the Messiah, and his coming: he firmly believes that God is true to every word of his, and will make good every promise; and this he seals, ratifies, and confirms by his embracing the testimony of Christ; whereas, on the contrary, he that believeth not makes God a liar, than which, nothing can be more reproachful to him, 1 John v. 10. The Jews have a saying <sup>2</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 144. 2. & 145. 1.

<sup>2</sup> T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 18. 1. & T. E. b. Sanhedrin, fol. 64. 1. & Yoma, fol. 69. 2.



that "the seal of the blessed God is truth." The Arabic version renders it, *he is already sealed, because God is true*; and the Ethiopic version, *God hath sealed him, because he is true*; namely, with his holy spirit; see 2 Cor. i. 22. Eph. i. 13. and iv. 30.

Ver. 34. *For he whom God hath sent, &c.*] Still meaning Christ, who was sent in human nature, in the likeness of sinful flesh, in the fulness of time; to be the Saviour of the world, of that which was lost, of the chief of sinners; and to preach the glad tidings of the Gospel, which is more especially here designed; and for which he was abundantly qualified by the spirit of God, with which he was anointed: *speaketh the words of God*; the words which God gave unto him; the doctrines of grace; the word of truth; the word of faith; the word of righteousness; the word of reconciliation; the words of salvation and eternal life; the whole mind and will of God; and whatever he spoke were as true as the oracles of God, and were such. *For God giveth not the spirit by measure*; unto him, as he did to the prophets of the Old Testament, and to the apostles of the New; and to the ordinary ministers of the word, who have gifts differing one from another; to one is given one gift of the spirit; and to another, another gift, as the spirit pleaseth; and to every one is given grace, or gifts of grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, Eph. iv. 7. To which agrees what the Jews say <sup>a</sup> of the Holy Spirit, and his gifts. "Says R. Joden bar R. Simeon, even the waters <sup>b</sup> which descend from above are not given, but, במדה *in measure*."—Says R. Acha, even the Holy Spirit, "which dwells upon the prophets, does not dwell, but במשקל, *in weight*." But the Lord Jesus has every gift of the spirit, and the fulness of grace in him: he's anointed with the oil of gladness, with the Holy Ghost above his fellows; and has an immeasurable unction of the holy one; which, like the precious oil poured on Aaron, descends from him to the members of his body.

Ver. 35. *The father loveth the son, &c.*] There is such a relation as that of father and son subsisting between the first and second persons in the Trinity; which is not by constitution and appointment; or arbitrary, arising from, and depending on the will of the first, but is natural and necessary; the second person being begotten by the first, and is of the same nature, and equally a divine person: and which relation is the foundation of the distinction of their persons; and which existed from all eternity, and co-existed with their being and essence; and is what no other stand in, angels or men, in such sense as the second person does; and is not to be conceived of, expressed and explained by us: and from this relation arises love; hence, the son of the father is his dear son, the son of his love; as he must needs be, since he is of the same nature, has the same perfections he has, and is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person: and hence he continues to love him in every form and appearance of his; in every office he sustains; in every state and condition into which he comes: he delighted in him as his elect, as chosen and appointed by him to be the Saviour of his people; he

took pleasure in him as the surety of them, and when he saw him engaging as such, and declaring it was in his heart to do his will, and work out their salvation; he loved him when he appeared in human nature, in the form of a servant; and in his state of humiliation, more than once he declared, by a voice from heaven, that he was his beloved son, and particularly at his baptism: and indeed, as in that, so in every thing else, he always did the things that pleased him; he loved him when he laid down his life for the sheep: when he was bruised, and his soul made an offering for sin; he loved him when on the cross, and even when he hid his face from him; when he lay in the grave he left him not, nor would he suffer him to see corruption; he raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; exalted him, and received him into heaven with a welcome, and placed him at his right hand; and now looks with pleasure upon him, upon his person, his sacrifice, blood, and righteousness: and this love is a love of complacency and delight, and is from everlasting to everlasting; the evidence of which follows, *and hath given all things into his hand*; or *by his hand*; as the doctrines of the Gospel, the gifts of the spirit, grace, and glory; or rather, *into his hand*; with which he, being the son of God, a divine person, is fit to be entrusted, which otherwise he would not be: *אנא, all*, includes *all persons*: all the angels, the good angels which are chosen in him, and he is the head of; and by whom they are confirmed in the state they are: and who are at his command and beck, and minister to him and his. The evil angels, though they have broke away from God, and rebelled against him, yet are, in some sense, in the hands of Christ, and under his power: as appears by his dispossessing them from the bodies of men on earth, his spoiling them on the cross, and triumphing over them in his ascension to heaven, and by his binding Satan a thousand years. All men are given to him; the elect in a special sense, as his bride and spouse, as his children, and as his sheep; hence, he died for them, and effectually calls them, and brings them to himself; and they shall never perish, or be plucked out of his hands, but shall have eternal life. And wicked men are, in a sense, given to him; their wrath he restrains, and makes it to praise him; he rules them with a rod of iron, and breaks them in pieces as a potter's vessel. And *all things* also are given into his hands; all temporal things, the things of nature and providence; the light of nature, and all the gifts and attainments of it; all the good things of the world, and which are wisdom's left-hand blessings; and Christ disposes of them to his people in mercy, and as covenant ones: all spiritual things are in his hands; all the gifts of the spirit, and the fulness of all grace, sanctifying, justifying, pardoning, adopting, and persevering grace; all the promises and blessings of the covenant; the government of the church, and the judgment of the world; all power, both in heaven and in earth; the salvation of the elect, and their eternal inheritance, happiness, and glory. For all which, no creature, angels or men, are fit, only the son of God.

Ver. 36. *He that believeth on the son, &c.*] Who is

<sup>a</sup> Vajikra Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 157. 2.

a proper object of faith and trust; which, if he was not truly and properly God, he would not be: and this is to be understood not of any sort of faith, a temporary, or an historical one; but of that which is the faith of God's elect, the gift of God, and the operation of his spirit; by which a man sees the son, goes unto him, ventures and relies upon him, and commits himself to him, and expects life and salvation from him; and who shall not be ashamed and confounded; for such ~~an~~ *one hath everlasting life*; he has it in Christ his head, in whom he believes; he has a right unto it through the justifying righteousness of Christ, and a meetness for it by his grace; he has it in faith and hope; he has the beginning of it in the knowledge of Christ, and communion with him; he has some foretastes of it in his present experience; and he has the earnest and pledge of it in his heart, even the blessed spirit, who works him up for this self-same thing: *and he that believeth not the son*; that does not believe Christ to be the son of God, or Jesus to be the Messiah; or rejects him as the Saviour; who lives and dies in a state of impenitence and unbelief: *shall not see life*;

eternal life; he shall not enter into it, and enjoy it; he shall die the second death. Very remarkable are the following words of the Jews<sup>b</sup> concerning the Messiah, whom they call the latter Redeemer: "who-soever believes in him *shall live*: but he that believeth not in him shall go to the nations of the world, and they shall kill him." *But the wrath of God abideth on him*; as the sentence of wrath, of condemnation, and death, and the curse of the law were pronounced upon him in Adam, as on all mankind, it continues, and will continue, and will never be reversed, but will be executed on him, he not being redeemed from it, as his final unbelief shews; and as he was by nature a child of wrath, as others, he remains such; and as the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, it comes upon the children of disobedience, and remains there; it hangs over their heads, and lights upon them, and they will be filled with a dreadful sense of it to all eternity. The Syriac and Arabic versions render it, *shall abide upon him*; so some copies.

## C H A P. IV.

Ver. 1. *WHEN therefore our Lord knew, &c.*] Or Jesus, as some copies, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read; who is Lord of all, Lord of lords, the one and only Lord of saints: and who knew all things as God; every man, and what is in man; who would believe in him, and who not, and who would betray him; he knew his adversaries, what they thought, said, or did; what was told them, and how it operated in them; and what were the secret motions of their hearts, and their most private counsels and designs; for this is not merely to be understood of his knowledge as man, which he might have by private intelligence from others; though what is here said, might be true also in this sense: *how the Pharisees*; the inveterate and implacable enemies of Christ, and particularly those that dwelt at Jerusalem, and were of the great sanhedrim, or council of the nation: *had heard*; either by their spies, which they constantly kept about Christ; or by John's disciples, who, through envy, might apply to the sanhedrim, to put a stop to, or check upon the baptism and ministry of Christ; or by common fame: *that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John*; see ch. iii. 26. The method Christ took was, he first made men disciples, and then baptized them; and the same he directed his apostles to, *saying, go and teach, or disciple all nations, baptizing them, &c.* And this should be a rule of conduct to us, to baptize only such, who appear to have been made the disciples of Christ: now a disciple of Christ, is one that has learned of Christ, and has learned Christ; the way of life, righteousness, and salvation by him; who is a believer in him; who has seen a beauty, glory, fullness, and suitableness in him, as a Saviour; and is come to him, and has ventured on him, and trusted in him; and who has been taught to deny himself, sinful self, and

righteous self; to part with his sins, and to renounce his own righteousness, and all dependence on it, for justification before God; and who has been made willing to leave and forsake all worldly things and advantages, and to bear all reproach, indignities, and persecutions, for Christ's sake: and such who are Christ's disciples in this sense, are the only proper persons to be baptized; these are they, that ought to put on this badge, and wear Christ's livery: nor can baptism be of any use to any others; for such only are baptized into him, and into his death, and partake of the saving benefits of it; for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin; and without it also, it is impossible to please God.

Ver. 2. *Though Jesus himself baptized not, &c.*] And therefore as Nonnus observes, it was a false report that was made to the Pharisees; at least in part, so far as concerns the act of baptizing: though it may be this is observed, not so much to shew the falsehood of that report, as to correct what is said of Christ's baptizing; lest it should be understood, as if he baptized in his own person; whereas he did not, that not so well comporting with his greatness and majesty: wherefore *the king did not baptize in water*, as Nonnus expresses it, but left that for his disciples and servants to do; he had other and greater work to perform, as to preach the Gospel, and work miracles, heal diseases, cast out devils, &c. And besides, had another sort of baptism, of a more excellent nature to administer, namely, the baptism of the spirit; and since water-baptism is administered in his name, as well as in the name of the father and of the spirit, it does not seem that it would have been administered with that propriety by himself, in his own name; add to which, as is also observed by others, it might have occasioned contentions and disputes among the baptized, had some

<sup>b</sup> Midrash Ruth, fol. 33. 2.

been baptized by Christ, and others by his disciples; the one valuing themselves on that account, above the others. The Persic version indeed suggests, as if both Christ and his disciples baptized, rendering the words thus, *Jesus was not alone who baptiz'd, but the disciples also baptized*: whereas the truth of the matter is, that Christ did not baptize in water at all: *but his disciples*; they baptized in his name, and by his orders, such who were first made disciples by him.

Ver. 3. *He left Judea, &c.*] Where he had been for some time: at the feast of the passover he went up to Jerusalem, and after a short stay there, he came into the country-part of Judea, where he tarried longer; and in both about the space of eight months; for it was now but four months to harvest, which began at the passover; see ch. ii. 13. and iii. 22. and iv. 35. And now upon the Pharisees being made acquainted with his success in these parts, he leaves them; not through fear of them, but because he would not irritate and provoke them, and stir up their malice and envy against him, which might put them upon measures to seek to take away his life; whereas his time was not yet come, and he had other work to do elsewhere: *and departed again into Galilee*; where he had spent the greatest part of his time, in private life; from whence he came to Jordan unto John to be baptized by him; and after that went thither again, where he wrought his first miracle: and now having been in Judea some time, he removes to Galilee again; and of this journey of his thither, after the imprisonment of John, an account is given, in Matt. iv. 12, 13. The Persic version leaves out the word *again*, and so do the Alexandrian copy, and many copies; but is by others retained, and very justly.

Ver. 4. *And he must needs go through Samaria.*] Not the city, but the country of Samaria; for the way to Galilee from Judea, lay through the midst of Samaria; nor was there any other way, without going a great way about; see Luke ix. 51, 52. and xvii. 11. and which is also confirmed by Josephus<sup>c</sup>: and this accounts for his going through Samaria, consistently with his forbidding his apostles going in the way of the Gentiles, or into any of the cities of the Samaritans; since here was a necessity for it, or otherwise he himself would not have gone, where he forbid his disciples; though the prohibition may be understood, not of barely going into a Samaritan city; for it was lawful for them, notwithstanding that, to go into one of them, as appears from ver. 8. and Luke ix. 52. but of going to preach there, Matt. x. 5, 6, 7. And besides this necessity, there was another thing that lay upon him, and obliged him to take this tour, and that is, the calling and conversion of a certain woman, and other Samaritans, whom the father had given to him, and he was to redeem by his blood; and the time of whose effectual vocation was now come; and therefore he must needs go this way, and at this particular time. The Arabic and Persic versions represent it, as a purpose and determination in his mind to go this way.

Ver. 5. *Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, &c.*] Now called Neapolis<sup>d</sup>; the same with *Sichem*, or *Shechem*, as appears from its situation, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; see Gen. xxxiii. 18, 19. and xlvi. 22. and Josh. xxiv. 32. and is either the same, only its termination is changed from *em* into *ar*, as Achan into Achar, 1 Chron. ii. 7. Or it is a new name that was given it, and by which it went in the time of Christ; and might be so called, either from סוּכַר *Socher*, which signifies a grave; because here, Joseph and the rest of the patriarchs were buried, Josh. xxiv. 32. Acts vii. 16. Or rather, it was a name of reproach, and so called, from שׂוֹכַר *drunken*; since the Ephraimites, the posterity of Joseph, which dwelt in these parts, were infamous for the sin of drunkenness; see Isa. xxxviii. 1. Hence *Sychar Sichem*, is *drunken Sichem*; mention is made in the Talmud<sup>e</sup>, of a place called סִיכְרָא *Sichra*. The parcel of ground, or of a field, as in Gen. xxxiii. 19. and Josh. xxiv. 32. is in the Persic version, called a vineyard; and so Nonnus renders it, a field planted with vines; and which may serve to confirm the above conjecture, concerning *Sychar* being a nick-name.

Ver. 6. *Now Jacob's well was there, &c.*] So called, either because it was dug by him; or because he and his family made use of it, when in those parts, as in ver. 12. though no mention is made of it elsewhere, unless any reference is had to it in the blessing of Joseph, to whom this place belonged, Gen. xlix. 22. as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, or in Deut. xxxiii. 28. as Grotius suggests: in the Talmud<sup>f</sup> there is mention made, of עַיִן סוּכַר *the fountain of Sochar*; and may not improperly be rendered, *the well of Sychar*: but whether the same with this, is not certain; that appears to be a great way from Jerusalem, as this also was, even forty miles: *Jesus therefore being wearied with his journey*; having travelled on foot, from Judea thither; and he having a body like to ours, subject to weariness, and which proves the truth and reality of it, was greatly fatigued; having very probably travelled all that morning, if not a day, or days before: *sat thus on the well*; or by it; by the side of it, upon the brink of it, as Nonnus paraphrases it, upon the bare ground. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, leave out *thus*; and the Ethiopic version reads it, *there*; but it is rightly retained, and is emphatical; and signifies, that he sat like a weary person, glad to set himself down any where; and not caring how, or where, he sat to rest his weary limbs: *and it was about the sixth hour*; about twelve o'clock at noon. The Ethiopic version adds by way of explanation, *and it was then noon*; and all the Oriental versions omit *was*, *about*; rendering it, it was the sixth hour: and now Christ had been travelling all the morning, and it was a time of day to take some refreshment, which as yet he had not, the disciples being gone to buy food; and a time of day also, when the sun if out, and has any strength, beats with its greatest vehemence; and all which considered, it is no wonder that he should be weary, faint, and thirsty.

Ver. 7. *There cometh a woman of Samaria, &c.*]

<sup>c</sup> Antiqu. Jud. l. 20. c. 5. & in vita sua, p. 1019.

<sup>d</sup> Hieron. Epitaph. Paulæ, Tom. I. fol. 59. & R. Benjamin Itin. p. 38.

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Bava Metsza, fol. 42. 1. & 83. 1. & Cholin, fol. 94. 2.

<sup>f</sup> T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 42. 4. T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 82. 2. & Menachot, fol. 64. 2. & Gloss. in Sanhedrin, fol. 11. 2.

Or out of Samaria; not out of the city of Samaria, but out of the country of Samaria; out of Sychar, a city of Samaria: her coming was not by chance, but by the providence of God, and agreeably to his purpose, who orders all things according to the counsel of his will; and it is an amazing instance of grace, that a woman, a Samaritan woman, a lewd and infamous one, should be a chosen vessel of salvation, should be the object of divine favour, and be effectually called by the grace of God; when so many wise, learned, and religious men in Judea, were passed by; and not only so, but she was the happy means of conveying the knowledge of the Saviour to many of her neighbours: she came, indeed, to draw water; for her present temporal use and service; she little thought of meeting at Jacob's well, with Christ the fountain of gardens, and well of living water; she came for natural water, having no notion of water in a spiritual sense: or of carrying back with her the water of life, even a well of it, springing up to everlasting life: *Jesus saith unto her, give me to drink*; that is, water to drink, out of the pot or pitcher, she brought with her, for he was athirst; which is another proof of the truth of his human nature, and of his taking it, with the sinless infirmities of it: though indeed this request was made, to introduce a discourse with the woman, he having a more violent thirst, and a stronger desire, after the welfare of her immortal soul.

Ver. 8. *For his disciples were gone away, &c.*] This is related, not so much to give a reason why Christ asked the woman for water, because his disciples were not present, to minister to him; but rather to shew, that Christ took the opportunity, in their absence, to converse with her; partly to avoid the scandal and offence they might take, at his conversation with her, being a Samaritan; as it appears to have been astonishing to them, when they found him talking with her, ver. 27. And partly, that he might not put the woman to shame and blushing before them all; he chooses to tell her of the sins of her former life, in a private way. The disciples were gone *unto the city*: to the city Sychar, which was hard by; and their business there, was to buy meat: for though it is said, in the following verse, that the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans; yet this is not to be understood in the strictest sense; for they had dealings with them in some respects, as will be seen hereafter; particularly their food, eatables, and drinkables, were lawful to be bought of them, and used: it is said by R. Juda bar Pazi, in the name of R. Ame<sup>s</sup>, "a roasted egg of the Cuthites (or Samaritans), lo, this is lawful: says R. Jacob bar Acha, in the name of R. Lazar, the boiled victuals of the Cuthites (Samaritans), lo, these are free; this he says concerning boiled food, because it is not their custom to put wine and vinegar into it," for these were forbidden: hence it is often said<sup>b</sup>, that "the unlea-

vened bread of the Cuthites (or Samaritans), is lawful, and that a man is allowed the use of it at the passover." And there was a time when their wine was lawful; for one of their canons runs thus<sup>1</sup>; "he that buys wine of the Cuthites (Samaritans), says, the two logs that I shall separate, lo, they are in first-fruits, &c." It is indeed said in one place, by R. Eliezer<sup>2</sup>, "that he that eats the bread of the Cuthites (or Samaritans), is as if he eat swine's flesh; to whom (who reported this) says (R. Akiba) be silent, I will not tell you what R. Eliezer thinks concerning it." Upon which the commentators observe<sup>3</sup>, that this is not to be understood strictly; because he that eats bread of the Samaritans, does not deserve stripes according to the law, but according to the constitutions of the wise men; but these, Christ and his disciples had no regard to.

Ver. 9. *Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, &c.*] In a scoffing, jeering way, *how is it, that thou being a Jew*; which she might know, by his language and his dress: *askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?* not that the waters of Samaria were unlawful for a Jew to drink of; for as "the land of the Cuthites (or Samaritans), was pure, or clean, so, בְּקִרְתָּהּ, their collections of water, and their habitations, and their ways were clean," and might be used; but because the Jews used no familiarity with the Samaritans, nor would they receive any courtesy or kindness from them, as follows: *for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans*: some take these to be the words of the evangelist, commenting upon, and explaining the words of the woman; but they seem rather to be her own words, giving a reason why she returned such an answer; and which must be understood, not in the strictest sense, as if they had no dealings at all with them: indeed in some things they had no dealings with them, and at some certain times; hence that discourse of the Samaritans with a Jewish Rabbi. "The Cuthites (or Samaritans) inquired of R. Abhu, your fathers, מִסְתַּפְּקִין, used to deal with us (or minister to us, or supply us with necessaries), wherefore do not ye deal with us? (or take a supply from us;) he replied unto them, your fathers did not corrupt their works, you have corrupted your works." They might not use their wine and vinegar, nor admit them to their tables; they say of a man<sup>4</sup>, "because the Cuthites (or Samaritans) ate at his table, it was the reason why his children went into captivity —and further add, that whoever invites a Cuthite (or Samaritan) into his house, and ministers to him, is the cause of captivity to his children." And they forbid a man to enter into partnership with a Cuthite (or Samaritan<sup>5</sup>): and particularly, "three days before the feasts of idolaters (for such they reckoned the Samaritans, as well as others), it is forbidden to have any commerce with them, to borrow of them, or lend to them<sup>6</sup>, &c." But then

<sup>s</sup> T. Hieros. Avoda Zara, fol. 44. 4.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 10. 1. & Cholin, fol. 4. 1. & Kiddushin, fol.

76. 1.

<sup>1</sup> Misn. Demai, c. 7. sect. 4. Vid. Bartenora in ib.

<sup>2</sup> Misna Shevith, c. 8. sect. 10. Pirke Eliezer, c. 39.

<sup>3</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. ib.

<sup>m</sup> T. Hieros. Avoda Zara, fol. 44. 4.

<sup>n</sup> Ib.

<sup>o</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 104. 1.

<sup>p</sup> T. Bab. Berozor, fol. 7. 2. Piske Toseph. ib. art. 4. & in Megilla, art. 102.

<sup>q</sup> Misna Avoda Zara, c. 1. sect. 1.

at other times, and in other respects, they had dealings with them; they might go into their cities and buy food of them, as the disciples did, ver. 8. they might send their wheat to a Samaritan miller, to be ground<sup>1</sup>; and as it appears from the above citations, their houses and habitations were clean, and might be lodged in, with which compare Luke ix. 52. the poor of the Samaritans were maintained with the poor of Israel<sup>2</sup>: wherefore the sense is, as Dr. Lighfoot observes, that the Jews refused to receive the least favour or kindness at the hand of a Samaritan; and therefore the woman might justly wonder, that Christ should ask so small a favour of her, as a little water. The reason of this distance and aversion, was religion; and so the Ethiopic version, rather paraphrasing than translating, renders the words, *the Jews do not agree in religion, nor do they communicate with the Samaritans, nor mix together*: and this was of long standing, and had been occasioned and increased by various incidents; for when the ten tribes revolted in Jeroboam's time, the calves were set up in Dan and Bethel, in order to draw off the people from worship at Jerusalem, which gave great umbrage to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; and when the ten tribes were carried away captive by the king of Assyria, he planted the cities of Samaria with colonies in their room, consisting of Heathenish and idolatrous persons, brought from Babylon, and other places; to whom he sent a priest, to instruct them in the manner of the God of the land; but with these instructions, they still retained their idols, and their idolatrous practices; see 2 Kings xvii. 24—41. which must render them odious to the Jews: and these were the principal adversaries of the Jews, after their return from captivity; and discouraged them, and weakened their hands, in the building of the second temple: but what latest, and most of all had fixed this aversion and enmity, was this; Manasseh, brother to Ahdubai the high-priest, having married Sanballat's daughter, governor of Samaria, was for it removed from the priesthood; who applying to his father-in-law, he proposed building for him a temple on Mount Gerizzim, and making him an high-priest; for which he obtained leave of Alexander the great, and accordingly built one, and made his son-in-law high-priest; which drew a great many profligate Jews over to him, who mixing with the Samaritans, set up a worship, religion, and priesthood, in distinction from the Jews; and this was ever after a matter of contention and quarrel between these people, and the reason why they would have no dealings with them.

Ver. 10. *Jesus answered and said unto her, &c.*] In a very serious manner, in a different way from hers: *if thou knevest the gift of God*; meaning, not the Holy Spirit with his gifts and graces, as some think, but himself; for the following clause is explanatory of it; *and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink*; and Christ is also spoken of in the Old Testament, as the gift of God, Isa. ix. 6. and he had lately spoken of himself as such, ch. iii. 16. and he is, by way of eminency, *the gift of God*; which is comprehensive of all others, is exceeding large, and very suitable to

the wants and cases of men; and is irrevocable, unchangeable, and unspeakable: for he is God's gift, as he is his own and only-begotten son; and he is given for a covenant to the people, with all the promises and blessings of it; and as an head, both of eminence and influence; and to be a Saviour of them, and a sacrifice for their sins; and as the bread of life, for them to feed and live upon; of which gift, men are naturally ignorant, as this woman was: they know not the dignity of his person; nor the nature and usefulness of his offices; nor the way of peace, righteousness, and salvation by him; nor do they see any amiableness, or loveliness in him; and whatever notional knowledge some natural men may have of him, they know him not spiritually and experimentally, or as the gift of God to them: *thou wouldst have asked of him*; a favour and benefit; for such who truly know Christ, the worth and value of him, and their need of him, will apply to him for grace, as they have encouragement to do; since all grace is treasured up in him, and he gives it freely, and unbraideth not; and souls are invited to ask it of him, and take it freely; nor is it to be had anywhere else: but knowledge of Christ, is absolutely necessary, to asking any thing of him; for till he is known, he'll not be applied to; but when he is made known to any, in his fulness and suitableness, they will have recourse to him, and ask grace and mercy of him; and which is freely had: the Vulgate Latin very wrongly adds, *perhaps*; reading it, *perhaps thou wouldst have asked*; whereas our Lord's meaning is, that she would certainly have asked: *and he would have given thee living water*; pardoning and justifying grace, every branch of sanctifying grace, and all the supplies of it; so called, because his grace quickens sinners dead in sin, and dead in law, and in their own apprehensions; and causes them to live in themselves, and before God; and because it refreshes and comforts, revives and cheers, and is like rivers of water in a dry land; and because it maintains and supports spiritual life in their souls; and it ever abides, and continues, and springs up unto everlasting life: for the allusion is to spring water, that bubbles up in a fountain, and is ever running; for such water the Jews call *living water*; see Gen. xxvi. 19. where in the Hebrew text 'tis *living water*; which we, and also the Chaldee paraphrase, render *springing water*. So living waters with them, are said to be always flowing, and never cease<sup>3</sup>.

Ver. 11. *The woman saith unto him, Sir, &c.*] Which was an usual way in those countries, of addressing men, and especially strangers; and expresses no uncommon respect to Christ, of whose dignity and greatness she was entirely ignorant; and at whom she was now scoffing; for so the following words are to be understood: *thou hast nothing to draw with*; no pail, or bucket, or rope, to let it down with, as Nonnus adds; for it seems, there was no bucket, or vessel, fastened at the well for the common use, but every one brought one with them, when they came to draw: though it is strange there was not one; since, according to common usage, and even of the Jews<sup>4</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Misna Demai, c. 3. sect. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Piske Tosephot Yoma, art. 62.

<sup>3</sup> Bartenora in Misn. Negaim, c. 14. sect. 1.

<sup>4</sup> T. Hieros. Erubin, fol. 20. 2.

“ a public well had, קֵל, a bucket, or pitcher; but a private well had no bucket:” and the well is deep: that which is now called Jacob’s well, is by some said to be forty cubits deep, and by others thirty-five yards: from whence then hast thou that living water? this she said in a sneering, scoffing manner: she reasoned with him, either that he must have it out of this well; but that could not be, since he had no vessel to draw with, and the well was so deep, that he could not come at the water without one; or he must have it from some neighbouring spring; upon which she scoffs at him in the following manner.

Ver. 12. *Art thou greater than our father Jacob, &c.*] A person of greater worth and character than he, who was content to drink of this water; or wiser and more knowing than he, who could find out no better fountain of water in all these parts? she calls Jacob the father of them, according to the common notion and boasting of these people, when it served their turn; otherwise they were not the descendants of Jacob; for after the ten tribes were carried away captive by the king of Assyria, he placed in their room, in the cities of Samaria, men from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, Heathenish and idolatrous people; see 2 Kings xvii. 24. And from these, the then Samaritans sprung; only upon Sanballat’s building a temple on Mount Gerizzim, for Manasseh his son-in-law, when put away from the priesthood by the Jews, for his marriage of his daughter, several wicked persons of the like sort, came out of Judea, and joined themselves to the Samaritans: and such a mixed medley of people were they at this time, though they boasted of Jacob as their father, as this woman did; and so to this day, they draw their genealogy from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and particularly call Joseph their father, and say, from whence are we, but from the tribe of Joseph the just, from Ephraim? as they formerly did\*; “ R. Meir saw a Samaritan, he said to him, from whence comest thou? (that is, from what family;) he answered, from the (tribe) of Joseph.” Which gave us the well; Jacob gave it indeed to Joseph and his posterity, along with the parcel of ground in which it was; see ver. 5. but not to this mixed company: and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle: which shews both the goodness and plenty of the water: though our Lord had spoken of living water, this woman understood him of no other water, but spring-water; called living water, from its motion, because it is continually springing up, bubbling, and ever running: so carnal persons, when they hear of spiritual things under earthly metaphors, think of nothing but carnal things; as Nicodemus, when Christ talked of being born again; and the Jews at Capernaum, when he discoursed concerning eating his flesh, and drinking his blood; for spiritual things are neither known nor received by the natural man.

Ver. 13. *Jesus answered and said unto her, &c.*] In a mild and gentle manner, patiently bearing all her scoffs and flouts, and continuing to instruct and inform her, concerning this living water, shewing the

preferableness of it to all others: *whosoever drinketh of this water*: meaning in that well called Jacob’s well, or any other common water: *shall thirst again*; as this woman had often done, and would again, as she herself knew, ver. 15. and as Jesus did, who very likely afterwards drank of it, John xix. 28. For though water allays heat, quenches thirst, and refreshes and revives the spirits for a while, yet in process of time, natural heat increases, and thirst returns, and there’s a necessity of drinking water again.

Ver. 14. *But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, &c.*] Meaning, the spirit and his grace; see ch. vii. 38, 39. and which he more than once speaks of, as his gift here, and in the context: of which, whoever truly partakes, *shall never thirst*; either after sinful lusts and pleasures, and his former vicious way of living, which he now disrelishes: not but there are desires and lustings after carnal things in regenerate persons, as there were lustings in the Israelites, after the onions, garlic, and flesh-pots in Egypt, when they were come out from thence; yet these are not so strong, prevalent, and predominant; they are checked and restrained by the grace of God; so that they do not hanker after sin as they did, nor drink up iniquity like water, or commit sin with greediness, as before: or else it means thirsting after the grace of God; thirsty persons are invited to take and drink of the water of life freely, and are pronounced blessed; and ’tis promised, that they shall be filled, or satisfied; yet not so in this life, that they shall never thirst after, or desire more; for as they need more grace, and it is promised them, they thirst after it, and desire it; and the more they taste and partake of it, the more they desire it: but the sense is, either as some read the words, *they shall not thirst for ever*; though they may for a time, and be in a distressed condition for want of a supply of it, yet they shall not always; God will open rivers and fountains for them, and give drink to his people, his chosen; and in the other state, they shall hunger and thirst no more; for the Lamb shall lead them to fountains of living waters: or rather, they shall never thirst, so as to be like the thirsty and parched earth, dried up, and have no moisture in them; for however this may seem sometimes to be their case, God will, and does, pour out water and floods upon them; yea, that grace which is infused into their souls, is an abundant and an abiding principle, which will preserve them from languishing, so as to perish: *but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water*; which denotes the plenty of it; for the grace of God given at conversion is exceeding abundant, it superabounds all the aboundings of sin; it comes in large flows into the hearts of regenerate persons, and flows out of them, as rivers of living water: and which also abides, for it continues *springing up into everlasting life*: it is a seed which remains, an immortal and never-dying principle; it is inseparably connected with eternal life; it is the beginning of it, and it issues in it; whoever has grace, shall have glory; and whoever are called, sanctified, justified, and pardoned, shall be glorified: such is the

\* Epist. Samar. ad Scaliger. in Antiqu. Eccl. Oriental. p. 123, 124, 126.

\* Bereshit Rabba, sect. 94. fol. 82. 1.

nature, influence, and use of this living water, in Christ's gift: the words of the law are, in the Targum on Cant. iv. 15. compared to a well of living water.

Ver. 15. *The woman saith unto him, Sir, &c.*] See the note on ver. 11. *give me this water, that I thirst not.* The Syriac and Persic versions add, *again: neither come hither*: the Ethiopic version adds here, *again; to draw.* This she said also, in the same sneering and scoffing way, as her talking of not thirsting and coming thither to draw water, shews; and it is as if she had said, pray give me some of this fine water you talk of, that I may never thirst again; and so have no occasion to be at all this fatigue and trouble, to come daily to this well for water: though some think, that she now spoke seriously, having some little knowledge of what our Lord meant by living water, but with a mixture of much ignorance, and that she heartily desired it; but the reason she gives, shews the contrary.

Ver. 16. *Jesus saith unto her, &c.*] Observing that she continued an ignorant scoffer at him, and his words, determined to take another method with her; and convince her, that he was not a common and ordinary person she was conversing with, as she took him to be; and also what a sinner she was, and what a vicious course of life she had lived; so that she might see that she stood in need of him, as the gift of God, and Saviour of men; and of the grace he had been speaking of, under the notion of living water: saying to her, *go, call thy husband, and come hither*: go directly from hence to the city of Sychar, and call thy husband, and come back hither along with him again: this Christ said, not to have him come to teach and instruct him, and as if he would more readily and easily understand him, and that he might be with her, a partaker of the same grace; but to bring on some further conversation, by which she would understand that he knew her state and condition, and what a course of life she now lived, and so bring her under a conviction of her sin and danger, and need of him and his grace.

Ver. 17. *The woman answered and said, I have no husband, &c.*] Which was a truth she would not have spoke at another time and place, or to any of her neighbours; but Christ being a stranger, and no odium incurring upon her by it; and this serving a purpose to excuse her going to call him, she declares the truth of the matter: *Jesus said unto her, thou hast well said, I have no husband*: this is the truth, it is really fact, and is the true state of the case, between thee and him, who goes for thy husband.

Ver. 18. *For thou hast had five husbands, &c.*] Which she either had had lawfully, and had buried one after another; and which was no crime, and might be: the Sadducees propose a case to Christ, in which a woman is said to have had seven husbands successively, in a lawful manner, Matt. xxii. 25—28. Or rather, she had had so many, and had been divorced from every one of them, for adultery; for no other cause it should seem did the Samaritans divorce; seeing that they only received the law of Moses, and rejected, at least, many of the traditions of the elders; and since they are particularly said, "not to be expert in the law of marriages and divorces:" and the rather this may seem

to be the case, as Dr. Lightfoot observes; since these husbands are mentioned, as well as he with whom she lived in an adulterous manner; and which suggests, that she had not lived honestly with them: *and he whom thou now hast, is not thy husband*; that is, not thy lawful husband, as the Persic version reads, and Nonnus paraphrases; being not married to him at all, though they cohabited as man and wife, when there was no such relation between them: *in that saidst thou truly*; or that which is truth: thus Christ the omniscient God, who knew her full well, and the whole of her past infamous conversation, and her present lewd and wicked way of living, exposes all unto her.

Ver. 19. *The woman saith unto him, Sir, &c.*] With another countenance, and a different air and gesture, with another accent and tone of speech, dropping her scoffs and jeers: *I perceive that thou art a prophet*; such an one as Samuel was, who could tell Saul what was in his heart, and that his father's asses were found, and where they were, 1 Sam. ix. 19, 20. and as Elisha, whose heart went with his servant Gehazi, when Naaman turned to him to meet him, and give him presents; and who could tell, ere the king's messenger came to him, that the son of a murderer had sent to take away his head, 2 Kings v. 26. and vi. 32. And such a prophet, that had such a spirit of discerning, this woman took Christ to be; and who indeed is greater than a prophet, and is the omniscient God; who knows all men's hearts, thoughts, words and actions, and needs not that any should testify of them to him; for he knows what is in them, and done by them; and can tell them all that ever they did, as he did this woman, ver. 29. Now in order either to shift off the discourse from this subject, which touched her to the quick; or else being truly sensible of her sin, and willing to reform, and for the future to worship God in the place and manner he had directed, she addressed Christ in the following words.

Ver. 20. *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, &c.*] Mount Gerizzim, which was just by, and within sight; so that the woman could point to it; it was so near to Shechem, or Sychar, that Jo-ham's voice was heard from the top of it thither, Judges ix. 6, 7. By the *fathers*, this woman claims as theirs, are meant, not the immediate ancestors of the Samaritans, or those only of some few generations past; but the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose descendants they would be thought to be; and they improved every instance of their worshipping in these parts, in favour of this mountain, being a sacred place. And Abraham did indeed build an altar to the Lord, in the plain of Moreh, Gen. xii. 6, 7. and which the Jews themselves own, is the same with Sichem; but their tradition which Theophylact reports, that Isaac was offered upon the Mount of Gerizzim, is entirely false: Jacob, 'tis true, came to Shalem, a city of Shechem; and upon this very spot of ground, the parcel of a field, he bought of the children of Hammor, and gave to his son Joseph, he built an altar, and called it El-elohe Israel, Gen. xxxiii. 18, 19, 20. And also upon this very mountain, the tribe of Joseph, with others stood, when they were come over Jordan, and blessed the people;

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 76. 1.  
VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>2</sup> Misna Sota, c. 7. sect. 5. T. Bab. Sota, fol. 33. 2.  
5 H

all which circumstances, the Samaritans failed not to make use of in vindication of themselves, and their worship in this mountain; and which this woman might be acquainted with, and might refer unto: but as for any temple, or place of worship-on this mount, there was none till of late years, even after the second temple was built. The occasion of it, as Josephus<sup>a</sup> relates, was this; Manasseh, brother to Jaddua the high-priest, having married Nicasso, daughter of Sanballat, governor of Samaria, was on that account driven from the priesthood; he fled to his father-in-law, and related the case to him, expressing great love to his daughter, and yet a regard to his office; upon which Sanballat proposed to build him a temple on Mount Gerizzim, for which he did not doubt of obtaining leave of Darius the Persian monarch, and make him an high-priest. Darius being overcome by Alexander the great, Sanballat made his court to him, and petitioned him for the building of this temple, who granted him his request; and accordingly he built one, and Manasseh became the high-priest; and many of the profligate Jews, that had married strange wives, or violated the sabbath, or had eaten forbidden meat, came over and joined him. This temple, we are told<sup>b</sup>, was built about forty years after the second temple at Jerusalem: and stood two hundred years, and then was destroyed by Jochanan, the son of Simcon, the son of Mattathiah, who was called Hyrcanus, and so says Josephus<sup>c</sup>; it might now be rebuilt: however, this did not put a stop to worship in this place, about which there were great contentions, between the Jews and the Samaritans; of which we have some instances, in the writings of the former: it is said<sup>d</sup>, that "R. Jonathan went to pray in Jerusalem, and passed by that mountain (the gloss says, Mount Gerizzim), and a certain Samaritan saw him, and said to him, whither art thou going? he replied, that he was going to pray at Jerusalem; he said to him, is it not better for thee to pray in this blessed mountain, and not in that dung-hill house? he replied, why is it blessed? he answered, because it was not overflowed by the waters of the flood; the thing was hid from the eyes of R. Jonathan, and he could not return an answer." This story is told elsewhere<sup>e</sup>, with a little variation, and more plainly as to the place, thus; "it happened to R. Jonathan, that he went to Neapolis, of the Cuthites, or Samaritans, (i. e. to Sichem, for Sichem is now called Naplous), and he was riding upon an ass, and an herdsman with him; a certain Samaritan joined himself to them: when they came to Mount Gerizzim, the Samaritan said to R. Jonathan, how came it to pass that we are come to this holy mountain? R. Jonathan replied, whence comes it to be holy? the Samaritan answered him, because it was not hurt by the waters of the flood." Much the same story is told of R. Ishmael bar R. Jose<sup>f</sup>. It is to be observed in this account, that the Samaritans call this mountain the holy mountain, they imagined there was something sacred in it; and the blessed mountain, or the mountain of blessing; no doubt, because the blessings were pronounced upon it; though a very poor

reason is given by them in the above passages. And they not only urged the above instances of the worship of the patriarchs at, or about this place, which this woman refers to; but even falsified a passage in the Pentateuch, as is generally thought, in favour of this mount; for in Deut. xxvii. 4. instead of Mount Ebal, in the Samaritan Pentateuch Mount Gerizzim is inserted. So stood the case on one side of the question; on the other hand, the Jews pleaded for the temple at Jerusalem. And ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship; that is, in the temple there; who urged, and very rightly, that God had chosen that place to put his name, and fix his worship there; and had ordered them to come thither, and bring their offerings and sacrifices, and to keep their passover and other feasts; see Deut. xii. 5, 6, and xvi. 2. 2 Chron. ix. 12. This was built by Solomon, according to the command and direction of God, some hundreds of years before Mount Gerizzim was made use of for religious worship; and they had not only these things to plead, but also the worship which was here given to God in this place before the temple was built upon it, which they failed not to do. So the Targumist on 2 Chron. iii. 1. enlarges on this head; "and Solomon began to build the sanctuary of the Lord in Jerusalem, on Mount Moriah, in the place where Abraham worshipped and prayed in the name of the Lord: דָּוָא אֲתָר אֲרַע פּוֹלְחָנָא, *this place is the land of worship*; for there all generations worshipped before the Lord; and there Abraham offered up his son Isaac, for a burnt-offering, and the word of the Lord delivered him, and a ram was appointed in his stead; there Jacob prayed when he fled from Esau his brother; there the angel of the Lord appeared to David, when he disposed the sacrifice in the place he bought of Ornan, in the floor of Ornan the Jebusite." And since, now there were so many things to be said on each side of the question, this woman desires, that seeing Christ was a prophet, he would be pleased to give her his sense of the matter, and inform her which was the right place of worship.

Ver. 21. *Jesus saith unto her, woman, believe me, &c.]* In what I am now going to say, since you own me to be a prophet: *the hour cometh*; the time is at hand; it is very near; it is just coming: *when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the father*; that is, God, whom the Jews, and so the Samaritans, knew under the character of the father of all men, as the Creator and preserver of them; for not God as the father of Christ, or of the saints by adopting grace, is here intended, which this ignorant woman at least had no knowledge of; and the reason of our Lord's speaking after this manner, signifying, that she need not trouble herself about the place of worship, was, partly, because in a little time Jerusalem, and the temple in it, would be destroyed, and not one stone left upon another; and that Samaria, and this mountain of Gerizzim, with whatsoever edifice might be upon it, would be laid desolate, so that neither of them would continue long to be places of religious worship; and partly, because all distinction of places in religion

<sup>a</sup> Antiqu. l. 12. c. 1. Vid. Juchasin, fol. 14. 2.

<sup>b</sup> Juchasin, fol. 14. c. & 15. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Antiqu. l. 12. c. 17.

<sup>d</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 32. fol. 27. 4. & Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 16. 3.

<sup>e</sup> Deharim Rabba, sect. 3. fol. 218. 2.

<sup>f</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 81. fol. 71. 1.



would entirely cease; and one place would be as lawful, and as proper to worship in, as another; and men should lift up holy hands, and pray, and offer up spiritual sacrifices in every place, even from the rising of the sun, to the going down of the same, Mal. i. 11.

Ver. 22. *Ye worship ye know not what, &c.*] However, as to her question, he more directly replies by condemning the Samaritans, and their ignorance in worship, and by approving the Jews; and so manifestly gives the preference to the Jews, not only with respect to the piety, and object of worship, but with respect to knowledge and salvation. As for the Samaritans, he suggests, that they were ignorant, not only of the true object of worship, but knew not what they themselves worshipped; or, at least, were not agreed in it. The original inhabitants of those parts, from whence these Samaritans sprung, were idolatrous Heathens, placed by the king of Assyria in the room of the ten tribes he carried away captive; and these feared not the Lord, for they *knew not the manner of the God of the land*: wherefore lions were sent among them, which slew many of them; upon which the king of Assyria ordered a priest to be sent to instruct them: but notwithstanding this, they had every one gods of their own, some one, and some another; and so served divers graven images, they and their children, and their children's children, to the time of the writer of the Book of Kings; see 2 Kings xvii. 24—41. And though after Manasseh, and other Jews were come among them, and they had received the law of Moses, they might have some knowledge of the true God, yet they glorified him not as God; and though they might in words profess him, yet in works they denied him; and even after this they are very highly charged by the Jews with idolatrous practices on this mount. Sometimes they say <sup>a</sup> the Cuthites, or Samaritans, worshipped fire; and at other times, and which chiefly prevails with them, they assert <sup>b</sup>, that their wise men, upon searching, found that they worshipped the image of a dove on Mount Gerizzim; and sometimes they say <sup>c</sup>, they worshipped the idols, the strange gods, or *Teraphim*, which Jacob hid under the oak in Sichem; which last, if true, may serve to illustrate these words of Christ, that they worshipped they knew not what, since they worshipped idols hid in the mount. “R. Ishmael bar Jose, they say <sup>d</sup>, went to Neapolis, (Sichem, called Naplous,) the Cuthites, or Samaritans came to him (to persuade him to worship with them in their mountain); he said unto them, I will shew you that ye don't worship at this mountain, but the *images which are hid under it*: for it is written, Gen. xxxv. 4. and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem.” And elsewhere <sup>e</sup> it is reported of the same Rabbi, that he went to Jerusalem to pray, as before related on ver. 20. and after what passed between him, and the Samaritan he met with at Mount Gerizzim, before mentioned, he added; “and said to him, I will tell you what ye are like, (ye are like) to a dog that lustr after carrion; so because ye know the idols are hid under it, (the mountain,) as it is written, Gen. xxxv. 4. and Jacob hid them, therefore ye lust

“ after it: they said—this man knows that idols are hid here, and perhaps he'll take them away; and “ they consulted together to kill him: he arose, and “ made his escape in the night.” But this was not the case of the Jews: *we know what we worship*; Christ puts himself among them, for he was a Jew; as the woman took him to be; and, as man, was a worshipper of God; he feared, loved, and obeyed God; he trusted in him, and prayed unto him; though, as God, he was the object of worship himself: and the true worshippers among the Jews, of which sort Christ was, knew God, whom they worshipped, spiritually and savingly; and the generality of that people had right notions of the God of Israel, having the oracles, and service of God, and being instructed out of Moses, and the prophets: *for salvation is of the Jews*; the promises of salvation, and of a Saviour, were made to them, when the Gentiles were strangers to them; the means of salvation, and of the knowledge of it, as the word, statutes, and ordinances, were enjoyed by them, when others were ignorant of them; and the Messiah, who is sometimes styled *Salvation*, see Gen. xlix. 18. Psal. xiv. 7. Luke ii. 30. was not only prophesied of in their books, and promised unto them, but came of them, as well as to them; and the number of the saved ones had been for many hundreds of years, and still was among them; the line of election ran among them, and few among the Gentiles were called and saved, as yet.

Ver. 23. *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers, &c.*] The worshippers of the true God, and who worship in a right manner, whether Jews or Samaritans, or of whatsoever nation: *shall worship the father*; the one true God, the father of spirits, and of all flesh living: *in spirit*; in opposition to all carnal conceptions of him, as if he was a corporeal being, or circumscribed in some certain place, dwelling in temples made with hands, or was to be worshipped with men's hands; and in distinction from the carnal worship of the Jews, which lay greatly in the observation of carnal ordinances: and this shews they should not worship with their bodies only, for bodily exercise profiteth little; but with their souls or spirits, with their whole hearts engaged therein; and by, and under the influence and assistance of the spirit of God, without whom men cannot perform worship, neither prayer, praise, preaching, or hearing, aright: *and in truth*; in opposition to hypocrisy, with true hearts, in the singleness, sincerity, and integrity of their souls; and in distinction from Jewish ceremonies, which were only shadows, and had not the truth and substance of things in them; and according to the word of truth, the Gospel of salvation; and in Christ, who is the truth, the true tabernacle, in, and through whom access is had to God, prayer is made to him, and every part of religious worship with acceptance: so Enoch is said, פלח ב'אמת, *to worship in truth*, before the Lord, in the Targum of Jonathan and Jerusalem, in Gen. v. 24. And it may be that the worship of all the three persons in the Godhead, as more distinctly performed under the Gospel dispensation, is here intended: for

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 5. 2.

<sup>b</sup> Maimon. in Misa. Beracot, c. 9. sect. 9. & Bartenora in ib. c. 7. sect. 1. & in Niddz, c. 4. sect. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Shalsholet Hakkabala, fol. 15. 9.

<sup>d</sup> T. Hieros. Avoda Zara, fol. 44. 4.

<sup>e</sup> Bureshit Rabba, sect. 81. fol. 71. 1.

the words may be thus read, *shall worship the father, with the spirit, and with the truth*; so the preposition *in* is rendered in Eph. vi. 2. and elsewhere; and then the sense is, they shall *worship the father*; the first person in the Trinity, who is the father of Christ, his only-begotten son, and together and equally with him *the spirit*; the holy spirit, as the Ethiopic version reads; and Nonnus calls it the divine spirit: and the rather he may be thought to be intended, since it follows in the next verse, *the spirit is God*; for so the words lie in the Greek text; and are so rendered in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; and therefore is the proper object of religious worship, whose temples the saints are, with whom they have communion, to whom they pray, and in whose name they are baptized: and also together *with the truth*: with Christ the way, the truth, and the life; who is the true God, and eternal life; and who is equally to be worshipped as the father and spirit, as he is by the angels in heaven, and by the saints on earth; who pray unto him, trust in him, and are also baptized in his name, as in the name of the other two persons: and the rather this may be thought to be the sense, since Christ is speaking, not of the manner, but of the object of worship, in the preceding verse: *for the father seeketh such to worship him*; it being agreeable to him to be worshipped in the manner, as above related; and his desire is, that the son and spirit should be honoured equally as himself; and such worshippers he has found, having made them such, both among the Jews and Gentiles; and such only are acceptable to him; see Phil. iii. 3.

Ver. 24. *God is a spirit, &c.*] Or *the spirit is God*: a divine person, possessed of all divine perfections, as appears from his names, works, and worship ascribed unto him; see the note on the preceding verse; though the Arabic and Persic versions, and others, read as we do, *God is a spirit*; that is, God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: for taking the words in this light, not one of the persons is to be understood exclusive of the other; for this description, or definition, agrees with each of them, and they are all the object of worship, and to be worshipped in a true and spiritual manner. God is a spirit, and not a body, or a corporeal substance: the nature and essence of God is like a spirit, simple and un-compounded, not made up of parts; nor is it divisible; nor does it admit of any change and alteration. God, as a spirit, is immaterial, immortal, invisible, and an intelligent, willing, and active being; but differs from other spirits, in that he is an increased one, an immense and infinite spirit, and an eternal one, which has neither beginning nor end: he is therefore a spirit by way of eminence, as well as effectively, he being the author and former of all spirits: whatever excellence is in them, must be ascribed to God in the highest manner; and whatever is imperfect in them, must be removed from him: *and they that worship him*; worship is due to him on account of his nature and perfections, both internal and external; with both the bodies and souls of men; and both private and public; in the closet, in the family, and in the church of God; as prayer, praise, attendance on the word and

ordinances: *must worship him in spirit and in truth*; in the true and spiritual manner before described, which is suitable to his nature, and agreeably to his will.

Ver. 25. *The woman saith unto him, &c.*] Not knowing well what to say to these things Christ had been discoursing about, as the place, object, and manner of worship; and being indetermined in her judgment of them, by what he had said, was willing to refer them to the Messiah's coming; of which she, and the Samaritans, had some knowledge. *I know that Messias cometh which is called Christ*: the last clause, *which is called Christ*, are not the words of the woman explaining the Hebrew word *Messiah*; for as, on the one hand, she did not understand Greek, so, on the other, she could not think that the person she was conversing with, who she knew was a Jew, needed that word to be explained to him; but they are the words of the evangelist, interpreting the Hebrew word *Messiah*, by the Greek word *Christ*, in which language he wrote: hence this clause is left out in the Syriac version, as unnecessary to a Syriac reader, not needing the word to be explained to him. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions, and some copies, read in the plural number, *we know that Messias cometh*; the knowledge of the coming of the Messiah was not peculiar to this woman, but was common to all the Samaritans; for as they received the five books of Moses, they might learn from thence, that a divine and excellent person was to come, who is called the seed of the woman, that should bruise the serpent's head; Shiloh, to whom the gathering of the people should be; and a prophet like unto Moses: and though the word *Messiah* is not found in those books, yet, as it was usual with the Jews to call the same person by this name, they might easily take it from them, and make use of it; and they not only knew that there was a Messiah to come, and expected him, but that he was coming, just ready to come; and this they might conclude, not only from the general expectation of the Jewish nation about this time, but from Gen. xlix. 10. And it is certain, that the Samaritans to this day do expect a Messiah, though they know not his name, unless it be *הַמְשִׁיחַ*; the meaning of which they don't understand<sup>m</sup>: to me it seems to be an abbreviation of *הַמְשִׁיחַ הַבָּנָה*, or *הַמְשִׁיחַ הַבָּנָה*, *he that is to come*; by which circumlocution the Jews understand the Messiah; see Matt. xi. 3. and to which this Samaritan woman seems to have some respect: *when he is come he will tell us all things*; the whole mind and will of God; all things relating to the worship of God, and to the salvation of men. This the Samaritans might conclude from his general character as a prophet, like unto Moses, to whom men were to hearken, Deut. xviii. 15. and from a common prevailing notion among the Jews, that the times of the Messiah would be times of great knowledge, founded on several prophecies, as Isa. ii. 3. and xi. 2, 9. Jer. xxxi. 34. and which they sometimes express in the following manner<sup>n</sup>: "in the days of the Messiah, even the little children in the world shall find out the hidden things of wisdom, and know in it the ends and computations (of times), and at that time he

<sup>m</sup> 1 Epist. Samar. ad Scaliger. in Antiq. Eccl. Oriental. p. 125.

<sup>n</sup> Zobar in Gen. fol. 74. 1.

“ shall be made manifest unto all.” And again <sup>o</sup>, “ says R. Judah, the holy blessed God will reveal the deep mysteries of the law in the times of the King Messiah; *for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, &c.* and it is written, *they shall not teach every man his brother,*” &c. And elsewhere <sup>p</sup>, “ the whole world shall be filled with the words of the Messiah, and with the words of the law, and with the words of the commandments; and these things shall extend to the isles afar off; to many people, the uncircumcised in heart, and the uncircumcised in flesh; and they shall deal in the secrets of the law.—And there shall be no business in the world, but to know the Lord only; wherefore the Israelites shall be exceeding wise, and know secret things, and comprehend the knowledge of their Creator, as much as is possible for a man to do, as it is said, *the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord,*” &c. Accordingly, the Messiah is come, who lay in the bosom of the father, and has made known all things to his disciples, he hath heard of him; he has declared him to them, his love, grace, and mercy. God has spoken all he has to say that appertains to his own worship, and the salvation of the children of men by his son Jesus Christ.

Ver. 26. *Jesus saith unto her, &c.*] Upon her making mention of the Messiah, of his coming, and of his work, he took the opportunity of making himself known unto her: *I that speak unto thee am he; the Messiah;* see Isa. lii. 6. This is a wonderful instance of the grace of Christ to this woman, that he should make himself known in so clear and plain a manner, to so mean a person, and so infamous a creature as she had been: we never find that he ever made so clear a discovery of himself, in such express terms, to any, as to her, unless it were to his immediate disciples; and these he would sometimes charge not to tell who he was.

Ver. 27. *And upon this came his disciples, &c.*] Just as he was saying the above words, and making himself known in this full manner, his disciples, who had been into the city to buy food, came up to them: *and marvelled that he talked with the woman;* or with a woman; for, according to the Jewish canons, it was not judged decent, right, and proper, nor indeed lawful, to enter into a conversation, or hold any long discourse with a woman. Their rule is this, “ don’t multiply discourse with a woman, with his wife they say, much less with his neighbour’s wife: hence the wise men say, at whatsoever time a man multiplies discourse with a woman, he is the cause of evil to himself, and ceases from the words of the law, and at last shall go down into hell <sup>q</sup>.” And especially this was thought to be very unseemly in any public place, as in an inn, or in the street: hence that direction, “ let not a man talk with a woman in the streets, even with his wife; and there is no need to say with another man’s wife.” And particularly it was thought very unbecoming a religious man, a doctor, or scholar, or a disciple of a wise man so to do.

This is one of the six things which are a reproach to a scholar, “ to talk with a woman in the street.” And it is even said <sup>r</sup>, “ let him not talk with a woman in the street, though she is his wife, or his sister, or his daughter.” And besides, the disciples might marvel, not only that he talked with a woman, but that he should talk with that woman, who was a Samaritan; since the Jews had no familiar conversation with Samaritans, men or women: and the woman was as much astonished that Christ should have any thing to say to her, and especially to ask a favour of her; for though they might, and did converse in a way of trade and business, yet did they not multiply discourse, or enter into a free conversation with one another: and it may be, that the disciples might overhear what he said to the woman, just as they came up; so that their astonishment was not merely at his talking with a woman, and with a Samaritan woman, but at what he said unto her, that he should so plainly tell her that he was the Messiah, when he so strictly charged them to tell no man. *Yet no man said;* no, not Peter, as Nonnus observes, who was bold and forward to put and ask questions: *what seekest thou?* or inquired of her about? is it food, or drink, or what? or *why talkest thou with her?* when it is not customary, seemly, and lawful. It may be considered, whether or no these two questions may not relate separately, the one to the woman, the other to Christ; as, the first, *what seekest thou?* to the woman; and the sense be, that no man said to her, what do you want with our master? what are you inquiring about of him? what would you have of him? or what do you seek for from him? and the latter, *why talkest thou with her?* peculiarly to Christ. The Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and Beza’s ancient copy indeed read, *no man said to him;* which confines both the questions to Christ. Now this shews the reverence the disciples had for Christ, and the great opinion they entertained of him, that whatever he did was well, and wisely done, though it might seem strange to them, and they could not account for it: however, they did not think that he, who was their Lord and master, was accountable to them for what he did; and they doubted not but he had good reasons for his conduct.

Ver. 28. *The woman then left her water-pot, &c.*] Her pail, or bucket, she brought with her to the well to draw water in: this she left, either for Christ and his disciples to make use of; or rather through forgetfulness, her mind being greatly impressed, and her thoughts much taken up with what Christ had said to her, and she being in haste to acquaint others with it: so the disciples left their nets, their business, their friends, and all for Christ; and so the saints are brought to quit their earthly and worldly things for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel. The Ethiopic version renders it, *she left her disputation:* she left off discoursing with Christ upon the disciples coming to him. *And went her way into the city:* the city of Sychar, to inform her friends, relations, and neighbours what she had met with: so Andrew and Philip, when they had

<sup>o</sup> Zohar in Lev. x. 1.

<sup>p</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Melachim, c. 11. sect. 4. & 12. 5.

<sup>q</sup> Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 5. Abot R. Nathan, c. 7. fol. 3. 3. & Derech Eretz, fol. 17. 3.

<sup>r</sup> Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 10. fol. 200. 2.

<sup>s</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 43. 2.

<sup>t</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Dayot, c. 5. sect. 7.

found Christ themselves, acquaint others with it, and bring them to him; so Levi, the publican, being called himself by Christ, makes a feast for Christ, and invites many publicans and sinners to sit down with him, that they might know him as well as himself; so the Apostle Paul, when converted, expresses a great concern for his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh; and such is the nature of true grace, that those that have it would have others partakers of it likewise: *and saith to the men.* The Ethiopic version adds, *of her house*; no doubt the men of the place in general are meant; not only those of her family, but the inhabitants of the city. The Syriac version leaves out the words, *to the men.* The Jews will not allow the Cuthites, or Samaritans, to be called *men*; thus they peculiarly ascribe to priests, Levites, and Israelites <sup>u</sup>.

Ver. 29. *Come, see a man, &c.*] An uncommon, an extraordinary man, a prophet, and, who himself says, he is the Messiah, who is now at Jacob's well; come, go along with me, and see him, and converse with him, and judge for yourselves, who, and what he is: she does not say, *go and see*; for she proposed to go along with them herself, that she might have more conversation with him, and knowledge of him, and grace from him: so such that have tasted that the Lord is gracious, desire more grace from him, and communion with him. *Which told me all things that ever I did*: the more remarkable things that had been done by her in the whole series of her life and conversation; referring more especially to the account he had given her of her having had five husbands, and what the man was she now lived with; when no doubt, all the transactions of her life were laid before her, and she had, at once, a view of all her iniquities; when her sins stared her in the face, and her conscience was filled with guilt and remorse, and her soul with shame and confusion; and so it is when Christ, by his spirit, convinces of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment: *is not this the Christ?* that was to come, has been promised and prophesied of, and we have expected, who is of quick understanding, and even God omniscient; surely this must be he, as he himself says he is.

Ver. 30. *Then they went out of the city, &c.*] *The men*, as the Syriac version expresses it; the inhabitants of Sychar left their business, and came out of the city: *and came unto him*; to Christ, to see him, and converse with him, that they might know who he was: for though the woman had been a woman of ill fame, yet such was the account that she gave of Christ, and such power went along with her words, that what with the strangeness of the relation, and the curiosity with which they were led, and chiefly through the efficacy of divine grace, at least in many of them, they were moved to regard what she said, and to follow her directions and solicitations.

Ver. 31. *In the mean while, &c.*] Whilst the woman was gone into the city, and had acquainted the inhabitants, that such a wonderful person was at Jacob's well, and invited them to come and see him: *his disciples prayed him, saying, master, eat*: for they perceived a disinclination in him to food; and they knew that he was weary with his journey, and that it was the

time of day, and high time, that he had had some food; and therefore out of great respect to him, and in concern for his health and welfare, they entreated him that he would take some food: so far was Christ from indulging his sensual appetite; and so little reason had the Scribes and Pharisees to traduce him as a wine-bibber and glutton.

Ver. 32. *But he said unto them, &c.*] That is, *Jesus*, as the Persic, or *the Lord Jesus*, as the Ethiopic versions express it: *I have meat to eat that ye know not of*; meaning the conversion of the Samaritan woman, and of other Samaritans, who were flocking in great numbers to him, which he knew, though his disciples did not; and the harvest of souls he had a prospect of, see ver. 35. was as meat unto him, delightful and refreshing; and his mind and thoughts were so taken up with these things, that he had no inclination to any corporeal food.

Ver. 33. *Therefore said the disciples one to another, &c.*] Privately, among themselves, though in his hearing; at least he knew what they said by his answer; *hath any man*; or any one, any angel from heaven, or any of the inhabitants of the city, or any man or woman, or this woman they had found him talking with: *brought him ought to eat?* for they thought of nothing else but bodily food; just as when he cautioned them against the leaven of the Sadducees and Pharisees, they imagined he said it, because they had taken no bread; whereas he meant the doctrine of these persons: so dull of understanding spiritual things were the disciples themselves, that it is not so much to be wondered at that the Samaritan woman, whilst in her carnal state, when Christ spoke of living water, should understand him of material water, or spring-water.

Ver. 34. *Jesus saith unto them, &c.*] His disciples: *my meat is to do the will of him that sent me.* The Ethiopic version reads, *of my father that sent me*, and who is undoubtedly intended. Now as food is pleasant, and delightful, and refreshing to the body of man, so doing the will of God was as delightful and refreshing to the soul of Christ: he took as much pleasure in it, as an hungry man does in eating and drinking. One part of the will of God was to assume human nature; this he had done, and with delight and pleasure: another part of it was to fulfil the law; and this was in his heart, and was his delight, and he was now doing it: and another branch of it was to suffer and die, in the room and stead of his people; and as disagreeable as this was in itself to the human nature, yet he cheerfully agreed to it; and was sometimes, as it were, impatient till it was accomplished; and he voluntarily became obedient to it: no man could, with greater eagerness, fall to eating, when hungry, than Christ went about his father's will and work, even that which was most ungrateful to him, as man. *And to finish his work*; one part of which was to preach the Gospel, and for which he was anointed and sent; and which he did with great assiduity and constancy: and another part of it was the conversion of sinners by it, whom he was sent to call, and with whom he delighted to be; and was the work he was now about, and took the pleasure in, the text expresses: and beside these,

\* T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 51. 1. & Tosephut in ib.

miracles were works his father gave him to finish; such as healing diseases, and dispossessing of devils, and which he went about doing continually, with great delight: but the chief work of all is, that of the redemption and salvation of his chosen ones: this was a work his father called him to, and sent him into this world to perform, which he gave unto him, and Christ accepted of, and agreed to do; and though it was a very toilsome and laborious one, there being a righteous law to be fulfilled, justice to be satisfied, the sins of all his people to bear, as well as the wrath of God, and the curse of the law, and numerous enemies to grapple with, and an accursed death to undergo; yet with pleasure he performed this: for the joy of doing his father's will, accomplishing his counsels and covenant, and his own engagements, and procuring the salvation of his people, he endured the cross patiently, and despised the shame of it. The whole of the will and work of God was done by him, just as the Lord commanded it; exactly, according to the pattern given him, with all faithfulness and integrity; with the most consummate wisdom and prudence; with all application, diligence, and constancy, and so as to finish it, and that without the help of any other; and in such a manner that nothing can be added to it to make it more perfect, or that it can be undone again by men or devils: and that the doing and finishing of this were his meat, or as delightful and refreshing to him as meat is to the body, appears from his ready and cheerful engaging in it in eternity; from his early and industrious entrance on it in time; from his constancy in it, when he had begun, insomuch that nothing could deter him from it; nor did he sink and fail under it, nor left it till he had finished it.

Ver. 35. *Say not ye, there are yet four months, &c.*] Our Lord had been in Jerusalem and Judea, about eight months from the last passover, and there remained four more to the next passover: and then cometh harvest? barley-harvest, which began at that time. Now as the passover was in the middle of the month Nisan, which was about the latter end of our March; reckoning four months back from thence shews, that it was about the latter end of our November, or beginning of December, that Christ was in Samaria, and at Jacob's well. Some think, that this does not refer to the then present time, as if there were so many months from thence to the next harvest, but to a common way of speaking, that there were four months from seed-time to harvest; during which time there was a comfortable hope, and longing expectation of it: but this will, by no means, agree either with the wheat or barley harvest. The wheat was sown before this time, and the barley a good while after. "Half Tisri, Marcheshvan, and half Cisleu, were  $\text{ורע}$ , seed-time." The earliest they sowed their wheat was in Tisri, which answers to our September and October; *i. e.* to half one, and half the other. The month of Marcheshvan, which answers to October and November, was the principal month for sowing it<sup>2</sup>: hence that paraphrase on Eccl. xi. 2.

"give a good part of thy seed to thy field in Tisri. and do not refrain from sowing even in Cisleu." As for the barley, that was sown in the months of Shebet and Adar, and usually in the latter<sup>7</sup>; the former of which answers to January and February, and the latter to February and March. And we read<sup>2</sup> of their sowing seventy days before the passover, which was within six weeks of the beginning of barley-harvest. Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; pointing to the lands which lay near the city of Sychar: for they are white already to harvest; alluding to the corn-fields, which, when ripe, and near harvest, look white: hence we read<sup>2</sup> of  $\text{עדה הלבן}$ , the white field; which the Jews say is a field sown with wheat or barley, and so called to distinguish it from a field planted with trees; though it may be rather, that it is so called from its white look when ripe. So the three Targums paraphrase Gen. xlix. 12. "his hills (his valleys, or fields, as Onkelos)  $\text{תירורין}$ , are white with corn, and flocks of sheep." Christ here speaks not literally; for the fields could not be white at such a distance from harvest; but spiritually, of a harvest of souls; and has regard to the large number of Samaritans that were just now coming out of the city, and were within sight, and covered the adjacent fields: and these he calls upon his disciples to lift up their eyes and behold; and suggests to them, that it was not a time for eating and drinking, but for working, since here was such a number of souls to be gathered in: and thus as from corporeal food he proceeded to treat of spiritual food; so from a literal harvest he goes on to speak of a spiritual one, and encourages his disciples to labour in it, by the following arguments.

Ver. 36. *And he that reapeth receiveth wages, &c.*] Angels are sometimes called reapers, and so are ministers of the Gospel here. The works and ministry of the apostles are here expressed by reaping: for as in reaping, when the corn is ripe, the sickle is put in, and the corn is cut down, and laid to the ground, and then bound in sheaves, and gathered into the barn; so when things are ripe in providence, and God's set time is come to convert any of his people, he makes use of his ministers for the cutting them down, laying low the loftiness and haughtiness of man, stripping him of all his goodness, and taking him off of a dependence on his own righteousness and works, and for the gathering them into his churches, which is done with a great deal of joy and pleasure: and such as are so employed, and in this way made useful, shall receive wages, shall not only be taken care of in providence, and have a sufficient and comfortable maintenance, the labourer being worthy of his hire; but shall have pleasure, delight, and satisfaction in their work, that being blessed for the good of souls, and the glory of Christ, and they having the presence of God in it; and also shall hereafter receive the crown of righteousness, when they have finished their course, and shall shine like the stars for ever and ever. *And gathereth fruit unto life eternal:* by fruit are meant sinners converted and turned from the error of their ways:

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 106. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Roshhashana, fol. 16. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Gloss. in Bava Metzia & in Roshhashana ib.

<sup>2</sup> Misn. Menachot, c. 8. sect. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Misn. Sheviith, c. 2. sect. 1. & Moed Katon, c. 1. sect. 4.

which are the fruit of a Gospel ministry, of the efficacy and power of divine grace accompanying it; see John xv. 16. and these are gathered, by the preaching of the Gospel, out from among the rest of mankind, unto Christ, the Shiloh, or peace-maker, and into his churches, and remain, abide, and persevere to the end; that grace, which is implanted in their souls, being a well of living water, springing up to everlasting life; so that they are at last gathered into Christ's garner, into heaven, where they shall live with him for ever: *that both he that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together.* The sowers are the prophets of the Old Testament, who sowed that seed in the prophecies, which sprung up in Gospel times, and laid the foundation therein of the great success of the apostles of Christ in preaching the word; for they so clearly described the Messiah, and pointed out Christ, his offices, and his work, in so distinct a manner, that when he was come he was readily known, and cheerfully embraced; they greatly facilitated the work of the apostles, who had nothing to do but to preach Christ, as come in the flesh: and hence they reaped and gathered a vast harvest of souls every where. John the Baptist also was one that sowed; he prepared the way of the Lord, and made straight his paths: and our Lord himself was a sower, that went forth to sow, and who sowed good seed in the field; all which succeeded well, and were ripening apace for a general harvest, which began on the day of Pentecost, after our Lord's ascension to heaven. This was in Judea; and in the Gentile world there was a sowing in providence, which contributed to make the work of the disciples more easy there, and to bring on, in time, a large harvest. The books of the Old Testament were translated into the Greek language; and the Jews were scattered in the several parts of the world; and the Greek tongue, in which the New Testament was to be written, was every where generally spoken; and these providences were ripening apace to bring on a great work there. And now, as before observed, the apostles were the reapers; they were remarkably successful in the gathering in of souls, even more than the prophets, than John the Baptist, or Christ himself; never was such a harvest of souls, either in Judea, or in the Gentile world, before or since; of which the conversion of these Samaritans was a pledge or earnest. Now when the whole harvest is gathered in, at the end of the world, all these will rejoice together, the patriarchs and prophets, the forerunner of Christ, and Christ himself, and all his apostles and ministers; the different parts they have had in this work all concurring and agreeing together, and issuing in the glory of God, and the good of souls.

Ver. 37. *And herein is that saying true, &c.*] This verifies that proverbial expression so much in use, and which may be applied to different persons and cases: *one soweth, and another reapeth*; the prophets sowed, and the apostles reaped.

Ver. 38. *I sent you to reap, &c.*] To preach the Gospel, and gather in souls by your ministry; referring to the mission of them in Matt. x. 6, 7. *that whereon ye bestowed no labour*; being sent to the Jews, who had the writings of the prophets, and were versed in them; and had learned from them that the Messiah

was to come, and were now in general expectation of him; so that they had nothing more to do, than to declare to those persons who were cultivated by the prophets, and were like to ground till'd and manured, that the Messiah was come, and the kingdom of heaven was at hand. *Other men laboured*; the prophets, and John the Baptist: *and ye are entered into their labours*; to finish the work they had begun, and which was almost done to their hands.

Ver. 39. *And many of the Samaritans of that city, &c.*] Of Sychar, which was a city of Samaria; *believed on him*; that he was the true Messiah he had told the woman he was; and she put it to them whether he was or not: before they saw him, or had any conversation with him themselves, they believed in him; see John xx. 29. *for the saying of the woman which testified, he told me all that ever I did*: the account she gave was so plain, and honest, and disinterested, that they could not but give credit to it; and since the person was an utter stranger to her, and yet had laid before her the whole series of her past life and conversation, they concluded he could be no other than the Messiah, who should tell all things; and being of quick understanding or smell, was able to disclose the secrets of men.

Ver. 40. *So when the Samaritans were come unto him, &c.*] The Ethiopic version reads, *all the Samaritans*; they came to him at Jacob's well, upon the woman's solicitations, and the account she gave of this extraordinary person: and after they had conversed with him, and heard him themselves, they were taken with his divine discourses, and being thoroughly persuaded that he was the Messiah, *they besought him that he would tarry with them*; they were not like the Gergesenes, who besought him to depart out of their coasts as soon he was in them: but these men were delighted with his company; and notwithstanding his being a Jew, desired a conversation with him, and entreated that he would go along with them to their city, and stay with them: *and he abode there two days*: he went with them to Sychar. He would not deny their request, lest they should be discouraged; and yet would not make any long stay with them, that he might give no umbrage to the Jews; though it is very likely from this short stay in Samaria, they afterwards reproached him as a Samaritan, ch. viii. 41. Our Lord's direction to his disciples not to enter into any of the cities of the Samaritans, was not a rule to himself, or binding upon him, and was only a rule to them *pro tempore*.

Ver. 41. *And many more believed, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions add, *on him*: when he was come into the city, and had preached to the inhabitants in general, a larger multitude than before believed in him as the Messiah, and professed him, and became followers of him. *Because of his own word*; which came to them, not in word only, but in power, and was the power of God unto salvation to them; and was received by them, not as the word of man, but as the word of God; and it wrought effectually in them, and was an hammer to break their rocky hearts in pieces, and to bring them into subjection to himself, his Gospel and ordinances: whether his word or doctrine was accompanied with miracles is not certain; this shews, that their faith in

him was founded on his own word, which fell with great weight upon them. It seems to have an emphasis laid upon it, his *own* word, in distinction from the woman's saying.

Ver. 42. *And said unto the woman, &c.*] Who, it appears, kept hearing Christ, attending on him, and conversing with him; for having tasted of his grace, she could not leave him: *now we believe, not because of thy saying; not on account of that only: it should seem that these were the same persons that believed upon her word before they went out of the city; and who, when come to Christ, invited him into it; and now, having heard his excellent discourses, were confirmed in the faith of him: for we have heard him ourselves; not only externally, with their bodily ears, but internally, having ears given them to hear, so as to understand what he said; to mix it with faith, and receive it in love; to feel the power of it in their hearts, and taste the sweetness of it, and be nourished by it; and so as to distinguish his voice from another's, as Christ's true sheep are capable of. And know that this is indeed the Christ; the true Messiah, and not a false one; the Messiah spoken of by Moses, whose books the Samaritans received, as the seed of the woman, the Shiloh, and prophet, like to Moses; the Christ of God, who is anointed to be prophet, priest, and King. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out the word Christ, and only read what follows, the Saviour of the world: they knew him to be the Saviour, he who was spoken of as such; for his work to bruise the serpent's head implies it, and his name Shiloh imports as much: and besides, he is called by Jacob God's salvation, Gen. xlix. 18. God appointed him as a Saviour; he sent him, and he came as such, and is become the author of salvation; and his name is called Jesus, on this account: and a great Saviour he is; both able, and willing; and he is suitable to the case of sinners; and is a complete, and an only one: and these Samaritans knew him to be the Saviour of the world; not of every individual person in it, for all are not saved by him; nor of the Jewish world, for many of them died in their sins; but of the Gentiles, in distinction from the Jews; see John iii. 16. 1 John ii. 2. even of all God's elect, whether among Jews or Gentiles; of all that believe in him, of whatsoever nation, and in whatsoever state and condition: so that their knowledge of him, and faith in him, were beyond that of the Jews, who looked upon the Messiah only as a Saviour of their nation; and that the Gentiles would have no manner of benefit and advantage by him: though the Jews <sup>b</sup> do call the angel in Exod. xxiii. 20. פְּרוֹתָא דְעֵלְמָא, the Saviour, or Redeemer of the world. And this the Samaritans might know from the writings of Moses, as from Gen. xxii. 18. and xlix. 10. their present knowledge of Christ was not a mere notional, speculative, and general one, but was special, spiritual, and saving, which they had from the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ; they approved of him as their Saviour; they trusted in him as such; they had an experimental acquaintance with him, and practically owned him; and which they attained to by hearing him:*

Ver. 43. *Now after two days he departed thence, &c.*] When he had staid two days at Sychar conversing with, and discoursing to the Samaritans, which were the means of the conversion of many of them: he departed out of that country, and passed on his way: and went into Galilee; as he first intended; see ver. 3.

Ver. 44. *For Jesus himself testified, &c.*] Matt. xiii. 57. *that a prophet hath no honour in his own country: all the Oriental versions read, in his own city; that is, Nazareth; for these words must not be understood as a reason why Christ left Judea, and went into Galilee, because he had no honour in Judea, in which was Bethlehem, the place of his nativity; but are a reason why, when he came into Galilee, he did not go to Nazareth, his own city, where he was educated, and had been brought up, and had lived the greatest part of his life, because they treated him with great disrespect and contempt; see the note on Matt. xiii. 57.*

Ver. 45. *Then when he was come into Galilee, &c.*] That part of it in which Cana lay, as appears by what follows: *the Galileans received him; willingly, readily, and cheerfully, with much delight and pleasure, and with marks of great esteem and respect: they received him into their houses, and entertained him, and provided for him and his disciples: having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem, at the feast of the passover; the miracles he wrought there, see ch. ii. 23. for they also went unto the feast; as well as Jesus and his disciples: they kept the feast of the passover, and went yearly to Jerusalem on that account: so Josephus speaks of the Galileans going to the Jewish festivals at Jerusalem, when he says; "it was the custom, or usual with the Galileans, when they went to the holy city at the festivals, to go through the country of the Samaritans;" which was the way that Christ now came from thence to them.*

Ver. 46. *So Jesus came again unto Cana of Galilee, &c.*] Where he had been once before; see ch. ii. 1, 2. The Syriac version here, as there, calls it *Kotne* of Galilee; and the Persic version, *Catneh* of Galilee; *where he made the water wine*; see ch. ii. 9, 11. *there was a certain nobleman*; the Vulgate Latin renders it, *a petty king*; the Arabic version, and Nonnus, call him, *a royal man*; and the Syriac version renders it, *a king's servant*; with which agrees the Ethiopic, calling him *a minister, a steward, the king's domestic*. The Persic version makes it to be his name, reading it, *there was a great man, whose name was Abdolmelic*, which signifies a king's servant: from the whole he seems to be one that belonged to the palace of Herod Antipas, and was one of his courtiers; who, though he was but tetrarch of Galilee, yet is sometimes called a king, Mark vi. 14. *whose son was sick at Capernaum*; some versions, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic, read the phrase, *in Capernaum*, with the former clause, *there was a nobleman in Capernaum*; and others, as we do with this; and both may be true; for he might be an inhabitant of Capernaum, and his house be there where his son lay sick. Some think this nobleman was either Chuza, Herod's steward, Luke viii. 3. or Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod, Acts xiii. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 124. 4.

<sup>c</sup> Antiqu. Jud. l. 20. c. 5.

Ver. 47. *When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea, &c.*] For the fame of Christ, for his doctrine and miracles, was spread every where; so that it was known, and talked of, in most places, where he was, and what course he was steering: and this nobleman understanding that he had left Judea, and was come into Galilee; and having inquired in what parts of Galilee he was, *he went unto him*; though it was many miles from Capernaum, where Jesus was, at least a day's journey; since, when the servants met their master, the child had been healed at one o'clock the day before; see ver. 52. Some reckon it about fifteen miles, but one would think it should be more: *and besought him, that he would come down*; for Capernaum, though it was built on a hill, lay lower down in the country of Galilee than Cana did, near the sea of Tiberias: a like way of speaking is used in chap. ii. 12. *and heal his son*. The nobleman believed that Christ had power to do it, by what he had heard concerning him, but thought his corporeal presence was absolutely necessary to it: *for he was at the point of death; or would die*: he was very near it; there was no likelihood of his recovery; the physicians had given him over; and when he left him, he seemed to be near his death, and must die for any human help that could be obtained, or natural means that could be used.

Ver. 48. *Then said Jesus unto him, &c.*] With some degree of roughness in his speech, and severity in his countenance, in a way of reproof for his unbelief, as if he could not heal his son without going down to Capernaum along with him: *except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe*. This was the cast of the Jews every where, both in Judea and Galilee; they required signs and miracles to be wrought, in confirmation of Christ's being the Messiah, and which indeed was but right; and Christ did perform them for that purpose: but their sin of unbelief lay in this, that they wanted still more and more signs; they could not be contented with what they had seen, but required more, being sluggish and backward to believe. Our Lord seems to say this chiefly for the sake of the Galileans, that were about him; who, though they might be acquainted with his former miracles, when among them, of turning water into wine, and had seen his wondrous works at the feast at Jerusalem, yet were very desirous of seeing more, and perhaps very pressing for this cure.

Ver. 49. *The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, &c.*] Notwithstanding this reproof, and seeming denial, he presses him again, and addressing him in a handsome and courteous manner, importunately entreats him, saying: *come down ere my son die*; here was faith with a mixture of unbelief; he believed that Christ was able to heal his son, but he still thought that his going down with him was necessary; that he must be corporeally present, and must lay his hands on him, or touch him, or speak, and command the distemper off, or something of this kind, and which must be done before he died; for otherwise, should he die first, all hope was then gone; he had no notion of Christ being able to raise him from the dead.

Ver. 50. *Jesus saith unto him, go thy way, &c.*] Re-

turn home in peace, be not over-much troubled and distressed about this matter; leave it with me, I'll take care of it; all will be well: so the Persic version reads, *be not anxious, and go thy way*; don't be solicitous for my presence, or urge me to go with thee; depart alone, there's no necessity for my being upon the spot: *thy son liveth*; he's now recovered of his disease, and is well, and in perfect health, and lives, and will live: *and the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken to him*; such power went along with the words of Christ, as not only cured the son at that distance, who lay at the point of death, but also the father of his unbelief; and he no more insisted on his going down with him, but firmly believed that his son was alive, and well, as Christ had said he was: *and he went his way*; he took his leave of Christ, and set out for Capernaum; very probably, not the same day, it being now in the afternoon of the day; but the next morning, as it should seem from what follows.

Ver. 51. *And as he was now going down, &c.*] From Cana to Capernaum, the day after he had been with Christ: *his servants met him, and told him, saying, thy son liveth*; as soon as this cure was wrought, though it was not known in the family how, and by whom it was done, immediately some of the servants were dispatched to carry the news to their master, that his sorrow might be removed; and he give himself no further trouble in seeking for a cure: these meeting him on the road, with an air of pleasure, at once address him with the joyful news, that his son was thoroughly recovered of his disorder, and was alive, and well; news which he was acquainted with, and believed before; though it must give him an additional pleasure to have it confirmed.

Ver. 52. *Then inquired he of them the hour, &c.*] He did not at all hesitate about the truth of it, or was in any surprise upon it; but that he might compare things together, he asked the exact time, *when he began to amend*; or grow better; for he seemed to think, that his recovery might be gradual, and not all at once, as it was: *and they said unto him, yesterday at the seventh hour*; which was one o'clock in the afternoon: *the fever left him*; entirely at once, so that he was perfectly well immediately.

Ver. 53. *So the father knew that it was at the same hour, &c.*] Precisely; *in that which Jesus said to him, thy son liveth*: he had observed what time of day it was, in which he conversed with Jesus; and particularly, when he told him his son was alive and well, and when he took his leave of him; and by comparing the account of his servants, with that, found that things entirely agreed, and that the cure was wrought exactly at the time, that Jesus spoke the words: *and himself believed, and his whole house*; when he came home, he related the whole affair to his family, and he and they all believed, that Jesus was the Messiah, and became his disciples and followers: if this nobleman was Chuza, Herod's steward, we have an account of his wife, whose name was Joanna, that she followed Christ, and ministered to him of her substance, with other women, Luke viii. 3. There is a story told by the Jews, and which seems somewhat like to this<sup>d</sup>;



" it is reported concerning R. Chanina ben Dosa, that " when he prayed for the sick, he used to say, 'יהי רצון, *this liveth*, and this dies; it was said to him, whence " knowest thou this? he replied, if my prayer be ready " in my mouth, I know that he is accepted (of God, " *i. e.* the sick man for whom he prayed); but if not, " I know that he will be snatched away (by the " disease):" upon which the Gemarists give the following relation<sup>c</sup>; " it happened that the son of Rabban " Gamaliel (the Apostle Paul's master) was sick, he sent " two disciples to R. Chanina ben Dosa, to ask mercy " for him; when he saw them, he went up to a chamber, " and sought mercy for him; and when he came down, " he said unto them, 'לכו שולחתי דמה, *go your way*, " *for the fever has left him*; they said unto him, art " thou a prophet? he replied, I am not a prophet, " nor the son of a prophet; but so I have received, " that if my prayer is ready in my mouth, I know that

" he is accepted; and if not, I know that he shall be " snatched away; and they sat and wrote and observed " *the very hour*; and when they came to Rabban Gama- " liel, he said unto them, this service ye have not " been wanting in, nor abounded in; but so the thing " was, that in that hour the fever left him, and he " asked of us water to drink." Which story perhaps is told, to vie with this miracle of Christ, and to obscure the glory of it.

Ver. 54. *This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, &c.*] That is, in that place, in Cana of Galilee; for otherwise, in Jerusalem and Judea, he had done many miracles, between the former and this; see ch. ii. 23. and iii. 2. and so the following words explain it: *when he was come out of Judea into Galilee*; this was the first he wrought, after his coming out of Judea into Galilee, this time, and was the second that he wrought in Cana of Galilee; see ch. ii. 11.

## C H A P. V.

Ver. 1. *AFTER this there was a feast of the Jews, &c.*] After Christ had been in Samaria, which was four months ago, ch. iv. 35. and had been in Galilee for that time, and had cured the nobleman's son, and had done other mighty works, the time came on for one of the three festivals of the Jews; either the feast of Pentecost, as some think; or as others, the feast of tabernacles; or rather, the feast of the passover, so called, in ch. iv. 45. since John is very particular, in giving an account of the several passovers, in Christ's ministry: *and Jesus went up to Jerusalem*; according to the law of God, which obliged all the males to appear there at that time; and to shew his compliance with it, and obedience to it, whom it became to fulfil all righteousness; and this he did also, that he might have an opportunity of discoursing, and doing his miracles before all the people, which came at this time, from the several parts of the land.

Ver. 2. *Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep-market, &c.*] The word *market* is not in the text, and of such a market, no account is given in the Scripture, nor in the Jewish writings; and besides, in our Lord's time, sheep and oxen were sold in the temple; rather therefore this signifies, the sheep-gate, of which mention is made, in Nehem. iii. 1, 32. and xii. 39. through which the sheep were brought into the city, to the temple. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, *there is at Jerusalem a sheep-pool*; and so it is interpreted in the Arabic version, and Jerom calls it *the cattle-pool*<sup>f</sup>. The Targumist on Jer. xxxi. 39. speaks of a pool called *בריכה עולה*, *the calf, or heifer, pool*, as Dr. Lightfoot renders it; though the translations of it, both in the London Polyglott, and in the king of Spain's Bible, interpret it *the round pool*. This pool of Bethesda, is thought by some, to be the same which the Jews call the great pool in Jerusalem; they say<sup>g</sup>, " between

" Hebron and Jerusalem, is the fountain Etham, from " whence the waters come by way of pipes, unto the " *great pool*, which is in Jerusalem." And R. Benjamin<sup>b</sup> speaks of a pool, which is to be seen to this day, where the ancients slew their sacrifices, and all the Jews write their names on the wall: and some think it was so called, because the sheep that were offered in sacrifice, were there washed; which must be either before, or after they were slain; not before, for it was not required that what was to be slain for sacrifice should be washed first; and afterwards, only the entrails of a beast were washed; and for this there was a particular place in the temple, called *לשכת המדיחין*, *the washing-room*; where, they say<sup>i</sup>, they washed the inwards of the holy sacrifices. This pool here, therefore, seems rather, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, to have been a bath for unclean persons; and having this miraculous virtue hereafter spoken of, diseased persons only, at certain times, had recourse to it. The Syriac and Persic versions call it, *a place of a baptistry*; and both leave out the clause, *by the sheep-market, or gate*: it is not easy to say where and what it was: *which is called in the Hebrew tongue, Bethesda*; which signifies, according to the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, *an house of mercy, or grace, or goodness*; because many miserable objects here received mercy, and a cure. Hegesippus<sup>k</sup> speaks of a Bethesda, which Cestius the Roman general entered into, and burnt; and which, according to him, seems to be without Jerusalem, and so not the place here spoken of; and besides, this is called a pool, though the buildings about it doubtless went by the same name. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read *Bethsaida*, very wrongly; and it is called by Tertullian<sup>l</sup>, the pool of *Bethsaida*. The Hebrew tongue here mentioned is *כתב של עבר הנהר*, *the language of those beyond the river*<sup>m</sup>, *i. e.* the river

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 34. 2.

<sup>b</sup> De Locis Hebraicis, p. 89. L. Tom. III.

<sup>c</sup> Cippi Hebraici, p. 10.

<sup>d</sup> Itinerar. p. 45.

<sup>e</sup> Min. Middet, c. 5. sect. 2. Maimon. Beth Habbechira, c. 5. sect. 17.

<sup>f</sup> De Excidio, l. 2. c. 15.

<sup>g</sup> Adv. Judæos, c. 13.

<sup>h</sup> De Semente, p. 945. Tom. I.

Euphrates; which is the Chaldee language, as distinct from the Assyrian language, which is called the holy and blessed language; the former is what the Cushites, or Samaritans used; the latter, that in which the book of the law was written<sup>a</sup>. *Having five porches*; or cloistered walks, which were very convenient for the diseased, which lay here for a cure, so Nonnus: Athanasius<sup>b</sup> speaks of the pool itself, as in being, though the buildings round about lay in ruins in his time; and<sup>c</sup> Daviler observes, there are still remaining five arches of the *portico*, and part of the bason. Now this place may be an emblem of the means of grace, the ministry of the word, and ordinances: the house of God, where the Gospel is preached, may be called a Bethesda, an house of mercy; since here the free, sovereign, rich, and abundant grace and mercy of God, through Christ, is proclaimed, as the ground and foundation of a sinner's hope; the mercy of God, as it is displayed in the covenant of grace, in the mission of Christ, and redemption by him, in regeneration, and in the forgiveness of sin, and indeed, in the whole of salvation, from first to last, is here held forth for the relief of distressed minds: and this Bethesda being a pool, some of the ancients have thought, it was an emblem of, and prefigured the ordinance of baptism; and that the miraculous virtue in it, was put into it, to give honour and credit to that ordinance, shortly to be administered: but as that is not the means of regeneration and conversion, or of a cure or cleansing, but pre-requires them; rather it might be a symbol of the fountain of Christ's blood, opened for polluted sinners to wash in, and which cleanses from all sin, and cures all diseases; and this is opened in the house of mercy, and by the ministry of the word: or rather, best of all, the Gospel itself, and the ministration of it, may be signified; which is sometimes compared to waters, and a fountain of them; see Isa. lv. 1. Zech. xiv. 8. Joel iii. 18. and whereas this pool was in Jerusalem, and that so often designs the church of Christ under the Gospel dispensation, it may fitly represent the ministry of the word there: and it being near the sheep-market, or gate, or a sheep-pool, may not be without its significance; and may lead us to observe, that near where Christ's sheep are, which the father has given him, and he has died for, and must bring in, he fixes his word and ordinances, in order to gather them in: and inasmuch as there were five porches, or cloistered walks, leading unto, or adjoining to this place, it has been thought by some of the ancients, that the law, as lying in the five books of Moses, may be intended by them; for under the law, and under a work of it, men are, before they come into the light and liberty, and comfort of the Gospel; and as the people which lay in these porches, received no cure there, so there are no relief, peace, joy, life, and salvation, by the law of works.

Ver. 3. *In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, &c.*] Sick and weak persons; who were an emblem of men under the law of works, and in a state of unregeneracy; who are enfeebled by sin, and are impotent and unable to do any thing of themselves; as to

keep the law of God, to which they have neither will nor power, and to atone for the transgressions of it; nor to redeem themselves from the curse of the law; or to begin and carry on a work of grace upon their souls; or to do any thing that is spiritually good; no, not to think a good thought, or to do a good action, as is required: *of blind*; these also may represent men in a state of nature, who are ignorant of, and blind to every thing that is spiritual; as to the true knowledge of God in Christ, the way of salvation by him, the plague of their own hearts, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin; to the spirit of God, and his work upon the soul; and to the truths of the Gospel, in the power of them: *halt, or lame*; this word sometimes is used of persons in suspense about religious things, hesitating concerning them, halting between two opinions; and sometimes designs the infirmities of the saints, and their falterings in religious exercises; and here may be expressive in a figurative way, of the incapacity of natural men, to go or walk of themselves; as to come to Christ for grace and life, which no man can do, except the father draw him; or to walk by faith in him: 'tis added, *withered*; one limb or another of them dried up: their arms or legs were withered, and their sinews shrunk, and were without radical moisture, or the free use of the animal spirits; and may point out carnal persons, such as are sensual, not having the spirit, destitute of the grace of God, without faith, hope, love, knowledge, and the fear of God; without God, Christ, and the Spirit; and in a lifeless, helpless, hopeless, and perishing condition: *waiting for the moving of the water*; hereafter mentioned: and so it is in providence, and a wonderful thing it is, that the hearts of so many unregenerate persons should be inclined to attend upon the outward means of grace, and should be waiting at Wisdom's gates, and watching at the posts of her door.

Ver. 4. *For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, &c.*] This angel is not to be understood of a messenger sent from the sanhedrim, or by the priests, as Dr. Hammond thinks; who has a strange conceit, that this pool was used for the washing of the entrails of the sacrifices; and which at the passover being very numerous, the water in it mixed with the blood of the entrails, was possessed of an healing virtue; and which being stirred by a messenger sent from the sanhedrim for that purpose, whoever went in directly received a cure: but this angel was *an angel of the Lord*, as the Vulgate Latin, and two of Beza's copies read; and so the Ethiopic version reads, *an angel of God*; who either in a visible form came down from heaven, and went into the pool, the Ethiopic version very wrongly renders it, *was washed in the pool*; or it was concluded by the people, from the unusual agitation of the water, and the miraculous virtue which ensued upon it, that an angel did descend into it; and this was not at all times, but at a certain time; either once a year, as Tertullian thought, at the time of the feast of the passover, or every sabbath, as this was now the sabbath-day; or it may be there was no fixed period for it, but at some times and seasons in the year so it was, which kept the people continually waiting for it:

<sup>a</sup> In Chambers's Dictionary, in the word *Piscina*.

<sup>b</sup> Vid. Gloss. in T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 115. 1. Megilla, fol. 18. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 2.

<sup>c</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in Misa. Yadaim, c. 4. sect. 5. Vid. Gloss. in T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 9. 2.

and troubled the water; agitated and moved it to and fro, caused it to swell and rise, to bubble and boil up, and to roll about, and be as in a ferment. The Jews have a notion of spirits troubling waters; they speak of a certain fountain where a spirit resided, and an evil spirit attempted to come in his room; upon which a contest arose and they saw עֲרִיבוֹיֵי דְמִיָּיָא, the waters troubled, and thick drops of blood upon them<sup>9</sup>: the Syriac writers have a tradition, that "because the body of Isaiah the prophet was hid in Siloah, therefore an angel descended and moved the waters." Whosoever then first after the troubling of the waters stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had; from whence it seems, that only one person at a season received a cure, by going in first into the water, so Tertullian thought<sup>1</sup>: the Jews ascribe an healing virtue to the well of Miriam; they say, "a certain ulcerous person went to dip himself in the sea of Tiberias, and it happened at that time, that the well of Miriam flowed, and he washed, וַאֲרִיטִי, and was healed." Now this angel may represent a minister of the Gospel, for such are called angels, Rev. i. 20. being called of God, and sent by him, with messages of grace to the sons of men; and the preaching of the Gospel by such, may be aptly signified by the troubling of the waters, as it is by the shaking of heaven, earth, and sea; see Hagg. ii. 6, 7. compared with Heb. xii. 25, 26. especially when attended with the spirit of God, who moved upon the face of the waters in the first creation; and who, in and by the ministry of the word, troubles the minds of men, and whilst the prophet prophecies, causes a shaking among the dry bones, which is done at certain seasons; for as there are certain seasons for the preaching of the Gospel, so there is more especially a fixed, settled, and appointed one, for the conversion of God's elect; who are called according to purpose, and at the time the Lord has appointed: and whoever now, upon the preaching of the Gospel, are enabled to step forth and come to Christ, and believe in him, are cured of all their soul-maladies and diseases, be they what they will; all their iniquities are pardoned, their persons justified, and they are saved in Christ, with an everlasting salvation: and as this cure was not owing to any natural virtue in the water, nor even to the angels troubling it, but to a supernatural power; so the conversion of a sinner is not owing to ministers, and to the word and ordinances as administered by them, but to the superior power of the grace of God; and which is exerted in his time, and on whom he pleases.

Ver. 5. *And a certain man was there, &c.*] At Bethesda's pool, in one of the five porches, or cloisters, that belonged to it: which had an infirmity thirty and eight years; what his infirmity was, is not said; he was one of the weak, or impotent folk, for so he is called, ver. 7. Some think his distemper was the palsy, and though he had had this infirmity so many years, it is not certain that he had waited so long in this place for a cure; though it may be, for that he had attended some time, is clear from ver. 7. Nor indeed can it be known how

long there had been such a preternatural motion in this pool, and such a miraculous-virtue in the water; some have thought, that it began at the repairing of the sheep-gate by Eliashib, in Nehemiah's time; so Tremellius and Junius, on Neh. iii. 1. and others have thought, that it had been some few years before the birth of Christ; and about the time that this man was first taken with his disorder. Tertullian says<sup>2</sup> that there was in Judea a medicinal lake, before Christ's time; and that the pool of Bethesda (it should be Bethesda) was useful in curing the diseases of the Israelites; but ceased from yielding any benefit, when the name of the Lord was blasphemed by them, through their rage and fury, and continuance in it<sup>3</sup>; but in what year it began, and the precise time it ceased, he says not. The Persic version here adds, *and was reduced to such a state that he could not move.*

Ver. 6. *When Jesus saw him lie, &c.*] In such a helpless condition: *and knew that he had been now a long time*; in that case, or *in his disease*, as the Ethiopic version supplies; even seven years before Christ was born; which is a proof of his omniscience: the words may be literally rendered, as they are in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, *that he had had much time*; or as the Arabic version, *that he had had many years*; that is, had lived many years, and was now an old man; he had his disorder eight-and-thirty years, and which seems from ver. 14. to have arisen from some sin of his. from a vicious course of living, perhaps intemperance; so that he might be a middle-aged man, when this distemper first seized him, and therefore must be now stricken in years: *he saith unto him, wilt thou be made whole?* which question is put, not as if it was a doubt, whether he was desirous of it, or no; for to what purpose did he lie and wait there else? but partly to raise in the man an expectation of a cure, and attention in the people to it: and it may be his sense and meaning is, *wilt thou be made whole on this day, which was the sabbath*; or hast thou faith that thou shalt be made whole in this way, or by me?

Ver. 7. *The impotent man answered him, Sir, &c.*] Which was a common and courteous way of speaking, much in use with the Jews, especially to strangers. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read, *yea Lord*, which is a direct answer to the question: *I have no man*; the Ethiopic version reads, *men*; he had no servant, so Nonnus, or servants, to wait upon him, and take him up in their arms, and carry him into the pool; he was a poor man, and such God is pleased to choose and call by his grace: *when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool*; that is, as soon as it is troubled by the angel, to put him in first before any other; for it was the first man only that had a cure this way: *but while I am coming*; in a slow way, by the help of his crutches, or in the best manner he could: *another steppeth down before me*; not so much disordered, or more active and nimble: so among those that wait on the ministry of the word, some are sooner in Christ, or earlier called by his grace, than others; some lie here a long time, and see one and another come to Christ,

<sup>9</sup> Vajikra Rabba, sect. 24. fol. 165. 2.

<sup>1</sup> Vid. Hackspan. Interpr. Errabund. sect. 20.

<sup>2</sup> De Baptismo, c. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Midrash Kohelet, fol. 71. 4.

<sup>4</sup> De Anima, c. 50.

<sup>5</sup> Adv. Judæos, c. 13.

believe in him, profess his name, and are received into the church; and they still left, in an uncalled and unconverted estate.

Ver. 8. *Jesus saith to him, rise, &c.*] From thy bed, or couch, on which he lay in one of the porches: *and take up thy bed and walk*; these words were spoken by the same power, as those to Lazarus, which called him out of his grave; as appears from the effect they had upon the man, who was in himself impotent, weak, and helpless.

Ver. 9. *And immediately the man was made whole, &c.*] As soon as ever the words were spoken by Christ, such power went with them, as restored the man to perfect health; and he finding himself to be quite well, rose up directly: *and took up his bed and walked*: which may be expressive of a sinner's rising from the bed of sin, and taking up the cross, or carrying the body of sin and death with him; and walking by faith in Christ, as he has received him: *and on the same day was the sabbath*; which is remarked, for the sake of what follows.

Ver. 10. *The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, &c.*] When they saw him, either at the place, or as he walked through the streets, with his bed on his back: *it is the sabbath-day: don't you know it? surely you forget yourself, or you would never be guilty of such an action as this; it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.* It was forbid by the law, to carry any burden on the sabbath-day; see Neh. xiii. 15, 19, and Jer. xvii. 22. for "carrying out and bringing in any thing, from one place to another, is said" "to be work, and one of the principal works;" and therefore forbid by the law, which says, *thou shalt not do any work*; and one of the traditions of the elders is this, "whoever carries any thing out (*i. e.* on the "sabbath-day), whether in his right hand, or in his left, "in his bosom, or *על כתפיו*, on his shoulder, is guilty; "for so carried the Kohathites." And particularly it is said, that "he that rolls up a bed of the brasiers "or tinkers (*i. e.* on the sabbath-day) is bound to a sin-offering." Which was a fold-up bed, such as tinkers, and those that went from city to city to work, had; and who carried their beds with them, as the gloss observes; and were so far from being lawful to be carried by them, on the sabbath, that they might not fold them up.

Ver. 11. *He answered them, &c.*] That is, the impotent man, who was now made whole, replied to the Jews: *he that made me whole, the same said unto me, take up thy bed and walk*; intimating, that he that had such divine power, as to make him whole, had power to dispense with the sabbath, and such an action on it; and that his word was warrant and authority sufficient, to support him in what he did; for he that had wrought this cure for him, he concluded must be from God; was at least a great prophet, and to be hearkened to and obeyed, in one thing as well as another.

Ver. 12. *Then asked they him, &c.*] Suspecting who had made him whole, and gave him this order: *what man is that which said unto thee, take up thy bed and walk?* they take no notice of the cure, being unwilling

to give any glory to Christ, and still less to spread it; but chose rather that it should be obscured, hid, and unobserved; but they laid hold on that, which they thought might be improved to his reproach and scandal; and they call him a man, as supposing him to be a merc man, and a wicked man too, for giving orders to transgress a tradition of the elders, though no mere man could work such a cure as this was. And so the Jews since, though they can't find fault with the cure, which they put an *if* upon, yet are highly displeased with the order, to take up his bed and carry it: "if (say they) he wrought a cure, lo, that is good, but "why did he bid him take up his bed?" the answer may be, to shew that he was cured.

Ver. 13. *And he that was healed, wist not who he was, &c.*] He had never seen, and perhaps had never heard of Christ before, and so knew him not; and besides, Christ gave him no opportunity of conversing with him, or so much as to ask him who he was: *for Jesus had conveyed himself away*; had slid away, as soon as ever he had wrought the miracle: *a multitude being in that place*; or *from the multitude that were in that place*; not that he hid himself among them, and there remained undiscovered; but he passed through them, and went his way to the temple, where he found the man he had healed, as in the following verse.

Ver. 14. *Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, &c.*] Perhaps on the same day; for as soon as he had been at home, and laid down his bed, it is very likely he went directly to the temple, there to shew himself, attend the worship of the place, and return thanks to God for the great mercy bestowed on him: *and said unto him, behold thou art made whole*; cured of the disease that had attended him so many years; and a wonderful cure it was; well may a *behold* be prefixed; though this is here not only a note of admiration, but of attention, to what he was about to say to him: sin is a disease, which is original, natural, and hereditary to men; it is an epidemical one, all are affected with it, and all the powers and faculties of the soul; and it is a nauseous and loathsome one; and what is mortal and incurable in itself, and only to be cured by the great physician, Jesus Christ: God's elect are attended with it as others, and being made sensible thereof, they come to Christ for a cure, and receive one, as this man did, to whom he said, *sin no more*; intimating, that as all diseases of the body spring from sin, so had his; and that the time past of his life should suffice, for a course of sinning; and that the mercy he had received, laid him under an obligation to guard against it, to which there would still be a proneness in him; nor did our Lord imagine, that he could hereafter live without sin, but that he should not indulge himself in it, and give up himself unto it, and live in it: so all the diseases of the soul arise from sin; and when a person is converted, he ought not to walk as others do, or he himself has done; and though there is a propensity to sin and backslide from God after conversion, yet the grace of God teaches men to deny sin, and to live righteously; and though it cannot be thought that they should be, and act without sin, yet it becomes them not to live in sin, or go on in a course

\* Maimon. Hilchot Sabbat, c. 12. sect. 8.

† Misa. Sabbat, c. 10. sect. 8.

‡ T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 47. 1. & 138. 1.

§ Vet. Nizzachon, p. 207.

of it, as heretofore: *lest a worse thing come unto thee*; for God could send a worse disease, or a sorer affliction, than he had yet done; an heavier punishment, either in this world, or that to come: and apply this to a good man, a converted man, one called by grace and cured by Christ, and a worse thing through sin may come unto him than a bodily disorder, namely, the hidings of God's face; for as his presence is life, his absence is death, to such persons; and as for such who only make a profession of religion, and are externally reformed only, such, if they sin and fall away, their latter end is worse than the beginning.

Ver. 15. *The man departed, &c.*] From Christ, and from the temple, not through displeasure, or as resenting what was said to him, but as highly delighted that he had found his kind benefactor and physician; and went either to Bethesda, where the miracle was wrought, and where a multitude of people were, and where he might expect to find some of the persons that had questioned him about carrying his bed, and who it was that bid him do it; or rather to the sanhedrim; see ver. 33. compared with ch. i. 19. and *told the Jews*; the members of that great council, the chief priests, scribes, and elders, whose business it was to judge of a prophet, and of any one that should set up for the Messiah: *that it was Jesus*; of Nazareth, of whom so much talk was about his doctrines and miracles, and who was thought to be the Messiah: *which had made him whole*: this he did, not out of any ill will to Christ, with any bad design upon him, to impeach and accuse him as a violator of the sabbath, for what he had said and done to him; for this would have been most ungrateful, and even barbarous, brutish, and diabolical; but with a good intention, that Jesus might have the glory of the cure, and that others of his fellow-creatures in distress might know where, and from whom to have relief; and chiefly that the sanhedrim might be induced hereby to believe that Jesus was the Messiah, and to declare and patronize him as such: and that his end was good, is clear from this, that he does not say it was Jesus that bid him take up his bed and walk, which was what the Jews cavilled at, not caring to hear of the cure; but that made him whole: he observes the miracle to them with a grateful spirit, to the honour of his physician, and that he might be thought to be what he really was.

Ver. 16. *And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, &c.*] With their tongues, reproaching and reviling him, as a sabbath-breaker, a destroyer of the law, and a sinful wicked man: *and sought to slay him*; either in a violent way, by setting the zealots, a sort of ruffians under the pretence of religion, upon him; or rather in a judicial way, summoning him before the sanhedrim, in order to condemn him to death for the breach of the sabbath, which by the law of Moses was punishable with death: *because he had done these things on the sabbath-day*; because he had cured the man of his disease, under which he had laboured eight-and-thirty years, and had ordered him to take up his bed, and walk home with it on his back on the sabbath-day. This drew upon him their resentment to such a degree, that they not only persecuted him with their tongues,

but sought to take away his life. Nothing would satisfy them but his blood.

Ver. 17. *But Jesus answered them, &c.*] Being convened before them, and charged by them with the violation of the sabbath, he vindicated himself in the following manner, saying; *my father worketh hitherto*: he who is my father, not by creation, or adoption, but by nature, though he ended all his work on the seventh day, and rested from what he had done; yet he did not cease from working at all, but has continued to work ever since, on sabbath-days, as well as on other days; in upholding and governing the world, in continuing the species of beings, and all creatures in their being; in providing for them, and in dispensing the bounties of his providence to them; in causing his sun to shine, and showers of rain to descend on the earth; and in taking care of, and protecting even the meanest of his creatures: and much more men; and still more his own people: *and I work*; or *also I work*; as the Syriac and Arabic version reads; *i. e.* in conjunction with him, as a co-efficient cause in the works of providence, in the government of the world, in upholding all things in it, in bearing up the pillars of the earth, in holding things together, and sustaining all creatures: or I also work in imitation of him, in doing good both to the bodies and souls of men on the sabbath-day, being the Lord of it: I do but what my father does, and therefore, as he is not to be blamed for his works on that day, as none will say he is, no more am I. So Philo the Jew says<sup>b</sup>, "God never ceases to work; but as it is the property of fire to burn, and of snow to cool, so of God to work." And what most men call fortune, he calls the divine Logos, or word, to whom he ascribes all the affairs of providence<sup>c</sup>.

Ver. 18. *Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, &c.*] They were the more desirous to take away his life, and were more bent and resolute upon it, and studied all ways and means how to bring it about; *because he had not only broken the sabbath*; as they imagined; for he had not really broken it: and if they had known what that means, that God will have mercy, and not sacrifice, they would have been convinced that he had not broke it by this act of mercy to a poor distressed object: *but said also that God was his father*; his own father, his proper father, his father by nature, and that he was his own son by nature; and this they gathered from his calling him *my father*, and assuming a co-operation with him in his divine works: *making himself to be equal with God*: to be of the same nature, and have the same perfections, and do the same works; for by saying that God was his father, and so that he was the son of God, a phrase, which, with them, signified a divine person, as they might learn from Psal. ii. 7, 12. and by ascribing the same operations to himself, as to his father, they rightly understood him, that he asserted his equality with him; for had he intended no more, and had they imagined that he intended no more by calling God his father, than that he was so by creation, as he is to all men, or by adoption, as he was to the Jews, they would not have been so angry with him; for the phrase, in this sense, they used themselves: but they understood him otherwise, as asserting his proper deity, and perfect equality with

<sup>b</sup> Leg. Allegor. l. 1. p. 41.

<sup>c</sup> Quod Deus sit Immutab. p. 318.

the father; and therefore to the charge of sabbath-breaking, add that of blasphemy, and on account of both, sought to put him to death; for according to their canons, both the sabbath-breaker, and the blasphemer, were to be stoned <sup>4</sup>.

Ver. 19. *Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, &c.*] They charged him with blasphemy for calling God his father, and making himself equal to him: and his answer is so far from denying the thing, or observing any mistake, or misrepresentation of his words, that he allows the whole, and vindicates himself in so saying: *verily verily*; nothing is more certain; it may be depended on as truth; I who am truth itself, the *Amen*, and faithful witness, aver it with the greatest assurance: *the son can do nothing of himself*; or he does do nothing of himself, nor will he do any thing of himself; that is, he neither does, nor will, nor can do any thing alone or separate from his father, or in which he is not concerned; not any thing without his knowledge and consent, or contrary to his will: he does every thing in conjunction with him; with the same power, having the same will, being of the same nature, and equal to each other: for these words do not design any weakness in the son, or want of power in him to do any thing of himself; that is, by his own power: for he has by his word of power spoke all things out of nothing, and by the same upholds all things; he has himself bore the sins of his people, and by himself purged them away, and has raised himself from the dead; but they express his perfection; that he does nothing, and can do nothing of himself, in opposition to his father, and in contradiction to his will: as Satan speaks of his own, and evil men alienated from God, act of themselves, and do that which is contrary to the nature and will of God; but the son cannot do so, being of the same nature with God, and therefore never acts separate from him, or contrary to him, but always co-operates and acts with him, and therefore never to be blamed for what he does. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render it, *the son cannot do any thing of his own will*; so Nonnus; as separate from, or contrary to his father's will, but always in agreement with it, they being one in nature, and so in will and work. He does nothing therefore *but what he seeth the father do*: not that he sees the father actually do a work, and then he does one after him, as the creation of the world, the assumption of human nature, and redemption of man, or any particular miracle, as if upon observing one done, he did the like; but that he being brought up with him, and lying in his bosom, was privy to the whole plan of his works, and saw in his nature and infinite mind, and in his vast counsels, purposes, and designs, all that he was doing, or would do, and so did the same, or acted agreeably to them; and which still shews and proves their unity of nature, and perfect equality, since there was nothing in the father's mind but was known to the son, seen, and observed, and acted up to by him: so Philo the Jew <sup>5</sup> says of the "father's most ancient son, whom he "otherwise calls the first-born; that being begotten, "he imitates the father, and *seeing, or looking to his "exemplars and archetypes, forms species;*" that is,

being conversant with the original and eternal ideas of things in the divine mind, acts according to them, which he could not do if he was not of the same nature with, and equal to his father. Moreover, the son sees what the father does by co-operating with him, and so does no other than what he sees the father do, in conjunction with him: to which may be added, that the phrase shews, that the son does nothing but in wisdom, and with knowledge; and that as the father, so he does all things after the counsel of his will: *for whatsoever things he doth, these also doth the son likewise*; the son does the self-same works as the father does, such as the works of creation and providence, the government both of the church, and of the world; and he does these things in like manner, with the same power, and by the same authority, his father does, and which proves him to be equal with him; the very thing the Jews understood him to have asserted, and which they charged him with: and this he strongly maintained. The Syriac version reads, *for the things which the father does, the same also does the son*; and the Persic version, *whatsoever God has done, the son also does like unto it*.

Ver. 20. *For the father loveth the son, &c.*] As being his son, his image, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person; as being of the same nature, and having the same perfections, and so equal to him; see the note on ch. iii. 35. and *sheweth him all things that himself doth*; not as if he was ignorant of them, since he lies in the bosom of his father, is the wisdom of God, is the omniscient God, that knows all things; not only all things in men, but all things in God, even the deep things of God: but this is said of the father, as consulting with him, communicating his designs to him, as his equal; doing nothing without him, as he never did in the works of nature, or of grace: he drew the plan of peace, reconciliation, and salvation in him; he made the worlds by him; and he does nothing in the government of the world without him; and indeed he shews him all things he does, by doing all things; and by him he shews himself, and his works, to men: *and he will shew him greater works than these*, or he will do greater works by him than these: either than the works of creation; namely, the redemption of the elect, the justification of their persons by his righteousness, and pardon of their sins through his blood, and the regeneration and conversion of them by his spirit and grace; either of which is a greater work than the making of the world: or greater than he has done under the Old-Testament dispensation; than the redeeming of Israel out of Egypt, leading them through the wilderness, and settling them in the land of Canaan; giving them the law, the statutes, and ordinances of God, and working miracles among them: for the redemption of God's people, by Christ, from sin, Satan, the world, the law, death, and hell, the publishing of the Gospel, the effusion of the spirit, and setting up of the Gospel dispensation, are greater works than these; and more and greater miracles were wrought by Christ than by Moses, or any prophet under the former dispensation. Though rather the sense is, that greater mira-

<sup>4</sup> Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 4.

<sup>5</sup> De Confus. Ling. p. 329.

cles would be shewn, and done by Christ, than these he had now done, in curing a man of his disorder, who had had it eight-and-thirty years, and bidding him take up his bed and walk; such as raising Jairus's daughter to life, when dead, and the widow of Naim's son, when he was carrying to the grave, and Lazarus, when he had been dead four days: *that ye may marvel*; this was not properly the end of these greater works shewn to, and done by Christ, which were to prove his divine sonship, his proper deity, his true Messiahship, to confirm the faith of his followers in him, and for the glory of God; but this eventually followed upon them: some wondered at them, and believed in him; and others were amazed at them, and confounded by them.

Ver. 21. *For the father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, &c.*] Which may be understood either spiritually of raising dead sinners from the death of sin, to a life of grace and holiness; and the rather, because it is expressed in the present tense *raiseth*, and not *hath raised*: or naturally of raising those that are dead in a corporeal sense, and quickening them, as the widow of Sarepta's son by Elijah, and the Shunamite's son by Elisha: *even so the son quickeneth whom he will*: both in a spiritual sense, being the resurrection and the life, or the author of the resurrection from a moral death to a spiritual life, whose voice, in the Gospel, the dead in sin hear, and live; and in a natural sense, as in the above instances of Jairus's daughter, the widow of Naim's son, and Lazarus; and in the general resurrection, when at his voice, and word of power, all that are in their graves shall come forth, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting damnation; and all this as he wills: he quickens, in a spiritual sense, whom he pleases, even as many as the father has given him; and he will raise up to everlasting life, at the last day, whom he pleases, even as many as were made his care and charge, whom he has redeemed by his blood; and called by his grace. Now as the quickening of the dead is an act of almighty power, and this being exercised by the son in a sovereign way, as is by his father, it shews his proper deity, and full equality with the father. The resurrection of the dead is here expressed by *quickeneth*, as it frequently is by the Jews, who often speak of *תחיית המתים*, the quickening of the dead, for the resurrection; so the Targumist on Zech. iii. 8. *in the quickening of the dead*, *אחיני, I will quicken thee*; see the Jerusalem Targum on Gen. xix. 26. and xxv. 34.

Ver. 22. *For the father judgeth no man, &c.*] That is, without the son; which is another proof of their equality: for that he does judge is certain; he is the Judge of the whole earth; he is God that judgeth in the earth, or governs the world with his son, who works together in the affairs of providence: he judged and condemned the old world, but not without his son, who by his spirit, or in his divine nature, went and preached to the spirits now in prison, then disobedient in the times of Noah; he judged and condemned Sodom and Gomorrah, but not without the son; for Jehovah the son rained, from Jehovah the father, fire and brimstone upon those cities, and consumed them; he judged the people of Israel, and often chastised them for their sins, but not without his son; the angel of his presence that went before them; he judges all

men, and justifies and acquits whom he pleases, but not without his son; but through his justifying righteousness, which he imputes to them; in doing which he appears to be a just judge, and to do right; and he will judge the world in righteousness at the last day by his son, whom he has ordained; so as the son does nothing without the father, the father does nothing without the son, which shews perfect equality. The Jews had an officer in their sanhedrim, whom they called Ab Beth Din, or *the father of the house of judgment*, to whom belonged the trying of causes, and of judging and determining them. Hence the Targumist on Cant. vii. 4. says, "ואב בית דינה, and the father of the house of judgment, who judgeth thy judgments, or determines thy causes, is mighty over thy people, &c." Whether there may not be some allusion here to this officer, I leave to be considered: *but hath committed all judgment to the son*; as the judgment, or government of his church and people, especially under the Gospel dispensation; and which he exercises by giving ordinances peculiar to it, such as baptism and the Lord's supper; and by enacting laws, and prescribing rules for the discipline of his house, over which he is as a son; and by appointing proper officers under him, over his churches, to administer these ordinances, and see that these laws are put in execution, which he qualifies them for, by bestowing proper gifts upon them: and he exercises this judgment, by protecting and defending his people from all their enemies, so that they dwell safely under his government: as also the general judgment of the world at the last day, is committed to him; which affair will be managed by Christ, the son of God, when he comes a second time; he'll then raise the dead, that every one may receive for the things done in his body, whether good or evil; he'll gather all nations before him, and all shall stand before his judgment-seat, both great and small; he'll separate one from another, the sheep from the goats, and set the one on his right hand, and the other on his left; he'll bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, and shew himself to be the searcher of the hearts, and the trier of the reins of the children of men, and will pass a most righteous and decisive sentence upon all: now for such a trust, and such a work as this, whether the particular government of the church, or the general judgment of the world, he would not be fit, was he not God equal with the father; the thing he had suggested, and which he supports and maintains in this vindication of himself.

Ver. 23. *That all men should honour the son, &c.*] This is the end of all judgment, and the exercise of all authority, and power being committed to him; namely, that he might have the honour given him by men that is due unto him: *even as they honour the father*; that the same honour and glory may be given to the one, as to the other, which must never have been done was he not equal with him, since he gives not his glory to another, Isa. xlii. 8. and xlvi. 11. Indeed, all men do not honour the father as they should; the Gentiles, who had some knowledge of God, glorified him not as God; and the Jews, who had an external revelation of the one, true, and living God, which other nations had not, yet were greatly deficient in honouring him, which made him complaining say, *if then I be a father, where is mine*

*honour?* Mal. i. 6. And Christians, who are favoured with a clearer revelation still of the father of Christ, are much wanting in giving him his due glory; but in common he is honoured, though in an imperfect manner; nor is there so much danger of his losing his honour, as of the son's losing his; the reason is this, though the son is in the form of God, and equal with him, yet by taking upon him the form of a servant, by becoming man, he has veiled the glory of his divine person, and made himself of no reputation; and by reason of this was reckoned by many, or most, as a mere man: wherefore, by agreement, that judgment, power, and authority, which equally belonged to the father, and the son, the exercise of it is put visibly and openly into the son's hands, that he might have his due honour and glory from all men, whether they will or no: from true believers in him he has it willingly, by their ascribing deity to him, by putting their trust in him, by attributing the whole of their salvation to him, and the glory of it, and by worshipping him: and he will be honoured by all men at the last day; they will be obliged to do it; for all judgment being committed to him, and he being Judge of all, every knee shall bow to him, and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord, to his own glory, and to the glory of God the father; see Isa. xlv. 23. Phil. ii. 10, 11. *He that honoureth not the son; that denies his divine sonship, or his proper deity; that detracts from the dignity of his person or office; that shews no regard to him in point of salvation, or of obedience: honoureth not the father which hath sent him; they are so the same in nature and perfections, in power, will, affections, and operations; and their interests and honours are so involved together, that whatever dishonour is done to one reflects on the other: and indeed, whatever is done in a way of disrespect to the son, as incarnate, and in his office-capacity, highly reflects on his father, that sent him in the fulness of time, in human nature, to obtain eternal redemption for his people, according to a rule often expressed by the Jews, "a man's messenger is as himself;" see the note on Matt. x. 40.*

Ver. 24. *Verily verily, I say unto you, &c.]* Who am the *Amen*, the true and faithful witness: *he that heareth my word;* by which is meant the Gospel, and is so called, both because it is spoken by Christ, and first began to be spoken by him; and because he is spoken of in it; his person, office, and work, peace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation by him, being the sum and substance of it: and by *hearing* it is meant, not a bare external hearing it; for so it may be heard, and not understood; and it may be understood in a notional and speculative way, and yet the consequences hereafter mentioned may not follow: but an internal hearing it is here designed, so as to understand it spiritually, or to have an experimental knowledge of it; so as to approve of it, love, and like it; to distinguish it from that which is not his doctrine, and to feel the power of it on the heart, and yield the obedience of faith unto it: for faith in Christ himself, the sum and substance of the word of the Gospel, is hereby expressed; to which is joined faith in God his father, they being equally the object of it; and which is introduced as a further proof of the equality in nature which is between them; see John xiv. 1. *and believeth on him that sent me;* he does

not say that believes on me, which might have been expected from him; but that believes on him that sent me, that is, on the father; for as he that rejects Christ, and receives not his words, rejects and receives not him that sent him; so he that hears Christ's words, and receives him, and believes in him, receives and believes in him that sent him; and the same effects and consequences follow upon the one as on the other, upon hearing the word of Christ, as upon believing on the father of Christ; and which is no inconsiderable proof of their perfect equality: for such a person that hears the one, and believes on the other, *hath everlasting life;* not only in the purpose of God, and in the covenant of his grace, and in the hands of Christ, and in faith and hope; but he has a right unto it, and a claim of it, according to the declaration of the Gospel; and besides, has the principle of it in himself, the grace of God, which springs up into, is the beginning of, and issues in eternal life; he has also a meekness for it, and has the pledge and earnest of it, the spirit of God, and shall certainly enjoy it: *and shall not come into condemnation;* neither for original sin, though judgment has passed upon all men unto condemnation for it; nor for actual sins and transgressions: for though every one deserves condemnation, yet were there as many sentences of condemnation issued out as sins committed, not one of them could be executed on such who are in Christ Jesus, as he that believes in him is openly and manifestly in him: the reason is, because the death of Christ is a security against all condemnation; and whoever believes in him shall not be condemned, but saved; and though he may come into judgment, yet not into condemnation: he shall stand in judgment, and be acquitted by the righteousness of Christ, which he, by faith, receives as his justifying righteousness. *But is passed from death unto life;* both from a moral death to a spiritual life, being quickened, who before was dead in trespasses and sins; and from under a sentence of condemnation, and eternal death, which as a descendant of Adam, and according to the tenour of the law of works, he was subject to, to an open state of justification, according to the tenour of the covenant of grace; the righteousness of Christ being revealed to him, and received by faith, and the sentence of justification passed upon his conscience by the spirit; so that he who before, in his own apprehension, was a dead man in a law sense, is now alive to God, and secure from the second death, and being hurt by it.

Ver. 25. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, &c.]* With the same asseveration as before, and for the further illustration and confirmation of the same thing, occasioned by the last clause of the preceding verse, as well as improving upon the argument in ver. 21. for his equality with the father, which he is still pursuing: *the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the son of God, and they that hear shall live;* which may be understood either of a corporeal resurrection, and of some particular instances of it, which should shortly be; and of some persons who would be in the state of the dead, and to whom the voice of Christ would be attended with such power as to cause them to hear and live; as did Jairus's daughter upon his saying *Talitha Cumi*, damsel arise, and



the widow of Naim's son upon his saying, young man arise, and Lazarus, upon his calling to him, Lazarus come forth; and which is a full proof of his being equal to God that quickens the dead: or rather this is to be understood of a spiritual resurrection, and the rather, because this sense best agrees with the foregoing verse; and a corporeal resurrection is expressed in somewhat different words, and seems to be distinguished from this in ver. 28, 29. And besides, the hour, or time of the resurrection of the above particular persons, was not strictly come; nor could they, with propriety, be said to be dead; to which may be added, that the phrase, *they that hear shall live*, and none but them, best agrees with this sense: so then by the *dead* are meant such who are dead in trespasses and sins; who are separated from God, alienated from the life of God, and in whom the image of God is defaced; who are dead in all the powers and faculties of their souls, to that which is spiritually good; and are without spiritual breath, sense, feeling, and motion. And by the *voice* of Christ is intended his Gospel, which is a voice of love, grace, and mercy, of life and liberty, of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by him; and which being attended with his power, is the means of quickening dead sinners; who may be said to *hear* it, when it comes not in word only, but in power, and works effectually in them; and is spirit and life, and the power of God unto salvation to them; when they receive it, understand, believe, and obey it: and such persons *shall live*: comfortably, pleasantly, and delightfully, a life of faith on Christ, a life of communion with him, and shall live eternally with him hereafter.

Ver. 26. *For as the father hath life in himself, &c.*] Is the living God, the fountain of life, and is the author of life to all living creatures; or rather has eternal life in his mind, his heart, his counsel, and his covenant, and in his hands, for all his chosen ones, which seems to be the peculiar sense here: *so hath he given to the son to have life in himself*; he hath not only made the purpose of it in him, and given the promise of it to him; but even eternal life itself, he has put into his hands, and secured it in him for them, 1 John v. 11. to give it to as many as he has given him: and he does give it to all his sheep, so that not one of them shall perish; which shews that he and his father are one, though not in person, yet as in affection, will and power, so in nature and essence. The son has life in himself, essentially, originally, and inderivatively as the father has, being equally the living God, the fountain of life, and donor of it, as he; and therefore this is not a life which he gives, or communicates to him; but eternal life is what the one gives, and the other receives, according to the economy of salvation settled between them: and hence it is, that all that hear Christ's voice spiritually shall live eternally; for these words are a reason of the former, and confirm the truth of them, as well as shew the equality of the son with the father, in that he is equal to such a trust, as to have eternal life committed to him.

Ver. 27. *And hath given him authority to execute*

*judgment also, &c.*] Both in his church and kingdom, in the present state of things, and at the last day, when all shall stand before his judgment-seat: and that *because he is the son of man*; truly and properly man; because though he was in the form of God, and equal to him, yet became man, and was in the form of a servant: and so reads the Ethiopic version, *because the son of God is the son of man*; and therefore the authority of executing judgment, according to the council and covenant of peace, is committed to him; or that men might have a visible judge, or be judged by one in their own nature: agreeably the Persic version renders it, *because the son himself is he who judges the sons of men*; or rather because he is that *son of man* spoken of in prophecy, especially in Dan. vii. 13. by whom is meant the Messiah, as the Jews themselves allow<sup>f</sup>, and who was not a mere man, but the man God's fellow; and so being omniscient and omnipotent, was equal to such a work, which otherwise he would not have been; see the note on ver. 22. The Syriac version joins this clause to the beginning of the next verse, and reads it thus, *because he is the son of man, marvel not at this*; let this be no obstruction to your faith of his quickening the dead, and having authority to execute judgment on all; since, though the son of man, he is not a mere man, but God over all, as what is next ascribed to him manifestly shews.

Ver. 28. *Marvel not at this, &c.*] Either at the cure of the man that had been diseased thirty and eight years, as some think; or at the son of God being also the son of man, as the Syriac version suggests; or rather at the dead hearing the voice of the son of God, and living upon it; and at his having authority to execute judgment upon all, to govern and defend his own church and people, and in the last day acquit them, and to take vengeance on his and their enemies, both now and hereafter: *for the hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice*. This respects the general resurrection; for there will be a resurrection both of the just and unjust, of all that are in their graves; and though all that are dead are not in graves, or interred in the earth, as some are in the sea; yet, because the greater part are in graves, this phrase is chosen to express the universality of the resurrection: and this is also a proof of the resurrection of the same body: for what else are in the graves but bodies? and what else can come forth from them but the same bodies? and the time is hastening on when these bodies shall be quickened, and hear the voice of the son of God; which whether the same with the voice of the archangel in 1 Thess. iv. 16. and whether an articulate voice, or a violent clap of thunder, which is the voice of God, or only the exertion of Christ's mighty power is intended, is not easy to determine, and may be needless to inquire. Certain it is, that this voice of Christ will be attended with almighty power, as the effect following upon it will shew. The Jews observe<sup>g</sup>, that "there are three things which don't come into the world but *by voices*; there's the voice of a living creature, as it is written, Gen. iii. 16. *in sorrow thou shalt bring forth chil-*

<sup>f</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 85. 4. Bemithbar Rabba, sect. 13. fol. 209. 4. Jarchi & Saadiah Gaon in Dan. vii. 13. & R. Jeshush in Aben Ezra in ib.

<sup>g</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 70. 4.

“*dren*, and as it is written, Gen. xxx. 22. and God *harkened to her*; and there is the voice of rains, “as it is written, 1 Kings xviii. 4. *for there is a voice of abundance of rain*, and it is written, Psal. xxix. 3. *the voice of the Lord is upon the waters*; and קול תחיית המתים, *there is the voice of the resurrection of the dead*, as it is written, Isa. xl. 3. *the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness*.” but that was the voice of John the Baptist. It will be the voice of the son of God that will quicken and raise the dead.

Ver. 29. *And shall come forth, &c.*] Out of their graves, as Lazarus came forth from his at the word of command, and as the bodies of the saints did after the resurrection of Christ, when their graves were opened: *they that have done good*: which none of Adam's posterity naturally do, or can do of themselves: such are designed here who believe in Christ, which to do is the work of God, and the greatest and best of works; and without which it is impossible to please God in any; and indeed, whatever is not of faith is sin, and cannot be a good work: a good work is that which is done according to the will of God, from love to him, in faith, and with a view to his glory; and those that do such works shall come forth *unto the resurrection of life*: that is, unto everlasting life, glory, and happiness; this is the first and better resurrection; and those that have part in it, over them the second death shall have no power. All shall rise to life, to an immortal life, so as never to die more; yet only good men shall rise to enjoy an happy and glorious life; which will lie in communion with God, angels, and saints, and in conformity to Christ, and in the everlasting vision of him: *and they that have done evil*: who give up themselves to work wickedness; whose continual employment, and the business, series, and course of whose lives it is to commit sin; who are slaves unto it, and vassals of it, and are properly workers of iniquity; otherwise there's no man but what does that which is evil, and that daily: these shall come forth *unto the resurrection of damnation*: that is, to everlasting damnation, shame, and reproach; they shall be condemned by the Judge of the whole earth, and shall be pronounced cursed; and shall be ordered to go into everlasting fire, and shall go into everlasting punishment; which will be a punishment both of loss and sense: they'll lose, or be deprived of, the presence of God, and feel his wrath in their consciences. All will rise, but with a difference; the dead in Christ will rise first, in the morning of the resurrection, in the beginning of the thousand years, and therefore are here mentioned first; the rest, the wicked, will not rise until the evening of that day, till the thousand years are ended, and therefore are spoken of last. The former will rise by virtue of union to Christ, the other by his power, and both at hearing his voice; the saints will rise with bodies glorious, powerful, and spiritual; and wicked men, though with bodies immortal, yet vile, and dishonourable: the one will rise to a life of joy and happiness that will last for ever, and which will be properly life; the other, though they'll rise and live for ever, yet in misery and woe, and which will be the second, or eternal death; see a like distinction

in Dan. xii. 2. to which there seems to be some reference here. And he at whose voice all this shall be, must be equal to God.

Ver. 30. *I can of mine own self do nothing, &c.*] This is the conclusion of the matter, the winding up of the several arguments concerning the son's equality to the father, and the application of the whole to Christ. He had before been chiefly speaking of the son, in relation to the father, as if he was a third person; but now he applies what he had said of the son to himself: and it is as if he had said, I am the son that can do nothing separate from the father, and contrary to his will, but do all things in conjunction with him; who sees all that he does, by being in him, and co-operating with him, and do the self-same. I am the son to whom the father shews, and by whom he does, all he does; and to whom he'll shew, and by whom he'll do, as a co-efficient with him, greater works than what, as yet, he has done: I am the son that quickens whom he pleases, and to whom all judgment is committed, and have the same honour the father has: I am he that quickens dead sinners now, and will raise all the dead at the last day; and have authority to execute judgment on all mankind; and, *as I hear, I judge*; not as he hears men, or, according to the evidence men will give one of another; for it is denied of him, that he will proceed in judgment in this manner, Isa. xi. 3. but as he hears his father; for being in his bosom, and one with him, as he sees, and knows all he does, his whole plan of operations, and acts according to them; so he hears, knows, and is perfectly acquainted with all his counsels, purposes, and rules of judgment, and never deviates from them. Hearing here signifies perfect knowledge, and understanding of a cause; and so it is used in the Jewish writings, in matters of difficulty, that come before a court of judicature<sup>b</sup>: “there were three courts of judicature; one that sat at the gate of the mountain of the house; and one that sat at the gate of the court; and another that sat in the paved chamber: they go (first) to that which is at the gate of the mountain of the house, and say, so have I expounded, and so have the companions expounded; so have I taught, and so have the companions (or colleagues) taught: אַם שָׁמַע, *if they hear, they say*; (i. e. as one of their commentators explains it, “if they know the law, and hear, or understand the sense of the law; in such a case they declare what they know; if not, they go to them that are at the gate of the court, and say (as before).—And, *if they hear, they tell them*; but if not, they go to the great sanhedrim in the paved chamber, from whence goes forth the law to all Israel.” Christ was now before the great sanhedrim, and speaks to them in their own language, and as a superior judge to them: *and my judgment is just*; in the administration of the affairs of his church, which are done in the strictest justice; just and true are all his ways, as King of saints; and in the execution of the last judgment, which will be in righteousness and truth; the judgment he passes must be right, since it is according to that perfect knowledge he has of his father's will, which is an infallible rule of judgment: *because I seek not mine*

<sup>b</sup> Mism. Sanhedrin, c. 10 sect. 2.

<sup>c</sup> Maimon. in ib.

own will, but the will of the father which hath sent me; that is, he did not seek to gratify his own will, as distinct from his father's, or in opposition to it; for he had no private end to answer, or separate interest, or advantage to pursue; and seeing therefore he acted according to his father's will, and not his own, as contrary to that; his judgment must be just, and the sentence he passes right; since the will of God is indisputably such. The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, the Alexandrian copy, and two of Beza's copies, leave out the word *father*, without altering or hurting the sense at all.

Ver. 31. *If I bear witness of myself, &c.*] Which was not allowed any man to do; nor indeed is it proper that a man should be a witness in his own cause: and, according to the Jewish canons, a man might not be a witness for his wife, because she was reckoned as himself. "An husband is not to be believed in bearing witness for his wife, that had been carried captive, that she is not defiled, שְׂאִי אִדָּם מֵעַד לְעַמּוֹ, "for no man bears witness of himself<sup>k</sup>." So likewise they say<sup>l</sup>, "a city that is subdued by an army, all the priestesses (or priests' daughters) that are found in it are rejected (from the priesthood, as defiled); but if they have witnesses, whether a servant, or an handmaid, lo, they are to be believed; but no man is to be believed for himself: says R. Zechariah ben Hakatzah, by this habitation (swearing by the temple) her hand was not removed from my hand, from the time the Gentiles entered Jerusalem, 'till they went out: they replied to him, no man bears witness of himself." Christ reasons here upon their own principles, and according to their sense of things, that should he bear witness of himself; then, says he, *my witness is not true*, לֹא נֶאֱמָר, not to be believed, or admitted as an authentic testimony: and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *is not credible*; not valid in law, or in such a court of judicature in which Christ now was; for, as according to the Jewish law, no man was admitted a witness for himself, so neither was any thing established by a single testimony, but by the mouth of two or three witnesses, Deut. xix. 15. Christ's meaning is, that his testimony alone, his single witness, how true soever it was, would stand for nothing in their court; and therefore he would not insist upon it, but drop it; for *true* here, is not opposed to that which is *false*, but to that which is not valid in law. Christ's testimony was true in itself; nor could it be any other, it coming from him, who is truth itself, the *Amen*, and faithful witness; but being considered as an human testimony, and in his own cause, was not to be admitted as sufficient; and this he allows. From arguments, proving his equality with the father, he passes to testimonies; and without making use of his own, he had enough to produce, and which were valid and authentic, and are as follow.

Ver. 32. *There is another that beareth witness of me, &c.*] Meaning not his father, who is another, and a distinct person, from him, as the spirit is another comforter; and both distinct testifiers from him, as well as of him. This is indeed the sense of some inter-

preters; but the father is particularly mentioned in ver. 37. and the thread of the discourse, and the climax, or gradation, here used, shew, that it is to be understood of *another man*, as Nonnus paraphrases it; of John the Baptist, who is spoken of by name in the next verse, as a witness; and then a greater than he, the works of Christ, and then the father: *and I know that the witness, which he witnesseth of me, is true*; for John was now alive, though in prison, and continued to bear a testimony to Christ; and therefore he speaks of him as now bearing witness of him, and abiding by that which he had bore; and Christ knew not only that what he testified of him was true in itself, but that his testimony was a valid and authentic testimony, with the generality of the Jews; who held John to be a prophet, and looked upon him as a man of great probity and integrity, and whose word was to be taken: nor indeed could the sanhedrim, before whom Christ now was, object to his character, nor to him as a witness; nor ought they, since they themselves had so judged of him, as appears by their message to him, which Christ next fails not to take notice of.

Ver. 33. *Ye sent unto John, &c.*] The sanhedrim at Jerusalem made a deputation of priests and Levites to him, to know who he was, whether the Messiah, or Elias, or that prophet, John i. 19. Now had they not looked upon him, from what they knew of him, or from the character they had of him, as a faithful witness, they would never have shewn him so much respect, and have been at so much pains, and charge, as to send such a body of men so far unto him, as from Jerusalem to beyond Jordan; which circumstance our Lord improves in favour of this evidence he produces: *and he bare witness unto the truth*; to Christ, who is the truth itself; and to the truth of his person, and office; to his dignity, and eternity, as being before him, though coming after him; and to his divine sonship, the thing now in debate, declaring, that he was the son of God; and to his office, as Mediator, pointing to him as the Lamb of God, who, by his blood, and sacrifice, takes away the sins of men. The Ethiopic version reads by way of interrogation, *did not you send unto John? &c.*

Ver. 34. *But I receive not testimony from man, &c.*] He stood in no need of an human testimony, nor did he rest the truth of his deity and divine sonship thereon: he had other and greater testimonies to produce; as he needed not that any man should testify of man to him, he had no need that any man should testify of him; and if the testimony of men was received, as this of John could not well be objected to, the testimony of God is greater, and which he had; and therefore should not have mentioned John's for his own sake: *but these things I say, that ye might be saved*: that is, he produced this testimony of John, who was a person of so great a character among them, that they might be induced by it to believe in him as the Messiah; and so be saved from that ruin and destruction, that would come upon their nation, city, and temple, for their rejection and disbelief of him.

Ver. 35. *He was a burning and a shining light, &c.*] He was not that light, the famous light, the Messiah,

<sup>k</sup> Maimon. Issure Bia, c. 19. sect. 19.

<sup>l</sup> Misn. Cetubot, c. 2. sect. 9. T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 27. 2. Juchasin, fol. 56. 1.

the sun of righteousness; yet he was the *phosphorus*, the forerunner of that light, and was himself a very great one: he had much light himself into the person and office of the Messiah; in the doctrines of faith in Christ, and repentance towards God; in the Gospel dispensation, and in the abolition of the Mosaic economy; and gave great light to others, in the business of salvation, and remission of sins, and was the means of guiding the feet of many in the way of peace. His light of pure doctrine, and of an holy and exemplary conversation, shone very visibly, and brightly before men; and he burned with strong love and affection for Christ, and the souls of men; and with flaming zeal for the honour of God, and true religion, and against all sin and profaneness, which he was a faithful reprove of, and for which he lost his life. It was common with the Jews to call their doctors, who were famous for their knowledge, and holiness of life, lights, burning lights, and shining lights; or in words which amount to the same. So R. Simeon ben Jochai is often called in the book of Zohar, *בְּצִינָה קְדִישָׁה*, the holy light; and particularly it is said of him<sup>m</sup>, “R. Simeon, *כְּבֹצִינָה דְשֵׁרָנָא דְאֵרְלִיק*, is as the lamp of light which burns above, and burns below; and by the light which burns below all the children of the world are enlightened: woe to the world, when the light below ascends to the light above.” So R. Abhu is called *בְּצִינָה נְדִירָה*, the lamp of light<sup>n</sup>: and it is said of Shuah, Judah’s father-in-law, that he was *בְּצִינָה דְאֵתְרָה*, the light of the place; that is, where he lived. The gloss on the place says, he was a man of note in the city, and enlightened their eyes; and it is very frequent with them still, when they are praising any of their doctors, to say of him, he was *דְּבִאֵר הַנִּדְרִל*, a great light, who enlightened the eyes of Israel, and in whose light the people walked<sup>p</sup>; so among the philosophers, Xenophon, and Plato, are called *duo lumina*<sup>q</sup>, two lights; see the note on Matt. v. 14. and *ye were willing for a season, or for an hour, to rejoice in his light; or to glory in it, or boast of it*, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it. When John first appeared among them, they were fond, and even proud of him; they gloried in him, that a man of such uncommon endowments, and of such exemplary holiness, was raised up among them; and hoped that he was the Messiah, or Elias, that was to come before him; and pleased themselves, that times of great outward honour and prosperity were hastening: wherefore they flocked about him, and many of the Pharisees and Sadducees attended his ministry, and would have been baptized by him; but when they found that he was not the Messiah, nor Elias, nor that prophet, but bore a testimony to Jesus of Nazareth, that he was the Messiah; and ran counter to their notions of a temporal kingdom, and of birth-privileges, and their own righteousness; and threatened them with ruin, and destruction, both in this world, and that which is to come, in case of their impenitence and unbelief; they grew sick of him, and said he had a devil, and rejected the counsel of God he declared, and despised his baptism.

Such was their fickleness and inconstancy, which Christ here tacitly charges them with. They were like the stony-ground hearers, and like some of the Apostle Paul’s admirers among the Galatians, who at first could have plucked out their eyes for him, but afterwards became his enemies for telling them the truth.

Ver. 36. *But I have greater witness than that of John, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions read, *greater than John*, but wrongly; for the testimonies of Christ’s works, and of his father, are not compared with John himself, but with his testimony; and the sense is, that Christ had a greater witness than the witness of John; and so it is expressed in the Persic version: and his meaning is, that he had no need to insist upon John’s testimony; he had other, and greater witnesses to produce: *for the works which the father hath given me to finish*; such as the preaching of the Gospel, the fulfilling of the law, and the redemption of his people; all which were appointed by his father, and given him to do, and which he completely finished. The whole Gospel came, and was published by Jesus Christ, and the law was entirely fulfilled by him; and the work of man’s salvation was finished by him, and these bear witness to the truth of his deity, and divine sonship; for none but the son of God could have done these things. The Ethiopic version reads in the singular number, *this work which my father hath given me, &c.* and if it was a single work that is referred to, the work of redemption bids fair to be it. But, these works include not only what Christ did on earth, in his state of humiliation, but what he has done since, and will do; which his father has given him to finish, and he has finished, or will finish them; such as the resurrection of himself from the dead, the effusion of the gifts and graces of the spirit, the spreading and succeeding his Gospel in the world, the conversion of his redeemed ones, the gathering in the fulness of the Gentiles, and the conversion of the Jews, the destruction of anti-christ, the resurrection of all the dead, and the judgment of the whole world. Though more especially his miracles are here intended, and which, and not his mediatorial works, were demonstrations and proofs to men of his divine sonship; see Matt. xiv. 33. and xxvii. 54. *the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the father hath sent me*: and that he was in the father, and the father in him; or that they were one in nature, and equal in power and glory, John x. 30—37. and xiv. 11.

Ver. 37. *And the father himself, which hath sent me, &c.*] Not only the works he gave him to do, and which he did, but he himself in person: *hath borne witness of me*; not only in the writings of Moses, and the prophecies of the Old Testament, but by an audible articulate voice from heaven, at the time of Christ’s baptism, Matt. iii. 17. which was a full testimony of the sonship of Christ, and of the father’s well-pleas’dness in him; and which was repeated at his transfiguration on the mount, Matt. xvii. 5. and the senship of Christ is the grand thing which the three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, testify

<sup>m</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 79. 1.

<sup>n</sup> T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 17. 1.

<sup>p</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 85. fol. 74. 4. & Mattanot Cebunah in ib.

<sup>q</sup> Vid. R. David Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 38. 1. 41. 1. 44. 2. 45. 1. 46. 2. & 47. 1.

<sup>r</sup> A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 14. c. 3.

of, 1 John v. 7. *ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape*: for the voices that were heard, and the forms that were seen under the Old-Testament dispensation, from the first of this kind in Eden's garden, to the incarnation of Christ, which are ascribed to God, or to a divine person, were either by the ministry of angels, or they were voices uttered by the son of God, or forms assumed by him, who often appeared in an human form, as a prelude of his incarnation; so that it was unusual, and wonderful, and remarkable, that the father should bear a testimony to the sonship of Christ by a voice from heaven; and which therefore ought to be attended to, and received as a sufficient and valid testimony.

Ver. 38. *And ye have not his word abiding in you, &c.*] Which some understand of Christ himself, the Logos, or word: who, though he was now with them, being made flesh, and dwelling among them, yet would not long continue with them: though rather this designs the written word, or the Scriptures of truth; and especially that part of them, which contains prophecies concerning the Messiah, which did not dwell in them richly, nor they dwell in their meditation on them, as was requisite. Or rather, it may intend that word of God expressed in the testimony he bore to the sonship of Christ at his baptism, by a voice from heaven, which made no lasting impression upon the minds and hearts of the Jews that heard it; as appears by what follows: *for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not*; meaning himself; for if they had had either a due regard to the sacred oracles, or to that voice from heaven at his baptism, they would have received and embraced him as the Messiah, and sent of God, and not have disbelieved and rejected him, as now they did.

Ver. 39. *Search the Scriptures, &c.*] The writings of Moses, and the prophets, which were of divine inspiration and authority, and are often appealed unto by Christ, and his apostles, for the truth of what they delivered; and were the standard of faith, and the test of doctrines; and therefore to be searched diligently into, for finding divine knowledge and improvement in it, and for the trial of doctrines. The words may be rendered in the indicative, as an assertion, *ye do search the Scriptures*; the Jews had the sacred oracles committed to them, and these they read, not only their kings, princes, and judges, but the common people, who brought up their children to the reading of them, and instructed them in them: and besides this, these writings were read, and expounded publicly in their synagogues every sabbath-day; and at this time especially these records were examined, and particularly those of them which respected the Messiah, since there was now a general expectation of him: and certain it is, that the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, or the sanhedrim, were very much versed in the Scriptures, and could readily refer to those which concerned the Messiah; see an instance of this in Matt. ii. 4, 5, 6. *for in them ye think ye have eternal life*; not the doctrine of eternal life, nor the promises of it, nor the way to it; though all these are contained in them, and pointed out by them: for though life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel, and the pro-

mise of eternal life belongs to the covenant of grace, and the way of life and righteousness by Christ is manifested without the law, and not by it; yet there is much of the Gospel, and an exhibition of the covenant of grace, and its promises, and Christ, the way of life, is directed to typically by the tree of life, and the brazen serpent, and other things in those writings. But the meaning here is, that they imagined, by having these writings in their hands, and by their reading them, and hearing them expounded every sabbath-day, they should obtain and inherit everlasting life: hence they call 'the law eternal life, and say' concerning the reading of it, that "he that begins to read in 'the book of the law is obliged to bless after this manner: blessed be he that has chosen us above all nations, and hath given us his law.—And he that finishes blesses after him in this manner: blessed is he who hath given us his law, the law of truth, and 'has planted eternal life in the midst of us.'" This was an opinion of theirs: so the Persic version reads, *for such is your opinion*; and though this was a very vain one, yet it shews what a very high opinion they had of the Scriptures: and now to these our Lord appeals as witnesses for him, and against which they could not object, upon their own principles: *and they are they which testify of me*; as they do of his proper deity and divine sonship, calling him Jehovah, God, the mighty God, and the son of God; and of his offices as prophet, priest, and King; and of his incarnation of a virgin; and of the tribe, family, and place of his birth; of the miracles which he should work; of the treatment he should meet with from men; of his sufferings and death; of the circumstances leading on to them, and attending them; as his riding on an ass into Jerusalem, the betraying him by one of his familiar acquaintance, the selling him for thirty pieces of silver, the spitting upon, and scourging him, giving him gall for his meat, and vinegar for his drink, and parting his garments, and casting lots for his vesture, and the crucifixion of him, and that between two thieves; and of his burial, resurrection from the dead, ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, and of his future coming to judgment.

Ver. 40. *And ye will not come to me, &c.*] Which is to be understood, not of a corporeal coming to him; for many of the Jews did come to him in this sense; some for one thing, and some for another; some for the loaves, that they might eat and be filled; some to see his miracles, and others to partake of the benefit of them; some to hear him preach, and others to catch and cavil at what they could: nor is bare coming to hear Christ preached, or an outward attendance on, and submission to his ordinances, such a coming to him as is here designed; for with these eternal life is not connected: bodily exercise profiteth not in this way; but a spiritual coming to Christ, or a coming to him by faith is here meant; in which sense the phrase is frequently used in this Gospel, especially in the next chapter; see ver. 35, 37, 44, 45, 65. and those who come aright to Christ, come to him as the alone, able, suitable, and sufficient Saviour; and in themselves as sinners, and ready to perish; and as such they are

<sup>1</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 100. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Maimon. in Misn. Megilla, c. 4. sect. 1.

received by him with a welcome: but these men did not see themselves as such; nor did they see any need they had of coming to Christ; for they thought they had eternal life elsewhere: and such were their ignorance of themselves and Christ; and such their prejudices against him; and such the depravity, perverseness, and stubbornness of their wills, that they had no inclination, desire, and will to come to Christ, any more than power; which is an argument against, and not for the free will of man, unless it be to that which is evil: and this perverseness of their wills to come to Christ, when revealed in the external ministry of the word, was blameworthy in them, since this was not owing to any decree of God, but to the corruption and vitiosity of nature; which being blameworthy in them, that which follows upon it must be so too; and it was the greater aggravation of their sin, that they had the Scriptures which testified of Christ, and pointed at him as the way of life, and yet would not come to him for it: *that ye might have life*; that is, eternal life, as is expressed in the foregoing verse, and is so read here in Beza's old copy, in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persian versions. This is in Christ, not only the purpose and promise of it, but that itself: he has the disposal of it, gives the right unto it, and a meekness for it, with all the comforts arising from it, and all the promises and blessings relating to it; and all that come to Christ by faith may, and shall have it: this is the will of the father, the end of his giving of Christ, and of his mission and coming into the world, and is inseparably connected with believing in him.

Ver. 41. *I receive not honour from men.*] Not but that honour from men was due to Christ; and it becomes all men to honour him, as they do the father; and he does receive honour and glory, and blessing from his saints, by their praying to him, praising him, believing in him, and serving him; but his sense is, that in asserting his equality with the father, and in producing the testimonies he did, in proof of it, his view was not to obtain honour and applause among men, but to vindicate himself, and glorify his father: nor did he say what he had just now said, about men's coming to him, with any such intention, to gather a party to him, to set up himself as a temporal king, in great pomp and splendour, and receive worldly homage and honour from men, as his subjects; for his kingdom was not of this world, and coming and subjection to him were things of a spiritual nature.

Ver. 42. *But I know you, &c.*] Being the omniscient God, he knew not only their persons, but their hearts, the thoughts of their hearts; what was in them, and what was wanting in them: particularly, *that ye have not the love of God in you*; and which is not in any man's heart naturally; for the carnal mind is enmity to God; and men, by nature, are haters of him, and enemies in their minds to him, till this grace, which is a fruit of the spirit, is implanted in them, in regeneration: love to God, is one of the weightier matters of the law, the Jews passed over; without which, all the actions of men signify nothing: this they made great pretensions to, and would have had it thought, that it was from love to God, that they sought to kill Jesus, for his violation of the sabbath, and making himself equal with God; but it was not

from a delight in the sabbath, or from love to the Lord of it, but out of ill will to Christ, that they expressed such dissembled piety and false zeal: they were lovers of themselves, and not God; they were covetous men, and loved the world, and the things in it, which is inconsistent with the love of the father; and besides, if they had loved him, they would have loved him that was begotten of him, and not sought to have killed him.

Ver. 43. *I am come in my father's name, &c.*] Power and authority; by his consent, with his will, and according to a covenant with him: Christ came not of himself, of his own accord, by a separate power and will of his own, but was called, and sent, and came by mutual agreement; and brought his credentials with him, doing the works and miracles which his father gave him to finish: *and ye receive me not*; notwithstanding this they rejected him as the Messiah, and would not receive him as such; yea, traduced him as an impostor, and a deceiver: *if another shall come in his own name*; which some understand of Simon Magus, others of antichrist; rather the false Christs are intended, of whom our Lord speaks, in Matt. xxiv. 24. who would rise up of themselves, and not be able to give any proof of their mission; or do any thing which might entitle them to the character of the Messiah, or Christ, a name they would take to themselves: and so the Ethiopic version reads, *if another shall come in my name*; saying he is Christ, or the Messiah: *him ye will receive*; as thousands of them did receive Barchocab, the false Christ, who rose up some years after in Adrian's time; and even some of their greatest Rabbins, as particularly the famous R. Akiba, who was his armour-bearer: and it is easy to observe, that though they were so backward to receive, and so much prejudiced against the true Messiah, they were always forward enough to embrace a false one: and indeed to follow any, that set up himself for a temporal deliverer of them; as the instances of Theudas, and Judas of Galilee, with others, shew; see Acts v. 36, 37. And the true reason why they rejected Christ was, because he did not appear in outward pomp and glory, nor set up a temporal kingdom, or give out that he would deliver them from the Roman yoke.

Ver. 44. *How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another? &c.*] As the Scribes and Pharisees did, who were ambitious of honour and respect from one another, as well as from the common people; doing all they did to be seen of men, and to gain applause among them: choosing the uppermost rooms at feasts, and chief places in the synagogues, and delighting in the pompous title of Rabbi, Rabbi; and were in expectation of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, when they hoped to be advanced to places of great honour and profit; and all this was an hindrance to them from believing in Christ, who appeared in such an abject form, and made so mean a figure; whose doctrine was so unsuitable to their carnal minds, and whose followers were so poor and contemptible; and besides it was made a law among them, that those who professed him to be the Messiah, should be cast out of the synagogue: hence many who were convinced that he was the Messiah, durst not confess him, lest they should lose their honour and respect

among men, which they preferred to the praise of God: and seek not the honour that cometh from God only; or from the only God, as the Vulgate Latin; or from the one God, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render it: the honour that comes from him is, that of being born of him; of being a son or daughter of his, having that new name, which is better than that of sons and daughters of the greatest princes on earth; of being made all glorious within, and clothed with gold of Ophir, with raiment of needle-work, with the robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation; of being translated into the spiritual kingdom of Christ, and made kings and priests unto God by him; of being set on the same throne with Christ, having on a crown of life and righteousness, and enjoying a kingdom and glory; being heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; which honour all the saints have, or shall have, and which these men cared not for.

Ver. 45. *Do not think that I will accuse you to the father, &c.*] To God the father, as the Ethiopic version reads. The Syriac and Persic versions read by way of interrogation, *do ye think that I will?* &c. Christ is no accuser of men; no, not of the worst of men; see John viii. 10, 11. he came not into the world to bring charges against men and condemn them, but to save them; to be an accuser is not agreeable to his characters of a Surety, a Saviour, an Advocate, and Judge: there were enough to accuse these persons of; as their perverseness and stubbornness, in not coming to Christ for life; their want of love to God; their rejection of him, though he came in his father's name; their reception of another, that should come in his own name; their taking honour one of another, and not seeking the true spiritual and eternal honour, which God gives; but though he hints these things to them, he would not have them think that he accused them of them to the father: the Jews have a notion, that when the Messiah comes, there will be accusations lodged against their doctors and wise men<sup>1</sup>. "R. Zeira says, that R. Jeremiah bar Aba said, that in "the generation in which the son of David shall come, "there will be קטנוניות בתלמידי חכמים, accusations "against the disciples of the wise men." And one of their writers "thus interprets, Dan. xii. 1. "and at "that time shall Michael stand up; he shall be as silent as a dumb man, when he shall see the holy "blessed God contending with him, and saying, how "shall I destroy a nation so great as this, for the sake "of Israel? and there shall be a time of trouble in the "family above, and there shall be accusations against "the disciples of the wise men." However, there was no need for Christ to accuse them; for as it follows, there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust; by whom is meant, not Moses personally; for when on earth, he was a mediator between God and the people of Israel, and an intercessor for them; and since he has been in heaven, as the dead

know not any thing, he knew nothing of their affairs; and when he was on the mount with Christ, his discourse with him turned upon another subject: but either the writings of Moses, as in Luke xvi. 29, 31. and xxiv. 27. or the doctrine of Moses, as 1 Cor. x. 2. John ix. 28. or rather the law of Moses, Matt. xxii. 24. Mark vii. 10. Acts vi. 11. and xxi. 21. And in this the Jews trusted; they rested in it, and made their boast of it; and expected eternal life and salvation on account of their having it, and through their hearing it read every sabbath-day, and by their obedience to it: and now sin being a transgression of the law, this same law brings charges against them, and accuses them of the breach of the several precepts of it, and pronounces them guilty before God; it curses and passes a sentence of condemnation on them, and according to it, will they perish eternally, without an interest in Christ; for their own righteousness by the law of works, will be of no avail to them; the law in which they trust for life, will rise up in judgment, and be a swift witness against them: so the Jews sometimes speak of the law, as witnessing against the people of Israel<sup>2</sup>.

Ver. 46. *For had ye believed Moses, &c.*] The doctrine of Moses, and what he says in his writings: ye would have believed me; for there is an agreement between Moses and Christ; Christ is the end of the law of Moses, and in him is the accomplishment of his writings: for he wrote of me; in the books written by him, Christ is spoken of, as the seed of the woman, that should bruise the serpent's head; as the seed of Abraham, in whom all nations of the earth should be blessed; as the Shiloh, to whom the gathering of the people should be; and as that prophet, who should be like unto himself, to whom the people of Israel should hearken; and he wrote many things typically of Christ; and indeed, the whole Mosaic economy was typical of Christ, as the epistle to the Hebrews shews; and therefore disbelieving Christ, was disbelieving Moses; who therefore would be an accuser of them, and a witness against them.

Ver. 47. *But if ye believe not his writings, &c.*] They believed them to be his writings, and that they were the word of God, and yet did not believe the things contained in them, respecting Christ; or did not see, and could not believe that they belonged unto, and were applicable to Jesus of Nazareth; and therefore it could not be supposed they would give credit to him, or his words: *how shall ye believe my words?* not that Moses was greater than Christ, or rather to be credited than he; Moses indeed was faithful, but Christ was worthy of more honour and credit than he was; Moses was but a servant, but Christ was a son in his own house: but this is said with respect to the Jews, with whom Moses was in great veneration and esteem; and it was more likely they should regard what he should say, than what Jesus of Nazareth should, whom they despised.

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 112. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Jarchi in Dan. xii. 1. Vid. Abkath Rocel, par. 2. p. 265.

<sup>3</sup> Prefat. Echa-Rabbati, fol. 40. 1.

## C H A P. VI.

Ver. 1. *AFTER these things, &c.*] After Christ's curing the man at Bethesda's pool, and the vindication of himself for doing it on the sabbath-day, and for asserting his equality with God; near a year after these things: for these were done at the feast of the passover, and now it was near another; and what is related here, was after the death of John the Baptist, and when the disciples had returned from preaching in the several cities and towns, where Christ afterwards went, and had given an account of their success; see Matt. xiv. 12, 13. Mark vi. 30, 31. Luke ix. 10. Quickly after the passover was ended, Christ departed from Jerusalem, and went into Galilee, and preached in the several cities and towns in those parts, and wrought many miracles: and after these things, in process of time, *Jesus went over the sea of Galilee*: the same with the lake of Gennesareth, Luke v. 1. *which is the sea of Tiberias*; and is frequently so called by the Jewish writers <sup>z</sup>, who often make mention of *יַם טִבֵּרְיָה*, *the sea of Tiberias*: and by other writers, it is called the lake of Tiberias <sup>y</sup>; Pliny, who calls it the lake of Genesara <sup>z</sup>, says, "it was sixteen miles long, and six broad, and was beset with very pleasant towns; on the east were Julias and Hippon, and on the south Tarichea, by which name some call the lake, and on the west Tiberias, wholesome for the Jews call *דַּטְבְּרִיָּה* or, *דַּטְבִּי*, the hot baths of Tiberias <sup>x</sup>; and from the city of Tiberias built by Herod, and called so in honour of Tiberius Cæsar, the sea took its name.

Ver. 2. *And a great multitude followed him, &c.*] From several cities and towns in Galilee, where he had been preaching and working miracles: *because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased*: so that it was not for the sake of his doctrine, or for the good of their souls, they followed him; but either to gratify their curiosity in seeing his miracles, or to be healed in their bodies, as others had been.

Ver. 3. *And Jesus went up into a mountain, &c.*] In a desert place near Bethsaida, Luke ix. 10. *and there he sat with his disciples*: partly for security from the cruelty of Herod, having just heard of the beheading of John; and partly for privacy, that he might have some conversation alone with his disciples, upon their return from off their journey; as also for the sake of rest and refreshment; and according to the custom of the Jewish doctors, which now prevailed, see the note on Matt. v. 1. he sat with his disciples, in order to teach and instruct them.

Ver. 4. *And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.*] This was the third passover, since our Lord's baptism, and entrance on his public ministry; see ch. ii. 13. and

v. 1. Whether Christ went up to this feast is not certain; some think he did not; but from what is said in ch. vii. 1. it looks as if he did: how nigh it was to the feast, cannot well be said. Thirty days before the feast, they began to talk about it; and especially in the last fifteen days, they made preparations for it, as being at hand <sup>b</sup>; and if there was now so long time to it, there was time enough for Jesus to go to it.

Ver. 5. *When Jesus then lift up his eyes, &c.*] Being before engaged in close conversation with his disciples, and looking wistly and intently on them, whilst he was discoursing with them: *and saw a great company come unto him*: who came on foot, over the bridge at Chammath, from Capernaum, and other cities of Galilee: *he saith unto Philip*; he directed his discourse to him particularly, because he was of Bethsaida, near to which place Christ now was, and therefore might be best able to answer the following question: *whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?* This, according to the other evangelists, must be said after Christ came from the mountain, and the people were come to him, and he had received them kindly, and had instructed them about the kingdom of God, and had healed the diseased among them, and expressed great compassion for them; and after the disciples had desired him to dismiss them, that they might go to the adjacent towns, and provide food for themselves; which Christ would not admit of, and declared it unnecessary, and then put this question, with the following view.

Ver. 6. *And this he said to prove him, &c.*] Or *tempting him*, trying his faith, and not only his, but the rest of the disciples; not as ignorant of it himself, but in order to discover it to him and them, and to prepare them for the following miracle; and that it might appear the more illustrious and marvellous: *for he himself knew what he would do*; Christ had determined to work a miracle, and feed the large number of people that were with him, with that small provision they had among them; and being God omniscient, he knew that he was able to do it, and that he was determined to do it, and it would be done; but he was willing first to try the faith of his apostles.

Ver. 7. *Philip answered him, &c.*] Very quick and short, and in a carnal and unbelieving way: *two hundred penny-worth of bread is not sufficient for them*. Two hundred pence, or *Roman denarii*, which may be here meant, amount to six pounds five shillings of our money; and this sum is mentioned, because it might be the whole stock that was in the bag, or that Christ and his disciples had; or because this was a round sum, much in use among the Jews; see the note on Mark vi. 37. Or this may be said by Philip, to shew how impracticable it was to provide for such a company;

<sup>z</sup> T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 81. 2. & Bava Bathra, fol. 74. 2. Beroth, fol. 55. 1. Megilla, fol. 5. 2. & 6. 1. Moed. Katon, fol. 19. 2. & T. Hieros. Kilaim, fol. 32. 3. & Erubin, fol. 25. 2.

<sup>y</sup> Solin, c. 48. Pausan. l. 5. p. 298.

<sup>x</sup> Lib. 5. c. 15.

<sup>a</sup> T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 21. 2. & Sheviith, fol. 39. 4. Kiddushin, fol. 61. 1. R. Benj. Itinerar. p. 53.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 6. 1. Maimon & Bartenora in Misn. Shekalim, c. 3. sect. 1.



that supposing they had two hundred pence to lay out in this way; though where should they have that, he suggests? yet if they had it, as much bread as that would purchase would not be sufficient: *that every one of them might take a little*; it would be so far from giving them a meal, or proper refreshment, that every one could not have a small bit to taste of, or in the least to stay or blunt his appetite: a penny, with the Jews, would buy as much bread as would serve ten men; so that two hundred pence would buy bread enough for two thousand men; but here were three thousand more, besides women and children, who could not have been provided for with such a sum of money.

Ver. 8. *One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, &c.*] Who also, and his brother Peter, were of Bethsaida, as well as Philip, and was a disciple of Christ's; he hearing what Christ said to Philip, and what answer he returned, *saith unto him*: to Christ, with but little more faith than Philip, if any.

Ver. 9. *There is a lad here, &c.*] Who either belonged to Christ and his disciples, and was employed to carry their provisions for them; which, if so, shews how meanly Christ and his disciples lived; or he belonged to some in the multitude; or rather he came here to sell what he had got: *which hath five barley loaves*. The land of Canaan was a land of barley, as well as wheat, Deut. viii. 8. this sort of grain grew there in plenty, and was in much use; the Jews had a barley-harvest, Ruth i. 22. which was at the time of the passover; for on the second day after the passover, the sheaf of the first-fruits was waved before the Lord, which was of barley; hence the Targumist on the place just cited, paraphrases it thus; "they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of the passover, and on the day the children of Israel began to reap the sheaf of the wave-offering, which was of barley." And it was now about the time of the passover, as appears from ver. 4. and had it been quite the time, and the barley-sheaf had been waved, it might have been thought that these loaves were made of the new barley; but though barley was in use for bread among the Jews, as is evident, from the mention that is made of barley loaves and cakes, 2 Kings iv. 42. Judges vii. 13. yet it was bread of the coarsest sort, and what the meaner sort of people ate; see Ezek. iv. 12. Yea, barley was used for food for horses and dromedaries, 1 Kings iv. 28. and since therefore these loaves were, if not designed for the use of Christ and his twelve apostles, yet for some of his followers, and which they all ate of; it is an instance of the meanness and poverty of them: but however, they had better bread than this, even the bread of life, which is afterwards largely treated of in this chapter, which some of them at least ate of; and as our countryman Mr. Dod used to say, "brown bread and the Gospel are good fare:" and it may be further observed, that the number of these loaves were but few; there were but *five* of them, for *five thousand* persons; and these don't seem to be very large ones, since one lad was able to carry them; and indeed, these loaves were no other than cakes, in which form they used to be made: *and two small fishes*; there were but *two*, and these *small*; it is amazing, that

five thousand persons should every one have something of them, and enough: these fishes seem to be what the Jews call *מורני*, and which the gloss interprets *small fishes*: and by the word which is used of them, they seem to be salted, or pickled fishes, and such it is very probable these were; Nonnus calls them, *οψαρια*; *οψαρια*, fishes which were broiled, or perhaps dried in the sun; see Luke xxiv. 43. *But what are they among so many?* every one cannot possibly have a taste, much less any refreshment, still less a meal.

Ver. 10. *Jesus said, make the men sit down, &c.*] The Syriac version reads, *all the men*; and the Persic version, *all the people*; men, women, and children: Christ, without reproving his disciples for their unbelief, ordered them directly to place the people upon the ground, and seat them in rows by hundreds and by fifties, in a rank and company, as persons about to take a meal: *now there was much grass in the place*; at the bottom of the mountain; and it was green, as one of the evangelists observes, it being the spring of the year, and was very commodious to sit down upon: *so the men sat down, in number about five thousand*; besides women and children, Matt. xiv. 21. so that there was but one loaf for more than a thousand persons.

Ver. 11. *And Jesus took the loaves, &c.*] Into his hands, as also the fishes, in order to feed the multitude with them: *and when he had given thanks*; for them, and blessed them, or implored a blessing on them, that they might be nourishing to the bodies of men, as was his usual manner, and which is an example to us; *he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were sat down*. The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, only read, *he distributed to them that were sat down*; but it was not by his own hands, but by the means of the disciples, who received from him, and gave it to them; so that the sense is the same; *and likewise of the fishes, as much as they would*; that is, they had as much, both of the bread and of the fishes, distributed to them, and which they took and ate, as they chose: in some printed copies it is read, *as much as he would*, and so the Persic version; that is, as much as Jesus would; but the former is the true reading, and makes the miracle more illustrious.

Ver. 12. *When they were filled, &c.*] Had not only eaten, but had made a full meal, and were thoroughly satisfied, having eaten as much as they could, or chose to eat: *he said unto his disciples, gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost*; this he said, partly that the truth, reality, and greatness of the miracle might be clearly discerned; and partly, to teach frugality, that, in the midst of abundance, care be taken that nothing be lost of the good things which God gives; and which may be useful to other persons, or at another time.

Ver. 13. *Therefore they gathered them together, &c.*] The several broken bits of bread, which lay about upon the grass, which the people had left, after they had been sufficiently refreshed: *and filled twelve baskets*; every disciple had a basket filled: *with the fragments of the five barley loaves*; and it may be of the fishes also: *which remained over and above unto them that had*

\* T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 60. 2. & Saubedrin, fol. 49. 1.

*caten*; such a marvellous increase was there, through the power of Christ going along with them; inasmuch that they multiplied to such a degree, either in the hands of the distributors, or of the eaters.

Ver. 14. *Then those men, &c.*] The five thousand men, who had been fed with the loaves and fishes: *when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did*; in feeding so many of them, with so small a quantity of food; in multiplying the provision in such a prodigious manner, that after they had eaten to the full, so many baskets of fragments were taken up: *said, this is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world*; meaning that prophet, that Moses spoke of, in Deut. xviii. 15. for the ancient Jews understood this passage of the Messiah, though the modern ones apply it to others; see the note on Acts iii. 22. And these men concluded that Jesus was that prophet, or the true Messiah, from the miracle he wrought; in which he appeared, not only to be like to Moses, but greater than he.

Ver. 15. *When Jesus therefore perceived, &c.*] As being the omniscient God, who knew their hearts, and the secret thoughts and purposes of them; or, as man, understood by their words and gestures: *that they would come and take him by force, and make him a king*; that they had determined, as the Arabic version renders it; or *had it in their mind*, as the Persic; to gather about him as one man, and seize him in a violent manner, whether he would or no; and proclaim him the King Messiah; place him at the head of them, to deliver the nation from the Roman yoke, and set up a temporal kingdom, in which they might hope for great secular advantages: and they might the rather be induced to take such a step, since, by this miracle, they could not doubt of his being able to support such an army of men, and to succeed in the enterprise; for he that could do this, what was it he could not do? but, *he departed again into a mountain, himself alone*; he left the company directly, upon this resolution of theirs, and even took not his disciples with him, who were in the same way of thinking about a temporal kingdom, as the people, and might encourage them in this undertaking: the mountain Christ went into, very probably was the same he went up to before; the reasons of his departure, were to prevent the attempt; to shew that his kingdom was not of this world; to teach his followers to forsake the honours and riches of this world, for his sake; and to let them know, that those who sought only for a temporal redeemer, were unworthy of his presence: and also he went away alone, for the sake of secret retirement, and private prayer; and it may be chiefly, that he prayed that God would open the minds of these men, and particularly the disciples; that they might be convinced of their mistaken notions of him as a temporal prince: some copies add, *and he prayed there*; the Syriac, Ethiopic, and Persic versions leave out the word *again*; and the latter, contrary to all others, renders it, *Christ departed from the mountain alone*.

Ver. 16. *And when even was now come, &c.*] The last of the evenings, when night was coming on; for the first of the evenings took place before they sat down to eat, when the above miracle was wrought; see Matt. xiv. 15, 23. *His disciples went down unto the sea*; of Galilee, or Tiberias, to the sea-side; and this was by

the order, and even constraint of Christ, who would have them go before him, that he might be clear of the multitude, and have an opportunity for solitary prayer, Matt. xiv. 14. Mark vi. 45. see the notes there.

Ver. 17. *And entered into a ship, &c.*] In which they came, and was waiting for them; or into another: *and went over the sea towards Capernaum*; steered their course from Bethsaida, where they took shipping over the sea of Galilee; at least over one part of it, a creek or bay of it, as they intended, towards the city of Capernaum, which lay over-against Bethsaida: *and it was now dark*; quite night, which made their voyage more uncomfortable, especially as it afterwards was tempestuous: but the worst of all was, *and Jesus was not come to them*: as they expected, and therefore were obliged to set sail and go without him.

Ver. 18. *And the sea arose, &c.*] Swelled, and was tumultuous and raging; the waves mounted up, and tossed the ship to and fro: *by reason of a great wind that blew*; which agitated the waters of the sea, and lifted up the waves; which storm seems to have arose after they had set sail, and were got into the midst of the sea.

Ver. 19. *So when they had rowed, &c.*] For the wind being contrary, they could not make use of their sails, but betook themselves to their oars, and by that means got *about five-and-twenty, or thirty furlongs*; which were three or four miles, or little more than a league; no further had they got, though they had been rowing from the time it was dark, to the fourth watch, which was after three o'clock in the morning; all this while they had been tossed in the sea; *they saw Jesus walking on the sea*; see the notes on Matt. xiv. 25, 26, 29. *And drawing nigh unto the ship*; though Mark says, *he would have passed by them*; that is, he seemed as if he would, but his intention was to come to them, and save them from perishing, as he did: *and they were afraid*; that he was a spirit, some nocturnal apparition, or demon, in a human form; see the note on Matt. xiv. 26.

Ver. 20. *But he saith to them, it is I, be not afraid.*] See the note on Matt. xiv. 27.

Ver. 21. *Then they willingly received him into the ship, &c.*] When they knew who he was; and especially he was the more welcome, as they were in distress; and he able, as they well knew, to help them: *and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went*; which was done, as Nonnus observes, by a divine motion; for not only the wind ceased, but another miracle was wrought; the ship was in an instant at the place whither they intended to go.

Ver. 22. *The day following, &c.*] The day after that, in which the miracle of feeding five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes was done: the morning after the disciples had had such a bad voyage: *when the people which stood on the other side of the sea*; from that in which the disciples now were, being landed at Capernaum; that is, they stood on that side, or shore, where they took shipping, near Bethsaida and Tiberias: here, after they were dismissed by Christ, they stood all night, waiting for boats to carry them over; or rather, knowing that Christ was not gone with his disciples, they continued, hoping to meet with him in the morning, and enjoy some more advantage by him: for they

saw that there was none other boat there, save that one wherewith his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone; from whence they concluded, that since there was only that boat, and Jesus did not go into it, but that the disciples went off without him, that he must be therefore somewhere on shore, and not far off, and they hoped to find him in the morning; wherefore it was very surprising to them, when they found him at Capernaum, when, and how he got there.

Ver. 23. *Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias, &c.*] A city by the sea-side, built by Herod, and called so in honour of Tiberius Cæsar; though the Jews give a different etymology of it; they say, it is the same with Rakkath, Josh. xix. 35. and that it was a fortified place from the days of Joshua, and that on one side, *כמה חומתה*, *the sea was its wall*<sup>a</sup>: and so Jonathan the Targumist on Deut. iii. 17. says, that Tiberias was near the sea of salt: this place became famous for many of the wise men that lived here; here was a famous university, and here the Misna and Jerusalem Talmud were written; and here the sanhedrim sat, after it removed from Jerusalem: *nigh unto the place where they did eat bread*: where the day before they had been fed in so miraculous a manner: the meaning is, either that Tiberias was near to the place where the miracle was wrought, or the boats from Tiberias came near that place, and both were true; so that these men that were waiting by the sea-side, had an opportunity of going over in these boats in quest of Christ, to whom they were now become greatly attached, by feeding them in so wonderful a manner: *after that the Lord had given thanks*; which clause is added to shew, that the multiplication of the bread, and the refreshment the men had by it, were owing to the power of Christ, and his blessing it; though this is wanting in Beza's most ancient copy, and in some others.

Ver. 24. *When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, &c.*] At the sea-side, at the usual place of taking boat; and having reason to think he was not on that side of the lake, but was gone from thence: *neither his disciples*: when they found that there were neither of them there, but both were gone, and considering that it was to no purpose for them to stay there: *they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum seeking Jesus*; they might observe, that the disciples steered their course towards this place; and they knew that was a place of general resort with Christ and his disciples; therefore they took boat and came directly thither, and sought for him in the synagogue, it being on a day in which the people used to go thither; and where Christ, as often as he had opportunity, attended.

Ver. 25. *And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, &c.*] At Capernaum, and in the synagogue there; see ver. 59. *They said unto him, Rabbi*; or *master*, a name now much in use with the Jewish doctors, and by which they delighted to be called; and these men being convinced by the miracle, that Christ was that prophet that should come, honour him with this title, saying, *when comest thou hither?* since he did not go with his disciples, and there was no other

boat that went off the night before, but that in which they went; and they came over in the first that came out that morning, and he did not come in any of them; and therefore it was amazing to them, both when and how he came, since they could not devise how he should get there by shipping, and also how he should so soon get there a-foot.

Ver. 26. *Jesus answered them and said, &c.*] Not by replying to their question, or giving a direct answer to that, which he could have done, by telling them that he walked upon the water, and found his disciples in great distress, and delivered them, and came early that morning with them to the land of Gennesareth, and so to Capernaum: but not willing to gratify their curiosity; and knowing from what principles, and with what views they sought after him, and followed him; and willing to let them know that he knew them, being the searcher of hearts, and to prove them for them, thus addressed them: *verily, verily, I say unto you*; this is a certain truth, and was full well known to Christ, and what their own consciences must attest: *ye seek me not because ye saw the miracles*; of feeding so large a number with so small a quantity of food, and of healing them that needed it, Luke ix. 11. Not but that they did regard the miracles of Christ, and concluded from thence he must be that prophet that was to come, and were for taking him by force, and proclaiming him king; but then they had a greater respect to their own worldly interest, and their carnal appetites, than to these, as follows: *but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled*: they regarded their own bellies more than the honour and glory of Christ, and even than the good of their immortal souls, and the spiritual and eternal salvation of them: and it is to be feared that this is the case of too many who make a profession of religion; their view being their own worldly advantages, and not the spiritual and everlasting good of their souls, and the real interest of a Redeemer: hence the following advice.

Ver. 27. *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, &c.*] Meaning either food for the body, which is perishing; its virtue is perishing; man cannot live by it alone, nor does it last long; its substance is perishing; it is received into the stomach, and there digested; it goes into the belly, and is cast out into the draught; and that which it supports, for a while, is perishing; and both the one, and the other, shall be destroyed; even meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: now, though it becomes men to work for their bread, to provide it for themselves and families; yet they should not be anxiously solicitous about it, or labour only for that, and prefer it to spiritual food: or else food for the mind is meant, and that either in a sensual way, as sinful lust and pleasures, the honours of this world, and the riches of it; which are sweet morsels, though bread of deceit, to carnal minds, and which they labour hard for: or, in a religious way, as superstition, will worship, external works of righteousness, in order to please God, and obtain eternal life and salvation; which to labour for in such a way, is to spend money for that which is not bread, and labour for that which profiteth not; and in each of these ways were these Jews

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 5. 2. & Hieros. Megilla, fol. 70. 1.

labouring for perishing food, from which Christ dissuades them: *but for that which endureth unto everlasting life*; either the grace of Christ, which, as meat, is quickening and refreshing, strengthening and supporting, and which causes nourishment and growth, and by virtue of which work is done; and this springs up unto everlasting life, and is inseparably connected with it; and particularly the blessings of grace, such as sanctification, adoption, pardon, and justification: or the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, which are refreshing, and strengthening, and by which the saints are nourished up unto everlasting life; or rather the flesh of Christ eaten, in a spiritual sense, by faith, of which Christ so largely discourses in the following part of the chapter: *which the son of man shall give unto you*; meaning either everlasting life, which is in Christ's gift, and is a free-grace gift of his; or else the meat which endures unto it: for though it is to be laboured for, not so as to prepare it, or to purchase it, but by asking for it in prayer, and by attending on ordinances, and exercising faith on Christ; yet it is his gift, and he gives it freely; grace, and the blessings of it, are freely given by him, and so are the Gospel and its ordinances; and also his own flesh, which is first given by him, by way of sacrifice, in the room and stead of his people, and for the life of them, ver. 51. and then it is given unto them to feed upon spiritually by faith, and which is here designed: *for him hath God the father sealed*: designated and appointed to be the Saviour, and Redeemer of his people, and has sent, authorized, and commissioned him as such; and has made him known, and approved of him, by the descent of the spirit on him, and by a voice from heaven, declaring him his beloved son; and has confirmed him to be the Messiah by the miraculous works he gave him to finish; for all which several uses seals are, as to distinguish one thing from another, to render any thing authentic, to point it out, or to confirm it.

Ver. 28. *Then said they unto him, &c.*] Understanding by what he said, that they must labour and work, though not for perishing food, yet for durable food; and as they imagined, in order to obtain eternal life by working: *what shall we do that we might work the works of God?* Such as are agreeable to his will, are acceptable to him, and well-pleasing in his sight: they seem to intimate, as if they desired to know whether there were any other works of this kind, than what Moses had directed them to, or than they had done; and if there were, they suggest they would gladly do them; for this was the general cast and complexion of this people; they were seeking for righteousness, and life, not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law.

Ver. 29. *Jesus answered and said unto them, this is the work of God, &c.*] The main and principal one, and which is well-pleasing in his sight; and without which it is impossible to please him; and without which no work whatever is a good work; and this is of the operation of God, which he himself works in men; it is not of themselves, it is the pure gift of God: *that ye believe on him whom he hath sent*; there are other works which are well-pleasing to God, when rightly per-

formed, but faith is the chief work, and others are only acceptable when done in the faith of Christ. This, as a principle, is purely God's work; as it is an act, or as it is exercised under the influence of divine grace, it is man's act: *that ye believe*; the object of it is Christ, as sent by the father, as the Mediator between God and men, as appointed by him to be the Saviour and Redeemer; and believing in Christ, is believing in God that sent him. The Jews reduce all the six hundred and thirteen precepts of the law, for so many they say there are, to this one, the *just shall live by his faith*, Hab. ii. 4. <sup>e</sup>

Ver. 30. *They said therefore unto him, &c.*] Seeing he proposed believing in him as the grand work of God to be done, and what is most acceptable in his sight: *what sign shewest thou then, that we may see and believe thee?* The people of the Jews were always requiring signs and wonders, and when they had one and another shewn them, they still sought for more, and were never satisfied; see Matt. xii. 39. and xvi. 1. These men had lately seen various signs and miracles of Christ, as healing the sick, and feeding five thousand of them, and more, with five loaves, and two fishes; and though, for the time present, these had some influence upon them, and they were ready to believe he was that prophet; yet now, at least some of them, begin to retract, and signify, that unless some other, and greater signs were shewn, they should not believe in him as the Messiah: *what dost thou work?* more than others, or Moses. They seem to make light of the miracle of the loaves, or at least require some greater sign and miracle, to engage their belief in him as the Messiah; and as they were lovers of their bellies, and expected dainties in the times of the Messiah, they seem to move for, and desire miracles of that kind to be wrought; and which sense the following words confirm.

Ver. 31. *Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, &c.*] Which was a sort of food prepared by angels in the air, and rained down from thence about the tents of the Israelites; it was a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground; it was like a coriander-seed, and the colour of it was the colour of bdellium: it was so called, either from מִנֶּה, *to prepare*, because it was prepared, and got ready for the Israelites; or from the first words that were spoken upon sight of it, בָּנֵהוּ, *what is it?* for they knew not what it was: and this the Jewish fathers fed upon all the while they were in the wilderness, 'till they came to Canaan's land, and they only; it was food peculiar to them: *our fathers did eat*; and so the Jews<sup>f</sup> observe on those words in Exod. xvi. 35. "*and the children of Israel did eat manna forty years*; the children of Israel, וְלֹא אֲחֵרִים, *and not another*. And the children of Israel saw, and said, *what is it?* and not the rest of the mixed multitude." Now these Jews object this miracle to Christ, and intimate, that he indeed had fed five thousand of them with barley loaves, and fishes, for one meal; but their fathers, in the times of Moses, to the number of six hundred thousand, and more, were fed, and that with manna, very sweet and delightful food, and for the space of forty years; even all the while they were in the wilderness: and there-

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 23. 2. & 24. 1.

<sup>f</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 75. 2.

fore, unless he wrought as great a miracle, or a greater than this, and that of the like kind, they should not think fit to relinquish Moses, and follow him; and in proof of what they said, they produce Scripture, *as it is written* in Psal. lxxviii. 24, 25, or rather in Exod. xvi. 15. and perhaps both places may be respected: *he gave them bread from heaven to eat*; they leave out the word *Lord*, being willing it should be understood of Moses, to whom they ascribed it, as appears from the following words of Christ, who denies that Moses gave it; and add the phrase *from heaven*, to set forth the excellent nature of it, which is taken from Exod. xvi. 4. where the manna, as here, is called *bread from heaven*.

Ver. 32. *Then Jesus said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, &c.*] It is truth, and may be depended on, whether it will be believed or no: *Moses gave you not that bread from heaven*; in which Christ denies that that bread, or manna, did come from heaven; that is, from the highest heavens, only from the air, and was not such celestial bread he after speaks of, and which came down from the heaven of heavens: and moreover, he denies that Moses gave them that bread; it was the Lord that gave them it, as is expressly said in the passage referred to, in the above citation. Moses had no hand in it; he did not so much as pray for it, much less procure it, or prepare it: it was promised and prepared by God, and rained by him, and who directed to the gathering and use of it. This stands opposed to a notion of the Jews, that the manna was given by means of Moses, for his sake, and on account of his merits: for they say <sup>g</sup>, “there arose up three good providers, or pastors for Israel, and they are these, Moses, and Aaron, and Miriam; and three good gifts were given by their means, and they are these, the well, the cloud, and the manna; the well by the merits of Miriam; the pillar of cloud by the merits of Aaron; *בן בוכות משה, the manna, by the merits of Moses.*” This our Lord denies; and affirms, *but my father giveth you the true bread from heaven*: he not only gave the manna to the Jewish fathers, and not Moses; but he also gives that bread which the manna was typical of, by which he means himself; who may be compared to bread, because of the original of it, or the matter of it, of which it is made, wheat, he is called a corn of wheat, John xii. 24. and from its preparation for food, being threshed, and winnowed, and ground, and kneaded, and baked; all which may express the sufferings and death of Christ, by which he becomes fit food for faith; and from its being the main part of human sustenance, and from its nourishing and strengthening nature, and from its being a means of maintaining and supporting life: and he may be called the *true bread*, because he is the truth and substance of the types of him; the unleavened bread, eaten at the passover, was typical of him, as he was free from sin in nature and life; and from all error in doctrine; and so was the shew-bread a type of his intercession, and set forth the continuance of it, its efficacy and acceptance, of which the priests only shared; and so were the meat-offerings in the sacrifices, which were offered up day by day: and

particularly the manna, the bread from heaven, the Jews were now speaking of: Christ was the truth of that type; that was but shadowy bread, Christ is the true bread, or the antitype of it in its name; whether it be derived from *manah*, to prepare, Christ being the bread of life, and salvation of God, prepared in the council and covenant of grace, and by his sufferings and death before the face of all people; or from the words *man hu*, what is it? Christ being as little known by carnal men, as the manna was at first to the Israelites: and in its nature, kind, form, and quality; it was round in form, which might be expressive of the perfections of Christ, and particularly his eternity, being without beginning or end; it was white in colour, which may denote the purity and innocence of him; it was sweet in taste, as he, his fruits, his word, and ordinances, are to them that are born again; it was small in quantity, which may set forth the meanness of Christ in his state of humiliation: it was also typical of Christ in its usefulness; it was sufficient to supply a great multitude, and that for many years, as the fulness of grace in Christ is sufficient for the whole family in heaven, and in earth, in time, and to all eternity; the Israelites all shared in it, and had all an equal portion of it; so all the people of God have an interest in Christ, and equally participate of the blessings of his grace, and shall enjoy the same eternal life and glory by him: one has neither more nor less than another; Christ is all in all, and made alike all things to them: and he may be called the bread *from heaven*; because he came from thence, not by change of place, but by assumption of nature, even from the highest heavens, the third heaven, from whence the manna came not: he is the Lord from heaven, and is such bread as has a virtue and tendency in it to nourish men for heaven, and is truly of a heavenly nature: and this is Christ's father's gift, and is of pure grace, without any consideration of works and merits in men. Philo the Jew says <sup>h</sup>, the heavenly food of the soul, which is called *manna*, the divine word distributes alike to all that ask.

Ver. 33. *For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, &c.*] In the way and manner just now mentioned: and which clearly points out Christ himself, who may be called *the bread of God*: to distinguish him from common bread, and to shew the excellency of him, and that he is of God's providing and giving, and which he would have his children feed upon: *and giveth life unto the world*; a spiritual life, which he is the author, supporter, and maintainer of; and eternal life, which he gives a right unto and meetness for, and nourishes up unto; and this not to a few only, or to the Israelites only, but to the Gentiles also, and even to the whole world of God's elect: not indeed to every individual in the world, for all are not quickened now, nor shall inherit eternal life hereafter; but to all the people of God, in all parts of the world, and in all ages of time; of such extensive virtue and efficacy is Christ, the bread of God, in which he appears greatly superior to that *manna* the Jews instance in.

Ver. 34. *Then said they unto him, &c.*] At least some

<sup>g</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 9. 1. Seder Olam Rabba, p. 28.

<sup>h</sup> Quis rec. divin. hares. p. 597.

of them: *Lord, evermore give us this bread*; that is so divine and heavenly, and has such a quickening virtue in it: these words are said by them either seriously, and to be understood of bread for their bodies, of which they imagined Christ was speaking; and so sprung from ignorance of his sense; and from sensuality in them who followed him for the loaves; and from a covetous disposition, being desirous of being supplied with such excellent food without charge; and from idleness, to save labour and pains in working for it; and from a vain desire of the continuance of this earthly life, being willing to live for ever, and therefore would have this bread evermore; and from a gross opinion of plenty and delicacy of corporeal food in the times of the Messiah; see the note on Luke xiv. 15. or else these words are spoken ironically, by way of derision, as if there was no such bread; and if there was, that Christ could not give it. However, the words may be improved, when considered as a petition coming from, and suitable to, a sensible and enlightened soul: for such who are sensible of their famishing condition by nature, and of their need of Christ, the bread of life, and whose taste is changed, and have tasted how good this bread is, will earnestly desire always to be supplied with it, and to live upon it; for nothing is more grateful to them, and more nourishing and satisfying to their souls; they are never weary of it; it is always new and delightful to them, and they always stand in need of it, and wait in the use of means and ordinances for it; and this has always an abiding, lasting, virtue in it, to feed their souls, and nourish them up to everlasting life. Josephus<sup>1</sup> says of the *manna*, which was a type of this bread, that there was such a divine quality in it, that whoever tasted of it needed nothing else: and the Jews also say<sup>k</sup>, that "in the manna were all kinds of tastes, and every one of the Israelites tasted all that he desired; for so it is written in Deut. ii. 7. *these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee, thou hast lacked nothing, or not wanted any thing*; what is any thing? when he desired to eat any thing, and said with his mouth, O that I had fat to eat, immediately there was in his mouth the taste of fat.—Young men tasted the taste of bread, old men the taste of honey, and children the taste of oil." Yea, they say<sup>l</sup>, "whoever desired flesh, he tasted it, and whoever desired fish, he tasted it, and whoever desired fowl, chicken, pheasant, or pea-hen, so he tasted whatever he desired." And this agrees what is said in the apocryphal book of Wisdom, ch. xvi. ver. 20, 21.—"Thou feddest thine own people with angels' food, and didst send them from heaven bread, prepared without their labour, able to content every man's delight, and agreeing to every taste; for thy sustenance (or manna) declared thy sweetness unto thy children, and serving to the appetite of the cater, tempered itself to every man's liking." All which must be understood of that pleasure, satisfaction, and contentment which they had in it; for it was a very uncommon case to eat it, and live upon it as their common food for forty years together: and no doubt but that there was something re-

markable in suiting it to their appetites, or giving them appetites suitable to that, to feed upon it, and relish it for so long a time: twice indeed in that length of time we read they complained of it, saying, that they had nothing but this manna before their eyes, and their souls loathed it as light bread, Numb. xi. 6. and xxi. 5. and lusted after the flesh, and the fish they had eaten in Egypt. And so it is with some professors of Christ, and his Gospel; for there is a mixed multitude among them, as there was among the Israelites, who disrelish the preaching of Christ, and the truths of the Gospel respecting his person, blood, and righteousness, and salvation by him; they can't bear to have these things frequently inculcated and insisted upon; their souls are ready to loath them as light bread, and want to have something else set before them, more suitable to their carnal appetites: but to such who are true believers in Christ, who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, Christ, the true manna, and bread of God, is all things to them; nor do they desire any other: they taste every thing that is delightful, and find every thing that is nourishing in him.

Ver. 35. *And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life, &c.*] Christ is so called, because he gives life to dead sinners: men in a state of nature are dead in trespasses and sins; and whatever they feed upon tends to death; Christ, the true bread, only gives life, which is conveyed by the word, and made effectual by the spirit: and because he supports and maintains the life he gives; it is not in the power of a believer to support the spiritual life he has; nor can he live on any thing short of Christ; and there's enough in Christ for him to live upon: and because he quickens, and makes the saints lively in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, and renews their spiritual strength, and secures for them eternal life. *He that cometh to me*; not corporeally to hear him preach, or preached, or merely to his ordinances, to baptism, or the Lord's table; but so as to believe in him, feed, and live upon him, as the next clause explains it: *and he that believeth on me shall never thirst*; and which is owing, not to the power and will of man, but to divine teachings, and the powerful drawings of the efficacious grace of God; see ver. 44, 45. Now of such it is said, that they shall never hunger and thirst; which is true of them in this life, though not to be understood as if there were no sinful desires in them; much less, that there are no spiritual hungerings and thirstings after they are come to Christ; but that they shall not desire any other food but Christ; they shall be satisfied with him; nor shall they hereafter be in a starving and famishing condition, or want any good thing: and in the other world there will be no desires after that which is sinful, nor indeed after outward ordinances, in order to enjoy communion with God in them, as now, for they will then be needless; nor shall they have any uneasy desires after Christ, and his grace, and the enjoyment of him, since he will be all in all to them.

Ver. 36. *But I said unto you, &c.*] The substance of what follows in ver. 26. though the Persic and Ethiopic versions render it, *I say unto you*; and so refers

<sup>1</sup> Antiqu. l. 3. c. 1. sect. 6.

<sup>k</sup> Shemot Rabba, sect. 25. fol. 108. 4.

<sup>l</sup> Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 7. fol. 108. 1.

not to any thing before said, but to what he was about to say: *that ye also have seen me, and believe not*; that is, they had not only seen him in person, which many kings, prophets, and righteous men had desired, but not enjoyed, yet nevertheless believed; but they had seen his miracles, and had shared in the advantages of them, being healed, and fed corporally by him, and yet believed not in him as the spiritual Saviour and Redeemer of their souls; nor did they come to him in a spiritual way, for eternal life and salvation.

Ver. 37. *All that the father giveth me, &c.*] The *all* design not the apostles only, who were given to Christ as such; for these did not all, in a spiritual manner, come to him, and believe in him; one of them was a devil, and the son of perdition; much less every individual of mankind: these are, in some sense, given to Christ to subserve some ends of his mediatorial kingdom, and are subject to his power and control, but do not come to him, and believe in him: but the whole body of the elect are here meant, who, when they were chosen by God the father, were given and put into the hands of Christ, as his seed, his spouse, his sheep, his portion, and inheritance, and to be saved by him with an everlasting salvation; which is an instance of love and care on the father's part, to give them to Christ; and of grace and condescension in him to receive them, and take the care of them; and of distinguishing goodness to them: and though Christ here expresses this act of his father's in the present tense, *giveth*, perhaps to signify the continuance and unchangeableness of it; yet he delivers it in the past tense, in ver. 39. *hath given*; and so all the Oriental versions render it here. And it certainly respects an act of God, antecedent to coming to Christ, and believing in him, which is a fruit and effect of electing love, as is clear from what follows: *shall come unto me*; such who are given to Christ in eternal election, and in the everlasting covenant of grace, shall, and do, in time, come to Christ, and believe in him to the saving of their souls; which is not to be ascribed to any power and will in them, but to the power and grace of God. It is not here said, that such who are given to Christ have a *power* to come to him, or *may* come if they will, but they *shall* come; efficacious grace will bring them to Christ, as poor perishing sinners, to venture on him for life and salvation: *and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out*; such who come to Christ in a spiritual manner, and are brought to believe in him truly and really, he not only receives kindly, but keeps and preserves them by his power, and will not cast them out, or thrust them from him into perdition: the words are very strongly and emphatically expressed in the original, *I will not, not, or never, never, cast out without*; or cast out of doors. Christ will never cast them out of his affections; nor out of his arms; nor out of that family that is named of him; nor out of, and from his church, which is his body, and of which they are members; nor out of a state of justification and salvation; and therefore they shall never perish, but have everlasting life. The three glorious doctrines of grace, of eternal election, efficacious grace in conversion, and

the final perseverance of the saints, are clearly contained in these words.

Ver. 38. *For I came down from heaven, &c.*] Not by change of place, or local motion; for Christ is the immense, infinite, and omnipresent God, and can't be said properly to move from place to place; for he fills all places, even heaven and earth, with his presence, and was in heaven as the son of God, at the same time he was here on earth as the son of man: wherefore this must be understood in a manner becoming his proper deity, his divine sonship, and personality: this descent was by the assumption of the human nature into union with his divine person, which was an instance of amazing grace and condescension. The Jew<sup>m</sup> objects to this, and says, "if this respects the descent of the soul, the soul of every man descended from thence; but if it respects the body, the rest of the evangelists contradict his words, particularly Luke, when he says, ch. ii. 7. that his mother brought him forth at Bethlehem." But this descent regards neither his soul nor body, but his divine person, which always was in heaven, and not any local descent of that; but, as before observed, an assumption of human nature, which he took of the virgin on earth; and so there is no contradiction between the evangelists; nor is descent from heaven unsuitable to Christ as a divine person, since it is ascribed to God, Gen. xi. 7. and xviii. 21. and if God may be said to go down from heaven by some display of his power, and intimation of his presence, Christ may be said to descend from heaven by that marvellous work of his, taking upon him our nature, and walking up and down on earth in the form of a servant; and which was done with this view, as he says, *not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me*; that is, not to do his own will, as separate from his father's, and much less as contrary to it; otherwise he did come to do his own will, which, as God, was the same with his father's, he being one with him in nature, and so in power and will; and though his will, as man, was distinct from his father's, yet not repugnant, but resigned unto it: and this will he came to do, was to preach the Gospel, fulfil the law, work miracles, and obtain the eternal redemption and salvation of his people. What the above Jewish writer<sup>n</sup> objects to this part of the text is of very little moment: whose words are; "moreover, what he says, *not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me*, shews, that he that sent, is not one and the same with him that is sent, seeing the will of him that is sent, is not as the will of him that sends." It is readily granted that they are not one and the same person; they are two distinct persons, which sending, and being sent, do clearly shew; but then they are one in nature, though distinct in person, and they agree in will and work. Christ came not to do any will of his own different from that of his father's; nor do these words imply a difference of wills in them, much less a contrariety in them, but rather the sameness of them.

Ver. 39. *And this is the father's will which hath sent me, &c.*] This explains both who he was that sent

<sup>m</sup> R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 44. p. 434.  
VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>n</sup> R. Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 44. p. 434.  
5 M

him; the father of him, and of his people; whose sending of him does not suppose any change of place, or inequality between them, or disrespect unto him, or compulsion of him, but agreement between them, and love to the persons on whose account he was sent; and also what is the will he came to do, and is what was declared by him to Christ, when he gave the elect to him: for this expresses his secret will in the council and covenant of grace, *that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing*; that is, that of all the elect which were given to Christ by his father, in eternal election, he should not lose any one of them, not the meanest among them, nor any thing of their's, their grace, or glory, or any thing belonging to them, either to their souls or bodies, and particularly the latter; *but should raise it up again at the last day*; even every part of their bodies, and every dust belonging to them; their bodies being given to Christ, and redeemed by his blood, as well as their souls: so the Jews<sup>o</sup>, speaking of the resurrection, and making mention of that passage in Numb. xxiii. 10. *who shall count the dust of Jacob?* add, "and he (*i. e.* God) shall order it all, וְלֹא יִתְאַבֵּיר כֹּלֹם, and not any thing shall be lost, but all shall rise again; for, lo, it is said, Dan. xii. 2. *and many of them that sleep in the dust, &c.*"

Ver. 40. *And this is the will of him that sent me, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin adds, *of my father*; and all the Oriental versions read only, *and this is the will of my father*; this is his declared, his revealed will in the Gospel, which the sons of men are made acquainted with, as the other was his secret will, which was only known to the son till he discovered it. *That every one which seeth the son, and believeth on him*; who so sees him as to believe in him; for this is not to be understood of a corporeal sight of Christ, or of a mere speculative knowledge of him, or historical faith in him; for it is not so to see him, as merely to believe what he is, the son of God, the Messiah and Saviour of the world, or what he says, but to trust in him for righteousness, life, and happiness. Men are by nature blind, their eyes are shut to all that is spiritually good; it is the spirit of God that opens blind eyes, and illuminates the understanding: and in his light men see not only themselves, their sin, and want of righteousness, and their lost state and condition, but Christ, and a beauty, glory, and excellency in him, ability and willingness to save, a suitableness in him for them, and a fulness of all grace; they see righteousness, peace, pardon, cleansing, wisdom, strength, grace, life, and salvation, and go out of themselves to him for all: and such a sight, though it may be but glimmering, is saving, and is self-abasing, soul-rejoicing, surprising, and transforming; is attended with certainty, reality, and evidence, and is a foretaste of glory; for it is the will of God, and not man, of a gracious father, of an unchangeable and eternal being, whose will cannot be resisted, and made void, that such *may have everlasting life*; which will be a life of glory, and will consist in possessing glory both in soul and body; in beholding glory, the glory

of one another, the glory of angels, the glory of divine truths, and mysterious providences, the glory of the divine perfections, and of the Lord Jesus Christ; and it will be a life of perfection, of perfect knowledge, holiness, obedience, love, peace, and joy; a life free from all the miseries and inconveniences of this, both in a natural and spiritual sense; a life of pleasure, and which will last for ever: to which Christ adds, *and I will raise him up at the last day*; Christ will be the efficient cause, as well as he is the exemplar, the earnest, and first-fruits of the resurrection of the dead; he will indeed raise all the dead by his power, but the saints particularly, by virtue of union to him, as the members of his body, and in the first place; and the very same shall rise, and with the same numerical body, that were given to him, and believe in him: and this will be at the last of the last days, at the end of all things; and is mentioned to shew, that length of time will not hinder the resurrection of the dead, and in opposition to a Jewish notion, that the resurrection of the dead would be at the Messiah's coming: it will be at his second coming, but was not to be at his first; there was indeed then a resurrection of some particular persons, but not a general one of all the saints: that the Jews expect the resurrection of the dead when the Messiah comes, appears from their Targums, Talmuds, and other writers; so the Targumist on Hos. xiv. 8. "They shall be gathered from their captivity, they shall sit under the shadow of their Messiah, and the dead shall live, and good shall be multiplied in the land." And in the Talmud<sup>p</sup> it is said, "the holy blessed God will quicken the righteous, and they shall not return to their dust." The gloss upon it is, "the holy blessed God will quicken them in the days of the Messiah." And so the land of the living is said to be, "the land, whose dead live first in the days of the Messiah<sup>q</sup>." And hence R. Jeremiah desired to be buried with his clothes and shoes on, and staff in his hand, that when the Messiah came, he might be ready<sup>r</sup>: with which agree others of the more modern writers; so Kinchi on Isa. lxvi. 5. "They shall live at the resurrection of the dead, in the days of the Messiah." And the same writer on Jer. xxiii. 20. observes it is said, "ye shall consider, and not they shall consider; which intimates the resurrection of the dead in the days of the Messiah." And says Aben Ezra on Dan. xii. 2. "The righteous which die in captivity shall live, when the Redeemer comes;" though some of their writers differ in this point, and will not allow the days of the Messiah, and the resurrection of the dead, to be one and the same<sup>s</sup>.

Ver. 41. *The Jews then murmured at him, &c.*] When they found that he spoke of himself as the true bread, the bread of God, and bread of life, and as descending from heaven: and which was to be fed upon in a spiritual manner by faith, which they were ignorant of, and had no desire unto: and thus being disappointed of the delicious corporeal food they expected, they grew uneasy, and displeas'd, because he said *I am the bread which came down from heaven*; for though,

<sup>o</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 43. 4.

<sup>p</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 92. 1.

<sup>q</sup> T. Hieros. Kilaim, fol. 32. 3.

<sup>r</sup> T. Hieros. Kilaim, fol. 32. 3. col. 2.

<sup>s</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 82. 4.



as yet, he had not said this in so many words, and in this direct form, as afterwards, in ver. 51. yet he had said what amounted to it, and which might be easily gathered from ver. 35, 38. The Vulgate Latin reads, *I am the living bread*: and the Persic version, *I am the bread of life*. And this last renders the first clause mocked at him.

Ver. 42. *And they said, is not this Jesus the son of Joseph? &c.*] From murmuring they go to mocking and scoffing at his parentage and descent, and object this to his coming down from heaven; and intend by it to upbraid him with the meanness of his birth, being the son of Joseph, a poor carpenter; and suggest, that it was great arrogance in him to claim an heavenly original, and to ascribe such things to himself, that he was the bread of God, and the bread of life, and came from heaven: *whose father and mother we know?* for Capernaum and Nazareth were not at a great distance from each other; so that Joseph and Mary might be personally known by the inhabitants of Capernaum, and they might be intimately acquainted with them. *How is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?* they could not tell how to reconcile these things, not knowing either his miraculous conception and incarnation, nor his divine sonship; otherwise his being made of a woman, or born of a virgin on earth, is consistent with his being the Lord from heaven.

Ver. 43. *Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, &c.*] Either overhearing what they said, or knowing, as God, their secret murmurs, and private cavils among themselves, thus addressed them, *murmur not among yourselves*: meaning neither about his descent from heaven, nor about coming to him, and believing in him; for it follows,

Ver. 44. *No man can come to me, &c.*] That is, by faith, as in ver. 35. for otherwise they could corporeally come to him, but not spiritually; because they had neither power nor will of themselves; being dead in trespasses and sins, and impotent to every thing that is spiritual: and whilst men are in a state of unregeneracy, blindness, and darkness, they see no need of coming to Christ, nor any thing in him worth coming for; they are prejudiced against him, and their hearts are set on other things; and besides, coming to Christ and believing in Christ being the same thing, it is certain faith is not of a man's self, it is the gift of God, and the operation of his spirit; and therefore efficacious grace must be exerted to enable a soul to come to Christ; which is expressed in the following words, *except the father which hath sent me, draw him*: which is not to be understood of moral suasion, or a being persuaded and prevailed upon to come to Christ by the consideration of the mighty works which God had done to justify that he was the true Messiah, but of the internal and powerful influence of the grace of God; for this act of drawing is something distinct from, and superior to, both doctrine and miracles. The Capernaïtes had heard the doctrine of Christ, which was taught with authority, and had seen his miracles, which were full proofs of his being the Messiah, and yet believed not, but

murmured at his person and parentage. This gave occasion to Christ to observe to them, that something more than these was necessary to their coming to him, or savingly believing in him; even the powerful and efficacious grace of the father in drawing: and if it be considered what men in conversion are drawn off from and to, from their beloved lusts and darling righteousness; to look unto, and rely upon Christ alone for salvation; from that which was before so very agreeable, to that which, previous to this work, was so very disagreeable; to what else can this be ascribed, but to unfrustrable and insuperable grace? but though this act of drawing is an act of power, yet not of force; God in drawing of unwilling, makes willing in the day of his power: he enlightens the understanding, bends the will, gives an heart of flesh, sweetly allures by the power of his grace, and engages the soul to come to Christ, and give up itself to him; he draws with the bands of love. Drawing, though it supposes power and influence, yet not always coercion and force: music draws the ear, love the heart, and pleasure the mind. *Trahit sua quemque voluptas*, says the poet. The Jews have a saying<sup>1</sup>, that the proselytes, in the days of the Messiah, shall be all of them, גֵּרִים גְּרוּרִים, *proselytes drawn*: that is, such as shall freely and voluntarily become proselytes, as those who are drawn by the father are. *And I will raise him up at the last day*; see the note on ver. 40. compare with this verse Judg. iv. 7.

Ver. 45. *It is written in the prophets, &c.*] In the book of the prophets, as the Ethiopic version renders it: the Jews divided the books of the Old Testament into three parts, the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa; now in that division which was called the Prophets, are the following words: or in one of the prophets, namely, in Isa. liv. 13. so the Syriac version reads, *in the prophet*; though some think reference is had to more prophets, and more passages than one, as besides the above-mentioned, Jer. xxxi. 34. Mic. iv. 2. and *they shall be all taught of God*; by his spirit to know themselves, and Jesus Christ; that is, all that are ordained to eternal life, all that are given to Christ, and are chosen in him; all the children of Zion, and who are the children of God; these are all, sooner or later, in a special manner, taught of God: and which does not intend mere external instructions, and objective teachings by the ministry of the word, for many are so taught, who never come to Christ; but special teachings, such as are attended with the energy of divine grace, and the power of the spirit of God, who guides into all truth, savingly and spiritually: for this is to be understood of their being taught in the Gospel of Christ, and not in the law, as the Targum paraphrases it, "all thy children shall learn in the law of the Lord." And that this prophecy refers to Gospel times, is clear from the citation and application of the first verse of it, to the church in the times of the apostles, Gal. iv. 27. The Jews themselves acknowledge the prophecy belongs to the times of the Messiah, to which they expressly apply<sup>a</sup> the words in the fifth verse, *thy Maker is thy husband, &c.* And one of their modern commentators al-

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 2. & 24. 1.

<sup>a</sup> Shemot Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 102. 4.  
5 M 2

lows", that this very passage, *all thy children shall be taught of God*, refers, לעתיד, *to the time to come*; that is, to the times of the Messiah: in this citation, those words, *thy children*, are left out, to shew that the words are not to be restrained to the people of the Jews, as they might seem by that clause, and to whom the Jews would limit them: for so they say\*, "they are truly taught of God from whom prophecy comes, which does not to all the world, but to Israel only, of whom it is written, *and all thy children are taught of God.*" But our Lord, by these words, instructs us, and would have us observe, that all that the father hath given him, whether Jews or Gentiles, of whom he had been speaking in the preceding verses, should be taught of God; and so taught, as to be drawn and brought to him, and believe in him, and have everlasting life: wherefore he infers from hence, that every man, whether a Jew or a Gentile, that is taught of God, will come to him in a spiritual way, and trust in him for eternal life and happiness, as follows: *every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the father, cometh unto me*; every one that has heard the voice of the father's love, grace, and mercy in the Gospel, and has learned of him the way of peace, life, and salvation by Christ, under the influence of his grace, comes unto Christ; being encouraged by the declarations and promises of grace he has heard and learned, and ventures his soul on Christ, and commits it to him; trusting and relying on his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, for justification, pardon, atonement, acceptance with God, and eternal life.

Ver. 46. *Not that any man hath seen the father, &c.*] This is said, lest it should be thought from the above words, that our Lord meant that men should be so taught of God, as that they should visibly see the father, and vocally hear his voice, and be personally instructed by him; for his voice is not heard, nor his shape seen; see ch. i. 18. and v. 37. *save he which is of God*: who is begotten of him, and of the same nature and perfections with him, though a distinct person from him, and who was always with him, and lay in his bosom: *he hath seen the father*; has perfect knowledge of him, personal communion with him; has seen the perfections and glory of his person, and the thoughts, purposes, and counsels of his heart, his whole mind, and will, and all the grace, goodness, and mercy which is in him, and has declared it; see John i. 18.

Ver. 47. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, &c.*] This is a certain truth, and to be depended on: *he that believeth on me hath everlasting life*: not only he may have it, as in ver. 40. and shall have it, but he has it; he has it in Christ, his head and representative; he has it in the covenant of grace; he has it in faith and hope; he has a right unto it, and a meetness for it; he has the earnest of it, the grace and spirit of God; and he has the beginning and foretastes of it in his soul, and shall certainly enjoy it.

Ver. 48. *I am that bread of life.*] See the note on ver. 35.

Ver. 49. *Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, &c.*] All the while they were in the wilderness, for the space of forty years, till they came to the

borders of the land of Canaan; this was their only food on which they lived, during their travels through the wilderness. It is observable, that Christ says, *not our fathers, but your fathers*: for though Christ, as concerning the flesh, came of these fathers, yet in every sense they were rather theirs than his; because regard may be had to such of them more especially who ate the manna as common food, and not as spiritual meat, as typical of the Messiah, as others did; and whom these, their offspring, did very much resemble. Though perhaps the reason of the use of this phrase may be, because the Jews themselves had used it in ver. 31. and Christ takes it up from them. *And are dead.* This food, though it supported them in life for a while, could not preserve them from a corporeal death, and still less from an eternal one: for some of them not only died the first, but the second death.

Ver. 50. *This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, &c.*] Namely, that of which he had spoken ver. 32, 33, 35, 48. meaning himself: *that a man may eat thereof, and not die*: for this heavenly bread is soul-quickening, soul-strengthening, and soul-satisfying food; nor can there be any want where this is: eating of it is not to be understood corporeally, as these Carnalites took it; nor sacramentally, as if it was confined to the ordinance of the Lord's supper, which was not, as yet, instituted; but more largely of eating and feeding upon Christ spiritually by faith: he is, by the believer, to be fed upon wholly, and only; all of him, and none but him, and that daily; for there is the same need of daily bread for our souls, as for our bodies; and also largely and freely, as such may do; and likewise joyfully, with gladness and singleness of heart: such as are Christ's beloved, and his friends, may eat; they have liberty, a hearty welcome to eat; and so have every one that have a will, an inclination, a desire to eat; and all overcomers, whom Christ makes more than conquerors, Cant. v. 1. Rev. ii. 7, 17. and xxii. 17. which liberty is owing to Christ's gracious invitation, and to his and the father's free gift; and to the openness and ease of access of all sensible sinners to him: and the consequence and effect of such eating is, that it secures from dying, not from a corporeal death, to which men are appointed, and saints themselves are subject; though it is indeed abolished by Christ as a penal evil; nor shall his people continue under the power of it, but shall rise again to everlasting life: but then they are, through eating this bread, secured from a spiritual death; for though there may be a decline, as to the exercise of grace, and a want of liveliness, and they may fear they are ready to die, and conclude they are free among the dead, and that their strength and hope are perished; yet he that lives and believes in Christ, the resurrection, and the life, shall never die; and such are also secure from an eternal death, on them the second death shall have no power, nor shall they ever be hurt by it.

Ver. 51. *I am the living bread which came down from heaven, &c.*] This is the same with what is said in ver. 33, 35, 48. which is true of Christ, as he has life

\* Kimchi in loc.

\* Zohar in Exod. fol. 70. 1.

in him; and is the author and giver of life to others; and is of an heavenly original, and came from heaven to give life to men: and such is the virtue of this living and heavenly bread, that *if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever*: not a natural, but a spiritual life; a life of sanctification, which is begun here, and will be perfected hereafter; and a life of glory, which will never end: *and the bread that I will give is my flesh: or body*, as all the Oriental versions render it. Here our Lord explains more clearly and fully what he means, under the notion of bread; and which shews, that by bread he did not design merely his doctrine, but his flesh, his human nature; though not as abstracted from his deity, but as in union with it: *which I will give for the life of the world*; and which he did by the offering up of his body, and making his soul, or giving himself an offering, a propitiatory sacrifice for sin; which was done in the most free and voluntary manner, in the room and stead of his people, to procure eternal life for them, even for the whole world of his elect; whether among Jews or Gentiles; particularly the latter are here meant, in opposition to a notion of the Jews, that the world, or the Gentiles, would receive no benefit by the Messiah when he came; see the note on ch. iii. 16.

Ver. 52. *The Jews therefore strove among themselves, &c.*] Fell to cavilling and disputing one among another; some understanding Christ, and others not; some being for him, and vindicated what he said; and others being against him, and who were the majority, objected, *saying how can this man give us his flesh to eat?* which is to be understood, not physically, but as morally impossible and unlawful; since, with the Jews, it was not lawful to eat the flesh of any creature alive, and much less the flesh of man; for the Jews understood Christ of a corporeal eating of his flesh, being strangers to a figurative or spiritual eating of it by faith, in which sense he meant it.

Ver. 53. *Then Jesus said unto them, &c.*] The Jews, who were litigating this point among themselves: *verily, verily, I say unto you*: or you may assure yourselves of the truth of what follows, *except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you*: by the son of man, Christ means himself; under which title he often speaks of himself; because it was a title of the Messiah under the Old Testament; and was expressive of the truth of his human nature, though as attended with weakness and infirmities. The *flesh and blood* of Christ do not design those distinct parts of his body; much less as separate from each other; nor the whole body of Christ, but his whole human nature; or Christ, as having united a perfect human nature to him, in order to shed his blood for the remission of sin, and to offer up his soul and body a sacrifice for it: and the eating of these is not to be understood of a corporeal eating of them, as the Capernaïtes understood them; and since them the Papists, who affirm, that the bread and wine in the Lord's supper are transubstantiated into the very body and blood of Christ, and so eaten: but this is not to be understood of eating and drinking in the Lord's supper, which, as yet, was not instituted; and some, without participating of this, have spiritual life in them now, and will enjoy eternal life hereafter; and

all that partake of that ordinance have not the one, nor shall have the other: and besides, having a principle of spiritual life in the soul, is previously necessary to a right eating of the supper of the Lord. These words, understood in this sense, once introduced infants to the Lord's supper; as a misinterpretation of John iii. 5. brought in the baptism of them. But the words design a spiritual eating of Christ by faith. To eat the flesh, and drink the blood of Christ, is to believe that Christ is come in the flesh, and is truly and really man; that his flesh is given for the life of his people, and his blood is shed for their sins, and this with some view and application to themselves: it is to partake of, and enjoy the several blessings of grace procured by him, such as redemption, pardon, peace, justification, &c. and such a feeding upon him as is attended with growth in grace, and in the knowledge of him, and is daily to be repeated, as our corporeal food is, otherwise persons have no life in them: without this there is no evidence of life in them; not such live as feed on sinful pleasures, or on their own righteousness; only such that believe in Christ are living souls; and without this there's nothing to support life; every thing else that a man eats tends to death; but this is what will maintain and preserve a spiritual life; and without this there is no just expectation of eternal life; but where there is this, there is good reason to expect it, and such shall enjoy it: some copies and versions read, *ye shall not have life in you*: eternal life. Now, though the acts of eating and drinking do not give the right to eternal life, but the flesh, blood, and righteousness of Christ, which faith lays hold, and feeds upon; yet it is by faith the right is claimed; and between these acts of faith, and eternal life, there is an inseparable connexion.

Ver. 54. *Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, &c.*] Spiritually by faith, as explained in the preceding verse: *hath eternal life*: the principle of spiritual life, which is evidently implanted in him, as appears from his eating and drinking; and is a durable and lasting principle: grace is an incorruptible seed; every part of it is abiding and permanent; and it is itself the beginning, pledge, and earnest of everlasting life, and is inseparably connected with it: moreover, such have eternal life itself, not only in Christ their head, but in themselves: they have a right unto it, and a meanness for it: and may be assured of it, as if they were personally possessed of it, from their election to it; the security of it in Christ; from the grace they have received, which is the beginning of glory; and the earnest of it in themselves: and *I will raise him up at the last day*: to enjoy it in soul and body; see the notes on ver. 30, 40.

Ver. 55. *For my flesh is meat indeed, &c.*] Not in a corporeal, but in a spiritual sense; and the same is said of his blood: *and my blood is drink indeed*: that is, they are both truly meat and drink, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions render it; or are true meat and drink, as the Arabic version: in opposition to what was typical meat and drink; as the manna in the wilderness, the water out of the rock, the flesh and wine at the passover, the meat and drink offerings under the law, or any other meats and drinks under that dispensation; and which, though not when

Christ said these words, yet now are abolished, being unprofitable, and not to be fed upon. Moreover, these phrases may denote the reality, substance, and solidity of that spiritual food believers have in Christ, in opposition to the imaginary food of sensual sinners, who feed on ashes and bread of deceit; and to that of self-righteous persons, who spend their labour and money for, and live upon that which is not bread, even upon their works of righteousness; and to the superficial tastes of hypocrites and formal professors; and to the charge of enthusiasm; and even to the outward elements of bread, and wine, in the Lord's supper, since instituted; and as it may be attended upon by persons destitute of the grace of God. And these words may also be expressive of the virtue, efficacy, and excellency of this food, it being soul-quickening, nourishing, strengthening, satisfying, and delightful food, as well as spiritual and savoury; not to carnal persons, or outward professors, but to new-born babes, and true believers; and which, by them, may be had, and to the full, and that in due season, even every day, and is what will abide for ever.

Ver. 56. *He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, &c.*] In the sense above given; see the note on ver. 53. *dwelleth in me, and I in him.* There is a mutual in-dwelling of Christ, and believers; Christ is the habitation, or dwelling-place of his people: there is a secret dwelling in Christ; so the elect of God dwelt in the heart, and in the hands, and arms of Christ from everlasting; and as members in their head in election grace; and representatively in him, as the Mediator of the covenant; and they secretly and safely dwelt in him, when all mankind fell in Adam; and when he was on the cross, in the grave, and now he is in heaven; all which is owing to his own love, his father's gift, and to secret union to him. But there is an open dwelling in him in time, which is here meant: God's elect, as in their nature-state, are without Christ, and lie open to the law and justice of God; the spirit of God convinces them of this state, and directs them to flee to Christ, as a city of refuge; when they find him a strong hold, a place of defence, and a proper dwelling for them, where they resolve to abide, and do abide; and where they dwell safely, peaceably, comfortably, and pleasantly; and from which dwelling-place they will never be turned out. Likewise, the saints are the habitation or dwelling-place of Christ; he dwells not in their heads and tongues, but in their hearts, and by faith; which is here expressed, by eating his flesh, and drinking his blood; and which, though it is not the cause of Christ's dwelling here, yet is the means or instrument by which men receive him into their hearts, and retain him, and have communion with him; for he dwells in believers, not in such sense as he dwells in the world, by his omnipresence, and power; or in the human nature, by hypostatical union to it; but by his spirit, and by faith, which is an instance of wonderful condescending grace, and is owing to union to him, and is expressive of communion with him, and is what will continue for ever.

Ver. 57. *As the living father hath sent me, &c.*] Into the world, to be the Saviour of it; not by local

motion, but by assumption of human nature; and not against his will, or as having superiority over him; but by joint consent and agreement: the first person in the Godhead is here styled, *the living Father*; not because he is the father of spirits, of angels, and the souls of men; and the father of all men by creation, and of saints by adoption; and the father, or author of all mercies, spiritual and temporal; but because he is the father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and this character is peculiar to him: he is indeed the living God, and has life in himself, and is the fountain of life to others; but not in distinction from, and to the exclusion of the son, or spirit; but then none but he is the living father, who ever did, and ever will, live as the father of Christ: *and I live by the father*; which is to be understood of Christ, not as God, but as Mediator, and as man. As Mediator he was set up by his father, as the head of life to the elect; and was intrusted by him with a fulness of life for them; and was sent to open the way of life unto them, and bestow it on them. As man, he had his human life from God, and was preserved and upheld in it by him; and he laid it down at his command, and at his death committed his soul or spirit to him; and which was restored unto him, and is continued with him. The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, *for the father, or because of him*; and may design either that near union and conjunction of Christ with him, by virtue of which they live the same life; or else his living to the glory and honour of his father, as he did, and does: *so he that eateth me*; in a spiritual sense, by faith. The phrase of eating the Messiah was a familiar one, and well known to the Jews; though these Capernaïtes cavilled at it, and called it an hard saying. "Says Rab, the Israelites shall eat the years of the Messiah: (the gloss on it, the fulness which the Israelites shall have in those days) says R. Joseph, it is certainly so; but who shall eat him? shall Chellek and Billek (two judges in Sodom) אכלי לה, eat him? contrary to the words of R. Hillel, who says, Israel shall have no Messiah, for אכלורו, they ate him in the days of Hezekiah;" that is, they enjoyed him then; for he thought that Hezekiah was the Messiah; but that was the doctor's mistake. The Messiah now was, and to be enjoyed and eaten by faith in a spiritual sense, and every one that does so, *even he shall live by me*: such have their life from Christ; he is their food, on which they lived; and by him they are continued, upheld, and preserved in their spiritual life, and are by him brought to the life of glory; or they live for, or because of him, as the above versions render it; they derive their life from him, and because he lives, they live also; and they live to his glory, and will do so to all eternity.

Ver. 58. *This is that bread which came down from heaven, &c.*] That true bread, the bread of God, the bread of life, living bread; meaning himself, as in ver. 32, 33, 35, 48, 50, 51. *not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead*: this is bread of a quite different nature from that; that was only typical bread, this true; that was the bread of angels, but this is the bread of God; that came but from the air, this from

the third heaven; that men ate of, and died; but whoever eats of this, lives for ever; see ver. 49. as follows: *he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever*; see the note on ver. 51.

Ver. 59. *These things said he in the synagogue, &c.*] Openly and publicly, in the place of divine worship, where the Jews resorted for that purpose: *as he taught in Capernaum*; his own city, and where there was a synagogue, into which he often went and taught his doctrines, and wrought miracles; see Matt. iii. 13. and viii. 5, 14. and ix. 1, 2. and xii. 9.

Ver. 60. *Many therefore of his disciples, &c.*] Not of the twelve, nor of the seventy, but of the multitude of the disciples, who followed him from place to place, attended on his ministry, and might be baptized in his name; see John iv. 1. *when they had heard this; that his flesh and blood were truly and really meat and drink, and that none had life in them, or should have eternal life, but such as eat and drink the same: said, this is an hard saying; or it is to be objected to; so קשה, an hard thing, the word here used in the Syriac version, and קשה הוא עלי, it is to me a hard thing, are phrases used to express an objection in the Talmudic writings, where they are often met with: or it is difficult to be understood and received; so הרבר הקשה, an hard saying, or an hard cause, is a cause difficult to be tried and determined, Exod. xviii. 26. and is used of that which seems incredible and absurd, and is surprising and unaccountable: so it is said<sup>2</sup>, that "it happened to a certain woman, " that she came before R. Abika: she said to him, I have " seen a spot; he said to her, perhaps there is a wound " in thee; she answered him, yes, and it is healed; " he replied, perhaps it may be opened, and the blood " brought out; she answered him, yes; and he pronounced her clean. R. Abika saw his disciples " look upon one another; and he said unto them, " כה ודבר קשה, is this an hard saying with you?" is it a difficult thing with you? does it seem absurd to you? or are you surprised at it? any thing difficult, or which seems irreconcilable, is so called: so the slaying the passover between the two evenings is called by Aben Ezra, in Exod. xii. 6. בילה קשה, an hard saying. In like sense the phrase is used here; and the allusion may be to food that is hard of digestion, since Christ had been speaking of himself under the metaphors of bread and meat. As some of the doctrines of Christ are comparable to milk, which is easy of digestion; others are like to strong meat, which belongs to those of full age, and cannot be digested by children, by babes in Christ, and much less be received, ate, and digested, with ease and pleasure, by carnal minds; who therefore say, as these Capernautes did, *who can hear it?* this saying, or doctrine, concerning eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of Christ; or *him* Christ, who delivered this doctrine: such preaching, and such a preacher, are intolerable; there's no hearing, nor bearing them: hence we afterwards read, that these withdrew from the ministry of Christ, ver. 66.*

Ver. 61. *When Jesus knew in himself, &c.*] And of himself, without any intelligence from others, or hear-

ing what was said, being the omniscient God: *that his disciples murmured at it*; at the doctrine he had delivered, looking upon it as absurd, incredible, and contrary to sense and reason: *he said unto them, does this offend you?* or trouble you? can't you get over this? can't you understand it? or account for it? if not, how will you be able to digest some other things, or reconcile them to your minds, which are less known, and more unexpected, and will appear at first sight more surprising?

Ver. 62. *What and if ye shall see the son of man, &c.*] Meaning himself then in a state of humiliation, and was taken for a mere man, though the true Messiah, and son of God: *ascend up where he was before?* for Christ was, he existed before his incarnation, and he was in heaven before; not in his human nature, but as the word and son of God: and he intimates, that when he had done his work, and the will of his father, for which he came down from heaven, by the assumption of the human nature, he should ascend up thither again; and which would be seen, as it was, by his apostles; and which would prove that he came down from heaven, as he had asserted; see Eph. iv. 9, 10. and that his flesh and blood were not to be eaten in a corporeal sense; in which sense they understood him: and he hereby suggests, that if it was difficult to receive, and hard to be understood, and was surprising and incredible, that he should come down from heaven, as bread, to be eat and fed upon; it would be much more so to them to be told, that he who was in so mean and lowly a form, should ascend up into heaven.

Ver. 63. *It is the spirit that quickeneth, &c.*] It is the spirit of man that quickens him; or which being breathed into him, he becomes a living soul; for the body, without the spirit, is dead; it is a lifeless lump: and it is the spirit of God that quickens dead sinners, by entering into them as the spirit of life, and causing them to live: and it is spiritual eating, or eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of Christ in a spiritual sense, which quickens, refreshes, and comforts the minds of believers; 'tis that by, and on which they live, and by which their spiritual strength is renewed: unless, by spirit, is meant the divine nature of Christ, by which he was quickened and raised from the dead, and ascended up into heaven, and was declared to be the son of God with power: *the flesh profiteth nothing*; the human nature of Christ, though profitable, as in union with the son of God, to be given for the life of his people, and to be an offering, and a sacrifice for their sins, yet not as alone, or as abstracted from the divine nature; nor would his flesh and blood, corporeally eaten, could, or should it be done, be of any avail to eternal life; nor is any other flesh, literally understood, profitable of itself for life; for man lives not by bread, or meat, or flesh alone, but by the word and blessing of God upon it, and along with it; nor flesh, in a figurative sense, as creature acts and performances, self-righteousness, obedience to the ceremonial law, carnal descent, and birth-privileges: *the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life*; the doctrines which Christ had then been delivering concerning himself, his flesh and blood, being spiritually understood,

<sup>2</sup> Misn. Nidda, c. 8. sect. 3.

are the means of quickening souls. The Gospel, and the truths of it, which are the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, are the means of conveying the spirit of God, as a spirit of illumination and sanctification, into the hearts of men, and of quickening sinners dead in trespasses and sins: the Gospel is the spirit that giveth life, and is the savour of life unto life, when it comes not in word only, or in the bare ministry of it, but with the energy of the Holy Ghost, and the power of divine grace.

Ver. 64. *But there are some of you that believe not, &c.*] Notwithstanding the ministry they sat under, and the words they heard; for though they professed to believe in Jesus, as the Messiah, yet they did not truly believe in him; their faith was not a living faith, or of a spiritual kind, but a mere historical and temporary one, and was feigned and hypocritical: for *Jesus knew from the beginning*; of his ministry, and of their profession of him, being God omniscient, and the searcher of hearts: *who they were that believed not*; i. e. in him, as the Arabic version reads: notwithstanding their following him, and professing to believe in him, and the great outward respect and esteem they shewed to him, he could see through all those masks they put on, and knew they had no true faith of him in them; and the same knowledge he has of every professor of his name: he knows whether their faith is of the right kind or no; whether they have obtained the like precious faith with God's elect; or whether their profession is only a verbal one. In some copies it is read, *who they were that believed*; who were true believers, as well as who were hypocrites. *And who should betray him*: he not only knew how it was with the multitude of the disciples that professed love to him, and faith in him; but he also particularly knew the case of the twelve apostles, and that one of them should betray him, and who he was. This was determined in the decrees of God, and was foretold in the prophecies of the Old Testament, and was predicted by Christ; and the person was pointed at by him before it was done.

Ver. 65. *And he said, therefore said I unto you, &c.*] Referring to ver. 44. where the substance of what is here said, is there delivered; though the Ethiopic version reads, *therefore I say unto you*, what follows: *that no man can come to me, except it be given him of my father*; which is the same, as to be drawn by the father; for faith in Christ is the gift of God, and coming to him, is owing to efficacious grace, and is not the produce of man's power and free-will; see the note on ver. 44.

Ver. 66. *From that time many of his disciples went back, &c.*] Not any of the twelve apostles, for they are distinguished from these in the next verse; nor any of the seventy disciples, for their names were written in heaven, and could not apostatize totally and finally, as these did; but some of the multitude of the disciples, who followed Christ, heard him, and professed to believe in him, and were baptized in his name, but were not true disciples, only nominal ones: they had never heard and learned of the father, otherwise they would have known what it was to come to Christ, as the father's gift, and under the drawings of his grace; and would not have been offended at the words of our

Lord, just now spoken by him, concerning that sort of coming to him: but from the time he spoke those words; *because of this word*, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render it; they withdrew themselves from his ministry, they dropped their profession of faith in him, and relinquished him as a Saviour and Redeemer: for finding that he would not be made king, nor set up for a temporal redeemer; and talking of himself as the bread of life, and of coming to him, in a sense they did not understand; they turned their backs on him; and as the words may be literally read, *returned to the things that were behind*: to the world, and to their old companions, to Satan and their own hearts' lusts; like the dog to its vomit, and the swine to its wallowing in the mire: their true picture is drawn, in the parable of the unclean spirit going out of the man, and returning, Matt. xii. 43. And they returned to their quondam teachers, the Scribes and Pharisees, and to the law of works, and to seek for righteousness by it; setting up their own righteousness, and not submitting to the righteousness of Christ; and thus to look back and draw back, is a sad case indeed: *and walked no more with him*; never returned to him more, or went with him from place to place as before: never more attended on his ministry, or had any intimacy and fellowship with him: and so it commonly is with apostates from the profession of Christ; they seldom or ever return, or are recovered; it is difficult, if not impossible, which is sometimes the case, to renew them again to repentance.

Ver. 67. *Then said Jesus unto the twelve, &c.*] *To his own twelve*, as the Persic version reads; that is, to his twelve apostles, whom he had chosen to that office: Christ takes no notice of those that went away from him, he shewed no concern about them; he knew what they were, that the truth of grace was not in them, and that they did not belong to him, and therefore was not uneasy about their departure; but turns himself to his apostles, whom he dearly loved, and in a very tender manner thus said to them, *will ye also go away?* this he said, not as ignorant of what they were, or of what they would do in this case; he knew full well their faith in him, their love to him, and esteem of him, and close attachment to him, at least in eleven of them; nor did he say this, as having any fears or jealousies concerning them, by observing any thing in their countenances or gestures, which looked like a departure from him; but it was said out of a tender regard and strong affection for them: and 'tis as if he should have said, as for these men that have walked with me for some time, and have now turned their backs upon me, it gives me no concern; but should you, my dear friends and companions, go also, it would give me, as man, real pain and great uneasiness: or he might say this to shew, that as they were not pressed into his service, but willingly followed him, and became his disciples, being made a willing people by him, in the day of his power on them; so they willingly continued with him, and abode by him; as also to strengthen their faith in him, and cause them the more to cleave to him, with full purpose of heart, when others left him; as well as to draw out from them expressions of their regard for him, and faith in him, which end was answered.

Ver. 68. *Then Simon Peter answered him, &c.*] Who was strong in the faith of Christ, and full of zeal for him, and love to him; and who was the mouth of the apostles, and always forward to speak out of the abundance and sincerity of his heart, in their name; believing, that they all of them, for he had now no suspicion of Judas, no more than of the rest, had the same faith in Christ, love to him, and esteem of him, as he himself had; wherefore out of a good opinion of them, and love to Christ, he thus addressed him: *Lord*; or *my Lord*; as the Syriac version renders it; which was either a title of respect, and the same with *Sir* with us; or else, as acknowledging the dominion and authority of Christ, as Lord of all, and especially of the saints, and as claiming his interest in him; and which carries in it a reason, why he should abide by him: *to whom shall we go?* as a teacher, whose ministry we can attend upon, to greater profit and advantage? not to the Scribes and Pharisees, whose leaven, or doctrine, Christ had bid them beware of; who taught for doctrines the commandments of men, and were blind leaders of the blind; nor to John the Baptist, who had declared he was not the Messiah; but had pointed him out to them in his person, as the son of God; and in his office as the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of men; and perhaps, he might not be now living; and if he was, he would have encouraged them not to follow him, but abide with their master; so that there was no other, that was *better*, as Nonnus expresses it, that they could go unto; and therefore it would be folly and madness in them to leave him: and as it was with Peter and the rest of the disciples, so it is with all sensible sinners, and true believers, who see there is no other to go to for life and salvation, but Christ; not to the law of Moses, which accuses, curses, and condemns, and by which there is neither life nor righteousness; nor to any creature, or creature-performance, for there is a curse on him that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm; nor to their own righteousness, which is impure and imperfect, and cannot justify before God, nor answer for them in a time to come; nor to their tears of repentance, which will not satisfy the law, atone for sins, or wash them away; nor to carnal descent, birth-privileges, a religious education, sobriety, and civility, to trust to which, is to have confidence in the flesh, which will be of no avail; nor to ceremonial services, or moral duties, or even evangelical ordinances, neither of which can take away sin. There is no other Saviour, but Christ, to look to; no other Mediator between God and man, to make use of; no other physician of value, for diseased and sin-sick souls to apply unto; no other fountain but his blood, for polluted souls to wash in, and be cleansed; no other city of refuge, or strong hold, for souls sensible of danger, to flee unto and be safe; no other to come to as the bread of life, where hungry souls may be fed; no other place of rest, for those that are weary and heavy laden; nor is there any other, where there is plenty of all grace, and security from every enemy, as in him: and therefore, to whom can they have recourse, but unto him? and that for the following reason, *thou hast the words of eternal life*: meaning, either the promises of eternal life, which were made before the world began, and were put into Christ's hands, for his people, and

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

are yea and amen in him; or the doctrines of eternal life; for so the Gospel, and the truths of it, are called, Acts v. 20. and that because the Gospel brings life and immortality to light, gives an account of eternal life; of the nature of it, that it is a glorious life, a life free from all the sorrows of the present one; a life of pleasure, and of perfect knowledge and holiness, and which will last for ever: and because it points out the way to it, that it is not by the works of the law, but by the grace of God; that it is his free gift, through Christ; and that Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, or the true way to eternal life: and because it is a means of quickening dead sinners, and of reviving true believers, and of nourishing them up unto everlasting life: or this phrase may design the power and authority which Christ has, to dispose of, and dispense eternal life; for he has the thing itself in his hands, and a power to give it to as many as the father has given him; and to them he does give it: and each of these senses carry in them a reason why souls should go to Christ, and to him only, for life and salvation.

Ver. 69. *And we believe and are sure, &c.*] Or *know* of a certainty: they believed upon the first call of them by Christ, and their following of him, that he was the true Messiah; and they came to an assurance of it, by the miracles he wrought, and by the doctrines which he taught; their faith, how weak soever it might be at first, rose up to a full assurance of faith, and of understanding; there was a reality and a certainty in it, as there is in all true faith, with respect to the object, though not always with respect to interest in it; which former was the case here, as appears by what follows: *that thou art that Christ*; or Messiah, that was promised by God of old, spoken of by the prophets, and expected by the Jews; that anointed prophet Moses had spoken of, that should arise out of Israel, like unto him; that anointed priest, who, according to the oath of God, was to be a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek; and that anointed King, whom God has set over his holy hill of Zion: *the son of the living God*: this they knew, and were sure of, both by John's testimony, and by the father's voice from heaven; which three of them heard, at Christ's transfiguration on the mount: God the father is called *the living God*; though the Vulgate Latin version leaves out the word *living*: not to distinguish him from his son; for he also is the living God; and is so called, Heb. iii. 12. but to distinguish him from the idols of the Gentiles, who have no life nor breath in them: and Christ is called the son of the living God, as he is a divine person, as he is truly God; and to shew that he has the same life his father has; being a partaker of the same nature, and divine perfections: and this is another reason why sensible souls will go to Christ, and no other; because he is the Messiah, the Saviour, and Redeemer, and an able one; and because he is God, and there is none else.

Ver. 70. *Jesus answered them, &c.*] The disciples, taking Peter's answer to his question, as delivered in the name of them all, and as expressing their mind and sense: *have not I chosen you twelve*: not to grace and glory, to holiness and happiness; though this was true of eleven of them, but to be apostles: *and one of you is a devil?* or like to one, is a deceiver, a liar, and a murderer, as the devil is from the beginning; all which

5 N

Judas was, and appeared to be, in the betraying of his master. The Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, *is Satan*: which name, if given to Peter, as it once was on a certain occasion, Matt. xvi. 23. might very well be given to Judas; who, notwithstanding his profession of faith in Christ, was in the hands and kingdom of Satan, and under his influence and power: and this our Lord said, partly that they might not too much presume upon their faith and love, and steady attachment, and be over-confident of their standing;

and partly, to prepare them for the apostacy of one from among them.

Ver. 71. *He spake of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, &c.*] These are the words of the evangelist, pointing out the person Christ intended, lest any other should be suspected: *for he it was that should betray him*: as it was determined and foretold, and which Christ knew full well, and therefore said the above words: *being one of the twelve*: apostles, whom Christ had chosen, and which was an aggravation of his crime.

### C H A P. VII.

Ver. 1. *AFTER these things Jesus walked in Galilee, &c.*] That is, after he had fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, near Bethsaida; and had that long discourse with the Jews at Capernaum, concerning himself, as the bread of life, and about eating his flesh, and drinking his blood; and had been up to the feast of the passover at Jerusalem, said to be nigh, when he went over the sea of Galilee, ch. vi. 4. otherwise the above places were in Galilee: but the case seems to be this, that after he had been at Capernaum, he went to Jerusalem, to keep the passover; and finding that the Jews still sought to take away his life, he returned to Galilee, and *walked* there; he did not sit still, or lie at home, and live an inactive indolent life, but went about from place to place, preaching the Gospel, and healing diseases; he walked, and walked about; but not as the enemy of souls, seeking to do all mischief, but to do all good, to the bodies and souls of men: *for he would not walk in Jewry*: in the land of Judea, where he had been, and tarried, and made disciples; but being rejected and ill-treated, he left them; which was a prelude of the Gospel being taken from them, and carried to another people; which afterwards took place, in the times of the apostles: his reason for it was, *because the Jews sought to kill him*; for healing a man on the sabbath-day, and for asserting his equality with God: not that he was afraid to die, but his time was not come; and he had work to do for the glory of God, and the good of men; and therefore it was both just and prudent to withdraw and preserve his life; for like reasons he advised his disciples, when persecuted in one city, to flee to another: and very lawful and advisable it is for good men, when their lives are in danger, to make use of proper means to preserve them, for further usefulness in the cause of God, and for the benefit of men.

Ver. 2. *Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.*] Which began on the fifteenth day of the month Tisri, which answers to part of our September; when the Jews erected tents or booths, in which they dwelt, and ate their meals during this festival; and which was done, in commemoration of the Israelites dwelling in booths in the wilderness; and was typical of Christ's tabernacling in human nature; and an emblem of the saints dwelling in the earthly houses and tabernacles of their bodies, in this their wilderness and pilgrimage state. Some assign other reasons of this feast, as that it was appointed in commemoration of the divine command, for building the tabernacle; and others, that

it was instituted in memory of the protection of the people of Israel under the cloud, as they travelled through the wilderness; by which they were preserved, as in a tent or booth; and to this inclines the Targum of Onkelos, on Levit. xxiii. 43. which paraphrases the words thus, *That your generations may know, that in the shadow of the clouds, I caused the children of Israel to dwell, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt*: and one of the Jewish commentators<sup>a</sup> suggests, that the reason why the first place the Israelites pitched at, when they came out of Egypt, was called *Succoth*, which signifies *tents*, or *tabernacles*, is, because there they were covered with the clouds of glory: but the true reason of this feast is that which is first given, as is clear from Levit. xxiii. 43. and because they were obliged to dwell in tents, as soon as they came out of Egypt, therefore the first place they encamped at, was called *Succoth*, or *tabernacles*, Exod. xii. 37. Numb. xxxiii. 5. This feast was not kept at the time of year the people came out of Egypt; for that was at the time of the passover; but was put off, as it seems, to a colder season of the year; and which was not so convenient for dwelling in booths; lest it should be thought they observed this feast for the sake of pleasure and recreation, under the shade of these bowers; which, as appears from Neh. viii. 15, 16. were made of olive, pine, myrtle, and palm-branches, and branches of thick trees; and were fixed, some on the roofs of their houses, others in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God; and others in the streets: an account of the sacrifices offered at this feast, is given in Numb. xxix. 13—38. in which may be observed, that on the first day thirteen young bullocks were offered; on the second, twelve; on the third, eleven; on the fourth, ten; on the fifth, nine; on the sixth, eight; and on the seventh, seven; and on the eighth, but one. The Jews, in their Misna, have a treatise called *Succa*, or *the Tabernacle*, in which they treat of this feast; and which contains various traditions, concerning their booths, their manner of living in them, and other rites and usages observed by them, during this festival: they are very particular about the measure and form, and covering of their booths; a booth might not be higher than twenty cubits, nor lower than ten hands' breadth; and its breadth might not be less than seven hands' breadth by seven; but it might be carried out as wide as they pleased<sup>b</sup>, provided it had three sides: they might not cover their booths with any thing, but what grew out of the earth,

<sup>a</sup> Bual Hattoria in Numb. xxxiii. 5.

<sup>b</sup> Misn. Succa, c. 1. sect. 1. Maimon. Hiltch. Succa, c. 4. sect. 1.



or was rooted up from thence; nor with any thing that received uncleanness, or was of an ill smell, or any thing that was fallen and faded<sup>c</sup>: into these booths they brought their best goods, their best bedding, and all their drinking-vessels, &c. and left their houses empty; for here was their fixed dwelling; they only occasionally went into their houses<sup>d</sup>; for here they were obliged to dwell day and night, and eat all their meals, during the seven days of the feast; and however, it was reckoned praiseworthy, and he was accounted the most religious, who ate nothing out of his booth<sup>e</sup>: they were indeed excused when it was rainy weather, but as soon as the rain was over, they were obliged to return again<sup>f</sup>: and besides their dwelling and sleeping, and eating and drinking, in their booths, there were various other rites which were performed by them; as particularly, the carrying of palm-tree branches in their hands, or what they call the *Lulab*; which was made up of branches of palm-tree, myrtle, and willow, bound up together in a bundle, which was carried in the right hand, and a pome-citron in the left; and as they carried them, they waved them three times towards the several quarters of the world; and every day they went about the altar once, with these in their hands, saying the words in Psal. cxviii. 25. *Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord, O Lord I beseech thee, send now prosperity*: and on the seventh day, they went about the altar seven times<sup>g</sup>: also there were great illuminations in the temple; at the going-out of the first day of the feast, they went down to the court of the women; they made a great preparation (*i. e.* as Bartenora explains it, they set benches round it, and set the women above, and the men below); and there were golden candlesticks there, and at the head of them four golden basons, and four ladders to every candlestick; and four young priests had four pitchers of oil, that held a hundred and twenty logs, which they put into each bason; and of the old breeches and girdles of the priests, they made wicks, and with them lighted them; and there was not a court in Jerusalem, which was not lighted with that light; and religious men, and men of good works, danced before them, with lighted torches in their hands, singing songs and hymns of praise<sup>h</sup>; and this continued the six nights following<sup>i</sup>: there was also, on every one of these days, another custom observed; which was that of fetching water from the pool of Siloah, and pouring it with wine upon the altar, which was attended with great rejoicing; of which, see the note on ver. 37 of this chapter: to which may be added, the music that was used during the performance of these rites; at the illumination in the court of the women, there were harps, psalteries, cymbals, and other instruments of music, playing all the while; and two priests with trumpets, who sounded, when they had the signal; and on every day, as they brought water from Siloah to the altar, they sounded with trumpets, and shouted; the great *Hallel*, or hymn, was sung all the eight days, and the pipe was blown, sometimes five days, and sometimes six<sup>k</sup>; and even

on all the eight days; and the whole was a feast of rejoicing, according to Levit. xxiii. 40.

Ver. 3. *His brethren therefore said unto him, &c.*] That is, the brethren of Jesus, as the Syriac and Persic versions express it; who were not James and Joses, and Simon and Judas, the sons of Alpheus, the brother of Joseph, the husband of Mary, so called, Matt. xiii. 55. for some of these were of the number of the twelve; and all of them believers in Christ; whereas these his brethren were not. The Jew<sup>l</sup> therefore is mistaken, who supposed the above persons are here intended; and objects this their unbelief to Jesus, as if they knew him too well to give him any credit; whereas they did believe in him, and abode by him to the last; and some of them, if not all, suffered death for his sake. They therefore are to be understood of some distant relations of Mary or Joseph, that dwelt at Nazareth, or Capernaum, or in some of those parts; and the feast of tabernacles being at hand, they put him upon going up to it, being willing to be rid of him: saying, *depart hence*; which is the language of carnal men, who desire not the company of Christ, nor the knowledge of his ways; and like the Gergesenes, who preferred their swine to Christ, and desired him to depart out of their coasts: *and go into Judea*: among his most inveterate enemies, who sought to take away his life; and which doubtless they knew; which shewed a quite different regard to him, from that of his true disciples, ch. xi. 7, 8. for which they give some plausible reasons: *that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest*; meaning not his twelve disciples, who were now with him, but the disciples he had made, and baptized in Judea, ch. iv. 1, 2. Or his disciples in the several parts of the land, who would all be at Jerusalem, at the feast of tabernacles; and so, should he go, would have an opportunity of seeing his miracles, and thereby be the more confirmed in the faith of him.

Ver. 4. *For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, &c.*] For so they reckoned his doing miracles in such a corner of the land, and in so obscure a place as Galilee: *and he himself seeketh to be known openly*; suggesting hereby, that Christ was an ambitious person, and sought popular applause, and honour and glory from men, when nothing was more foreign from him; see ch. v. 41. and viii. 50. *If thou do these things*; for they question whether the miracles he wrought were real; and suspected that they were deceptions of the sight, and delusions; or at least they questioned their being done by him; and rather thought that they were done by diabolical influence, by Beelzebub the prince of devils: but if they were real ones, they advise him, saying, *shew thyself to the world*; or do these openly, and in the presence of the great men of the world; the princes of it, the rulers of the people, the chief priests and sanhedrim; and before all the males of Israel; who at this feast would come up from all parts of the land, and are for their multitude called the world: the reason of this their advice was, that if his miracles were real, and he was the person he would

<sup>c</sup> Misa. Succa, sect. 4, 5, 6. Maimon. ib. c. 5. sect. 1, 2, &c.

<sup>d</sup> Maimon. ib. c. 6. sect. 5.

<sup>e</sup> Misa. ib. c. 2. sect. 5, 6. Maimon. ib. sect. 6, 7.

<sup>f</sup> Maimon. ib. sect. 10.

<sup>g</sup> Misa. ib. c. 4. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Maimon. Hilch. Lulab, c. 7. sect. 5, 6, 9, 22.

<sup>h</sup> Misa. Succa, c. 5. sect. 2, 3, 4.

<sup>i</sup> Maimon. ib. c. 8. sect. 12.

<sup>k</sup> Misa. ib. c. 4. sect. 8, 9, & c. 5. 1, 4, 5. & Eracin, c. 2. sect. 9.

<sup>l</sup> R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 43. p. 434, 435.

be thought to be, the doing of them before such, would gain him great credit and esteem; and if not, he might be detected by such numbers, and by men of such penetration as were among them.

Ver. 5. *For neither did his brethren believe in him.*] At first they might take to him, and embrace him as the Messiah, and expect he would set up a temporal kingdom; in which they might hope, on account of their relation to him, according to the flesh to enjoy great honours and privileges; but finding that he was not inclined to any thing of that nature, and talked in a quite different way, they grew sick of him, and rejected him, as the Messiah; so, little regard is to be had, or confidence placed, in carnal descent from, or alliance to the best of men; as to Abraham, or any other true believer, if they have not the same grace, or the same faith as such have; and which comes not by blood, or natural generation, but by the free favour of God; for it matters not, if men have known Christ, or have been allied to him after the flesh, unless they are new creatures in him; they may be the one, and not the other; even the carnal brethren of Christ, and yet not believers in him; and 'tis only such who are so in a spiritual sense, that are regarded by him, Matt. xii. 49, 50.

Ver. 6. *Then Jesus said unto them, &c.*] In answer to their solicitations and arguments used with him, to go up to the feast: *my time is not yet come*; meaning, not the time of his death, or of his exaltation and glorification, or of the shewing of himself forth unto the world; though all this was true; but of his going up to this feast; as appears from ver. 8. *but your time is always ready*; intimating, they might go at any time; their lives were not in any danger, as his was, and had nothing to consult about the preservation of them; it was all one to them when they went up, whether before the feast, that they might be ready for it, or at the beginning, middle, or end of it, as to any notice that would be taken of them, unless they should be guilty of an omission of their duty; but not on any other account; which was not his case.

Ver. 7. *The world cannot hate you, &c.*] Because they were of the world, belonged to it; they were like unto it, and every like loves its like; and they were the world's own, and therefore instead of being hated, were loved by it; and they walked according to the course of it; and wicked men not only take pleasure in sin, but in them that do it: *but me it hateth*; though without a cause; that is, without a just cause, or reason; a cause there was, and it follows: *because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil*; even those works of it, which were reckoned good works; Christ bore his testimony of these, that they were evil; being done either not according to the command of God, but the traditions of the elders; or not from a right principle, as of faith and love, nor to a right end, as the glory of God; but only to be seen of men: and very severely did he inveigh against the pride, covetousness, hypocrisy, and uncleanness of the Scribes and Pharisees: and so he continued to do, and this drew upon him their hatred and ill-will.

Ver. 8. *Go ye up unto this feast, &c.*] Suggesting,

that he would not have them stay for him, or hinder themselves on his account: he encourages them to go up, and observe this festival; for the ceremonial law was not yet abolished; and though they were carnal men, and did not understand what it typified: and so unregenerate persons ought to attend on the outward means, as the hearing of the word, &c. though they do not understand it; it may be God may make use of it, for the enlightening of their minds; and blessed are they that wait at Wisdom's gates, and there find Christ, and life and salvation by him: *I go not up yet unto this feast*; this clause, in one of Beza's copies, is wholly left out; and in some, the word *this* is not read; and in others it is read, *I go not up unto this feast*: leaving out the word *yet*; and so read the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; and the Persic version only, *I do not go up*: which occasioned Porphyry, that great enemy of Christianity, to reproach Christ, as guilty of inconstancy, or of an untruth, since he afterwards did go up: but in almost all the ancient copies the word is read; and so it is by Chrysostom and Nonnus; and to the same sense the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, *I do not go up now to this feast*; that is, just at that very time, that very day or hour: which is entirely consistent with what is afterwards said, *for my time is not yet full come*; not to die, or to be glorified, but to go up to the feast.

Ver. 9. *When he had said these words unto them, &c.*] Had exhorted them to go up to the feast, and told them that he should not go yet, and the reason of it: *he abode still in Galilee*; and went not up with his brethren, nor at all at present; shewing hereby a firmness and resolution of mind, not using lightness of speech; and his words being not yea, and nay, but all of a piece, and by which he abode.

Ver. 10. *But when his brethren were gone up, &c.*] To the feast, as all the Oriental versions read, from the next clause: *then went he also up unto the feast*; the Ethiopic version reads, *he went up that day*; which is very likely, and no ways contrary to what is said, in ver. 14. for though he did not go up to the temple to teach, till the middle of the feast, he might be up at the feast sooner: and according to the law, it was necessary that he should be there on the first and second days, and keep the Chagigah, and make his appearance in the court; though there was a provision made for such that failed, the canon runs thus<sup>m</sup>; "he that does not make his festival sacrifice, on the first good day of the feast, may make it throughout the whole feast, and on the last good day of the feast; and if the feast passes, and he has not made the festival sacrifice, he is not obliged to a compensation; and of this it is said, Eccl. i. 15. *That which is crooked cannot be made straight*; &c." But however, whatever day he went on, he went up *not openly, but as it were in secret*: as he was made under the law, and came to fulfil all righteousness, it was necessary that he should observe every precept, and fulfil the whole law: and therefore he went up to this feast; yet in the most private manner, that he might escape those who would lie in wait for him, and sought to kill him: and this he did, not through fear of death,

<sup>m</sup> *Misn. Chagiga, c. 1. sect. 6. Maimon. Hilch. Chagiga, c. 2. sect. 4, 5, 6, 7.*

but because his hour was not yet come; this was not the feast he was to suffer at, but the passover following; which when near at hand, he went up to it, and entered Jerusalem in the most public manner.

Ver. 11. *Then the Jews sought him at the feast, &c.*] Some to take him and kill him, and others to hear his doctrine, and see his miracles: for all expected him at the feast, knowing it was always his custom, as it was his duty, as an Israelite, to attend at it: *and said, where is he?* not naming his name; either through contempt, which might be the case of the far greater part; or through fear of the Jews; or because that he was so well known.

Ver. 12. *And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him, &c.*] There was a general whisper, and a private controversy and contention among the people about him, upon inquiry being made after him: *for some said he is a good man*; a man of a good principle, of a good life and conversation; and who is good, kind, and beneficent, both to the bodies and souls of men; preaches good doctrine, and does many good things: *others said; nay, or denied him to be a good man: but he deceiveth the people*: drawing them off from the law of Moses, teaching them to break the sabbath, setting himself up for the Messiah, and asserting himself to be the son of God.

Ver. 13. *Howbeit, no man spoke openly of him, &c.*] So loud as to be overheard, at least by many, but in a secret and whispering way; or did not speak with freedom, or all their mind, what they really thought of him, nor with courage and boldness: *for fear of the Jews*; for fear of being mobbed by them, or taken up and prosecuted, or turned out of the synagogue; for a law was made, that whoever confessed him, should be so used; and this deterred persons from expressing the true sentiments of their minds about him.

Ver. 14. *Now about the midst of the feast, &c.*] About the fourth day of it, for it lasted eight days; this might be on the sabbath-day, which sometimes was בְּתוֹךְ הַדָּבָר, *in the middle of the feast*<sup>n</sup>; and the rather, since it follows, *Jesus went up into the temple*; as the Lord and proprietor of it, and as was his usual method; he had for some reasons kept himself retired till now, and now he appeared publicly: *and taught the people his doctrine*; he expounded the Scriptures, gave the true sense of them, and instructed the people out of them.

Ver. 15. *And the Jews marvelled, &c.*] Both at the matter, and manner of his doctrine; it was such, as never man spake; his words were so gracious, and there were such truth and evidence in them, and they were delivered with such power and authority, that they were astonished at them: *saying, how knoweth this man letters?* or *the Scriptures*, as the Arabic and Persic versions render it; which are called *holy letters*, 2 Tim. iii. 15. according to which, the sense is, that they were surprised at his knowledge of the Scriptures, that he should be conversant with them, and be able to interpret them, and give the sense and meaning of them, in so full and clear a manner, as he did: or else

the sense is, how came this man to be such a learned man? whence has he this wisdom, and all this learning which he shews? as in Matt. xiii. 54. So a learned man is in Isa. xxix. 11. said to be one that יָדַע הַסֵּפֶר, *knows letters*, as the Septuagint there translate the Hebrew text; but how Christ should know them, or be a learned man, *having never learned*, was surprising to them: that is, he had not had a liberal education, but was brought up to a trade; he was not trained up at the feet of any of their Rabbins, in any of their universities, or schools of learning; and in which they were certainly right. Modern Jews pretend to say he had a master, whom they sometimes call Elchanan<sup>o</sup>, but most commonly they make him to be R. Joshua ben Perachiah<sup>p</sup>: with whom they say, he fled into Alexandria in Egypt, for fear of Jaunai the king: and one of their writers<sup>q</sup>, on this account, charges the evangelist with a falsehood: but who are we to believe, the Jews who lived at the same time with Jesus, and knew his education and manner of life, or those that have lived ages since?

Ver. 16. *Jesus answered them and said, &c.*] Having heard them express their surprise, and state their objection: *my doctrine is not mine*: it was his, as he was God; as such, he was the author of it, it was from him, by the revelation of him; and it was of him, or he was the subject of it, as Mediator; it respected his person as God-man, his offices, as prophet, priest, and King, and his grace, righteousness, and salvation; and it was his, as preached by him as man; it came by him, and first began to be spoken by him; and was so spoken by him, as it never was before, or since: but it was not human; it was not acquired by him, as man; he did not learn it of man; he needed no human teachings; he increased in wisdom without them, from his infancy: they said right, in saying he had never learned; the spirit of wisdom and knowledge rested on him, and the treasures of them were hid in him; nor was it a device or invention of his, as man; it was not from himself as such, but it was from heaven, from his father: wherefore he adds, *but his that sent me*; thereby intimating, that it was of God, and was communicated to him by his father; from whom he received it, and from whom he had a commission to preach it; so that his doctrine was that wisdom which comes from above, and is pure and peaceable, divine and heavenly, and ought to be received by men.

Ver. 17. *If any man will do his will, &c.*] Meaning, not one that perfectly fulfils the law, which is the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God; for there is no man that does this, or can do it; nor is it so said here, *if any man do his will*, but *if any man will do it*; that is, is desirous of doing it; who has it wrought in him both to will and do, of the good pleasure of God, by his grace and spirit; with whom to will is present, though he has not power to perform, and so is a spiritual man; and who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, which is one branch of the will of God; and who depends upon the spirit and grace of God, and

<sup>n</sup> Misn. Saccas, c. 5 sect. 5.  
<sup>o</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 5.

<sup>p</sup> Juchasin, fol. 159. 1. Gauz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 21. 1. & 24.  
<sup>q</sup> R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 46. p. 435.

acts from a principle of love to God, and in the exercise of faith on Christ: *he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself*; not a man of mere natural knowledge and learning, or a man of theory and speculation, is a judge of doctrine; but he that leans not to his own understanding, and implores the assistance of the Divine Spirit, and who is for reducing doctrine into practice: he knows by the efficacy of the doctrine upon his heart, and the influence it has on his life and conversation; by its coming not in word only, but in power; and by its working effectually in him, whether it is divine or human, of God or of man.

Ver. 18. *He that speaketh of himself, &c.*] What he himself has devised, and is a scheme of his own; for which he has no divine warrant and commission; *seeketh his own glory*: honour and applause from men; as did the Scribes and Pharisees, who taught for doctrines the commandments of men, the traditions of the elders, their own glosses upon the law, and their own decisions and determinations: and as did the false teachers, who had nothing else in view but themselves, their worldly interest, or vain glory; these suited their doctrines to the minds and lusts of men, in order to gain their point: *but he that seeketh his glory that sent him*; that gave him in commission what he should say and speak, and his only; as did Christ, and so his apostles after him: *the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him*; he is an upright and faithful man, and what he says is truth; he brings true doctrine along with him, and there is no fraud or imposture in him; nor any insincerity in his heart, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it; nor any dishonesty in his conduct; he is no cheat or deceiver; was he, he would seek his own glory and interest; but as he appears to be a man of no design, his doctrine is to be depended on and received; and such was Christ.

Ver. 19. *Did not Moses give you the law, &c.*] After Christ had vindicated himself and his doctrine, he proceeds to reprove the Jews for their breaking the law, which contained the will of God: by which it appeared, that they were no proper judges of his doctrine, though they cavilled at it: the question he puts could not be denied by them; for though, properly speaking, God was the lawgiver, yet inasmuch as it was delivered by Moses, it is ascribed to him, and said to come by him; and it was put into his hands, to be delivered by him, peculiarly to the people of Israel; and being given to the Jewish fathers, not only for themselves, but for their posterity in ages to come, is said to be given to the then present generation; and may be understood, either of the whole system of laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, belonging to that people; or else of the particular law, concerning the keeping of the sabbath, which was a peculiar law of Moses, and proper to the children of Israel only: *and yet none of you keepeth the law*; though they boasted of it as a singular privilege, and rested in it, and their obedience to it for life and salvation, yet daily broke it in various instances, in thought, word, or deed; yea, those that sat in Moses's chair, and taught it, did not observe and do what they taught; nor could the most holy and righteous man among them perfectly keep it: and many of them,

who were most forward to censure others, for the violation of it, paid the least regard to it; and particularly to the law of the sabbath, which both priests and people transgressed, in one point or another, every sabbath-day: wherefore our Lord reasons with them, *why go ye about to kill me?* an harmless and innocent man, who never injured you in your persons and properties; and which is a proof of their not keeping that body of laws Moses gave them, since *thou shalt not kill* is one of them: though rather this may refer to the law of the sabbath, and the sense be, that since Moses had given them the law of the sabbath, and they did not keep it themselves, why should they seek to take away his life, for what they pretended was a breach of it? for our Lord here, as appears by what follows, refers to what they sought to do, above a year and a half ago, and still continued to seek after; namely, to kill him, because he had healed a man on the sabbath-day, ch. v. 16, 18, and vii. 1.

Ver. 20. *The people answered and said, &c.*] These seem to be the country-people, who came from Galilee and other parts, who knew nothing of the designs of the Jerusalem Jews upon him; nor were they his downright enemies at least, but rather seemed to favour him, and were on his side, though greatly provoked to hear him talk after this manner: *thou hast a devil*; or art possessed with one; thou talkest like one of the demoniacs, like a madman, one beside thyself; whom the devil has so much power over, and has so deprived of thy senses, that thou knowest not what thou sayest: *who goeth about to kill thee?* no man; for they could not believe that any man, or body of men, would be so wicked, as to attempt to take away the life of so harmless a person, and who did so much good both to the bodies and souls of men.

Ver. 21. *Jesus answered and said unto them, &c.*] Taking no notice of their passion, reproach, and blasphemy; but proceeding upon the thing he had in view, and which he was determined to reassume, and vindicate himself in; *I have done one work*; that is, on the sabbath-day; meaning, his cure of the man that had had a disorder eight-and-thirty years, who lay at Bethesda's pool; which single action, they charged with being a breach of the sabbath, he mentions with a view to their many, and daily violations of it: *and ye all marvel*; at it, as a thing unheard-of, as a most shocking piece of iniquity, as an intolerable evil; wondering that any man should have the front, to bid another take up his bed and walk, on the sabbath-day: they did not marvel at the miracle that was wrought; but were amazed, offended, and disturbed, at its being done on the sabbath-day.

Ver. 22. *Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision, &c.*] The command of circumcision, which he renewed and established, Lev. xii. 3. (*not because, or that it is of Moses*; originally, or that he was the first giver of it, for it was enjoined before his time; this is a correction of what is before said, giving a more accurate account of the rise of circumcision: *but of the fathers*;) Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom it was enjoined by God, and who practised it before the times of Moses; so that this command was in force before him, and obligatory upon the descendants of

Abraham, before he delivered it; and would have been, if he had never mentioned it; though the Jews say, "we don't circumcise because Abraham our father, on whom he peace, circumcised himself and his household; but because the holy blessed God commanded us by Moses, that we should be circumcised, as Abraham our father was circumcised." But no doubt it would have been binding on them, if Moses had said nothing about it; the command to Abraham is so express, for the circumcision of his male offspring, Gen. xvii. 10, 11, 12. however, it being both of Moses and of the fathers, laid a very great obligation on the Jews to observe it: *and ye on the sabbath-day, circumcise a man*: a male child, as they did, when the eighth day fell on a sabbath-day; for the law of circumcision was before the law of the sabbath, and therefore was not to be made void by it, nor was it made void by it; and so much is intimated by our Lord's observing, that it was not of Moses, but of the fathers; and this is the reason which the Karaites give for circumcision on the sabbath-day: for "say they, because it is a former command, from the time of Abraham our father, on whom he peace, before the giving of the law of the sabbath, *היו מלים בשבת, they circumcise on the sabbath-day*, and when the command of the sabbath afterwards took place, it was not possible it should disannul circumcision on the sabbath-day; and for the same reason, they also allow the sacrifice of the passover to be done on the sabbath-day, because it is a command which went before the command of the sabbath." And this was also the sense and practice of the other Jews: thus citing the law of Moses in Lev. xii. 3. *And in the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised*, by way of gloss upon it add, *ואפילו בשבת, and even on the sabbath-day*<sup>1</sup>; and on the same text another writer observes<sup>2</sup>, that by Gematry, every day is fit for circumcision. R. Jose says<sup>3</sup>, "they do all things necessary to circumcision, on the sabbath-day." R. Abika says<sup>4</sup>, "all work that can be done on the evening of the sabbath, does not drive away the sabbath; but circumcision, which cannot be done on the evening of the sabbath, drives away the sabbath: they do all things necessary to circumcision; they circumcise, and make bare, and suck, and put (on the wound) a plaster and cummin; and which, if not bruised on the evening of the sabbath, they may chew with their teeth."—Also it is allowed<sup>5</sup>, to "wash the infant on the third day of circumcision, which happens to be on the sabbath." Moreover, a case is put after this manner<sup>6</sup>; "if a man has two infants, one to be circumcised after the sabbath, and the other to be circumcised on the sabbath, and forgets, and circumcises that, that was to be after the sabbath, on the sabbath, he is guilty of sin; if one is to be circumcised in the evening of the sabbath, and the other on the sabbath, and he

forgets, and circumcises that which should be on the evening of the sabbath, on the sabbath, R. Eliezer pronounces him guilty, but R. Joshua absolves him." And we have an instance<sup>7</sup> of "R. Sheshana, the son of R. Samuel bar Abdimo, that when he was to be circumcised, it was the sabbath-day, and they forgot the razor; and they inquired of R. Meni and R. Isaac ben Eleazar, and it was "drove off to another day." From all which it appears, that circumcision on the sabbath-day, was a common practice, and which confirms the assertion of Christ.

Ver. 23. *If a man on the sabbath-day receive circumcision, &c.*] As it was certain in many instances he did: *that the law of Moses might not be broken*; either the law concerning circumcision, which confirmed the law given to Abraham, and required it should be on the eighth day, let it fall when it would, even on a sabbath-day; and therefore on that day, male children received circumcision, that that law might be kept, and not be broken: or else the law concerning the sabbath; and the sense be, if circumcision was administered on the sabbath-day, *without breaking the law of Moses*, as some render the words, which commanded the observation of the sabbath, *are ye angry at me*; and pursue me with so much wrath and bitterness, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath-day? or a man that was whole, sound on the sabbath-day; who was wholly, or all over disordered, every limb of whom shook with the palsy: or as some think the sense is, he was made every whit whole, both in soul and body; and then the argument is, if it was no breach of the sabbath to make a wound, and lay a plaster on it, as in circumcision; it would be no violation of it, nor ought any to be offended with it, that Christ should heal a diseased man, who was so in every part of his body, and restore health to his soul likewise: and nothing is more common with the Jews than to say, the danger of life, and *פיקוח נפש, the preservation of the soul*, or life, drive away the sabbath<sup>8</sup>.

Ver. 24. *Judge not according to the appearance, &c.*] Or through respect of persons, and so as to please men, the Scribes and Pharisees; who had condemned the action of Christ, in curing the diseased man on the sabbath-day, and sought to kill him for it: *but judge righteous judgment*: give your sense and judgment of things, according to the truth and evidence of them; and don't find fault with that, which you yourselves allow of, and which Moses and his law, and your own practices, justify.

Ver. 25. *Then said some of them of Jerusalem, &c.*] Who were inhabitants of Jerusalem, and so are distinguished from the people, ver. 20. who came up out of the country to the feast; so Jose ben Jochanan is called *איש ירושלים, a man of Jerusalem*<sup>9</sup>; that is, an inhabitant of it: now these men living in the city, knew more of the temper and disposition, the designs

<sup>1</sup> Maimon. in Misn. Chollin, c. 7. sect. 6.

<sup>2</sup> R. Eliahu in Adderet apud Trigland. de Sect. Karzorom, c. 9. p. 134.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 132. 1. Mitzvot Torat, pr. Affirm. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Baal Haturim in Lev. xii. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Misna Sabbat, c. 13. sect. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Misna Sabbat, c. 19. sect. 1, 2. T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 69. 2. Maimon. Hitchot Milah, c. 2. sect. 6, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Ib. sect. 3. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 8. fol. 70. 3. Maimon. ib. sect. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Ib. sect. 4. T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 19. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Juchasin, fol. 105. 2.

<sup>10</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 132. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 4, 5.

and attempts, of the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, to take away the life of Christ; and therefore say, *is not this he whom they seek to kill?* they knew that they had formed a design to kill him, ever since the pass-over before the last; when he wrought the miracle referred to in the text, and that they had been ever since plotting against his life, and were now at this feast seeking an opportunity to lay hold on him and kill him.

Ver. 26. *But lo, he speaketh boldly, &c.*] And with great freedom, and openly and publicly in the temple, as if he had a licence from the chief priests for so doing: *and they say nothing to him; don't contradict him, or forbid him speaking; he goes on without control; though he takes great liberty in charging the Jews with an intention to kill him, in arguing from their practices in vindication of himself, and in suggesting that they judged in favour of men, and not according to the truth of things. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?* have they changed their minds concerning him, and so their conduct towards him? are they convinced, and do they know by plain demonstrations, and full proof, that he is really the Messiah that has been promised of old, and long expected?

Ver. 27. *Howbeit, we know this man whence he is, &c.*] They signify, that if the rulers had altered their minds, and had gone into the belief of Jesus of Nazareth being the Messiah, they should not follow them in it, for this reason; because they knew from whence he came; meaning not so much the place of his birth, which they supposed was Galilee, and Nazareth in Galilee, in which they were mistaken, as the manner of his birth, which they could account for: they pretended to know his extract, that he was the son of Joseph and Mary, that he was begotten in wedlock, and was born as other persons are; there was no difficulty with them in accounting for his coming into the world, no more than any other ordinary person; his descent from Joseph and Mary was well known to them, and to be accounted for in a rational way, and therefore concluded he could not be the Messiah: *but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is;* they knew the place from whence he was to come; so the chief priests and Scribes did, Matt. ii. 4, 5. and so did these Jews, ver. 42. They knew he would come from Bethlehem, and they knew that he would come out of the seed of David; but then he was to be born of a virgin, according to Isa. vii. 14. and such a coming into the world was not to be known, reasoned upon, and accounted for: wherefore since Jesus, according to the notion of these men, came into the world in the common and ordinary way, they thought they had an invincible argument against his being the Messiah; and therefore, let their rulers do what they would, for their parts, they were determined to reject him: and because it could not be known from whence the Messiah should come; hence the ancient Jews used to call him the seed which comes from another place: not from the place from whence seed ordinarily comes, from the loins of men, but from some

other place they knew not where: their words are very remarkable on that passage in Gen. iv. 25. *and she called his name Seth, for God hath appointed me another seed, &c.* This observation is made by R. Tanchuma, in the name of R. Samuel<sup>4</sup>; says he, “has respect to that seed, which is he that comes, מִכֹּקֶם אֲדָרָה, *from another place*, and what is this? “this is the King Messiah.” And elsewhere<sup>5</sup>, the same Rabbi observes on those words in Gen. xix. 32. *that we may preserve seed of our father:* it is not written, *that we may preserve a son of our father*, but *that we may preserve seed of our father;* and that which is he that comes from another place; and what is this? this is the King Messiah. The modern Jews<sup>6</sup> endeavour to explain away the sense of this phrase, *another seed*, as if it regarded strange seed; and that the sense of the expression is only, that the Messiah should spring from the family of Moab, and from Ruth the Moabitess: nor is their sense what Aquinas<sup>7</sup> attributes to the Jewish Rabbins, “that the more noble part of that mass, of which Adam was made, remained untouched (by sin), and was afterwards transfused into Seth; and so through all descending from him, unto Joakim, or Eliakim, or Heli, the father of the virgin, out of which the body of the blessed Virgin was made:” which is no other than a Popish device, fathered upon the Jews, and made for the sake of the Virgin Mary, rather than for the sake of Christ. But their meaning is, that Christ should not be begotten of man, or come into the world in the ordinary way of generation, but should be born of a virgin; and so it could not be known, and accounted for from whence he was, or from whence that seed was of which he was made. The angel gives the best account of this in Luke i. 35. a body was prepared for Christ by the Lord; it was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost; his birth of a virgin was miraculous; it is beyond the comprehension of men, and can't be explained by any mortal; from whence he is it can't be said; no man can be pointed to as his father; all that can be said is, he was made of a woman, a virgin.

Ver. 28. *Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, &c.*] Overhearing the reasonings of these men, or, however, knowing what they said; so the Persic version adds, *having secretly known this;* exalted his voice as he was teaching in the temple, and in the midst of his discourse, publicly before all the people, in the temple, spoke out with a loud voice, that all might hear: *saying, ye both know me, and ye know whence I am;* some, as the Ethiopic version, read these words by way of interrogation, *do ye both know me, and do ye know from whence I am?* no; you do not. Or they may be considered as an ironical concession; yes, you know me, and you know whence I am; you know me to be Jesus of Nazareth, but you are wrong, I am not of Nazareth; you suppose I come from Galilee, but that is your ignorance; you take me to be the real son of Joseph, to be begotten by him on Mary, but that is your mistake: such is your knowledge of me: you know me indeed who I am, and from whence I come. *And I am not come of myself; into*

<sup>4</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 20. 4. Midrash Ruth, fol. 36. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 51. fol. 46. 1. Midrash Ruth, fol. 35. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Mattanot Cehunah & Jade Mosch in ib.

<sup>7</sup> In 3 sent. distinct. 3. art. 2.

this world, by incarnation, or the assumption of human nature, to work out the salvation of men; the father called him to it, and he agreeing to do it, was in the fulness of time sent about it; this was not a device of his own, or an honour he took to himself; he was not alone in it; it was a mutual agreement between him and his father, in consequence of which he was sent and came. *But he that sent me is true*; to the covenant he made with Christ, and to the promises he made to the fathers of the Old Testament, concerning the mission of his son; and he is true to be believed, in the testimonies he gave of him, particularly by a voice from heaven, declaring him his beloved son. *Whom ye know not*; so that notwithstanding all their boasted knowledge of him, they knew not his father, from whence he came, and by whom he was sent; and notwithstanding also their boasted knowledge of the one, only, true, and living God, see Rom. ii. 17. yet they knew him not in a spiritual sense; they knew him not in Christ, nor as the father of Christ; they knew neither the father nor the son: and this their ignorance of both was the reason of their hatred of Christ, and of his followers, John xv. 21. and xvi. 3.

Ver. 29. *But I know him, &c.*] His nature and perfections, his purposes and promises, his council and covenant, his mind and will; and indeed none knows him but he, and those to whom he pleases to reveal him; and there is good reason why he should have intimate and perfect knowledge of him: *for I am from him*; being the only-begotten of him, and as such lay in his bosom, and knew him, and his whole heart, and was privy to all of him, and that that is within him; *and he hath sent me*; in an office-capacity to redeem his people. This is the original descent of Christ, which the Jews knew not, though they pretended to know him, and whence he was.

Ver. 30. *Then they sought to take him, &c.*] By force, and carry him before the sanhedrim, in order to be tried and condemned as a blasphemer, being enraged to hear him claim a descent from God, whom they took to be a mere man, the son of Joseph the carpenter: *but no man laid hands on him*; though they had a good will to it, they had no power to do it, being restrained by the secret providence of God from it, and awed by the majesty of Christ, which shewed itself in his looks and words; and perhaps also they might be afraid of the people, lest they should rise in his favour; and so every man being fearful of being the first that should seize him, no man did: however, so it was ordered by divine providence, that he should not be apprehended at this time, *because his hour was not yet come*; to suffer and die, to depart out of this world, and go to the father: there was a precise time fixed for this in the council and covenant of God, by mutual compact, called *due time*; as his coming into the world is called *the fulness of time*; nor could he die before that time, and therefore no man was suffered to lay hands on him, whatever good will he had to it. And there is a time for every man's death, nor can any man die before that

time, or live beyond it; see Eccles. iii. 2. Job xiv. 5. and this is the sense of the ancient Jews; for they say<sup>h</sup>, "a man before his years, or his time, does not die," that is, before he comes to the years appointed for him: and they ask<sup>i</sup>, "who is there that goes before his time? *i. e.* dies before his time?" And it is said<sup>k</sup> of a certain person who was in his house, and *בשעת מותו*, *his time was come*; and he died without sickness: though it must be owned some of them were otherwise minded, and say<sup>l</sup>, that death, by the hand of heaven, or God, shortens a man's years; and that there are some reasons for which righteous men depart out of this world before their time is come; and particularly of Enoch they say, *God took him before his time was come*<sup>m</sup>.

Ver. 31. *And many of the people believed on him, &c.*] Whilst some were displeased at his doctrine, others were induced by his miracles to believe on him, as an extraordinary person, if not the Messiah; and these were the common people, especially those that came out of the country; for the city Jews, and above all the rulers, were very averse to him: and it is easy to observe, that faith in Christ, and true religion, spread and flourish most among the meaner sort of people. *And said, when Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?* referring not so much to the miracles many of them might have seen done by him in other parts of Judea, and in Galilee; nor only to those he had done in the preceding feasts at Jerusalem, but to those that were done by him now, though not recorded by the evangelist. The Jews expected many miracles to be wrought by the Messiah when he came, and they had good reason for it from Isa. xxxv. 5, 6. To these Christ sends John the Baptist, and the Jews, for proofs of his being the Messiah, Matt. xi. 4. John x. 37, 38. and by these he was approved of God as such, Acts ii. 23. And it is certain that the ancient Jews expected miracles in the days of the Messiah. "Says R. Simeon to Eleazar his son, Eleazar, at the time that the King Messiah is raised up, how many signs and other wonders will be done in the world? a little after, from that day all the signs, and wonders, and mighty works, which the holy blessed God did in Egypt, he will do to the Israelites, as it is said, Mic. vii. 15. according to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt, will I shew unto him marvellous things." So the Targumist on Isa. liii. 8. paraphrases thus, "from afflictions and punishment he will deliver our captivity, and the wonderful things which shall be done for us in his days, who can tell?" It is true indeed that the modern Jews have laid aside such expectations, and pretend they were not looked for formerly. Maimonides says, "let it not enter into thy heart, that the King Messiah hath need to do signs and wonders (as that he shall renew things in the world, or raise the dead, and the like; these are things which fools speak of); the thing is not so." And he instances in Ben Coziba, who set up for the Messiah, of whom R. Akiba, and the rest of

<sup>h</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 114. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 29. 1. & Bava Metzia, fol. 85. 1.

<sup>i</sup> T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 4. 2.

<sup>k</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 71. 4

VOL. L.—NEW TEST.

<sup>l</sup> Piske Tosephot. Sabbat, art. 113.

<sup>m</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 4. 4.

<sup>n</sup> Ib. fol. 3. 4. & 4. 2.

<sup>o</sup> Hilchot Melakim, c. 11. sect. 5.

the wise men of that age, did not require a sign or miracle: yet this same writer elsewhere says<sup>p</sup>, that "all nations shall make peace with the Messiah, and "serve him, because of his great righteousness, and "the miracles which shall be done by him."

Ver. 32. *The Pharisees heard that the people murmured, &c.*] Or whispered, privately talked among themselves: *such things concerning him*: as that surely he must be the Messiah, since such wonderful things were done by him, and might also express some uneasiness and surprise, that the rulers did not receive him as such: *and the Pharisees, and the chief priests, sent officers to take him*: and bring him before the sanhedrim, by them to be condemned, and so a stop be put to the people's receiving him, and believing in him as the Messiah; fearing, that should things go on at this rate, their principles and practices would be rejected, and their persons and authority be brought into contempt.

Ver. 33. *Then said Jesus unto them, &c.*] To the officers that were sent to take him, and other unbelieving Jews that were about him: *yet a little while am I with you*: no longer than till the next passover, which was but about half a year at most: this he might say, partly to quicken the attention of the people to him, to make the best use and improvement of his ministry whilst they had it, since in a little time he would be removed from them; and partly to suggest to the officers that were sent to take him, that they, and their masters, need not have given themselves that trouble, for in a short time he should be gone from them, and till that time he should continue in spite of them. *And then I go unto him that sent me*: still confirming his mission from God, expressing his death by going, and as being voluntary, and signifying his glory and happiness after it.

Ver. 34. *Ye shall seek me, &c.*] That is, the Messiah, who he was; meaning, that after his departure they should be in great distress, and be very much on the inquiry after, and solicitous for the coming of the Messiah, to be a Redeemer and Deliverer of them out of their troubles: *and shall not find me*; no Messiah will appear, no Saviour will be sent, no Redeemer will come to relieve them; they shall inquire, and look for one in vain, as they did. *And where I am, thither ye cannot come*: intimating hereby, that not only their temporal estate and condition would be very distressed and miserable, but also their eternal estate; since they should not be able to come where he would be in his human nature, and where he now was as a divine person, namely, in heaven.

Ver. 35. *Then said the Jews among themselves, &c.*] That is, the unbelieving, scoffing Jews; it may be the officers, at least some of them, that were sent to take him: *whither will he go that we shall not find him?* what distant, or obscure part of the world will he betake himself to, and there hide himself, that so he cannot be found? *will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles?* or Greeks; and so may design the Jews,

who were scattered abroad in the times of the Grecian monarchy, under the successors of Alexander, and particularly Antiochus, in distinction from the Babylonish dispersion; or the strangers scattered through Pontus Galatia, &c. to whom Peter writes, 1 Pet. i. 1. The Arabic version renders it, *the sect of the Greeks* by which the Hellenistic Jews seem to be meant: or the Jews in general, wherever, and by whomsoever scattered, who might be thought to be more ignorant than the Jews in Judea, and therefore more easily to be imposed upon: hence, in a flouting manner, they inquire, whether he'll go to those when he is rejected by them. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, *will he go into the countries, or country of the Gentiles*; into Heathen countries, not to the Jews there, but to the Gentiles themselves: *and teach the Gentiles?* suggesting, that he was more fit to be a teacher of them, than of the Jews, and might meet with more encouragement and success among them, who would not be able to detect him.

Ver. 36. *What manner of saying is this that he said, &c.*] It is not easy to be understood; and if that is not meant, which is suggested, what should he mean by saying, *ye shall seek me, and shall not find me, and where I am, thither ye cannot come?* repeating the words of Christ just now expressed by him.

Ver. 37. *In the last day, that great day of the feast, &c.*] That is, of tabernacles, as appears from ver. 2, which was usually called *דן, the feast*, in distinction from the passover and Pentecost<sup>1</sup>; and the eighth day of it was called *האחרון, הרגל, the last day of the feast*<sup>2</sup>, as here: and it was a *great day*, being, as is said in Lev. xxiii. 36. an holy convocation, a solemn assembly, in which no servile work was done, and in which an offering was made by fire unto the Lord. According to the traditions of the Jews, fewer sacrifices were offered on this day than on the rest; for on the first day they offered thirteen bullocks, and lessened one every day; so that on the seventh day, there was but seven offered, and on the eighth day but one, when the priests returned to their lots, as at other feasts<sup>3</sup>: but notwithstanding the Jews make out this to be the greater day for them, since the seventy bullocks offered on the other seven days, were for the seventy nations of the world; but the one bullock, on the eighth day, was peculiarly for the people of Israel<sup>4</sup>: and besides, they observe, that there were several things peculiar on this day, as different from the rest; as the casting of lots, the benediction by itself, a feast by itself, an offering by itself, a song by itself, and a blessing by itself<sup>5</sup>: and on this day they had also the ceremony of drawing and pouring water, attended with the usual rejoicings as on other days; the account of which is this<sup>6</sup>: "the pouring out of "water was after this manner; a golden pot, which "held three logs, was filled out of Siloah, and when "they came to the water-gate, they blowed (their "trumpets) and shouted, and blowed; (then a priest) "went up by the ascent of the altar, and turned to the "left hand, (where) were two silver basons—that on

<sup>p</sup> In Misn. Sanhedrin c. 11. sect. 1.

<sup>1</sup> Shirshashirim Rabba, fol. 5. 3. & 7. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 7. sect. 6. & Maimon. in ib.

<sup>3</sup> Bartenora in Misn. Succa, c. 5. sect. 6.

<sup>1</sup> T. Bab. Succa, fol. 55. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 21. fol. 231. 1.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bab. Succa, fol. 48. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Misn. Succa, c. 4. sect. 9.



“ the west side was filled with water, and that on the east with wine; he poured the bason of water into that of wine, and that of wine into that of water.” At which time there were great rejoicing, piping, and dancing, by the most religious and sober people among the Jews; insomuch that it is said <sup>2</sup>, that “ he that never saw the rejoicing of the place of drawing of water, never saw any rejoicing in his life.” And this ceremony, they say <sup>3</sup>, is a tradition of Moses from Mount Sinai, and refers to some secret and mysterious things; yea, they plainly say, that it has respect to the pouring forth of the Holy Ghost <sup>4</sup>. “ Says R. Joshua ben Levi, “ why is its name called the place of drawing water? “ because, from thence שואבֵים רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ, *they draw the Holy Ghost*, as it is said, and ye shall draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation, Isa. xii. 3.” Moreover, it was on this day they prayed for the rains for the year ensuing: it is asked <sup>5</sup>, “ from what time do they make mention of the powers of the rains (which descend by the power of God)? R. Eliezer says, from the first good day of the feast (of tabernacles); R. Joshua says, from the last good day of the feast.—They don't pray for the rains, but near the rains;” that is, the time of rains; and which, one of their commentators says <sup>6</sup>, is the eighth day of the feast of tabernacles; for from the feast of tabernacles, thenceforward is the time of rains. The Jews have a notion, that at this feast the rains of the ensuing year were fixed: hence they say <sup>7</sup>, that “ at the feast of tabernacles judgment is made concerning the waters;” or a decree or determination is made concerning them by God. Upon which the Gemara <sup>8</sup> has these words, “ wherefore does the law say “ pour out water on the feast of tabernacles? Says the “ holy blessed God, pour out water before me, that “ the rains of the year may be blessed unto you.” Now when all these things are considered, it will easily be seen with what pertinency our Lord expresses himself on this day, with respect to the effusion of the gifts and graces of the spirit of God, as follows: *Jesus stood and cried*; he now stood up, whereas at other times he used to sit, and spoke with a loud voice, both to shew his fervour and earnestness, and that all might hear: *saying, if any man thirst, let him come to me and drink.* This is to be understood not of a natural thirst, though the allusion is to it, which is very painful and distressing; as the instances of the Israelites in the wilderness, Samson after he had slain the Philistines, and our Lord upon the cross, shew; much less a sinful thirst, a thirst after the riches, honours, and pleasures of this life; but a spiritual thirst, or a thirst after spiritual things, after salvation by Christ, and a view of interest in it, free and full pardon of sin through him, justification by his righteousness, a greater degree of knowledge of him, more communion with him, and conformity to him, and after the sincere milk of the word, and the breasts of Gospel ordinances: and such that thirst after these things, and eagerly desire them, and

are in pain and uneasiness without them, as a man is, who has a violent thirst upon him, are such as are regenerated and quickened by the spirit of God, and are made sensible of themselves, and of their state and condition by nature. Now these Christ invites to *come* unto him, not to Moses and his law, moral or ceremonial, and to obedience to them, and works of righteousness done by them, to any creature, or creature-acts; for these are cisterns without water, where no true peace, joy, righteousness, and salvation are to be had; but to himself, who is the fountain of gardens, the well of living waters, and who is as rivers of water in a dry land, to thirsty souls: and when come to him, which is by believing in him, they are encouraged to *drink*; that is, to take of the water of life freely, or to take of his grace freely; salvation by him is of free grace, and the pardon of sin is according to the riches of grace, and justification is freely by his grace, and so all other blessings; and of this they may drink abundantly, or they may partake of it largely: there is a fullness of grace in Christ, and there is an abundance of it communicated to his people; it is exceeding abundant; it flows, and overflows, and may be drank of to satisfaction, till their souls are as a watered garden, and they are satisfied with the goodness of the Lord.

Ver. 38. *He that believeth on me, &c.*] Which explains what is meant by coming to Christ, and drinking; for these acts are no other than for a man to go out of himself to Christ, and live by faith on him, and his grace. To which what follows is a great encouragement; *as the Scripture hath said*: some refer these words to the preceding clause concerning believing in Christ, which the writings of the Old Testament speak of, as in Deut. xviii. 15. Isa. xxviii. 16. Hab. ii. 4. and the sense is, that he that believes on Christ, the object of faith the Scripture points at, and in him, as that directs and requires; that believes in him as the mighty God, and as the prophet, priest, and King, and as the only foundation of the church, and lives by faith upon him, as just men do, then *out of his belly shall flow, &c.* though rather they belong to what follows; and do not design any particular place of Scripture; for no such one is to be found, where the following passage is expressed in so many words; but all those Scriptures which speak of grace, under the metaphors of water, and abundance of water, as rivers and floods of water, and of the effusion of the Holy Spirit, under such figurative expressions, such as Isa. xli. 17, 18. and xliii. 20. and xlv. 3. and lviii. 11. Joel ii. 28. Hence the Syriac version reads in the plural number, *as the Scriptures hath said*; referring to more than one: *out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water*; the grace of the spirit of God is signified by water, because it is of a cleansing and purifying nature, as faith and hope are, having to do with the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin; and because it fructifies and causes the saints, as trees of righteousness, to grow, and bring forth fruit; and especially because it is cooling to those who are

<sup>2</sup> Misn. Succa, c. 5. sect. 1. 4.

<sup>3</sup> T. Zebachin, fol. 110. 2. Maimon. in Misn. Succa, c. 4. sect.

9. & Hichot Tamidin, c. 10. sect. 6.

<sup>4</sup> T. Hieros. Succa, fol. 55. 1. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 70. fol. 69. 3.

& Midrash Ruth, fol. 32. 2. Caphtor, fol. 52. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Misn. Taanith, c. 1. sect. 1. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Bartenora, in ib.

<sup>7</sup> Misn. Roshhashana, c. 1. sect. 2.

<sup>8</sup> T. Bab. Roshhashana, fol. 16. 1.

scorched with the heat of a fiery law, and very refreshing to thirsty souls: and it is called *living water*, because by it dead sinners are quickened, drooping saints are revived, and comforted; spiritual life in them is maintained and supported, and it springs up to, and issues in eternal life: and it is expressed by *rivers* of living water, because of the abundance of it in regeneration, justification, and pardon; it is grace for grace, abundance of grace believers receive from Christ; and from him, in whom those large measures of grace are, they *flow out* again, even *out of his belly*: from within him, out of his heart, the seat of it, by his lips, both in prayer to God, and in conversation with the saints, to whom he communicates his rich experiences of grace, to their comfort, and the glory of God: for grace is of a diffusive and communicative nature; out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh: and also it flows out by his life and conversation, which is sober, righteous, and godly; and this the grace of God teaches and influences: and this grace, as it is permanent and lasting itself, even perpetual, and always abiding; so it continues to flow, and to shew itself in its acts and effects, in one way or another. The Jews ought not to find fault with Christ's using such expressions, mystically understood, since they, comparing Moses and the Messiah together, say, "as the first Redeemer caused a well to spring up, so the last Redeemer shall cause waters to spring up, according to Joel iii. 18."

Ver. 39. *But this spake he of the spirit, &c.*] These are the words of the evangelist, explaining the figurative expressions of Christ; shewing, that by rivers of living water, he meant the spirit in his gifts and graces; and which is the plain sense of the passages referred to by him, particularly Isa. xlv. 3. Joel ii. 28. and which, as before observed, the Jews supposed were intimated by their drawing and pouring water at the feast of tabernacles. *Which they that believe on him should receive*: the apostles, and others, that had believed in Christ, and had received the spirit, as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification; as a spirit of illumination and conversion; as a spirit of faith and adoption; but on the day of Pentecost they were to receive a larger, even an extraordinary measure of his gifts and grace, to qualify them for greater work and service: *for the Holy Ghost was not yet given*; the word *given* is not in the original text, but is very properly supplied, as it is in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions. The Arabic version renders it, *for the Holy Ghost was not yet come*; he was; he was in being as a divine person, equal with the Father and Son, so he was from everlasting; and he had been bestowed in his grace upon the Old-Testament saints, and rested in his gifts upon the prophets of that dispensation; but, as the Jews themselves confess<sup>f</sup>, "after the death of the latter prophets, Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi, the Holy Ghost removed from Israel." And they expressly say, he was not there in the time of the second temple. Maimonides says<sup>g</sup>, "they made the Urim and Thummim in the second

temple, to complete the eight garments (of the priests) though they did not inquire by them; and why did they not inquire by them? *because the Holy Ghost was not there*; and every priest that does not speak by the Holy Ghost, and the Shekinah, does not dwell upon him, they don't inquire by him." They observe<sup>h</sup> there were five things in the first temple which were not in the second, and they are these, "the ark with the mercy-seat, and cherubim, the fire (from heaven), and the Shekinah, *רוח הקודש*, and the Holy Ghost, and the Urim and Thummim." Now, though he had removed, he was to return again; but as yet the time was not come, at least for the more plentiful donation of him: the reason of which was, *because that Jesus was not yet glorified*; he had not as yet gone through his state of humiliation; he had not yet suffered, and died, and rose again, and ascended, and sat down at the right hand of God; for the Holy Spirit was to come upon his departure, and in consequence of his sufferings and death, and being made sin, and a curse for his people; and through his mediation and intercession, and upon his exaltation at the father's right hand; when being made, and declared Lord and Christ, this should be notified by the effusion of his spirit; see Acts ii. 33, 36.

Ver. 40. *Many of the people therefore, &c.*] Of the common people, and it may be chiefly those that came out of the country: *when they heard this saying*; or discourse of Christ, on the last and great day of the feast, relating to the large measure of grace, and the effusion of the spirit on him, that believed: *said, of a truth this is the prophet*: spoken of in Deut. xviii. 15. which some understood not of the Messiah, but of some extraordinary prophet distinct from him, who should come before him, or about the same time; or they imagined he was one of the old prophets raised from the dead, whom they also expected about the times of the Messiah: or their sense might only be, that he was a prophet, which was true, though not all the truth; they had some knowledge, though but small; and they spake of him, though but as children in understanding.

Ver. 41. *Others said, this is the Christ, &c.*] The true Messiah, which they concluded, not only from the miracles, ver. 31. but from his speaking of rivers of living water flowing from him that believes in him; for the same prophecy that speaks of miracles to be performed in the times of the Messiah, speaks also of waters breaking out in the wilderness, and streams in the desert, of the parched ground becoming a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water, Isa. xxxv. 5, 6, 7. *But some said, shall Christ come out of Galilee?* as they supposed Jesus did; and because he was educated at Nazareth, and Capernaum was his city, and he chiefly conversed, preached, and wrought his miracles in these parts, they concluded that he was born there; and therefore object this to his being the true Messiah. For if they did not mean this, according to their own accounts, the Messiah was to be in Galilee, and to be first revealed there; for they affirm<sup>i</sup> this in so many

<sup>e</sup> Midrash Kohelet, fol. 63. 2.

<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 9. 2. Sota, fol. 48. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 11. 1.

<sup>g</sup> Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 10. sect. 10. Vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 73. 2.

<sup>h</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 21. 2. Vid. Jarchi & Kimchi in Hagg. i. 8.

<sup>i</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 74. 3. & in Exod. fol. 3. 3. & 4. 1.

words, that *הַמֶּלֶךְ מְשִׁיחָא בְּאַרְעָא דְגַלִּילָה*, the King Messiah shall be revealed in the land of Galilee; accordingly Jesus, the true Messiah, as he was brought up in Galilee, though not born there, so he first preached there, and there wrought his first miracle; here he chiefly was, unless at the public feasts; and here he manifested himself to his disciples after his resurrection.

Ver. 42. *Hath not the Scripture said, &c.*] These objectors were those who were accounted the more wise and knowing; who were conversant with the Scriptures, and pretended at least to a large knowledge of them: that *Christ cometh out of the seed of David*; that he should be a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots; that he should be one out of David's loins, and of the fruit of his body, referring to Isa. xi. 1. Psal. cxxxii. 11, 17. which was very true, and what was commonly known, and expected among the Jews, that the Messiah should be David's son, as Jesus of Nazareth was, Acts xiii. 23. and out of the town of Bethlehem where David was<sup>2</sup> where his parents lived, and he was born; and, according to Jerom<sup>3</sup>, he was buried here. The account he gives of this city, where he himself for some time lived, "is; Bethlehem, the city of David, in the lot of the tribe of Judah, in which our Lord and Saviour was born, is six miles from Ælia, (i. e. Jerusalem) to the south, by the way which leads to Hebron, where also is shewed the sepulchre of Jesse and David." In which may be observed likewise the exact distance of this place from Jerusalem; which, according to Josephus<sup>4</sup>, at least as he is generally understood, was but twenty furlongs: and, according to Justin<sup>5</sup>, thirty-five: but that this is the true distance, is clear from the old Jerusalem Itinerary<sup>6</sup>, and which agrees with Jerom about the sepulchre of David; for not far from it is the monument of Ezekiel, Asaph, Job, Jesse, David, and Solomon: however, it is certain that David was born here, and therefore it is called his city; and from hence the Messiah was to come; and here Jesus, the true Messiah, was born, and which the Jews themselves own; see the notes on Matt. ii. 1. and Luke ii. 4. and in vain it is for them to expect the Messiah from thence, where none of their nation live, nor have lived, for many hundreds of years; being particularly forbid by Adrian, after he had subdued them, living in or near Jerusalem, and also Bethlehem. Tertullian<sup>7</sup> refers to this when he thus argues with them, and very justly, and strongly; "if he is not yet born, who, 'tis said, shall come forth a ruler out of Bethlehem, of the tribe of Judah, he must come (says he) out of the tribe of Judah and from Bethlehem; but we now observe, that no one of the stock of Israel remains in Bethlehem, because it is forbidden that any one of the Jews should continue on the border of that country—how shall the governor be born in Judea, come forth from Bethlehem, as the divine books of the Prophets declare, when there is none of Israel left there at this day, of whose lineage Christ can be born?—how shall he come out of

"Bethlehem, when there is none in Bethlehem of the stock of Israel?" And the passage they had in view, is Mic. v. 2. Now these very things they object to Jesus being the Messiah, were what were fulfilled in him, and proved him to be the person; for his supposed father, and real mother Mary, were of the house and lineage of David; and though he was conceived at Nazareth, and brought up there, yet by a remarkable providence, which brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, he was born there, Luke ii. 4, 5, 6, 7.

Ver. 43. *So there was a division among the people concerning him.*] Some, though they did not go so far as to believe him to be the Messiah, yet took him to be a prophet, and a very extraordinary one; others made no difficulty to assert him to be the Christ; and others objected to it on account of the country from whence he came, and so fulfilled the words of Christ, Luke xii. 51.

Ver. 44. *And some of them would have taken him, &c.*] Some of the latter sort, who did not believe he was the Messiah; who were the most averse to him, and hot and furious against him; these were for seizing him at once in a violent manner, and for carrying him before the sanhedrim, as an impostor and blasphemer to be examined and tried, and judged by them, to whom it belonged to judge and determine concerning such persons: *but no man laid hands on him*; though they had a good will to it, no man had power to do it; they were held back and restrained by the providence of God; and were diverted from it upon one consideration or another; either fearing the people, or being awed by the majesty of Christ's countenance, or words; the true reason of which was, that which is before given, that his hour was not yet come.

Ver. 45. *Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees, &c.*] Who were assembled together in council, as the great sanhedrim of the nation; who were sitting and expecting Jesus to be brought before them. The same officers they sent to take him, ver. 32. returned to them without him; for though they were sent on that errand which they intended to have performed, yet they were not on the side of those who were for seizing him by force, nor of those who objected to his being the Messiah; but rather took part with those who affirmed he was the Messiah; or at least looked upon him to be some extraordinary prophet: *and they said unto them*: that is, the chief priests and Pharisees said to the officers; the Syriac version reads, *the priests said unto them: why have ye not brought him?* They mention not the name of Jesus by way of contempt, and knowing that the officers would easily understand them; though the Persic version expresses it, reading the words thus, *why have ye not brought Jesus?* seeing them returned without him, they were transported with rage and fury, and fell upon them in a fierce and furious manner, for disobeying their orders, who had sat there waiting some time: and hoping, and not doubting, but they should have him in their hands, whose blood they were thirsting after: wherefore it was a great disappointment

<sup>2</sup> De locis Hebraicis, fol. 89. E.

<sup>3</sup> Antiqu. l. 7. c. 12. sect. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Apolog. 2. p. 75.

<sup>5</sup> In Reland. Palestina illustrata, l. 2. c. 4. p. 416. Vid. c. 9. p. 445. & l. 3. p. 645.

<sup>6</sup> Adv. Judæos, c. 13. p. 224, 225.

to them, and much enraged them to see them come without him.

Ver. 46. *The officers answered, &c.*] Very honestly and uprightly, making use of no shifts and excuses; as that they could not find him, or could not come at him, because of the multitude about him, or that they were afraid of the people, lest they should rise upon them, and stone them, and rescue Jesus; which would have carried a shew of probability, and have brought them off; but they tell the naked truth, *never man spake like this man*; not Moses, the spokesman of the people of Israel; nor David, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet Psalmist of Israel; nor Solomon, the wisest of men; nor that sublime and evangelical prophet Isaiah; nor any of the other prophets; nor John Baptist his forerunner, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: never man spoke words for matter like him; such gracious words, or words, and doctrines of grace, which so fully express the grace of God, and are so grateful to men; such as free justification by his righteousness, full pardon by his blood, peace and reconciliation by his sacrifice, the liberty of captives from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law, and spiritual and eternal salvation by him: never man spoke such words of truth, as he who is full of truth, and truth itself did: or such words of wisdom, who is the wisdom of God, on whom the spirit of wisdom rested, and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; nor such wholesome and salutary words, which nourish up unto eternal life. Nor did ever any speak words for form and manner, as he did; words so apt and pertinent, with such propriety, beauty, and gracefulness, with such majesty and authority, and with such power and efficacy; which at once charmed the ear, affected the heart; carried evidence and conviction with them, enlightened the understanding, and fastened attention to them; which was the case with these men, so that they had not power to execute their commission. He delivered such excellent things, and in such a charming manner, they could not find in their hearts to use any violence towards him; or be the means of bringing him into any trouble or danger. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persian versions read, *never man spake as this man speaks*.

Ver. 47. *Then answered them the Pharisees, are ye also deceived?* As well as the common people; you that have been so long in our service, and should know better; or who, at least, should have taken the sense of your superiors, and should have waited to have had their opinion and judgment of him, and been determined by that, and not so hastily have joined with a deluded set of people. It was the common character of Christ, and his apostles, and so of all his faithful ministers in all succeeding ages, that they were deceivers, and the people that followed them deceived, a parcel of poor deluded creatures, carried aside by their teachers; when, on the other hand, they are the deceived ones, who live in sin, and indulge themselves in it; or who trust in themselves that they are righteous; who think they are something, when they are nothing; who imagine, that touching the righte-

ousness of the law, they are blameless, are free from sin, and need no repentance; who follow the traditions and commandments of men: whereas these cannot be deceived, who follow Christ, the way, the truth, and the life, and his faithful ministers, who shew unto men the way of salvation.

Ver. 48. *Have any of the rulers, &c.*] In the sanhedrim, or of the synagogues; or the civil magistrates, the noble, rich, and wealthy: or of the Pharisees, believed on him; men famous for wisdom, learning, and holiness. It must be owned, there were but very few of this sort, and perhaps not an instance of this kind had as yet occurred to them; there was Nicodemus, who is mentioned in the context, who was both a ruler and a Pharisee; and Joseph of Arimathea, a rich counsellor; but they neither of them openly shewed themselves to be the disciples of Christ till his death: and besides these, there were some women, as Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, Susanna, and some other women, who ministered to him of their substance; but the far greater part of his followers were poor and illiterate: and this has been the common case of those that have believed in Jesus, for the most part, ever since, and therefore should not be a stumbling to any. God is pleased to hide the great things of the Gospel from the wise and prudent, the rich and noble, and preach and reveal them to the poor and foolish: nor is a doctrine a whit the truer for being espoused by the rich, and wise men of this world, but rather to be suspected on that account.

Ver. 49. *But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.*] With great contempt they style the followers of Jesus *this people*; the common people, the dregs of the nation, the refuse of the earth; and whom they call, עַם הָאָרֶץ, *the people of the earth*, in distinction from the wise men, and their disciples: and when they speak the best of them, their account is this; "one of the people of the earth is one that has moral excellencies, but not intellectual ones; that is, there is in him common civility, but the law is not in him;" as here, *who knoweth not the law*: they always reckon them very ignorant. Says one of their writers, "they that are without knowledge are the multitude." And elsewhere 'tis said, "the old men of the people of the earth, when they grow old their knowledge is disturbed (or is lost), as it is said, Job xii. 20. but so it is not with the old men of the law, when they grow old, their knowledge rests upon them, as it is said, Job xii. 12. with the ancient is wisdom." Upon which one of the commentators has this gloss; "these are the disciples of the wise men; for the people of the earth, what wisdom is there in them?" By the *law* here, is meant either the written law of Moses, which the Pharisees boasted of, and of their knowledge of it, as having the key of knowledge to open it; as understanding the true sense, and capable of giving a right interpretation of it, to the people; though they themselves were wretchedly ignorant of it, as appears by their false glosses on it, refuted by our Lord in Matt. v. or else the oral law is here

<sup>p</sup> Maimon. in Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 5. & c. 5. sect. 7.

<sup>q</sup> Abarbanel in proph. post. fol. 473.

<sup>r</sup> Misn. Kenim, c. 3. sect. 6. Vid. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 152. 1.

<sup>s</sup> Bartenora in Misn. ib.

intended, which they pretended was given by word of mouth to Moses, and handed down to posterity from one to another; and this lay among the doctors: they tell us<sup>1</sup>, that Moses received it at Sinai, and delivered it to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the men of the great synagogue (Ezra's), the last of which was Simeon the just: Antigonus, a man of Socho, received it from him; and Jose ben Jozzer, and Jose ben Jochanan, received it from him; and Joshua ben Perachia, (whom they sometimes say was the master of Jesus of Nazareth,) and Nittai the Arbelite, received it from them; by whom it was delivered to Judah ben Tabia, and Simeon ben Shetach; and from them it was received by Shemaiah, and Abtalion, who delivered it to Hillel, and Shammai; who, or whose scholars, were, at this time, when these words were spoken, the present possessors of it, and taught it their disciples in their schools: and thus it was handed down from one to another, until the times of R. Judah, who collected the whole of the traditions of the elders together, and published it under the title of the Misna; and then, as Maimonides says<sup>2</sup>, it was revealed to all Israel; whereas before it was but in a few hands, who instructed others in it; but as for the common people, they knew little of it, especially of the nice distinctions and decisions of it; and these people were always had in great contempt by the wise men: they would not receive a testimony from them, nor give one for them, nor deliver a secret to them, nor proclaim any thing of theirs that was lost, nor walk with them in the way, nor make a guardian of any of them<sup>3</sup>. The people of the earth were not reckoned holy or religious<sup>4</sup>, but generally profane and wicked; that they were abandoned to sin, rejected of God, and to be cast off by men; yea, they will not allow that they shall rise again at the last day, unless it be for the sake of some wise men they are allied unto, or have done some service for. They say<sup>5</sup>, "whoever ministers in the light of the law, the light of the law will quicken him; but whoever does not minister in the light of the law, the light of the law will not quicken him—though it is possible for such an one to cleave to the Shekinah—for every one that marries his daughter to a scholar of a wise man, or makes merchandise for the disciples of the wise men, and they receive any advantage from his goods, this brings on him what is written, as if he "cleaved to the Shekinah." Thus we see in what contempt the common people were with the learned doctors, and what an opinion these men had of the followers of Christ; though, in truth, they were not so ignorant of the law as themselves: they knew the spirituality of it, that it reached to the thoughts of the heart, as well as to external actions; they knew what it required, and their own impotence to answer its demands; they knew the wrath, terror, and

courses of it, and that Christ only was the fulfilling end of it, for righteousness to those that believed in him: and they were far from being cursed persons: they were blessed with all spiritual blessings: with the pardon of their sins, and the justification of their persons: with grace and peace in their souls, and would be introduced as the blessed of the father into his kingdom and glory.

Ver. 50. *Nicodemus saith unto them, &c. ?*] To the Jewish sanhedrim, who were running down Christ, and his followers, in great wrath and fury: *he that came to Jesus by night*; see Johu iii. 1, 2. *being one of them*; a member of the sanhedrim.

Ver. 51. *Doth our law judge any man, &c.*] Or condemn any man; or can any man be lawfully condemned: *before it hear him*: what he has to say for himself; is this the usual process in our courts? or is this a legal one to condemn a man unheard? *and know what he doth?* what his crimes are. This he said, having a secret respect for Christ, though he had not courage enough openly to appear for him.

Ver. 52. *They answered and said unto him, &c.*] Being displeased with him, and as reproaching him, though they could not deny, or refute what he said: *art thou also of Galilee?* a follower of Jesus of Galilee, whom, by way of contempt, they called the Galilean, and his followers Galileans, as Julian the apostate after them did; for otherwise they knew that Nicodemus was not of the country of Galilee; *search and look*; into the histories of former times, and especially the Scriptures: *for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet*; but this is false, for Jonah the prophet was of Gath Hopher, which was in the tribe of Zebulun, which tribe was in Galilee; see 2 Kings xiv. 25. Josh. xix. 10, 13, 16. And the Jews<sup>2</sup> themselves say, that Jonah, the son of Amittai, was, מְיֹבֵלֶךְ, of Zebulun, and that his father was of Zebulun, and his mother was of Asher<sup>3</sup>; both which tribes were in Galilee: and if no prophet had, as yet, arose from thence, it did not follow that no one should arise: besides, there is a prophecy in which it was foretold, that a prophet, and even the Messiah, the great light, should arise in Galilee; see Isa. ix. 1, 2. and they themselves say, that the Messiah should be revealed in Galilee; see the note on ver. 41.

Ver. 53. *And every man went unto his own house.*] The officers not bringing Jesus with them, and the sanhedrim being posed with Nicodemus, broke up without doing any business, and every member of it went home: this we may suppose was about the time of the evening sacrifice: for "the great sanhedrim sat from the time of the morning daily sacrifice, to the time of the evening daily sacrifice<sup>4</sup>:" and it is said<sup>5</sup>, that "after the evening daily sacrifice, the sanhedrim went, לְבֵיתָם, to their own houses:" as they now did, and not to their booths, the feast of tabernacles being now over.

<sup>1</sup> Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 1—12.

<sup>2</sup> Prefat. ad Yad Hazaka.

<sup>3</sup> Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud. col. 1626.

<sup>4</sup> lb. Florileg. Heb. p. 276.

<sup>5</sup> T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 111. 2.

<sup>2</sup> T. Hieros. Succa, fol. 55. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 98. fol. 88. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrim, c. 3. sect. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Fiske Tosephot Sanhedrim, art. 35.

## C H A P. VIII.

Ver. 1. *JESUS went unto the Mount of Olives.*] Which lay eastward of Jerusalem, about a mile from it; hither Christ went on the evening of the last day of the feast of tabernacles; partly to decline the danger, and avoid the snares the Jews might lay for him in the night-season, having been disappointed and confounded in the day-time; and it may be for the sake of recreation and diversion, to sup with his dear friends Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, who lived at Bethany, not far from this mount; and chiefly for private prayer to God, on account of himself as man, and for his disciples, and for the spread of his Gospel, and for the enlargement of his interest; this being his common and usual method, Luke xxi. 37.

Ver. 2. *And early in the morning he came again into the temple, &c.*] Which shews his diligence, constancy, and assiduity, in his ministerial work, as well as his courage and intrepidity; being fearless of his enemies, though careful to give them no advantage against him, before his time: *and all the people came unto him:* which also commends the industry and diligence of his hearers, who were forward to hear him, and were early at the temple for that purpose, and that in great numbers: *and he sat down and taught them;* he sat, as his manner was; see the note on Matt. v. 1. and taught them as one having authority, and such doctrine, and in such a manner, as never man did; with all plainness, boldness, and freedom.

Ver. 3. *And the Scribes and Pharisees, &c.*] The members of the sanhedrim, who had been so miserably disappointed the day before, were no less diligent and industrious in their wicked way, seeking all opportunities, and taking all advantages against Christ; and fancying they had got something whereby to insnare him, and bring him into disgrace or danger, they pursue it; and *brought unto him a woman taken in adultery;* who, as some conjecture, might have been taken in it the day before, in one of their booths; being drawn into it through intemperance and carnal mirth, which at this feast they greatly indulged themselves in; which shews, that they were far from drawing the Holy Ghost at this time upon them; that on the contrary, they fell into the hands, and under the power of the unclean spirit: who this woman was, is not material to know; what is pretended to be taken out of the annals of the Spanish Jews, is no doubt a fable; that she was the wife of one Manasseh of Jerusalem, an old man, whose name was Susanna<sup>d</sup>: *and when they had set her in the midst;* of the company, as the Persic version reads, to be seen by all the people. This history of the woman taken in adultery, is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in other ancient copies; nor is it in Nonnus, Chrysostom, and Theophylact; nor in any of the editions of the Syriac ver-

sion, until it was restored by De Dieu, from a copy of Archbishop Usher's; but was in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, and in the Harmonies of Tatian and Ammonius; the former of which lived about the year 160, and so within 60 years, or thereabouts, of the death of the Evangelist John, and the other about the year 230; it was also in Stephens's sixteen ancient Greek copies, and in all Beza's seventeen, excepting one; nor need the authentickness of it be doubted of; Eusebius<sup>e</sup> says, it is in the Gospel according to the Hebrews; nor should its authority be called in question.

Ver. 4. *They say unto him, Master, &c.*] They applied to him in a handsome and respectful manner, the better to cover their ill design: *this woman was taken in adultery;* by two persons at least, who could be witnesses of it; otherwise the accusation was not legal; see Deut. xix. 15. though in the case of a wife suspected of adultery, they admitted a single witness as valid<sup>f</sup>: *in the very act;* or *in the theft itself,* for adultery is a theft; it is an unlawful use of another's property; see this word used in the same sense, in Heliodor. l. 1. sect. 11.

Ver. 5. *Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned, &c.*] Not in Lev. xx. 10. for though according to the law there, an adulteress, one that was a married woman, and so an adulterer, that was a married man, were to be put to death; yet the death was not stoning, but strangling; for it is a rule with the Jews<sup>g</sup>, that where death is simply mentioned (without restraining it to any particular kind) strangling is intended, and which rule they apply to this law: and accordingly in their Misna, or oral law, one that lies with another man's wife, is reckoned among those that are to be strangled<sup>h</sup>: Kimchi indeed says<sup>i</sup>, that adulteresses, according to the law, are to be stoned with stones; but then this must be understood of such as are betrothed, but not married; and such a person, Moses has commanded in the law, to be stoned, Deut. xxii. 23, 24. And with this agree the traditions of the Jews<sup>k</sup>; "a daughter of Israel must be stoned, who is ארוסה ולא נשואה, betrothed, but not married." And such an one we must believe this woman was; she was betrothed to a man, but not married to him, and therefore to be stoned: the Jews<sup>l</sup> have also a saying, that "if all adulterers were punished with stoning, according to the law, the stones would be consumed, but they would not be consumed;" adultery was so common with that people: but *what sayest thou?* dost thou agree with Moses, or not?

Ver. 6. *This they said, tempting him, &c.*] For they brought this woman, and exposed her in this manner, not because of their abhorrence and detestation of the sin; nor did they put the above ques-

<sup>d</sup> Vid. Selden. Uxor Hebr. l. 3. c. 11. p. 377.

<sup>e</sup> Hist. Eccles. l. 3. c. 39.

<sup>f</sup> Maimon. Hilchot Eduth, c. 5. sect. 2.

<sup>g</sup> Maimon. Hilchot Issure Bia, c. 1. sect. 6.

<sup>h</sup> Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 1.

<sup>i</sup> In Ezek. xvi. 40.

<sup>k</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 51. 2.

<sup>l</sup> Apud Castell. Lex. Polyglott, col. 2180.

tion to Christ, out of their great respect to the law of Moses; which in many instances, and so in this, they in a great measure made void, by their traditions; for they say, that for such an offence as adultery, they did not put to death, nor beat, unless there was a previous admonition; the use of which was, to distinguish between presumptuous sins, and wilful ones<sup>m</sup>; but if there was no admonition, and the woman, even a married woman, if she confessed the crime, all her punishment was to have her dowry taken from her, or to go away without it<sup>n</sup>: now these masters say nothing about the admonition, nor do they put the question, whether this woman was to be dealt with according to their traditions, or according to the law of Moses? but what was the sense of Christ, whether Moses's law was to be attended to, or whether he would propose another rule to go by? and their view in this was, *that they might have to accuse him*; that should he agree with Moses, then they would accuse him to the Roman governor, for taking upon him to condemn a person to death, which belonged to him to do; or they would charge him with severity, and acting inconsistently with himself, who received such sort of sinners, and ate with them; and had declared, that publicans and harlots would enter into the kingdom of heaven, when the Scribes and Pharisees would not; and if he should disagree with Moses, then they would traduce him among the people, as an enemy to Moses and his law, and as a patron of the most scandalous enormities: *but Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground*; some think<sup>o</sup> he wrote in legible characters the sins of the woman's accusers; and the learned Wagenseil<sup>p</sup> makes mention of an ancient Greek manuscript he had seen, in which were the following words, *the sins of every one of them*: Dr. Lightfoot is of opinion, that this action of Christ tallies with, and has some reference to, the action of the priest at the trial of the suspected wife; who took of the dust of the floor of the tabernacle, and infused it in the bitter waters for her to drink; but it is most likely, that Christ on purpose put himself into this posture, as if he was busy about something else, and did not attend to what they said; and hereby cast some contempt upon them, as if they and their question were unworthy of his notice: and this sense is confirmed by what follows, *as though he heard them not*; though this clause is not in many copies, nor in the Vulgate Latin, nor in any of the Oriental versions, but is in five of Beza's copies, and in the Complutensian edition.

Ver. 7. *So when they continued asking him, &c.* For observing that he put himself in such a posture, they concluded that they had puzzled and perplexed him, and that he knew not what to say; and therefore they were more urgent for a speedy answer, hoping they should get an advantage of him; and that they should be able to expose him, and that his confusion would appear to all the people: *he lift up himself and said unto them*; having raised up himself,

he looked wistly at them, and returned them this wise answer to their confusion: *he that is without sin among you*; meaning, not that was entirely free from sin, in heart, in lip, and life; for there is no such person; the most holy man in life is not, in such sense, free from sin; but that was without any notorious sin, or was not guilty of some scandalous sin, and particularly this of adultery; which was in this age a prevailing sin, and even among their doctors; hence our Lord calls that generation an adulterous one, Matt. xii. 39. and which was literally true of them; with this compare Rom. ii. 22. Adultery increased to such a degree in this age, that they were obliged to leave off the trial of suspected wives, because their husbands were generally guilty this way; and the waters would have no effect, if the husband was criminal also: so the Jews say<sup>q</sup>, "when adulterers increased, the bitter waters ceased; and Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai (who was now living) caused them to cease." In vindication of which, he cited the passage in Hos. iv. 14. and this agrees with their own account of the times of the Messiah, and the signs thereof, among which stands this<sup>r</sup>; "in the age in which the son of David comes, the house of assembly (the gloss interprets it the place where the disciples of the wise men meet to learn the law) shall become, *לוננות, a brothel-house*." And that this sin so greatly prevailed, our Lord well knew; and perhaps none of those Scribes and Pharisees were free from it, in one shape or another; and therefore bids him that was, *first cast a stone at her*; alluding to the law in Deut. xvii. 7. which required the hands of the witnesses to be upon a person first, to put him to death; and as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, referring to their own sense and opinion, in trying a wife suspected of adultery; that if the husband was guilty the same way, the waters would have no effect: by this answer of our Lord, he at once wrought himself out of the dilemma, they thought to distress him with; for though he passed no sentence upon the woman, and so took not upon him the judiciary power, with which they could accuse him to the Roman governor, yet he manifestly appeared to agree with Moses, that such an one deserved to be stoned; wherefore they could not charge him with being contrary to Moses; and by putting him that was without sin, to cast the first stone at her, he shewed himself merciful to the woman, and to them, to be the searcher of hearts.

Ver. 8. *And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.* As before, having said enough to confound them; and yet unwilling to pursue the matter any further, or publicly expose them in any other way; and that they might have an opportunity of withdrawing themselves without any further notice of his, he took this method.

Ver. 9. *And they which heard it, &c.* Not all, not the disciples of Christ, nor the multitude, but the Scribes and Pharisees: *being convicted by their own conscience*; that they were not without sin, nor free from this; they had a beam in their own eye, who were so forward to observe the mote in another's; and

<sup>m</sup> Maimon. ib. sect. 3.

<sup>n</sup> Misn Sota, c. 1. sect. 5.

<sup>o</sup> Hieron. adv. Pelagianos, l. 2. fol. 96. H. Tom. II.

VOL. I.—NEW TEST.

<sup>q</sup> In Misn. Sota, c. 1. sect. 5.

<sup>r</sup> Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 9.

<sup>s</sup> Misn. ib. c. 9. sect. 15. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1.

oftentimes so it is, that those who are most forward to reprove, and bear hardest on others for their sins, are as culpable in another way, if not in the same; when sin lies at the door, and conscience is awakened and open, it is as good as a thousand witnesses; and lets in, and owns the sin which lies heavy, and makes sad work; and fills with anguish, confusion, and shame, as it did these men: *who went out one by one*; from the temple, in as private a manner, and as unobserved as they could: *beginning at the eldest*; who might have been most culpable, or however soonest took the hint, being more wise and sagacious: *unto the last*: this is wanting in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions, and in two of Beza's copies, and the Basil. edition: *and Jesus was left alone*; not by his disciples, nor the multitude, but his antagonists, who came to tempt and ensnare him: for it follows, *and the woman standing in the midst*; that is, of the company as before.

Ver. 10. *When Jesus had lift himself up, &c.*] From the earth, towards which he stooped, and on which he had been writing: *and saw none but the woman*; that is, none of those that had brought her there, and had accused her to him: *he said unto her, woman, where are those thine accusers?* the Syriac and Arabic versions read only, *where are these?* these men, that brought thee here, and charged thee with this crime: *hath no man condemned thee?* has no one offered to do unto thee what I proposed? what, not one that could take up a stone, and cast at thee? was there not one of them free from this sin? could no man take upon him to execute this sentence?

Ver. 11. *She saith, no man, Lord, &c.*] No man said a word to me, or lift up his hand against me, or moved a stone at me: *and Jesus said unto her, neither do I condemn thee*; Christ came not into the world to act the part of a civil magistrate, and therefore refused to arbitrate a case, or be concerned in dividing an inheritance between two brethren, Luke xii. 13, 14. Nor did he come into the world to condemn it, but that the world, through him, might be saved, John iii. 17. nor would he pass any other sentence on this woman, than what he had done; nor would he inflict any punishment on her himself; but suitably and agreeably to his office, as a prophet, he declares against her sin, calls her to repentance, and bids her *go and sin no more*; lest as he said to the man he cured at Bethesda's pool, a worse thing should come unto her. Wherefore the Jew<sup>s</sup> has no reason to object to this conduct of Christ, as if he acted contrary to the law, in Deut. xiii. 5. *Thou shalt put the evil away from the midst of thee*; and also to the sanctions of all civil laws among men, which order the removal of evil, by putting delinquents to death; and he observes, that those that believe in him, don't follow him in this, but put adulterers and adulteresses to death; and that indeed, should his example and instructions take place, all courts of judicature must cease, and order be subverted among men: but it should be observed, that our Lord manifested a regard,

even to the law of Moses, when he bid this woman's accusers that were without sin, to cast the first stone at her; though as for the law in Deut. xiii. 5. that respects a false prophet, and not an adulterer or an adulteress; nor do the civil laws of all nations require death in the case of adultery; and did they, Christ here, neither by his words nor actions, contradicts and sets aside any such laws of God or man; he left this fact to be inquired into, examined, and judged, and sentence passed by proper persons, whose business it was: as for himself, his office was not that of a civil magistrate, but of a Saviour and Redeemer; and suitably to that he acted in this case; he did not connive at the sin, he reprov'd for it: nor did he deny that she ought to suffer according to the law of Moses, but rather suggests she ought; but as this was not his province, he did not take upon him to pronounce any sentence of condemnation on her; but called her to repentance, and, as the merciful and compassionate Saviour, gave her reason to hope for pardon and eternal life.

Ver. 12. *Then spake Jesus again unto them, &c.*] The Syriac fragment of Bishop Usher's, published by De Dieu, prefaces this verse thus, *when they were gathered together, Jesus said, &c.* that is, the Scribes and Pharisees, who went out and returned again; or some others of them, who came after this, to whom Christ addressed himself thus: *I am the light of the world*; which he might say, on occasion of the rising sun, which was now up, and might shine brightly in their faces; see ver. 2. which is *אור העולם*, the light of the world, as Aben Ezra in Psal. xix. 8. rightly calls it: thus on occasion of the water in Jacob's well, he discoursed of living water; and upon the Jews at Capernaum mentioning the manna, he treated at large concerning himself as the bread of life: and he might also make use of this character, and apply it to himself, with a view to some passages in the Old Testament, which speak of him under the metaphor of the sun, as Psal. lxxxiv. 11. Mal. iv. 2. and represent him as the light; and the Jews themselves say, that light is one of the names of the Messiah; and God himself is called by them, *the light of the world*: and likewise he may have regard to those pompous titles and characters, which the Jewish doctors assumed arrogantly to themselves, and oppose himself to them; for they not only called Moses their master, *אור העולם*, the light of the world, and also the law of Moses<sup>2</sup>, but their Rabbins and doctors; see the note on Matt. v. 14. By the world here is meant, not the whole world, and all the individuals of it; for though Christ, as the Creator of all things, is the light of men, and does lighten every individual man with the light of nature and reason, yet not in a spiritual and saving manner, as is here intended; nor the whole body of the elect of God, though they are sometimes called the world, being the better part of it, and are made light in the Lord, in a special sense; nor the Jews only, and the chosen of God among them, though Christ was a great light to many of them, that sat

<sup>1</sup> R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 47. p. 435, 436.

<sup>2</sup> Bereshit Rabba, fol. 1. 3. Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 2. & Jarchi in Psal. xliii. 3.

<sup>1</sup> Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 17. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 114. 3.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 4. 1.



in darkness, and in the shadow of death; but the Gentiles are here designed, who were usually called by the Jews, the world; see the note on John iii. 16. And these were in gross darkness before the coming of Christ, about the Divine Being, concerning the object, nature, and manner of worship; the Scriptures, the law, and Gospel; the Messiah, and his office and work; the spirit of God, and his operations of grace; the resurrection of the dead, and a future state; now Christ came to be a light of the Gentiles, as well as the glory of his people Israel: our Lord seems to have respect to the prophecy of him, in Isa. xlii. 6. as well as alludes to the sun in the firmament; whose light is diffused to all the nations of the earth, and not confined to one spot of land only: but since Christ was the minister of the circumcision, and was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, it may be asked, how could he be the light of the Gentiles? to which it may be replied, that he was so by his apostles, who were sent by him with the light of the Gospel, into all the world; and by his spirit, who enlightens the minds of men, who were darkness itself, with the light of Christ: for he is not only the author and giver of the light of nature to all men, but also of the light of grace to all his chosen ones, Gentiles as well as Jews; who, in his light, see light; see themselves lost and undone, and him to be the only willing, able, suitable, and complete Saviour; and behold wondrous things in the doctrines of the Gospel, and have some glimpse of glory; and he is likewise the author of all the light of glory the saints enjoy in the other world; the Lamb is the light of that state; he is their everlasting light, and their glory; and happy are they who are his followers now: *he that followeth me*; not corporeally, but spiritually, by faith; for as believing is expressed by coming to Christ, so by following after him: compare with this, John xii. 46. and with love and affection to him, the desires of the soul being unto him, and to the remembrance of him; and in the exercise of every grace and discharge of every duty, in imitation of him; and through a variety of sufferings and tribulations, pressing after him as the guide, captain, and forerunner: and such *shall not walk in darkness*; in the darkness of unregeneracy, not knowing what they are, and where they are, and whither they are going; for such know they are in the light; and though they were blind, now they see; they know in whom they have believed, and that they are in Christ, in the covenant of grace, and in the love of God, and are going to heaven and eternal happiness; such shall not walk in the darkness of unbelief, but walk by faith on Christ; nor in the darkness of error, but in the truth of the Gospel, and as becomes it; and though they may sometimes walk without the light of God's countenance, yet light shall arise to them; and such *shall not go into darkness*, as the Ethiopic version renders the words, into outer darkness, or the darkness of eternal death: *but shall have the light of life*; the grace of God abiding in them now; which as it is a well of living water, springing up to eternal life, so it is a shining light, which increases to the perfect day: as darkness and death, so light and life go together; grace, which is enlightning, is also quickening and comfort-

ing, and issues in eternal light and life; a light that will never be extinguished, and a life that will continue for ever, with never-fading joys and pleasures; see Job xxxiii. 30.

Ver. 13. *The Pharisees therefore said unto him, &c.*] On account of his declaring himself the light of the world: these were either the same who went out of the temple, filled with remorse of conscience, and were now returned, and bearing him a grudge, came to take some advantage against him, if they could; or they were others of the same complexion, sent by them, to make their observations on him: *thou bearest record of thyself*. The Ethiopic version renders it, *dost thou praise thyself?* which does not seem so decent and comely; see Prov. xxvii. 2. though it does not follow, that what a man says of himself is not truth, as these suggest: *thy record is not true*: for John testified of himself, that he was not the Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet; but the voice of one crying in the wilderness; and this testimony he bore of himself, at the importunity of the Jews themselves, John i. 19—23. and his testimony was true; so was that which Christ bore of himself; but their sense rather seems to be, that it was not firm and authentic, and would not pass in any court of judicature, since no man can be a witness in his own cause.

Ver. 14. *Jesus answered and said unto them, &c.*] In vindication of himself, and his testimony: *though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true*; which seems contradictory to what he says, in ch. v. 31. and may be reconciled thus; there he speaks of himself as man, and in the opinion of the Jews, who took him to be a mere man; and also as alone, and separate from his father, as the context shews; therefore his single testimony, and especially concerning himself, could not be admitted as authentic among men; but here he speaks of himself as a divine person, and in conjunction with his father, with whom he was equal; and therefore his testimony ought to be looked upon, and received as firm and good, giving this as a reason for it: *for I know whence I came, and whither I go*: that he was truly the son of God, the only-begotten of the father, and had his mission and commission from him into this world; and which, as he knew himself, he was able to make known, and make appear to others, by his credentials, the doctrines taught, and the miracles wrought by him; which proved him to be what he said he was, the light of the world; and he knew that when he had done his work he came about, he should go to his God and father, and take his place at his right hand: *but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go*; they took him to be the son of Joseph, and that he came out of Galilee; in which they were mistaken; and when he talked of going away, they did not understand him, nor know whither he was going; they ask if he was going to the dispersed among the Gentiles, to teach them? and at another time, whether he would kill himself? they knew not, that through a train of sufferings and death, he must, and would enter into his glory: the Persic version inserts another clause without any foundation; *but ye know not from whence ye come, and whither ye go*, and then follows the former; there might be a truth in this, they did not know their true original, that they

were from beneath; nor whither they were going, to what dismal abode, when they expected to enter, and enjoy the kingdom of heaven.

Ver. 15. *Ye judge after the flesh, &c.*] According to their carnal affections and prejudices; taking the Messiah to be a temporal prince, and his kingdom to be of this world, they judged that Jesus could not be he; they looked upon him as a mere man, and seeing him in much outward meanness, in his human nature, they judged of him according to this outward appearance: or *ye that are after the flesh judge*; to which sense the Persic version agrees, *for ye are carnal*; and so judged as carnal men, who are very improper persons to judge of spiritual things: *I judge no man*; in the same way, after the flesh, or in a carnal manner, nor according to outward appearances, according to the sight of the eyes, or the hearing of the ears: Christ did not take upon him to judge and determine in civil affairs, or in things pertaining to a court of judicature among men; this was not his province; an instance of this there is in the context, in not condemning the woman brought to him; nor did he judge the persons and states of men, or proceed to pass any sentence of condemnation on them; he came not to condemn, but save the world: this was not his business now; otherwise, all judgment is committed to him, and which he will exercise another day.

Ver. 16. *And yet if I judge, my judgment is true, &c.*] Because he saw not as man did, nor looked unto, and judged according to the outward appearance of things; but looked into the heart, and knew what was in it, being the searcher and trier of it; to whom all things are naked and open, and therefore cannot be deceived or imposed upon; his judgment must be sure and infallible: *for I am not alone, but I and the father that sent me*; he was not separate from the father, or at a distance from him, when he was here on earth; he was in his bosom, and in heaven, as the son of God, when as the son of man, he was below; nor was he alone in his testimony and judgment, the father joined with him therein: and which is a further proof of the truth of his testimony, and the certainty of his judgment.

Ver. 17. *It is also written in your law, &c.*] The law of Moses, which was given unto them, and they boasted of; the passage referred to is in Deut. xix. 15. see also Deut. xvii. 6. where though what follows is not to be found in so many words, yet the sense is there expressed: *that the testimony of two men is true*: concerning which the Jewish writers say<sup>7</sup>, “they used not to determine any judiciary matter by the mouth of one witness, neither pecuniary causes, nor causes of life and death, as it is said, Deut. xvii. 6.” It is asked<sup>8</sup> in their oral law, *if the testimony of two men stand, why does the Scripture particularly mention three?* (for no other reason) but to compare or equal three with two, that as three convict two of a falsehood, two may also convict three.” On which one of their commentators<sup>9</sup> has this observation, taking notice of Deut. xix. 18. which speaks of a single witness; “Mar (a doctor) says, wherever it is said a

*witness, it is to be understood of two, unless the Scripture particularly specifies one.*” In the case of a wife suspected of adultery, and in the business of striking off the neck of the heifer in case of murder, they admitted of one witness<sup>b</sup>.

Ver. 18. *I am one that bear witness of myself, &c.*] As he does of his sonship, in 1. John v. 7. *And the father that sent me, beareth witness of me*; as he did, by the descent of the spirit upon him at his baptism, and by a voice from heaven, both at that time, and at his transfiguration, and by the miracles which he wrought; and particularly he bore testimony of him, long before, in prophecy, that he was the light of the world he now said he was, Isa. xlii. 6. so that here were two testifiers, his father and himself; which shew them to be two distinct divine persons, and equal to each other: and now if the testimony of two men is true, firm, and authentic, and to be depended upon and received, then much more the testimony of two divine persons; see 1 John v. 9.

Ver. 19. *Then said they unto him, where is thy father? &c.*] The Persic version adds, *shew him unto us*: produce this witness boasted of, let us see him; this they said in a sneering, taunting, and insulting manner; where's thy father? what! he is in Galilee; fetch him from thence; it is Joseph the carpenter you mean; a goodly witness indeed! *Jesus answered, ye neither know me nor my father; if ye had known me, ye should have known my father also*: they did not know the divine original of Christ, that he was the son of God, and that God was his father; they greatly boasted of their knowledge of God, but they knew him not; their ignorance of Christ shewed it: the knowledge of both go together, and which is life eternal; nor can any truly know the one, without the other: and where the one is known, the other will be also; Christ is the brightness of his father's glory, and the express image of his person: so that he that has seen the one, must know the other; and indeed, no one can know the father, but he to whom the son reveals him: this was a severe mortification to these men of knowledge.

Ver. 20. *These words spake Jesus in the treasury, &c.*] The place where the thirteen chests stood, into which the people put their voluntary contributions for the sacrifices, and service of the temple: the Ethiopic version renders it, *at the alms-chest*; see the note on Mark xii. 41. The design of this observation of the evangelist, is to suggest to us, that it was in a very public place, in the temple, openly, that Christ delivered the above words: *as he taught in the temple*; where the Jews resorted, where his ministry was public, and he spake freely, and without reserve; in a very bold manner, with intrepidity, and without fear of man: *and no man laid hands on him*; though they had sought to do it the day before; had sent officers to take him; and they themselves had a good will to it; and yet they were so awed and over-ruled by one means, or one account or another, that no man did it; the reason was, *for his hour was not yet come*; the time appointed for his sufferings and death.

Ver. 21. *Then said Jesus again unto them, &c.*] It

<sup>7</sup> Maimon. Hilchot Eduth. c. 5. sect. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Mishn. Maccot. c. 1. sect. 7.

<sup>a</sup> Bartenora in ib.

<sup>b</sup> Maimon. Hilchot Eduth, ib. sect. 2.

may be, immediately after he had said the above words; or rather some time after, it may be on the same day: *I go my way*: meaning, the way of all flesh, or that he should die: the way of speaking shews, that his death was certain, a determined thing; which must be, and yet was voluntary: he was not drove, nor forced, but went freely; this being the path, the way, through which he must enter into his kingdom and glory: *and ye shall seek me*: that is, shall seek the Messiah, as their deliverer and Saviour, when in distress; and whom he calls himself, because he was the true Messiah, and the only Saviour and Redeemer of his people, in a spiritual sense; otherwise they would not, nor did they seek Jesus of Nazareth: *and shall die in your sins*; or *in your sin*: so it is in the Greek text, and in the Vulgate Latin, and Persic versions: meaning, in their sin of unbelief, and rejection of him the true Messiah: the sense is, that in the midst of their calamities, which should come upon them, for their sin against him, they should in vain seek for the Messiah, as a temporal deliverer of them; for their nation, city, and temple, and they therein should utterly perish, for their iniquity; and their ruin would not only be temporal, but eternal: since it follows, *whither I go ye cannot come*, signifying, that whereas he was going to his father, to heaven and glory; to enjoy eternal happiness at his father's right hand, in the human nature; they should never come there, but whilst many sat down in the kingdom of heaven, with their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who should come from afar, they would be shut out, and not suffered to enter in.

Ver. 22. *Then said the Jews, will he kill himself? &c.*] Which was not only a wicked, but a foolish consequence, drawn from his words: for it by no means followed, because he was going away, and whither they could not come, that therefore he must destroy himself; this seems to be what they would have been glad he would have done, and suggested the thought that he might do it, in which they imitated Satan, Matt. iv. 6. under whose influence they now apparently were, and hoped that he would, which would at once extricate them out of their difficulties on his account: *because he sayeth, whither I go ye cannot come*: this is no reason at all; for had Christ's meaning been, as they blasphemously intimate, they might have destroyed themselves too, and have gone after him.

Ver. 23. *And he said unto them, &c.*] Upon this wicked remark of theirs, and query on his words: *ye are from beneath*: not only of the earth, earthy, and so spoke of the earth, and as carnal men; but even of hell, they were the children of the devil; they breathed his spirit, spoke his language, and did his lusts, as in ver. 44. *I am from above*: not with respect to his human body, which he did not bring with him from heaven, that was formed below, in the Virgin's womb; otherwise he would not have been the seed of the woman, the son of Abraham, David, and Mary: but either with regard to his divine nature and person, he was of God, the son of God, the only-begotten of the father, who then lay in his bosom, and was in heaven above at that time; or to his mission, which was from heaven. *Ye are of this world*; they were, as they were born into

the world, sinful, carnal, and corrupt; they were in it, and belonged to it, had never been chosen, or called out of it; they had their conversation according to the course of it, and conformed to its evil customs and manners; they were under the influence of the God of the world, and were taken with the sinful and sensual lusts thereof; they were men of worldly spirits; they minded earth, and earthly things, and had their portion in this world, and might be truly called the men of it. *I am not of this world*; he was in it, but not of it; he was come into it to save the chief of sinners, but he did not belong to it, nor did he conform to it; for though he conversed with sinners, ate with them, and received them, being called to repentance by him; yet he was separate from them, and did not as they did: nor did he pursue the pleasures, honours, and riches of this world, being all his days a man of sorrows, and despised of men; and though Lord of all, had not where to lay his head.

Ver. 24. *I said therefore unto you, &c.*] Because they were from beneath, and of the world, and discovered an earthly, worldly, carnal, yea, devilish disposition, in their conduct towards him: *that ye shall die in your sins*; this he had said in ver. 21. and now repeats it, and confirms it by the following reason: *for if ye believe not that I am he*: the everlasting and unchangeable I am, the true God, God over all, blessed for ever; the eternal son of God, God manifest in the flesh, really made flesh, and become incarnate; the true Messiah, the only Saviour of sinners; the one and only Mediator between God and man; the Head of the church, prophet, priest, and King, and the Judge of quick and dead; as also the light of the world he had declared himself to be: these are things that are necessary to be believed concerning Christ; indeed, carnal and unregenerate men may believe all these things; the devils themselves do, and tremble at them; but then they, and so unconverted men, have no faith in them, with an application of them to themselves: true faith in Christ deals not with him in a general way, but in a special regard to a man's self; it is a seeing of Christ for a man's self; it is not an implicit faith, or a believing him to be what he is, merely upon report, but upon sight; it is a going out of the soul to Christ, a renouncing its own righteousness, and a trusting in him alone for life and salvation; it is with the heart, and from it, and is unfeigned; it works by love to Christ, and his people, and is attended with the fruits of righteousness, and a cheerful obedience to the commands and ordinances of Christ. Though perhaps no more than a general faith is here intended, for want of which, and their rejection of Jesus, as the Messiah, the Jews suffered temporal ruin; and had they but believed that Jesus was the son of God, and true Messiah, they had been saved from that temporal destruction which came upon their nation, city, and temple; but not believing this in a general and notional way, they perished, as is here threatened: *ye shall die in your sins*: in which they were, being defiled with them, guilty before God for them, under the power of them, and liable to punishment for them; and so they remained, and did remain, and were yet in their sins, even until death, when they died in them, and for them, not only a corporeal, but an eternal death: for

dying in their sins, these would be found upon them, and they would be charged with them, and must be answerable for them, and consequently endure the punishment of them, which is the second death. Dying in sin, and dying in Christ, are two widely different things. They that die in faith, die in Christ; they that die in unbelief, die in sin; and this is a dreadful dying; see Josh. xxii. 21. where the Targum paraphrases it, *and he, one man,* (or alone,) *לא מות ברויחא, did not die in his sins.*

Ver. 25. *Then said they unto him, who art thou? &c.]* That talks at this rate, and threatens with death, in case of unbelief; this they said with an haughty air, and in a scornful manner: *and Jesus saith unto them, even the same that I said unto you from the beginning;* meaning, either of this discourse, as that he was the light of the world, and which he continued to assert; or of his being had before the sanhedrim, when he affirmed that God was his father, and by many strong arguments proved his divine sonship; or of his ministry, when by miracles, as well as doctrines, he made it to appear that he was he that was to come, the true Messiah; or who spake from the beginning to Moses, saying, I am that I am, hath sent thee, and to the church, and Jewish fathers in the wilderness; and who is that word that was from the beginning with God; and who is called the beginning, the first cause of all things, and of the creation of God; and some think this is intended here.

Ver. 26. *I have many things to say, and to judge of you, &c.]* Being God omniscient, he knew their persons and actions, their lives and conversations, and all their sins and transgressions, which he could justly have complained of, and charged them with, and proved against them, and judged and condemned them for; but this was not his present business, he came not to judge and condemn, but to save: wherefore he waded these things, and took no notice of them, leaving them to his father, who would call them to an account, and punish them for them: *but he that sent me is true;* as to his promises concerning the mission of his son, to be the Saviour of sinners; so to his threatenings, to bring down vengeance on those that disbelieve him, and reject him: *and I speak to the world, or in the world, those things which I have heard of him;* as concerning his love, grace, and mercy to those that should believe in him, so of the destruction of the despisers and rejecters of him; which things he spoke not in secret, in a corner, but publicly and openly, before all the world, to Jews and Gentiles, and to as many as were in the treasury, in the temple at this time; see John xviii. 20.

Ver. 27. *They understood not that he spake to them of the father.]* That sent him, and who was true and faithful to all he had said, whether in a way of promise, or threatening; such was their stupidity, that they did not know that he meant God the father by him that sent him, so deriving his mission and doctrine from him; their hearts were made fat, and hardened, and their eyes were blinded. The Vulgate Latin version reads, *they did not know that he said, God was his father;* and so Beza's most ancient copy, and another exemplar of his.

Ver. 28. *Then said Jesus unto them, &c.]* Upbrid-

ing them with their ignorance, and giving them a sign, as well as pointing out the time when they either, by good or sad experience, should have knowledge of him: *when ye have lift up the son of man;* meaning himself, who was to be lifted up upon the cross, as the serpent was upon the pole, in the wilderness; and which signified the manner of death he should die, the death of the cross; and suggested, that what the Jews designed for his reproach, shame, and abasement, would be the way and means of his rise and exaltation; and this lifting him up, or crucifying him, he ascribes to them, because they would deliver him to Pontius Pilate to be condemned, and stir up the people to ask, and be importunate themselves for his crucifixion: *then shall ye know that I am he;* the son of God, and true Messiah, as the centurion, and those that were with him, did, when they observed the earthquake, and the things that were done at his death; and after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, and the pouring forth of his spirit, many of the Jews had not only a notional, but a true and spiritual knowledge of Jesus, as the Messiah; and upon the destruction of their temple, city, and nation, and their disappointment by false Christs, they doubtless many of them must, and did know, that the true Messiah was come, and that Jesus of Nazareth was he: *and that I do nothing of myself;* see the note on ch. v. 19. *but as my father hath taught me, I speak these things;* this he says not as lessening himself, or making himself inferior to the father, but to shew the excellency of his doctrine, and to assert the original, authority, and divinity of it; suggesting that it was not an human doctrine, or a device of man's, or his own, as man, but was divine, and from God; see ch. vii. 16.

Ver. 29. *And he that sent me is with me, &c.]* By virtue of that near union there is between them, they being one in nature, essence, power, and glory, and by the gracious, powerful, comfortable, assisting, and strengthening presence of his father, which he vouchsafed to him as man, and Mediator; *the father hath not left me alone;* Christ, as the word, was with the father from all eternity, and, as the son of God, was in heaven, and in the bosom of the father, when he, as the son of man, was here on earth; for though he came forth from the father into this world, by assumption of the human nature, yet the father was always with him, and he with the father, through the unity of the divine nature; nor did he withhold his supporting and assisting presence from him as man; nor did he withdraw, at least he had not yet withdrawn his gracious and comfortable presence from him, though he afterwards did, when upon the cross: compare with this ch. xvi. 32. *for I do always those things that please him;* by submitting to Gospel ordinances, as to baptism, at which the father declared his well-pleasèdness in him; and by complying with the ordinances of the ceremonial law, which were typical of him; and by perfectly obeying the precepts of the moral law, and bearing the penalty of it: or by suffering and dying in the room and stead of his people; all which were the will of God, and well-pleasing to him.

Ver. 30. *As he spake these words, &c.]* Concerning his being lifted up, or his crucifixion, and the know-

ledge the Jews should then have of him; of the excellency and divinity of his doctrine, of his mission from the father, and of the father's presence with him, and of his always doing the things that are pleasing in his sight; which were spoken by him with majesty and authority, and came with power: *many believed on him*: as the son of God, and true Messiah: faith came by hearing; Christ's hearers were of different sorts: some understood him not, and disbelieved, and rejected him; others had their eyes, and their hearts opened, and received him, and his words.

Ver. 31. *Then said Jesus to those Jews that believed on him, &c.*] For he knew instantly who they were, and when they believed on him; and therefore he immediately turned himself to them, and thus addressed them; *if ye continue in my word*: meaning the Gospel, called his, because he was both the author, and preacher, and sum, and substance of it: and to continue in it, is having cordially received it, to abide by it, and hold it fast, and not to be moved from it, by the temptations of Satan; the cunning of those that lie in wait to deceive; nor by the revilings and persecutions, the frowns and flatteries of men: and when men continue thus steadfast in it, and faithful to it, it is an evidence that it has come with power, and has a place in their hearts, and that they are the true followers of Christ: *they are ye my disciples indeed*; there are two sorts of disciples of Christ; some are only nominal, and merely in profession such; and these sometimes draw back from him, discontinue in his word, and go out from among his people; which shews that they never were of them, nor are the true disciples of Jesus; for the genuine disciples of Christ continue in his Gospel, hold fast to him, the head, and remain with his people; which to do to the end, is an evidence of their being disciples indeed.

Ver. 32. *And ye shall know the truth, &c.*] Either the truth of the Gospel, the truth as it is in Jesus; meaning, that they should have a larger knowledge of it, while others are ever learning, and never come to the knowledge of the truth; but the spirit of truth should lead them into all truth, and cause them to grow and increase in Gospel light and knowledge; or Jesus himself, who is the way, the truth, and the life; and the sense is, that they should know more of him, of the dignity of his person, of the nature and usefulness of his offices; of the efficacy of his blood, the excellency of his righteousness, and the fulness of his grace, and that for themselves: *and the truth shall make you free*: from ignorance and error, and the prejudices of education, under which the whole nation laboured, and from the thralldom of the law.

Ver. 33. *They answered him, &c.*] Not the believing Jews, whom he peculiarly addressed, but the unbelieving Jews, who were present, and heard these things: *we be Abraham's seed*: this the Jews always valued themselves upon, and reckoned themselves, on this account, upon a level with the nobles and the princes of the earth. "Says R. Akiba, even the poor of Israel are to be considered as if they were בני הורין, *noblemen*, that are fallen from their substance, because they are the children of Abraham,

"Isaac, and Jacob;" *and were never in bondage to any man*; which is a very great falsehood, for it was declared to Abraham himself, that his seed should serve in a land not theirs, and be afflicted four hundred years, as they were; and as the preface to the law which the Jews gloried in shews, which says, that the Lord their God brought them out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; and they were frequently overcome by their neighbours, the Moabites, Ammonites, and Philistines, and reduced to servitude under them, until delivered by one judge, or another: and not to take notice of their seventy-years' captivity in Babylon, they were at this very time under the Roman yoke, and paid tribute to Caesar; and yet such was the pride of their hearts, they would not be thought to be in bondage; and therefore, with an haughty air, add, *how sayest thou, ye shall be made free?* when they thought themselves, and would fain have been thought by others, to have been free already, and so to stand in no need of being made free.

Ver. 34. *Jesus answered them, verily verily I say unto you, &c.*] Taking no notice of their civil liberty, to which he could easily have replied to their confusion and silence, he observes to them their moral servitude and bondage, and in the strongest manner affirms, that *whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin*: which must be understood, not of one that commits a single act of sin, though ever so gross, as did Noah, Lot, David, Peter, and others, who yet were not the servants of sin; or of such who sin through ignorance, weakness of the flesh, and the power of Satan's temptations, and especially who commit sin with reluctance, the spirit lusting against it; nor indeed of any regenerate persons, though they are not without sin; nor do they live without the commission of it, in thought, word, or deed; and though they fall into it, they don't continue and live in it, but rise up out of it, through the grace of God, and by true repentance; and so are not to be reckoned the servants of sin, or to be of the devil. But this is to be understood of such whose bias and bent of their minds are to sin; who give up themselves unto it, and sell themselves to work wickedness; who make sin their trade, business, and employment, and are properly workers of it, and take delight and pleasure in it: these, whatever liberty they promise themselves, are the servants of corruption; they are under the government of sin, that has dominion over them; and they obey it in the lusts thereof, and are drudges and slaves unto it, and will have no other wages at last but death, even eternal death, if grace prevent not; see Rom. vi. 16. 2 Pet. ii. 19.

Ver. 35. *And the servant abideth not in the house for ever, &c.*] The servant of God, and of Christ, does, but not the servant of sin: there may be servants of sin in the house or church of God here below; and such were these Jews Christ is speaking to; but such shall not abide there for ever: some that get into this house are quickly discerned, as Simon Magus was, and are soon removed; and others that may stay longer, are sometimes suffered to fall into some foul sin, or into some gross error and heresy, for which they are cast out of the house or church of God, ac-

ording to the rules of God's word; others make parties, draw disciples after them, and separate themselves, and go out of their own accord, to serve their own purposes: and others, when persecution and tribulation arise because of the word, they are offended and gone; this is the fan with which Christ sometimes winnows his floor, and removes the chaff; and those that continue longest, even to the end of their days, or of the world, or the second coming of Christ, as the foolish virgins, will then be discerned and separated; for the ungodly shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; they shall not enter into the house above, into the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, which is Christ's father's house: none but sons are brought to glory; these are the only heirs of salvation; others will be bid to depart, as workers of iniquity, as the servants of sin; even such who have made a profession of religion, and have been, and have had a standing in the house of God below. The allusion is to the case of servants in common; and, in a literal sense, it is true both of good and bad servants: good servants don't always continue in their master's house; even an Hebrew servant, that loved his master, and would not go out free at the end of his servitude; and who, after having his ear bored, is said to serve him for ever, Exod. xxi. 6. yet that *for ever* was but until the year of jubilee, whether near or remote, as the Jewish commentators<sup>d</sup> in general explain it; nay, if his master died before that time, he went out free: he was not obliged to serve his son or heirs; and so say the Misnic doctors: "one that is bored is obtained " by boring, and he possesses himself (or becomes " free) by the year of jubilee, and by the death of " his master." And to this agrees what Maimonides<sup>e</sup> says; "he that has served six years, and will not go " out, lo, this is bored, and he serves until the year of " jubilee, or until his master dies; and although he " leaves a son, he that is bored does not serve the son; " which may be learned from the letter of the words, " *he shall serve him*, not his son, *for ever*, for his ever " of the jubilee; from whence it appears, that he " that is bored does not possess himself (or is free) " but by the jubilee, and by the death of his master." And one of their writers<sup>f</sup> observes, that the word rendered, *shall serve him*, is by Gematry, and not his son. And among the Romans, good servants were oftentimes made free, and bad ones were turned out, and put into a work-house, to grind corn in mills, a sort of bridewell; and such evil servants may more especially be respected, since Christ is speaking of servants of sin: *but the son abideth ever*: the son of God, the only-begotten son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ will always continue as a son in his own house, as the Lord and proprietor of it; and as an high-priest over it, having an unchangeable priesthood; and as he that takes care of it, provides for it, and manages all the affairs thereof, the family in heaven and in earth being named of him. And as he, so all the adopted sons of God shall continue, being pillars in this house,

that shall never go out: such are no more servants, nor foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and being sons, are heirs, and shall never be cast out, as the bond-woman and her son have been: but these being the children of the free, shall for ever enjoy the inheritance they are adopted to; once sons, always so; the relation ever continues; they will ever remain in the family, and being entitled to the heavenly estate, shall ever possess it.

Ver. 36. *If the son therefore shall make you free, &c.*] Alluding to the custom of adoption by the sons or brethren in the family, which obtained in Greece, called *ἀδοξία*, the adoption of brethren, as Grotius, and others have observed; or rather to a custom among the Romans, of a son's making free after his father's death, such as were born slaves in his house. Such a case as this is supposed; "a man having a " son or a daughter by his servant-maid, that which " is born of her, since of a servant, is without doubt " a servant: wherefore if he (the son) should say, " this is my natural brother, or my natural sister; " for since my father had children by his maid-servant, " whom he did not make free: and he dying, the law " has made me lord of these, *ἐν τούτοις ἐλευθερώσα, I have " made these free*, because of their natural kindred." This is allowed to be a just and good reason of manumission. Now this answers very much to the case in hand. Men are home-born slaves; the chosen people of God are such by nature; they are born in sin, and are the servants of it; Christ the son makes them free; and then they are no more foreigners and strangers, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. This suggests, that true freedom is by Jesus Christ, the son of God; see Gal. v. 1. He it is that makes the saints free from sin; not from the being of it in this life, but from the bondage and servitude of it, from its power and dominion, and from its guilt and liability to punishment for it, by procuring the pardon of their sins through his blood, and justifying their persons by his righteousness: he also makes them free, or delivers them from the captivity of Satan, by ransoming them out of his hands, taking the prey from the mighty, binding the strong man armed, and delivering them from him, and from the power of darkness, and putting them into his own kingdom; he does not indeed free them altogether from his temptations, but he preserves them by his power from being hurt and destroyed by him: he likewise makes his people free from the law, not only the ceremonial law, which is abolished by him, but from the moral law; not from obedience to it, as it is in his hands, and a rule of walk and conversation to them, but as in the hands of Moses, and as a covenant of works, and from the rigorous exaction of it, and from seeking justification and life by it, and from its curse and condemnation: and he gives them freedom of access to God, as their father, through his blood, and by his spirit; and admits them to all the privileges and immunities of the church below; and

<sup>d</sup> Jarchi, Aben Ezra, & ben Gerson in Exod. xxi. 6.

<sup>e</sup> Misn. Kiddushin, c. 1. sect. 1.

<sup>f</sup> Hilchot Abadim, c. 3. sect. 6, 7.

<sup>g</sup> Baal Hatturin in Exod. xxi. 6.

<sup>h</sup> Theophilus Antecessor. Institut. Imperat. Justinian. l. 1. tit. 6. sect. 5. p. 38.

gives them a right to, faith in, and an expectation of the glorious liberty of the children of God hereafter; and such are truly Christ's freemen: *ye shall be free indeed*; this is true freedom; what the Jews boasted of, supposing what they said was right, was but a shadow of freedom in comparison of this; and that liberty which sinful men promise themselves in sin, is all deceit; there's no true, solid, substantial freedom but what is by Christ, the son of God. Even that freedom which the children of God had under the legal dispensation, was a servitude, in comparison of that which the saints enjoy by Christ under the Gospel dispensation; though they were sons and heirs, yet being in nonage, differed nothing from servants, being under tutors and governors, in bondage under the elements of the world; and under the influence of a spirit of bondage unto fear; see Gal. iv. 1, 2, 3. Rom. viii. 15. but such that have received the spirit of adoption from Christ, they are really free: they have not only the name of children, and of freemen, but they are truly such, and wholly so; perhaps there may be some reference had to such sort of persons among the Jews, who were partly servants, and partly free: so it is said<sup>1</sup>, "מי שדוני עבד, *he who is half a servant*, or partly a servant, and partly free, shall serve his master one day, and himself another." And such an one, as the commentators<sup>k</sup> say, is one who is a servant of two partners, and is made free by one of them; or who has paid half his price to his master (for his freedom), but the other half is still due: and of one in such circumstances it is said<sup>1</sup>, that "he that is partly a servant, and partly free, may not eat of his master's" (lamb at the passover): but now those who are made free by Christ the son of God, they are not in part only, but are wholly free, and have a right to all the privileges of his house, to the supper of the Lord, and to every other immunity.

Ver. 37. *I know that ye are Abraham's seed, &c.*] In answer to the other part of the Jews' objection to Christ, and in favour of themselves, Christ owns that they were the natural seed of Abraham; for truth must be allowed to an adversary. But then this hindered not but they might be, as they were, in moral bondage to sin, and a generation of vipers, as those of them who came to John's baptism were; and might not be the sons of God, for not because they were the natural seed of Abraham, were they all the adopted sons of God; and might be cast out of the house of God, as Ishmael was cast out of Abraham's, though he was his natural seed. And what follows proves them to be under the power, and in the servitude of sin, and that they were the seed of the serpent that was to bruise the heel of the woman's seed, or put the Messiah to death, though they were the natural seed of Abraham: *but ye seek to kill me*; which none but such who are under the governing power of sin, are slaves unto it, and the vassals of the devil, would ever do: the reason of which is, *because my word hath no place in you*: their hearts were barred and bolted against it, with ignorance, enmity, and unbelief; it had no

entrance into them; it did not come with power to their hearts, nor work effectually in them; it had no place at all in them, much less a dwelling; had it had one, it would have produced another effect in them, even love to Christ; which the doctrine of Christ, wherever it comes with power, and takes place in the soul, brings along with it; but where it does not, as here, hatred and indignation, envy and malice, more or less, shew themselves. This clause is differently rendered, and so admits of different senses. The Vulgate Latin renders it, *my word does not take in you*; it did not take place in them, nor did it take with them; they could not receive it; in which sense the word is used in Matt. xix. 11. for the natural man cannot receive the doctrines of Christ; they are not suited to his taste: they are disagreeable to him. The Syriac version renders it, *ye are not sufficient for my word*, to take it in; they were not capable of it; they could not understand it; it requires divine illumination, and a spiritual discerning, which they had not: the Persic version is, *ye are not worthy of my words*; of having the Gospel preached to them, and continued with them; they contradicting and blaspheming it, and rejecting the author of it; see Acts xiii. 45, 46. The Ethiopic version renders it, *my word does not remain with you*; and to the same purpose the Arabic version, *my word is not firm in you*; as soon as it was heard by them, it was caught away from them by Satan, whose children they were; it made no lasting impressions on them, but was like water spilt upon the ground: it may be rendered, *my word does not enter into you*; it did not make its way and penetrate into their hearts; for though, when attended with the demonstration of the spirit, and of power, it is quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword, and enters into the conscience, and penetrates to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and lays open the secret thoughts and intents of the heart; yet of itself is an insufficient means of conversion; it can't make its own way; there must be an exertion of powerful and efficacious grace; which shews the hardness and obstinacy of the heart of man.

Ver. 38. *I speak that which I have seen with my father, &c.*] This is an aggravation of the sin of the Jews, in seeking to kill Christ, on account of his doctrine, since it was not his own, but his father's; was not merely human, but divine; was what he the only-begotten son, that lay in the bosom of his father, had seen in his heart, in his purposes, and decrees, in his council, and covenant, and so was clear, complete, certain, and to be depended on: *and ye do that which ye have seen with your father*; meaning the devil, whom, though they had not seen with their eyes, nor any of his personal actions; yet acted so much under his influence, and according to his will, as if they had close and intimate consultation with him, and took their plan of operation from him, and had him continually before them, as their example and pattern, to copy after. The Ethiopic version reads, *what ye have heard*; and so it is read in three of Beza's copies, and in three of Stephens's.

Ver. 39. *They answered and said unto him, &c.*] On

<sup>1</sup> Misn. Gittin, c. 4. sect. 5. & Ediot, c. 1. sect. 13.

<sup>k</sup> Maimonides, Jarchi, & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>1</sup> Misn. Pesachim, c. 8. sect. 1.

account of his making mention of a father, whose works they did, and whom they imitated: *Abraham is our father*; meaning their only one, nor had they any other: *Jesus saith unto them, if ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham*; for who should children imitate but their parents? Abraham was a merciful, charitable, and hospitable man, as well as a man of strict justice and integrity; he feared God, believed in him, and was ready to receive every message and revelation which came from him; and they are his genuine children and offspring, who walk in the steps of his faith, charity, justice, and piety: and this is a rule which the Jews themselves give<sup>m</sup>, whereby the seed of Abraham may be known: "whoever is merciful to the creature (man), it is evident that he is of the seed of Abraham, our father; but whoever has not mercy on the creature, it is a clear case that he is not of the seed of Abraham our father." And if this is a sure rule of judging, these men could not be the seed of Abraham, who were a merciless, barbarous, and cruel generation. Another of their writers<sup>n</sup> has this observation, agreeably to the way of reasoning Christ uses; "a disciple is to be judged of according to his manners; he that walks in the ways of the Lord, he is of the disciples of Abraham, our father, seeing he is used to his manners, and learns of his works; but the disciple who is corrupt in his manners, though he is of the children of Israel, lo, he is not of the disciples of Abraham, seeing he is not accustomed to his manners." Whence it appears, that they say these things not to distinguish themselves from other people who claimed a descent from Abraham, as the Ishmaelites or Saracens did; as did also the Spartans or Lacedemonians; for so writes Aretus their king, to Onias the high-priest of the Jews, "it is found in writing, that the Lacedemonians and Jews are brethren, and that they are of the stock of Abraham, 1 Maccab. xii. 20, 21." But to distinguish those who were religious and virtuous among the Jews themselves, from those that were not; and so our Lord means not to deny, that the Jews, though they were evil men, were the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh; but that they were not so in a spiritual sense, they did not tread in his steps, or do the works he did. The Persic version reads in the singular number, *ye would do the work of Abraham*: and if any particular work is designed, it is most likely to be the work of faith, since it was that which Abraham was famous for; and the doing of which denominated men, even Gentiles, the children of Abraham, and which the Jews were wanting in, they disbelieving and rejecting the Messiah.

Ver. 40. *But now ye seek to kill me, &c.*] A temper and disposition very foreign from that of Abraham's: a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: to seek to kill a man is a very great crime, and punishable with death; to kill an innocent one, that had done no sin, who was pure, holy, harmless, and inoffensive to God and man, was an aggravation of the iniquity; and to kill a prophet, and one more than a prophet, who brought a revelation from God himself,

and declared the whole truth of the Gospel, and particularly that of his divine, eternal sonship, which incensed them against him, and put them upon seeking to take away his life, still increased the sin. *This did not Abraham*: the sense is not, that Abraham did not tell the truth he had heard of God; for he did instruct, and command his children after him, to walk in the ways of the Lord, which he had learned from him; but that Abraham did not reject any truth that was revealed unto him, and much less seek to take away the life of any person that brought it to him; and indeed not the life of any man that deserved not to die: and our Lord suggests, that if he had been on the spot now, he would not have done as these his posterity did, since he saw his day by faith, and rejoiced in the foresight of it, ver. 56. The Jew<sup>o</sup> makes an objection from these words against the deity of Christ; "you see (says he) that Jesus declares concerning himself that he is not God, but man; and so says Paul concerning him, Rom. v. 15. and so Jesus, in many places, calls himself the son of man: nor do we find in any place that he calls himself God, as the Nazarenes believe." To which may be replied, that Jesus does not declare in these words, nor in any other place, that he is not God; he says no such thing; he only observes, that he was a man, as he really was: nor is his being man any contradiction to his being God; for he is both God and man; and so those that believe in him affirm: and though Christ does not in express terms call himself God, yet he owned himself to be the son of God, Mark xiv. 61. and said such things of himself, as manifestly declared him to be God; and upon account of which the Jews concluded, that he not only made himself equal with God, but that he made himself God, John v. 17, 18. and x. 33. Besides, he suffered himself to be called God by a disciple of his, which he would never have done, had he not been really and truly God, John xx. 28. yea, he seems to call himself so, when being tempted by Satan, he observed to him what is written, *thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*, Matt. iv. 7. The reason why he so often calls himself the son of man is, because it was more suitable to him in his state of humiliation; and indeed, there was no need for him to assert his deity in express words, since his works and miracles most clearly proved that he was God: and as for the Apostle Paul, though he sometimes speaks of him as a man, he also says of him, that he is God over all, blessed for ever; and calls him the great God, and our Saviour, and God manifest in the flesh, Rom. ix. 5. Tit. ii. 13. 1 Tim. iii. 16.

Ver. 41. *Ye do the deeds of your father, &c.*] Not Abraham, but the devil. *Then said they unto him, we be not born of fornication*: meaning either literally, that they were not a brood of bastards, children of whoredom, illegitimately begotten in unlawful copulation, or wedlock; or figuratively, that they were not the children of idolaters, idolatry being called fornication in Scripture; but that they were the holy seed of Israel, and children of the prophets, who had retained the pure word, and the true worship of God, though in

<sup>m</sup> T. Bah. Betzn. fol. 22. 2.

<sup>n</sup> Abarbanel Nach'ath Abot, fol. 183. 1.

<sup>o</sup> R. Isaac Clizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 48. p. 436. & par. 1. c. 10. p. 118.



all this they might have been contradicted and refuted; to which they add, *we have one father*: even *God*; Israel being called by God his son, and first-born to them belonged the adoption, in a national sense, and of this they boasted; though few of them were the children of God by special adoption, or God their father by regenerating grace.

Ver. 42. *Jesus said unto them, if God were your father, &c.*] By adoption; and this was discovered by the grace of regeneration; or in other words, if they had been born of God, *ye would love me*: for in regeneration love to Christ is always implanted: it is a fruit of the spirit, which always comes along with the superabounding grace of God in conversion; whoever are begotten again, according to abundant mercy, love an unseen Jesus; and where there is no love to Christ, there can be no regeneration: such persons are not born again; nor is God their father, at least manifestly: *for I proceeded forth; and came from God*: the former of these phrases is observed by many learned men to be used by the Septuagint, of a proper natural birth, as in Gen. xv. 4. and xxxv. 11. and here designs the eternal generation of Christ, as the son of God, being the only-begotten of the father, and the son of the father in truth and love; and the other is to be understood of his mission from him, as Mediator: *neither came I of myself*; or did not take the office to himself, without being called unto it, and invested with it, by his father: *but he sent me*; not by force, or against the will of Christ, or by change of place, but by assumption of nature; he sent him at the time agreed upon, in human nature, to obtain eternal redemption for his people: and upon both these accounts Christ is to be loved by all regenerate persons, or who have God for their father; both on account of his being the son of God, of the same nature and essence with him, see 1 John v. 1. and on account of his mission into this world, as Mediator, since he was sent, and came to be the Saviour of lost sinners.

Ver. 43. *Why do ye not understand my speech? &c.*] Language, idiom, dialect, and form of speaking, in a figurative way; for they did not know what he meant by liberty, and bondage, and by having another father than Abraham, or by his own procession and coming forth from God: even *because ye cannot hear my word*; as they had no spiritual discerning and understanding of the doctrine of Christ, which shewed them to be carnal, and natural men, and not regenerate ones, and the children of God; so they had an aversion to it, and could not bear to hear it.

Ver. 44. *Ye are of your father the devil, &c.*] Not of his substance, but by imitation and example; and as being under his authority and influence, his instructions and directions, and ready to follow after him, and obey his commands; the word *your* is rightly supplied, and is in some copies: *and the lusts of your father ye will do*; the Syriac and Persic versions read in the singular number, *the lust*, or *desire of your father*; by which may be particularly meant, his eager desire after the death of Christ, which he shewed at different times; he instigated Herod to seek to destroy his life in his infancy, and when he was just entering on his public

ministry, he tempted him to destroy himself; and often stirred up the Scribes and Pharisees, to stone him or kill him, some other way; and at last put it into the heart of one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, to betray him: this looks as if though the devil had a notion of the salvation of men by Christ, yet that he thought, as some erroneous men have also done, that it was only by his doctrine and example, and therefore he was in haste to get him out of the world, that he might not be useful, or any more so that way; and not by the shedding of his blood, the sacrifice of himself, or by his sufferings and death, in the room of sinners; or otherwise it is scarcely credible, that he would have sought his death so earnestly: now this self-same lust and insatiable desire after the death of Christ prevailed in the Jews; and they were resolute and bent upon fulfilling it at any rate, nor could any thing divert them from it; this is the thing Christ is speaking of in the context, and is what fully proved the devil to be their father, and them to be his children: *he was a murderer from the beginning*; he was not only spoken of from the beginning, as he that should bruise the Messiah's heel, or should compass his death, but he was actually a murderer of Adam and Eve, and of all their posterity, by tempting them to sin, which brought death and ruin upon them; and who quickly after that instigated Cain to slay his brother; and has had, more or less, a concern in all murders committed since; and has been in all ages, and still is, a murderer of the souls of men; and therefore is rightly called Abaddon, and Apollyon, which signify the destroyer: the phrase, *from the beginning*, does not intend the beginning of his own creation; for he was created a holy creature, was in the truth, though he abode not in it; and was in a happy state, though he lost it: nor strictly the beginning of time, or of the creation of the world, which were some days at least before the fall of man, when the devil commenced a murderer; but it being very near it, therefore this phrase is made use of: the Syriac version renders it, *from Bereshith*, which is the first word in the Hebrew Bible, and is frequently used by the Jewish Rabbins for the six days of the creation; and if Adam fell, as some think, the same day he was created, it might be properly said that the devil was a murderer from thence. Philo<sup>p</sup> speaks of Eve's serpent, as *αὐθιππος φονεύς*, a murderer of man; applying to this purpose the text before referred to, Gen. iii. 15. *and abode not in the truth*; neither in the integrity, innocence, and holiness, in which he was created; nor in veracity, or as a creature of veracity, but spake lies, and formed one, by which he deceived Eve, saying, *ye shall not surely die*, when God had said they should; nor in the truth of the Gospel, which was at least in part made known unto him; particularly that the son of God should become man, and in that nature be the head of angels and men: this he and his associates, in the pride of their hearts, not bearing that the human nature should be exalted above that of theirs, left their first estate, broke off their allegiance to God, and turned rebels against him: *because there is no truth in him*; not that this is a reason why he continued not in the truth, for there was originally truth in him; though he

<sup>p</sup> De Agricultura, p. 203.

abode not in it; but a reason, shewing there was none in him now, since he was fallen from it, and abode not in it; there is no truth in him, that is natural and genuine, and essential to him; and if at any time he speaks it, it is not from his heart, but because he is forced to it, or has an evil design in it: *when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own*; that is genuine and natural, of his own devising, willing, and approving: *for he is a liar, and the father of it*; he was a liar, as early as he was a murderer, or rather earlier; it was with a lie he deceived, and so murdered our first parents, and he has continued so ever since; he was the first author of a lie; the first lie that ever was told, was told by him; he was the first inventor of one; he was the first of that trade; in this sense the word *father* is used, Gen iv. 20, 21. so the serpent is by the Cabalistic Jews<sup>1</sup> called, the lip of lie, or the lying lip.

Ver. 45. *And because I tell you the truth, &c.*] And no lie, the whole truth of the Gospel, and particularly the truth of his divine sonship: *ye believe me not*; to such an infatuation and judicial blindness were they give up, to disbelieve him, because he told the truth, and to believe a lie, that they might be damned; which shewed them to be the children of the devil, and under his power and influence.

Ver. 46. *Which of you convinceth me of sin? &c.*] Of any immorality in life, or of any imposture, corruption, or deceit in doctrine. There were many of them that were forward enough to charge him with both scandalous sins, and false doctrines; but none of them all could prove any thing against him, so as to convict him according to law: they called him a wine-bibber, and a glutton; gave out they knew he was a sinner; charged him with blasphemy and sedition; sought to bring proof of it, but failed in their attempt: *and if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?* since as no sin in life, so no corruption in doctrine, could be proved against him, what he said must be true; and therefore it was a most unreasonable thing in them, and shewed invincible obstinacy, not to believe him.

Ver. 47. *He that is of God, &c.*] Who is born, not of blood, by carnal descent from any person, or of the carnal will, or by the power of free-will, or of the will of the best man in the world; but of God, according to his abundant mercy, of his own will, by the power of his grace; and so has God to be his father: such an one *heareth God's words*; the doctrines of the Gospel, which have God for their author, being of his ordaining, sending, and publishing; and his grace for the matter of them, displayed in election, redemption, justification, pardon, adoption, and eternal salvation, and his glory for the end: now a regenerate man has eyes to see into the glory, loveliness, excellency, suitableness, and usefulness of these things; and he has ears to hear, and a heart to understand them, which others have not; and therefore hears them with pleasure, receives them in the love of them, cordially embraces them by faith, and distinguishes them from the words of man; and puts such of them in practice, as requires it: *ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God*; because God was not their father, or they were not

born of him, as they boasted; therefore they had not eyes to see, nor ears to hear, nor hearts to understand: and it may as fairly be inferred, that because they did not hear the words of God, therefore they were not of God; for these two necessarily imply each other; it looks very dark on such persons, who neither hear the doctrines of the Gospel externally nor internally.

Ver. 48. *Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, &c.*] Being incensed to the last degree, that he should say they were of their father the devil, and not of God; and that he spoke the truth, and no one could convince him of sin: *say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan?*<sup>2</sup> it seems they had said so before, though it is not recorded; and now they thought themselves justified in it, since he treated them, the true sons of Abraham, in such a manner; and the rather, since he had been lately among the Samaritans, and had in a parable spoken in favour of a Samaritan: they meant by this expression, that he was an irreligious man, and one that had no regard to the law of Moses; or at least played fast-and-loose with religion and the law, and was for any thing, as times served: the Jews had a very ill opinion of the Samaritans, on these accounts; and to call a man a Samaritan, was all one as to call him an heretic, an idolater, or an excommunicated person; for such were the Samaritans with the Jews; they charged them with corrupting the Scriptures, and with worshipping idols, which were hid in Mount Gerizzim; and they give us a dreadful account of their being anathematized by Ezra, Zorobabel, and Joshua; who, they say, "gathered the whole congregation into the temple, and brought in three hundred priests, and three hundred children, and three hundred trumpets, and three hundred books of the law, in their hands; they blew the trumpets, and the Levites sung, and they anathematized the Samaritans, by the inexplicable name of God, and by the writing on tables, and with the anathema of the house of judgment, above and below; (saying,) let not any Israelite for ever eat of the fruit, or of the least morsel of a Samaritan; hence they say, whoso eateth the flesh of a Samaritan, it is all one as if he ate swines' flesh; also let not a Samaritan be made a proselyte, nor have a part in the resurrection of the dead; as it is said, *You have nothing to do with us, to build an house unto our God*, Ezra iv. 3. neither in this world, nor in the world to come: moreover, also let him have no part in Jerusalem; as it is said, *But you have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem*, Neh. ii. 20. and they sent this anathema to the Israelites that were in Babylon, and they added thereunto, curse upon curse: moreover, king Cyrus added an everlasting anathema to it, as it is said, *And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there, destroy, &c.* Ezra vi. 12." And hence, because the Samaritans were had in such abhorrence by the Jews, they would not ask a blessing over food in company with them<sup>3</sup>, nor say *Amen* after they had asked one<sup>4</sup>; nor indeed, after the better sort of them had asked, unless the whole blessing was distinctly heard<sup>5</sup>, that so they might be sure there was no heresy in it; by

<sup>1</sup> Lex. Cabalist. p. 724.

<sup>2</sup> Pirke Eliezer, c. 38.

<sup>3</sup> Bartenora in Misn. Beracot, c. 7. sect. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Elias in Tishbi in voce כרת.

<sup>5</sup> Misn. Beracot, c. 8. sect. 3. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

all which it appears, how opprobrious this name was, and what a sad character was fixed upon a man that bore it; see the note on John iv. 9. and as Christ was called by the Jews a Samaritan, they having no name more hateful and reproachful to call him by, so the Christians are still in their writings called Cuthites, or Samaritans; and it is indeed with them a general name for all Gentiles and idolaters, or whom they esteem such: *and hast a devil*; familiarity and converse with one; by which means they imagined he knew their thoughts, and their actions, and by his assistance performed his miracles; or they took him for a lunatic, or a madman; whose lunacy and madness proceeded from the devil, with whom he was possessed: and this rather seems to be the sense, since in ver. 52. the Jews say they knew he had a devil, which they concluded from his saying, that such that observed his words, and kept them, should never die; which they considered as the words of a man out of his senses, seeing all men, even the best of men die, they not understanding his meaning; whereas they could not gather from hence, that he dealt with familiar spirits; and what still confirms this sense is, that these two are joined together in John x. 20. *he hath a devil, and is mad*, and such as were demoniacs, men possessed with devils, were either mad, or lunatic, and melancholy; see Matt. viii. 28. Mark v. 2—5. Matt. xvii. 15. compared with Mark ix. 17, 25. To which may be added, that it was a prevailing notion with the Jews, that madness and melancholy were owing to evil spirits, which had the predominancy over men: and seeing Christ was thought to be besides himself by his friends and relations, Mark iii. 21. it need not be wondered at, that his enemies should fix such a character on him; nor was this an unusual one to be given to good men; the prophets and spiritual men of the Old Testament were accounted madmen, 2 Kings ix. 11. Hos. ix. 7. And since our Lord was used in this abusive manner, it need not seem strange, that his followers should be treated in the same way; as the Apostle Paul and his companions in the ministry were, Acts xxvi. 24. 2 Cor. v. 13. see John x. 20.

Ver. 49. *Jesus answered, I have not a devil, &c.*] He takes no notice of the first charge and scandalous character, that he was a Samaritan; it being so notorious to all the Jews, that he was not; but was, as they supposed, a Galilean, and of Nazareth; and besides, this was a term of reproach, which they gave to any man, that they had no good opinion of; just as we call a man a Turk, or a Jew; not meaning that he is in fact such an one, but behaves like one: to the other Christ replies, that he had not a devil, had no conversation with one, nor was he possessed or assisted by him, or was mad, and acted the part of a madman: in proof of which he observes, *but I honour my father*; by ascribing his doctrine and miracles to him, by doing his will, seeking his glory, and speaking well of him; all which he would not, had he been in confederacy with the devil; for no man can be familiar with him, or be assisted by him, and honour God; nor could a man out of his senses do all this: *and ye do dishonour me*: by such wicked charges, and scandalous imputations: and Jews, who deny Jesus to be the Messiah, and treat him in this opprobrious manner, are not the

only persons that dishonour Christ; there are many that are called by his name, who greatly dishonour him; some by their bad principles, and others by their evil practices: such highly reflect upon him, who deny his proper deity, and eternal sonship; who assert, that he is only God by office, and did not exist before his incarnation; who despise and reject his righteousness, submit not to it, but establish their own; who account his blood as common and useless, and speak disrespectfully of his sacrifice and satisfaction; and who consider his sufferings and death only as an example to men, and for the confirmation of his doctrine, but not as in the room and stead of his people, to answer and satisfy divine justice for them: and others they dishonour him, though they talk much of him, and pretend to faith in him, and love to him, and hope of eternal life by him, through their scandalous lives and conversations; dishonour his name and Gospel; give the enemy an occasion to reproach and blaspheme, and by reason of them, the ways and truths of Christ are evil-spoken of.

Ver. 50. *I seek not mine own glory, &c.*] In his doctrine, or in his miracles; which shewed that he was no impostor, but a true, faithful, and upright person; and though he was so very much reproached and abused, he was not over-solicitous of his own character, and of retrieving his honour, and of securing glory from man; he knew that Wisdom was justified of her children, and he committed himself to God that judgeth righteously, who would take care of his glory, and vindicate him from all the unjust charges and insults of men: *there is one that seeketh and judgeth*; meaning God his father, who had his glory at heart; who had glorified him on the mount, and would glorify him again, when he should raise him from the dead, and spread his Gospel in all the world; and when he would judge the nation of the Jews, and bring wrath upon them, upon their nation, city and temple, for their contempt and rejection of him.

Ver. 51. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, &c.*] This is truth, and may be depended upon, as coming from the *Amen*, and faithful witness: *if a man keep my saying*; or doctrine, receives the Gospel in the love of it, obeys it from his heart, and cordially embraces and firmly believes it; and retains and holds it fast, having a spiritual and comfortable experience of the doctrines of Christ, and yielding a cheerful and ready obedience to his commands and ordinances, in faith and love: *he shall never see death*; the second death, eternal death, which is an everlasting separation of a man, body and soul, from God: this death shall have no power on such a person, he shall never be hurt by it; and though he dies a corporeal death, that shall not be a curse, a penal evil to him; nor shall he always lie under the power of it, but shall rise again, and live in soul and body, for ever with the Lord: seeing and tasting death, as in the next verse, are Hebraisms expressive of dying.

Ver. 52. *Then said the Jews unto him, &c.*] Upon these last words that he spake, giving assurance, that whoever kept his saying, should not die: *now we know that thou hast a devil* they thought and said so before, but now they were assured, that he must be under diabolical influence, must be possessed with the devil,

and mad, and out of his senses; for they thought no man in his senses would ever talk at this rate: *Abraham is dead, and the prophets*; that is, they are dead also, as the Ethiopic version adds; see Zech i. 5. and thou sayest, if a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death: Abraham and the prophets were so far from pretending by their doctrine to communicate life and secure men from death, that they could not keep themselves from dying; and therefore it must be diabolical madness and phrenzy to assert any thing of this kind.

Ver. 53. *Art thou greater than our father Abraham?* &c.] So the woman of Samaria said, concerning Jacob, ch. iv. 12. The Jews had a mighty opinion of their ancestors, especially of Abraham; and yet they allow the Messiah to be greater than he, as Jesus truly was: so one of their ancient commentators<sup>v</sup> on those words of Isa. lii. 13. thus paraphrases them, “Behold my servant shall deal prudently, this is the King Messiah; he shall be exalted above Abraham, as it is written, Gen. xiv. 22. and extolled above Moses, as it is written, Numb. xi. 12. and he shall be higher than the ministering angels, as it is written, Ezek. i. 18. Zech. iv. 7. for he shall be גדול בן אברהם, greater than the fathers.” They add here, of Abraham, which is dead; he was a great and good man, and yet dead: and the prophets are dead; though they truly kept, and faithfully delivered the word of God: whom makest thou thyself? who art a poor carpenter’s son, a Galilean, a Nazarene, and yet makest thyself greater than Abraham, or any of the prophets; yea, makest thyself to be God, to promise security from death, and an everlasting continuance of life upon keeping thy word.

Ver. 54. *Jesus answered, if I honour myself, my honour is nothing, &c.]* It is empty and vain, and will not continue; see 2 Cor. x. 18. it is my father that honoureth me: by a voice from heaven, both at his baptism, and transfiguration, declaring him to be his beloved son, and by the works and miracles he did by him; as he afterwards also honoured him by raising him from the dead, and setting him at his own right hand, by pouring forth his spirit on his disciples, and succeeding his Gospel in every place: of whom ye say that he is your God; your covenant God and Father, being the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; of this the Jews boasted. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and all the Oriental versions read, our God.

Ver. 55. *Yet ye have not known him, &c.]* Not as the father of Christ, nor as in Christ, whom to know is life eternal: they had no spiritual knowledge of him, nor communion with him; nor did they know truly his mind and will, nor how to worship and serve him as they ought: but I know him; his nature and perfections, being of the same nature, and having the same perfections with him; and his whole mind and will lying in his bosom: nor did, or does any know the father, but the son, and he to whom he is pleased to reveal him: and if I should say, I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you. Our Lord still intimates, that they were of their father the devil, and imitated him not only as a murderer, but as a liar: this is quite

contrary to the character they give of themselves, for they say<sup>x</sup>, that an Israelite will not tell a lie. But I know him, and keep his saying; do his will, and always the things that please him, observe his law, preach his Gospel, fulfil all righteousness, and work out the salvation of men, which were the will and work of his father he came to do.

Ver. 56. *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, &c.]* Or he was desirous to see my day, as the Syriac and Arabic versions rightly render the word; or very desirous, as the Persic version: and indeed, this was what many kings and prophets, and righteous men, were desirous of, even of seeing the Messiah and his day: we often read of ימות המשיח, the days of the Messiah: and the Jews, in their Talmud<sup>y</sup>, dispute much about them, how long they will be; one says forty years, another seventy, another three ages: it is the opinion of some, that they shall be according to the number of the days of the year, three hundred and sixty-five years; some say seven thousand years, and others as many as have been from the beginning of the world; and others, as many as from Noah; but we know the day of Christ better, and how long he was here on earth; and whose whole time here is called his day; this Abraham had a very great desire to see: and he saw it and was glad; he saw it with an eye of faith, he saw it in the promise, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and when it was promised him he should have a son, which was the beginning of the fulfilment of the other, he laughed, and therefore his son was called Isaac, to which some reference is here made; he saw him in the birth of his son Isaac and rejoiced, and therefore called his name Isaac, that is, laughter: he saw also Christ and his day, his sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead, in a figure; in the binding of Isaac, in the sacrifice of the ram, and in the receiving of Isaac, as from the dead; and he not only saw the Messiah in his type Melchizedeck, and who some think was the son of God himself, but he saw the second person, the promised Messiah, in a human form, Gen. xviii. 2. and all this was matter of joy and gladness to him. This brings to mind what the Jews say at the rejoicing at the law, when the book of the law is brought out<sup>z</sup>: “Abraham rejoiced with the rejoicing of the law, he that cometh shall come, the branch with the joy of the law; Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, rejoiced with the joy of the law; he that cometh shall come, the branch with the joy of the law.”

Ver. 57. *Then said the Jews unto him, thou art not yet fifty years old, &c.]* One copy reads forty, but he was not that; no, not much more than thirty; not above two or three and thirty years old: the reason of their fixing on this age of fifty might be, because Christ might look like such an one, being a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs, as well as of great gravity; or they might be free in allowing him as many years, as could be thought he should be of, and gain their point; for what were fifty years, when Abraham had been dead above two

<sup>v</sup> Tachuma apud Huls. p. 321.

<sup>x</sup> Maimon. in Misn. Pesachim, c. 8. sect. 6.

<sup>y</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 1.

<sup>z</sup> Seder Tephillot, fol. 309. 1 Ed. Basil.

thousand? and therefore he could never see Abraham, nor Abraham see him; moreover, this age of fifty, is often spoken of by the Jews, and much observe; at the age of fifty, a man is fit to give counsel, they say<sup>a</sup>; hence the Levites were dismissed from service at that age, it being more proper for them then to give advice, than to bear burdens; a Methurgeman, or an interpreter in a congregation, was not chosen under fifty years of age<sup>b</sup>; and if a man died before he was fifty, this was called the death of cutting off<sup>c</sup>; a violent death, a death inflicted by God, as a punishment; Christ lived not to that age, he was now many years short of it: *and hast thou seen Abraham?* if he had not, Abraham had seen him, in the sense before given, and in which Christ asserted it, and it is to be understood.

Ver. 58. *Jesus said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, &c.*] Whether it will be believed or no, it is certainly fact: *before Abraham was, I am*; which is to be understood, not of his being in the purpose and decree of God, fore-ordained to sufferings, and to glory; for so all the elect of God may be said to be before Abraham, being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world: or that Christ was man, before Abraham became the father of many nations; that is, before the calling of the Gentiles; for nothing is said in the text about his being the father of many nations; it is a bold and impudent addition to it: and besides, Abraham was made the father of many nations, as Ishmaelites, Israelites, Hagarenes, &c. long before the incarnation of Christ; yea, he was so from the very promise in Gen. xvii. 5. which so runs, *a father of many nations have I made thee*: so that this appears a false sense of the text, which is to be understood of the deity, eternity, and immutability of Christ, and refers to the passage in Exod. iii. 14. *I am that I am—I am hath sent me unto you*, the true Jehovah; and so Christ was before Abraham was in being, the everlasting I am, the eternal God, which is, and was, and is to come: he appeared in an human form to our first parents before Abraham was, and was manifested as the Mediator, Saviour, and living Redeemer, to whom all the pa-

triarchs before Abraham looked, and by whom they were saved: he was concerned in the creation of all things out of nothing, as the efficient cause thereof; he was set up from everlasting as Mediator; and the covenant of grace was made with him, and the blessings and promises of it were put into his hands before the world began; the eternal election of men to everlasting life was made in him before the foundation of the world; and he had a glory with his father before the world was; yea, from all eternity he was the son of God, of the same nature with him, and equal to him; and his being of the same nature proves his eternity, as well as deity, that he is from everlasting to everlasting God; and is what he ever was, and will be what he now is: he is immutable, the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever; in his nature, love, grace, and fulness, he is the invariable and unchangeable I am.

Ver. 59. *Then they took up stones to cast at him, &c.*] Supposing that he had spoken blasphemy; for they well understood that he, by so saying, made himself to be the eternal God, the unchangeable Jehovah. Should it be asked how they came by their stones in the temple? it may be replied, the temple was still building, John ii. 20. and stones, or pieces of stones, might lie about, with which they furnished themselves, in order to have destroyed Christ: and this they attempted, though it was on the sabbath-day, as appears from ch. ix. 1, 14. and with them, סקילד בשבת, *stoning on the sabbath-day*<sup>d</sup> was allowed in some cases. *But Jesus hid himself*, not in any corner of the temple, or behind a pillar; but he withdrew himself from them directly, and made himself invisible to them, by holding their eyes, or casting a mist before them, that they could not see him: *and went out of the temple*; by one of the gates of it: *going through the midst of them*; not of the persons that took up stones to stone him; but the rest of the people, who were there in great multitudes to hear his doctrine, and see his miracles: *and so passed by*, and escaped out of their hands; the last words, *going through the midst of them, and so passed by*, are not in Beza's most ancient copy, and in the Vulgate Latin version.

<sup>a</sup> Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 21.

<sup>b</sup> T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 14. 1 Juchasin, fol. 44. 2.

<sup>c</sup> T. Hieros. Bicurim, fol. 64. 3. T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 28. 1. Ma'se'eth Semachot, c. 3. sect. 9. Kimchi in Isa. xxxviii. 10.

<sup>d</sup> T. Hieros. Yom Tob, fol. 68. 2.

# THE BAPTIST STANDARD BEARER, INC.

A non-profit, tax-exempt corporation  
committed to the Publication & Preservation  
of The Baptist Heritage.

## SAMPLE TITLES FOR PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE IN OUR VARIOUS SERIES:

### THE BAPTIST COMMENTARY SERIES

Sample of authors/works in or near republication:

John Gill - *Exposition of the Old & New Testaments (9 Vol. Set)*

John Gill - *Exposition of Solomon's Song*

### THE BAPTIST FAITH SERIES:

Sample of authors/works in or near republication:

Abraham Booth - *The Reign of Grace*

John Fawcett - *Christ Precious to Those That Believe*

John Gill - *A Complete Body of Doctrinal & Practical Divinity (2 Vols.)*

### THE BAPTIST HISTORY SERIES:

Sample of authors/works in or near republication:

Thomas Armitage - *A History of the Baptists (2 Vols.)*

Isaac Backus - *History of the New England Baptists (2 Vols.)*

William Cathcart - *The Baptist Encyclopaedia (3 Vols.)*

J. M. Cramp - *Baptist History*

### THE BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES SERIES:

Sample of authors/works in or near republication:

Abraham Booth - *Paedobaptism Examined (3 Vols.)*

Alexander Carson - *Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament Churches*

E. C. Dargan - *Ecclesiology: A Study of the Churches*

J. M. Frost - *Pedobaptism: Is It From Heaven?*

R. B. C. Howell - *The Evils of Infant Baptism*

### THE DISSENT & NONCONFORMITY SERIES:

Sample of authors/works in or near republication:

Champlin Burrage - *The Early English Dissenters (2 Vols.)*

Albert H. Newman - *History of Anti-Pedobaptism*

Walter Wilson - *The History & Antiquities of the Dissenting Churches (4 Vols.)*

For a complete list of current authors/titles, visit our internet site at  
[www.standardbearer.org](http://www.standardbearer.org) or write us at:



**The Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc.**


**No. 1 Iron Oaks Drive • Paris, Arkansas 72855**

Telephone: (479) 963-3831 Fax: (479) 963-8083

E-mail: [baptist@arkansas.net](mailto:baptist@arkansas.net)

Internet: <http://www.standardbearer.org>





**The Philadelphia Baptist Association, in its official minutes, of October, 1807, recommended**  
*“that each member church of the Association subscribe for a copy of Dr. Gill’s incomparable Exposition of the Old and New Testaments for the use of their ministers, and urge all sister associations to aid in the accomplishment of this desirable object.”*

**A.D. Gillette,**

The Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association  
1707-1807, p. 439

**The Charleston Baptist Association**

*“recommended to the churches and the public to encourage, by subscription, the undertaking...to republish Dr. Gill’s Exposition and each church was advised to provide a copy for the use of its minister”*

**David Benedict**

A General History of the Baptist Denomination,  
Vol. 2, p. 149

---

**The Baptist Standard Bearer, Incorporated**

is a republication society organized in 1984, and is recognized as a nonprofit, tax-exempt charitable organization. It was founded for the primary purpose of republication and preservation of materials reflecting the Baptist heritage. It is not affiliated with, or financially supported by any association, convention or particular denomination. It is financed by individual donations, foundation grants, bequeathed inheritances, but primarily by the sale of its own publications.

ISBN 978-1-57978-482-9



9 781579 784829